APPROVED

New Heights Charter School Board of Trustees

Minutes

January Board Meeting

Date and Time
Tuesday January 31, 2023 at 5:00 PM

Location
Hybrid - Zoom and 1105 W Chestnut St

Join Zoom Meeting
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8981912806?pwd=WHJ2dE1sTHNYVlVmNUsvTkxEaW1JZz09
Meeting ID: 898 191 2806
Passcode: Eiqs3m

New Heights Board of Trustees
January 31st, 2023
Starting Time: 5:00pm
Location: 1105 W Chestnut Street
Brockton, MA 02301
Join Zoom Meeting

ZOOM Meeting:
Description:
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8981912806?pwd=WHJ2dE1sTHNYVlVmNUsvTkxEaW1JZz09

Trustees Present
G. Bengen (remote), G. Phillips, J. Charnel (remote), N. Christ (remote), S. Bernard (remote), V. Marturano

Trustees Absent
M. Sullivan, O. Spears

Trustees who arrived after the meeting opened

G. Bengen, J. Charnel

Ex Officio Members Present
O. Walker

Guests Present
J. Geier, J. Vega (remote), K. Kendrick, M. Fernandes (remote), M. Tracey (remote), R. Bevis (remote), S. Stephney (remote), T. Chin (remote), W. Libby (remote)

I. Opening Items

A. Call the Meeting to Order

G. Phillips called a meeting of the board of trustees of New Heights Charter School Board of Trustees to order on Tuesday Jan 31, 2023 at 5:04 PM.

B. Approved Board Members List

C. Roll Call

D. Reading and Approval of Minutes

N. Christ made a motion to approve the minutes from 11/29/22.
S. Bernard seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

II. Executive Director's Report

A. Board on Track Presentation

Board on Track provided a presentation regarding the use of the Board on Track platform the board is transitioning to next month.

B. Enrollment Report

Lourdes presented the enrollment report as of January 30, 2023.

- 733 students enrolled
- Omari - 733 is an important number, on 2/15 we have to certify our enrollment which will lock in our tuition for the remainder of the school year. Lourdes is working hard to accept students so we can certify at 735 students and remain fully funded through the end of the year
- Steve - Is there any great percentage increase in a specific ethnicity within the communities than before? Is there directed outreach to diversify student body?

- Lourdes - We are out there marketing to Cape Verdean community and others, doing outreach to diversify the student population.
- Judge - what specific efforts are being made to diversify?
  - Lourdes - Maria and I did an interview with Brockton Community Cable Access specifically using Cape Verdean to reach the community. Have several upcoming events with churches that have strong Cape Verdean communities.

C. State Visit February 7, 2023

- February 7, 9-10:15am: Board Focus Group at 1690 Main St
  - Most board members have one site visit in the past. Jess will send more information about the focus group after the meeting and will be available to further discuss the visit.
  - Coffee and donuts provided, meet at main lobby by 8:50am

G. Bengen arrived at 5:26 PM.

D. State Nutrition Review

- Visit occurred January 26, 2023
- Tim provided an overview of the review:
  - State felt that in the food prep room on school's side everything was up to date and inline with expectations. Did have concerns about logistics of lunchroom and have implemented changes in cafeteria due to those concerns.
  - State found that much of the food being served was not compliant or up to federal standard. State will not be reimbursing for all of last week due to this.
    - Was highlighted that food provider should be held to higher standard as they didn't provide compliant meals - highly recommended that they should reimburse us for the week because of this
  - Reviewer retired after the visit, supervisor will be the one making the final decision as to whether or not we will be reimbursed for December
  - There will be a followup visit to see if we followed guidelines when finding vendor
- Judge - has anyone been following up on getting credit from vendor?
  - Tim - yes, followed up with vendor and let them know that we will be looking for a credit for that week on our upcoming bill and will not be paying for that week.
- Graham - what were the concerns regarding food guidelines?
  - Tim - they found that we didn't have evidence of allotted dark green vegetable for the week. Also felt that salads weren't up to weight standard or include food that brought it to the standard. Vegetable can change through week but must be offered once.

- Judge - Have we made sure we haven't been ripped off by company in the past? Do we want to continue to do business with them?
    - Tim - It is a major concern, looked into December meals and it seems we have been compliant on paper. I have communicated that we are looking into possibly ending the contract and finding other vendors. Also have highlighted that they were supposed to be on site during the visit and they weren't.
- Graham - have they said they would reimburse us?
    - Tim - No, they are coming in next week and we will be meeting to discuss the contract.
- Vinnie - Did the auditor say they knew that the company had misbehaved in past?
    - Tim - no, they said they knew the vendor and the struggles they have had in the past.
    - Vinnie - Is it in the contract that they have to provide compliant food?
    - Tim - yes it is
- Judge - Can you provide your findings after the meeting with the company and your recommendation moving forward? Have some possible new vendors just to have on hand?
    - Tim - absolutely
- Omari - what kind of money are we talking for not being reimbursed for the week?
    - Tim - I can't say for sure for the week but if the state goes after the month it would be around $35,000.
    - Jess - We have started the fight for the week and can probably fight for the month as well.
- Jess - can you speak to underweight salads since the visit?
    - Tim - yes, this week especially food service has been on top of ensuring compliance and been communicating with the company and we have been getting credit for mistakes. This is also adding onto list of things for the upcoming meeting?
- Graham - How many other schools do they serve? Is it something in the company causing it?
    - Tim - not sure. Know Foxborough charter uses them and have had problems with them in the past.

J. Charnel arrived at 5:42 PM.

E. Survey Data

Nicolas provided a presentation titled "Winter 2022 Climate Surveys Presentation for NHCSB Board"
Student survey:

- Judge - Did students specify which rules they felt were unfair?
    - Nicolas - we didn't reach that level of specificity in this survey

- Graham - know I didn't like any rules in high school, probably would've put negative on a survey if given the chance.

- Jeff - How many students participated?
  - Nicolas - 320 students, 174 families, 65 staff
- Steve - You said neutral was expected, why?
  - Nicolas - for this age group (middle and high school) apathy is the norm
- Judge - how would you personally rate this survey compared to historical?
  - Nicolas - only found one previous offering of this survey from years ago, the data was comparable
- Judge - have you identified any specific area of concern that we should be focused on for students?
  - Nicolas- look into ways we give students a voice to get a say in the rules

Staff survey:

- Judge - in overall assessment is there any in particular that we need to pay attention to more than others?
  - Nicolas - discipline team is actively working on staff concerns about student behaviors and addressing those

F. Vote to accept Executive Director's Report

III. Old Business

A. Discipline Data

Nicolas provided a presentation titled "Q2 2022 Discipline Data Presentation for NHCSB Board"

- Judge - could you provide distinction between in school and out of school suspension?
  - Sophia - in school suspension is a remedy that can be used in place of out of school suspension. student would report to special room and not have access to classroom, but access to work and school building. Schools using in school suspension to keep students motivated and in school culture. Out of school suspension is removing child from school grounds, they would stay at home with access to work. After 10 days they must have a tutor or liaison who would provide online services
- Jeff - What's the plan to reduce suspensions? Is there a hierarchy?
  - Sophia - we have been looking at our handbook to provide more supports instead of sending students out of class. State law only allows suspensions for unsafe behaviors, like fighting, so what you're seeing here is unsafe behaviors and not low level offense

IV. New Business

A. Window Grant

- Federal government issued a grant to improve ventilation. Applied to help replace/reseal windows and allow them to be opened by staff. Did receive the grant but to contract a vendor we have to follow a sealed bid process because of the amount. Up to $124,000 can be used by the grant.

N. Christ made a motion to Allow Tim to go out to bid.
G. Bengen seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

V. Academic Excellence Committee

A. MCC

- Students did well academically last term on MCC
- We did receive complaints from administration concerning student preparation and behaviors. The main complaint was that students were behaving more like high school students than college students and the concern was that professors wouldn't want to teach the students. Called a meeting with MCC professors in December to voice issues and concerns from the first semester. We created a new plan addressing these concerns.
- Withdrew 21 students due to behavioral concerns, evaluated 10th graders for college readiness and 62% were deemed not college ready.
    - Judge - concerned that 21 students were removed
        - Omari - they were not allowed to continue taking classes on MCC campus. They are enrolled in college readiness classes. We had relaxed our rules too much after the first two classes and those students probably shouldn't have been on campus in the first place?
        - Judge - what are we doing to prevent relaxing in the future?
            - Omari - we are looking into that now, we don't want to set anyone up for failure
- Added behavioral probations and rules on campus to address professor concerns
- Placing behavior on a higher level of importance than in the past in determining college readiness
- 5 high behavior concerns
    - Eating/drinking in classroom
    - take cellphone out
    - fall asleep in class
    - skip/come late to class
- 3 strike system - 3 strikes will remove a student from the MCC campus
    - Jeff - is there an ability to appeal this?
        - Meagan - Liaisons will mark any of the violations in a tracker. If a student receives three it is investigated by EC staff to see if they're

legitimate. Then the case will be reviewed by a disciplinary team to determine if the student is removed and what the terms are

- Steve - who's policing this?
  - Meagan - they are being monitored by the liaisons
- Shelly - are there considerations for biases or arbitrary reasons? Is a student not allowed to have water?
  - Omari - the goal isn't to throw kids out of their college classes. The challenge is that students have abused their rights to eat food by leaving messes/not picking up after themselves. Water is still allowed in the classroom. All strikes will be in the tracker but we have the discipline review process to check on the story behind the strikes. Already had one student with three strikes where two were removed for legitimate reasons. Goal is to make sure the students know that we are watching and keeping them on track, want the professors to know we are responding to their concerns. Hope is that this isn't a practice we need to continue longer than this semester.
- Steve - What is boards role in helping to resolve this problem? board or administrative responsibility?
  - Omari - at this point in time board has entrusted administration to implement a model that allows students to be on campus. Bringing this to the board due to the fact that it could impact future associate completion rates.
- Vinnie - seeing this as a more remedial problem. How are students reacting to measures put in place?
  - Omari - they're taking this very seriously which is what we hoped. Pushback at first. Critical to keep professors on board, this is our second and final shot
- Judge - one of the issues I have is we focus on quantity over quality. Are we putting money over getting our objectives met? Spending more time trying to get quantity of students over quality?
  - Omari - as a charter school we can't put standards in place for application. Anyone who applies and gets in through the blind lottery gets in. Have no discretion over who gets in. We have to have a model who meets students where they are and gets them where they need to be
- Jeff - Issue I have is when you say disruptive students are ruining it for everyone else, is MCC at the point where they would think of pulling this program because of immature students who may have made it through?
  - Omari - it's a concentration of behaviors that professors haven't signed up for. MCC administration loves us but professors can choose to teach for us and that's where we could lose the program.

- Discussion regarding NHCSB Early College model and role of Liaisons in the classroom

- Graham - think the administration can manage this and bring updates to the board monthly.

B. Vote to accept Academic Excellence Committee as presented

VI. Finance Committee

A. Tuition Decrease

- Nick - Each town has a foundation rate that is state mandated for a minimum they have to spend on education. Brockton and Randolph typically come above foundation rate. Government money has given schools money to rely on so towns don't have to provide additional funding from their own pockets. Will have more information on the blended costs next month when Randolph's rates are released.

B. YTD Finances

- Lower cost expenses associated with staffing problem has helped the budget bottom line, anticipate this saving some money. Have budgeted for unfilled staff positions so there will be cost savings there.
- Forecasting that MCC reimbursement will be higher than what we have budgeted for.
- Are confident that we'll end the year even or in the black but important to pay attention to what blended tuition rate will be.

C. Vote to accept Finance Committee as presented

S. Bernard made a motion to Accept presentation of committee.
G. Bengen seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

VII. Governance Committee

A. ED Evaluation

N. Christ made a motion to accept the evaluation of the Executive Director as presented by the governance committee.
G. Bengen seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

B. New Board Members

N. Christ made a motion to accept the nomination of the new board members as presented.
G. Bengen seconded the motion.

- Governance committee recommends to the full board the nomination of Shelly Jackson and Dr. Carine Sauvignon

The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

C. Board Retreat

- Looking at April 4 as a date for the retreat. Invitation will be forthcoming.
- 4-5 hour session at MCC, working on the materials/presentations

D. Vote to accept Governance Committee as presented

VIII. Good of the Order

A. Announcements

- State requires that the March board meeting has to have the majority of board members in person

IX. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 7:30 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
G. Phillips

Documents used during the meeting

- BOT Agenda 11_29_22.pdf
- Enrollment as of Jan 30.docx
- Winter 2022 Climate Surveys Presentation for NHCSB Board.pdf
- Q2 2022 Discipline Data Presentation for NHCSB Board.pdf
- 2022 ED Eval.docx
- CARINE SAUVIGNON (1).pdf
- Shelly Jackson CV and Resume (1).pdf