APPROVED

New Heights Charter School Board of Trustees

Minutes

Board Retreat

Date and Time
Tuesday August 22, 2023 at 10:00 AM

Location
1105 W Chestnut St
Brockton, MA 02301

New Heights Board of Trustees
August 22, 2023
Starting Time: 10:00am
Location: 1105 W. Chestnut St
Brockton, MA 02301
Join Zoom Meeting

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

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

Trustees Absent
M. Sullivan

Trustees who arrived after the meeting opened
G. Bengen, J. Charnel

Ex Officio Members Present
O. Walker

Guests Present
J. Geier, K. Kendrick, M. Fernandes

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

B. Call the Meeting to Order

G. Phillips called a meeting to order on Tuesday Aug 22, 2023 at 10:15 AM.
J. Charnel arrived at 10:16 AM.

C. Approve Minutes

G. Phillips made a motion to approve the minutes from June Board Meeting on 06-27-23.
V. Marturano seconded the motion.
The team **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

II. Retreat

A. Welcome

Presenters used this presentation: https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1TYTio9fI-wBSbQLgde2nqbNVTKwYdQdpx6j592EOrpM/edit?usp=sharing
V. Marturano made a motion to move Steve Bernard be approved for a 3 year term.
G. Phillips seconded the motion.
The team **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

B. Year in Review

G. Bengen arrived at 10:25 AM.

- Omari provided a brief history of New Heights and the process to get the school started. Also discussed accomplishments and challenges of the previous years.
- Steve - We relied on Resiliency Foundation to open. Are we still dependent on Resiliency Foundation to run?
    - Omari - Resiliency Foundation has given to the school, New Heights hasn't given anything to the foundation. Resiliency gave loans at 0% interest to start the school, gave at least $500,000 in grants. New Heights has never been beholden to the foundation, the only relationship is where the foundation gives money to benefit the school.
    - Nick - The foundation helped a lot to fill holes and gaps during the opening financially.
    - Steve - The school no longer owes the foundation anything?
    - Omari - The last loan was paid off in 2021.

- Steve - what are the relationships of Omari and Jess to the foundation in terms of time?
    - Omari - I do some weekend and evening work with the foundation, along with Jess. Janice Manning does most of the work and is not associated with the school anymore.
- Steve - Is Early College a trend that will create competition with our model going forward that may impact applications?
    - Omari - there are over 60 recognized early college programs in MA. Doesn't appear to be competition as other programs haven't hurt us, we've had our strongest pool of applicants this year.
- Steve - How are we expected to grow if our cap is 735?
    - Omari - We need to gain proven provider status to expand. One criteria is being at or above state levels in terms of MCAS to expand beyond that seat cap. Until we can exceed state levels in MCAS testing we can't expand in Brockton. There are some opportunities in Taunton that we chose to not focus on but would be our best option at this time.
- Jeff - What are Brockton High's policies when it comes to suspension?
    - Omari - I haven't looked but can guess. All districts have different standards but there are basic rules given by the State, there is flexibility in those rules. State is asking districts to not suspend but this has to be considered with safety/climate. Lots of fights start outside of school through social media.
    - Jeff - are there consultants who can come in and give guidance?
    - Omari - State is providing training for this work. Our 4 deans are going through training right now. Do have students creating "much respect" campaigns to get students to demonstrate respect. Goal is to reduce fights by 80%.
- Vinnie - You mentioned the need to update the student handbook?
    - Omari - in the process of finishing it right now and will get that to the Governance Committee soon.
- Jeff - Is peer mediation something that the school does?
    - Omari - it has mixed results and seems to have been pretty ineffective.
- Vinnie - What grades have the most incidents?
    - Omari - it's prevalent throughout. Concentrated in two classes of kids but occurs throughout the school.
- Judge - has anyone looked at the space of the school and correlation with number of incidents?
    - Omari - could be something to look through
- Graham - What does the State look for when they monitor schools? What is the alternative to suspension?
    - Omari - They want you to focus on restorative actions. Re-establish relationship between students, do research on violence and consequences, community service.

    - Continued discussion of how the State limits suspensions and expulsions and how the school can organize discipline

- Omari presented the 4 district priorities for next year
- Judge - what changes do you foresee to ensure that you and your immediate staff are receiving feedback from teachers?
    - Omari - we have grade level leads who facilitate meetings with the grade levels then meet with senior staff to communicate concerns/questions from teachers. Will also have Town Halls to have open communication with all staff in addition to open door policy. Utilize TeachPoint to communicate feedback with teachers.
- Judge - Can board members look at ways to bring their expertise into the school to assist with career programs?
    - Omari - we'd love that
- Steve - How far are we getting from our core mission if we bring in career aspects?
    - Omari - The question is preparing students for college and the different ways we are able to do that.
    - Dr. Sauvignon explained some of the Canton campus opportunities for students to get college and career experience

C. Data Presentation

- Jess provided a quick overview of our accountability measures and their purpose
- Nicolas presented data from the presentation linked above
    - Maria - enrolled all 10th graders last year to try and catch them up due to the gap caused by COVID. We will be going back to previous model in future years
- Jeff - can this data be compared to the state data?
    - Nicolas - State keeps track of that, is looking at ways to dashboard that. We are the only ones sending all students, other schools are only sending selected students.
    - Maria - there really isn't data on SPED or MLL students as we appear to be the only ones doing it
    - Omari - I've only come across two schools in the country who are sending students with special needs

D. Lunch

E. Board Responsibilities and Goal Setting

- Robert Carpenter presented his BED Report (focus on slide 19, 20, 21, 22)
- Discussion about the need for improved board and administrative relationships in future to continue success
- Robert provided recommendations of next steps to be sent in an email:
    - Set aside time to identify specific governance goals

        - Have prioritization exercise to determine feasible and important goals for membership capacity
            - Do we have capacity to do this?
            - Do we have individuals on the board whose expertise can be used to do this?
        - Develop succession plan
        - Create onboarding process
        - Check-ins with board members before meetings (1 on 1)
    - Omari - How do other schools set board agenda? What does a healthy process look like?
        - Robert - Seen governance/executive committee meet with leaders to set the agenda. Could also develop annual work plan of what should be seen each meeting, general topics planned out

F. Board Planning

- Omari presented the mission and a case study of RFL students to begin the discussion of supports for students who aren't on the typical college pathway
- Steve - Can we be everything to everybody? Are we educators or are we here to rehabilitate?
    - Discussion on what college means and if the mission should be changed
        - Exposure to college going culture throughout grades 6-12
        - Vinnie - what are the implications if we want to start offering career pathways?
            - Omari - it would cost about a minimum of $500,000 to bring students to the Canton campus due to transportation and supervision needs. Budget has opened so do we pilot program in Spring? Help to retain students who aren't interested in traditional college pathway.
        - Agreement that we can prepare students for college whether they go the traditional college pathway or not. Mission will stay the same
- Judge - What is our responsibility towards students who don't fit the college pathway? We can't select students so how can we serve all of them?
    - Discussion regarding responsibility to provide services for all students in the school
- Omari - Would like permission to continue the conversation with the Academic Excellence Committee to create a pilot career program to launch in the Spring

G. Phillips made a motion to Allow Academic Excellence Committee to develop pilot program for Canton campus.
G. Bengen seconded the motion.
The team **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

- Vinnie brought up the topic of succession planning due to terms ending for Nicholas Christ and Mike Sullivan in 2024

    - Can amend the bylaws?
- Governance Committee will be screening 3 new potential board members
    - Agreement to revisit student involvement in the board

III. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

N. Christ made a motion to adjourn.
G. Bengen seconded the motion.
The team **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.
There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 3:00 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
G. Phillips

Documents used during the meeting

- New Heights Charter School of Brockton - 2023 BED Report.pdf