APPROVED

New Heights Charter School Board of Trustees

Minutes

October Board Meeting

Date and Time
Tuesday October 24, 2023 at 5:00 PM

Location
1105 W Chestnut St
Brockton, MA

OR

Zoom

New Heights Board of Trustees
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
D. Sauvignon (remote), G. Bengen (remote), G. Phillips, S. Bernard, S. Jackson (remote), V. Marturano

Trustees Absent
J. Charnel, M. Sullivan, N. Christ

Ex Officio Members Present

O. Walker

Guests Present
B. Hancock (remote), J. Vega, K. Kendrick, M. Fernandes, R. Lewis (remote), S. Graham (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 Oct 24, 2023 at 5:09 PM.

B. Approved Board Members List

C. Roll Call

D. Reading and Approval of Minutes

V. Marturano made a motion to approve the minutes from September Board Meeting on 09-26-23.
G. Bengen seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

II. Executive Director's Report

A. Enrollment/Lottery Report

- Lourdes presented the enrollment data as of today
  - 733 students total
- Have we had any success in terms of diversifying the student body?
  - We have increased the Cape Verdean population and the White population as well. Working on those numbers and can have them at the next board meeting.
  - Were any efforts made to increase these numbers?
    - Yes, attended lots of community events to share the school with communities not represented in our school community.

B. Highlights

- Staff presented student, staff, and department spotlights from the following presentation: https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1LW9oX24l6dsfgZXsvmfOuhC0Y9Q9tbAlbRIzgyUl9JQ/edit?usp=sharing

- What qualifies the student to be a New Heights Scholar?
    - He's always had a mind for learning, he struggled at first but has progressed in recent years and is working to be the best he can be. He's realizing it himself. He is a role model student for what students should look like as they're leaving New Heights
- What do we do to notify spotlighted staff/students that they've been spotlighted?
    - Those who are nominate reach out to the spotlighted person to let them know, they're invited to the board meeting. We used to do a student of the month and maybe we go back to that
- On behalf of the board, thank you for all of your contributions to the community and New Heights.
- New Heights is also participating in the Brockton Holiday Parade again this year on November 25 and it should be a good time.

C. Discipline Data

- Bryan and Nicolas presented discipline data on September 2022 vs September 2023.
- Data is definitely showing a downturn which is exciting to see. There was one more incident of battery this year but 3 less incidents of fighting and 17 fewer incidents of physical altercations.
- Are the results we're seeing due to having stronger punishments?
    - Not sure how much of a deterrent punishment is. However, we are much more vigilant this year and the students are aware. There are fewer students at a time in the cafeteria and more staff in the halls.
- Has there been any pushback to the new handbook rules from older students?
    - Received an email from an older student asking about it. Explained to her the reason and she accepted it.
- What education or information have we given to students to let them know the importance of the behavior?
    - In middle school we have a Student Success period to discuss character and provide remediation everyday. Have an advisory on Friday for the whole school where we discuss heavier topics, this month is bullying.

III. Old Business

A. Gym Rentals

- Renting out the gym after school and on weekends became unwieldy and supervision was lacking. Have asked that all gym rentals cease as of September 30 to take inventory of what is happening.
- Put it out to bid again in March when the basketball season is over. Inclined to not use the gym as a way to gain money but simply keep it for our students. It has

been damaged and not kept to the standards we were hoping for. Asking the board to support putting a pause on the rental of the gym.

- How much money did we end up making?
  - Very little
  - Is the rental something the ED manages or the Board?
    - That has to do with money so it would be the board's decision. Any proposal for rental would be brought to the board
- The school facilities should be for students.
- If the situation were manageable from an administrative point of view would you make the same decision?
  - Probably not
- Were the repairs that need to be made caused by the renters or by wear and tear of student use?
  - If trusting the staff working for New Heights its been made by the outside renters, but impossible to say for sure
- Was the AAU program not managed properly?
  - That program is run by our staff for mostly our students. They run a tight ship and were probably not responsible for the issues.
  - This program is also paused from using the gym?
    - It doesn't start until March so needs to be reevaluated then. This is the one thing that would be advocated to continue in March
  - Does it need to be our students for AAU to continue using the gym?
    - Believe it's mostly for our students to continue exploring basketball
- Is the gym used for community events?
  - It's not now but there were mens basketball, open hours, youth football practice, and other community events. There are gift drives and turkey drives as well. Would like to continue using it for the turkey drives.

S. Bernard made a motion to continue using the gym for the turkey drive.
V. Marturano seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

IV. New Business

A. MOU - proposed partnerships

- One of the goals of the engagement team is to increase community partnerships.
- Maria presented a potential BAMSI partnership to both help students and families, but also to create a pipeline to help fill open vacancies. There is no financial expectations for either party but is just a partnership. BAMSI is willing to provide PD for staff as well.
  - Opportunity to expose students to potential careers?
    - Yes
  - BAMSI does not address interventions at the school in their MOU?

        - We haven't discussed that yet but are hoping to have a discussion in the future regarding the potential services New Heights could utilize.
    - Fisher College reached out to offer school community a discount if they continue their education. The original discussion was regarding staff, but pushed to include parents if we can confirm that they are parents of students. There are no financial obligations on either end.
    - Board agrees that unless there is a financial or legal obligation then there doesn't need to be a board vote, but would like to be kept informed of any that come up.

G. Bengen made a motion to devolve MOU approvals to ED unless there are legal or financial obligations on the school. The board would vote on the MOU if that was the case.
V. Marturano seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

V. Academic Excellence Committee

A. MCAS Data

- Nicolas presented MCAS data linked below:
    - https://drive.google.com/file/d/14xCLrMhQbRu9pd_ynk4axW0hn_313kpY/view?usp=sharing
        - Students scored higher in math in 2023 than previous years
    - https://drive.google.com/file/d/1PyQyP_6RAKAdKuSigJaTBdRverLScYpK/view?usp=sharing
        - Students all scored higher in ELA this year except for in the 8th grade
    - New Heights performed better than 2 sending districts in math MCAS scores this year
    - Is it safe to say that students scores are constantly improving?
        - Haven't looked close enough at math to say for sure but definitely in ELA that is true.

B. Impact of Hiring Challenges

- The question was posed during the Academic Excellence Committee meeting about how the teacher shortage had impacted the school and students learning time this year.
    - We began the year fully staffed except for four science teachers. We are now fully staffed in all areas except for a substitute and paraprofessional position. The work the board did in supporting teacher compensation plan helped a lot in ensuring that we were able to recruit staff and retain the staff that we currently have. Our students haven't had any gaps in their learning time due to these challenges other schools are experiencing.

C.

Student Success

- Students are encouraged to take control of their education and success starting in the 6th grade during the specific period. Shana Cunningham had piloted the program with the MLLs and, together with Dr. Sumner, has translated it into the entire middle school by giving students the opportunity to take control of their success and close the achievement gap. This is part of the Instructional Team's goal to improve MCAS scores in the next two years to give New Heights proven provider status with the state and make expansion possible.

VI. Finance Committee

A. YTD Finances

- Maria read the following statement for Nicholas Christ in his absence:

  Finance Committee met Oct. 24. It is the recommendation of the Finance Committee to accept the financials as presented. There are no material changes to the financials month over month. All finances are inline as expected. The Committee did review in detail each individual grant and will continue to do so for the remainder of the year and would be happy to provide the board with updates on the grants at any given point moving forward. As always, the Finance committee is available for questions or concerns at any time. Please accept the financials as presented and I apologize for not being available.

- Budget is projected to be in the black by approximately $11,000. This is meeting the Finance Committee's goal to finish in the black.

V. Marturano made a motion to accept the Finance Committee report as presented.
G. Bengen seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

VII. Governance Committee

A. New Board Members

- Governance Committee met to interview candidates who expressed interest in joining the board. Bylaws allow a maximum of 15 members, presently have 9. Committee is presenting three individuals to join the board.
- Gayl Crump Swaby was introduced by a staff member, has a doctorate in education and runs the Boston office of Springfield College. Has experience with charter schools and will bring another voice and level of knowledge that can be helpful to the work of the school.
    - Find her to be a very strong candidate and anticipate that she will be a very active member.

- Jason Radzevich is the CFO of Signature Healthcare in Brockton and has extensive experience in different medical systems. Vast majority of funding at one position comes from state and Medicaid. Should bring an interesting perspective to our finances.
    - Believe he will be a strong board member.
- William Lyttle just recently retired as President of Key Program which provides welfare and behavioral health support for youth across the state. He has had extensive experience with providing services for youth and will bring an interesting perspective.
- The question is what length of terms can be offered. The committee will be looking at bylaws during the next meeting but want to find a balance so that there is never a large class of board members turning over at once. Could put two candidates in a two year term and one in a one year term to begin a better balance of renewals than there is currently. Recommendation is that Gayl Swaby and Jason Radzevich receive a 2 year term and William Lyttle receive a 1 year term.
    - Do you think this will impact the decision of the candidates?
        - I don't think so, especially if we provide an explanation.
    - Can you explain what the different terms mean?
        - By giving 2 people a two year term it gives balance. They receive 8 years on the board. The person with a one year term would have 7 years on the board.
    - Are these bylaws that we've created or that the state have created?
        - We created them but they are part of the charter. We may have to make a case to change them with the state as they have to be approved by the Commissioner.
        - The process for any material change to charter require an application to the Commissioner and are approved on a monthly basis. We have to provide a letter to the Commissioner with the changes providing reasoning behind the changes. You want to ensure that the argument being made is articulating the need to sustain leadership rather than key people. Change being made to terms will impact everyone who comes onto the board. Can make an argument to do 4 year terms as well.
    - Question at hand is what kind of terms do we want to give the candidates?
        - Is that something we need to decide now?
            - When we communicate to the Commissioner the new board members we have to provide them with the terms of the members.
            - Do we give each of them a 3 year term and see how it plays out?
                - If you want to give everyone a 4th year term then giving a 1 or 2 year term might not be a bad idea as they are untested.

- Maria Fernandes and Meagan Tracey are working on developing onboarding materials for new board members and providing important information to all board members.

V. Marturano made a motion to approve Gayl Swaby and Jason Radzevich to a 2 year term and William Lyttle to a 1 year term.
S. Bernard seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

Roll Call

V. Marturano	Aye
G. Phillips	Aye
N. Christ	Absent
J. Charnel	Absent
S. Jackson	Aye
M. Sullivan	Absent
S. Bernard	Aye
G. Bengen	Aye
D. Sauvignon	Aye

B. MCPSA Meeting

- Attended a meeting of how to create an autonomous charter school
  - Financial transparency
  - teacher voice
  - board education and alignment
  - messaging, mission, and correcting assumptions
  - ensuring school has the right resources available
- Will be looking into this further at upcoming committee meetings to ensure this is met. Believe MCPSA is a great resources.

C. Principal Search Update

- Principal position is posted and the committee has a list of current applicants for review at next meeting on November 6. If there are sufficient candidates there will be interviews on November 14 of exciting candidates.
  - There are currently 10 applicants who are promising
- What is the application deadline?
  - There isn't one, we will accept applications until we find a candidate we want to hire.
  - When and how do we say that a candidate has been selected?
    - Right now Dec 1 is the date for preferential consideration. Anyone who comes in after Dec 1 won't make the first deadline. We will pose this question to the committee at the next meeting.

VIII. Good of the Order

A. Federal & State Board Regulations

B. Board on Track

- Really important that the board utilize Board on Track to have all the information and know who's going to be attending meetings.

C. FY23 Audit

- Clean audits for 4 years now. Suzanne received the final audit report and will send it to the board shortly.
- What happens after the audit?
    - We submit it to DESE and once it's approved we are all set.
    - We don't have to submit anything to the IRS?
        - No we don't have to do that.

IX. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

S. Bernard made a motion to adjourn.
V. Marturano seconded the motion.
The board **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 7:18 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
G. Phillips

Documents used during the meeting

- New Heights Charter School of Brockton Parternship Agreement Draft.docx
- BAMSI - NHCSB Draft MOU.docx
- 20230927074435164 (1).pdf
- 20230927074358441 (1).pdf
- 20230927074504730 (1).pdf