APPROVED

New Heights Charter School Board of Trustees

Minutes

January Board Meeting

Date and Time
Tuesday January 30, 2024 at 5:00 PM

Location
1105 W Chestnut St
Brockton, MA 02301

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, G. Swaby (remote), J. Charnel (remote), J. Radzevich, M. Sullivan (remote), N. Christ (remote), S. Bernard, V. Marturano, W. Lyttle

Trustees Absent
S. Jackson

Ex Officio Members Present

O. Walker

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

I. Opening Items

A. Call the Meeting to Order

M. Sullivan called a meeting of the board of trustees of New Heights Charter School Board of Trustees to order on Tuesday Jan 30, 2024 at 5:03 PM.

B. Approved Board Members List

C. Roll Call

D. Reading and Approval of Minutes

M. Sullivan made a motion to approve the minutes from Emergency Board Meeting on 01-09-24.
V. Marturano seconded the motion.
No Discussion
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

II. Executive Director's Report

A. Enrollment/Lottery Report

Enrollment Report: 113 6th, 110 7th, 11 8th, 97 9th, 105 10th, 111 11th, 89 12th graders. The majority of students are from Brockton with assorted students out of district. 381 students are female and 355 are male.
Discussion: Are the out of district numbers atypical?
Response: Students out of district are required to provide their own transportation, we provide transportation for Taunton, Randolph and Brockton. We were mandated to provide transportation to Taunton and Randolph. This mandate lifted at the end of our five-year term, but we continue to do so at no cost. The Board may revisit charging for transportation.
Question: There is a cap for students who come from Randolph, please review for the Board why that is?
Response: If you are in a low-performing district (lowest 10%), only 18% of our students may attend charter schools. Randolph was able to get out of lowest 10% and thus their cap moved from 18% to 9%. Several schools continue to take Randolph students, which lowers the tuition dollars available to all schools who include Randolph students.

Open House: There was an open house on 1/24, 50 families attended. A second open house is on 2/8.
Lottery: WE have received 269 applications, the deadline for applications is March 1st.
Question: The 269, how does that compare to previous years? And, how many students do we need to have on our waitlist?
Response: These numbers are slightly elevated over last year. We need to take in 105 sixth graders and then we may take 20-25 students in the 9th grade. We do not have space to take any other students in.
Question: How many students typically drop-out or make it to the senior year?
Response: We have a bit of a transient population, as all urban districts do. Aside from family relocation, or a need for sports/arts that we do not offer, students typically do not leave us. We do a good job retaining our students.

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B. Highlights

The following presentation was given:
https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1LW9oX24l6dsfgZXsvmfOuhC0Y9Q9tbAlbRIzgyUl9JQ/edit?usp=sharing

Staff: Janelle Watty, Middle School Dean of Students. Janelle has been with NHCSB for two years and she is dedicated to our middle school students.

Teacher: Savina Pires, seven years at NHCSB, special education co-teacher. She participates in afterschool activities, sports and tutoring.

Nurses: Debbie and Shirley, both at NHCSB for four years, they contribute significantly to the overall success of scholars.

Student: Brianna Docanto is a tenth grader, a straight-A student, a roll model and strong peer model. She is willing to help her peers and she has a zero-tolerance policy for bullying or negative talk, she keep them in check!

Question: What do we do to recognize staff beyond the Board meeting?
Answer: We have made it part of our monthly routine at town hall meetings. Occasionally we send communication home to caregivers.

C. Advocacy Week

Mass Charter School Association Week Advocacy Week 2/12-2/16. The Association will advocate for per pupil funding increase, for example, and ask the school communities to email legislators and participate in charter school support. February 12th at 6pm is a virtual rally.

D. Interact Club

Pauline Nassif presented the linked presentation:
https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1HbV4H3Rqz1TRkSxbU03WCM1mYMSiZkq07wEdTRktQi0/edit?usp=sharing

Interact Club - NHCSB now offers the Interact Program, a subsidiary of Rotary International. Interact will organize two events, one that is local and one that promotes international understanding. Students ages 12-18 are welcome to join. First meeting was January 17th where students made "bags of love" for elderly in the community. On 1/31 students will volunteer at the NCHSB carnival.
Two events coming up include the International Peace Pole at NHCSB and an International Day of Service on 5/18, which includes a Park clea-up from 1-4pm.

Third Annual Service Learning Trip to the Dominican Republic: The objective of this trip is to create global ambassadors of our young scholars and to make a study of human rights focusing on ethnic Haitians who migrated to the Dominican Republic. This population lives in extreme poverty without recognition from the Dominican Republic government. Our scholars will run a sports and arts/crafts camp. NHCSB scholars created photo journals to provide members of the Haitian community.

This year we will be partnered with the Dream organization, a departure from previous years, though we will continue to focus on engaging the community and building friendships. Mr. Cesar, a staff member at NCHSB, is in the process of developing a leadership program for the Haitian youth, who typically leave school after 8th grade with few resources to manifest success or find work.

The Dominican Republic trip will be schedule for the last week of school rather than during the summer, as we have done previously, but we will still bring 10-12 students and 4-6 adults.

Once a budget and plan are complete this will be presented to the Board for approval.

Question: Why are we no longer working with the NGO?
Response: The former NGO is replacing workers who were previously Haitian with Dominican staff. This is creating massive upheaval with the NGO. It is important to our program to distance ourselves a bit from the NGO at this time.

Question: How are students selected to participate?
Response: We run an afterschool program in February to generate interest. Students compete a vetting process including an application, a review of grades and behavioral record. They also submit responses to questions about why they wish to attend and the skills they possess. Staff make the final decision using this information. Caregivers are then invited in to discuss the program and what is required of attendees.

Question: Do we ensure that each year there is a different group?
Response: Our trip last year included 4 returning members to serve as leaders to assist new students navigating the experience including cultural expectations and educational engagement.

Jeff Charnel wanted to acknowledge the hard work of Pauline, everything is well thought-out and the school is in this aspect really shines through.

E. Honor Roll Breakfasts

We are no holding Excellence Assemblies, a public recognition to celebrate honor roll recipients. Most recently, 91 scholars from the early college who earned honor roll. Students enjoyed breakfast and a $5 gift card to Dunkin' or $5 voucher to the cafeteria at MCC/BSU. This is a great opportunity for community shout-outs and for grade-specific team to come together and celebrate success.

Upcoming celebrations:
2/9 - 9 and 10th grade
2/16 - 6-8
5/12 6-8
6/3 early college
6.20 6-9

F. School Site Visits

On 1/31 the Early College Programs office will visit NHCSB. The new Director, Danielle Wheeler, will visit with members of her team. The Early College team will participate in a tour, visit Massasoit, attend classroom visits, and enjoy a student panel.

On 2/1 The Mass Charter Public School Association will visit NHCSB and Massasoit.

G. Athletics Update

The Athletics Department has been hard at work this fall and winter. In September/October we shared that we would be joining the MIAA and our student athletes are playing at a much higher level, which is leading to more public recognition. We have 48 scholar athletes playing basketball. We hope to add softball and baseball in the spring. We are currently running indoor track with 16 student athletes. Our boys varsity basketball team is 11-1 and our girls varsity program is 8-2. JV Boys lost their first game last night to Dennis/Yarmouth. Our girls JV program has two losses this season.

We are gearing up for outdoor track in the spring and re-introduce middle school sports in the fall of 2024. This year we stepped back from middle school sports to ensure we were meeting the requirements of dual representation with MIAA and the Charter School League.

Ticket sales have lead to $4k in revenue via an online app program. We are exploring other options to reduce overhead costs moving forward. If you have time, please check-out NHCSB's YouTube channel to see our games.

Question: Have you suffered any injuries of any consequence? And do you have sufficient staff to take care of training/taping/injury situations?
Response: We have lost one player this year to injury, a back injury, he is 6'7 and took a bad fall, pinching a nerve. He should be cleared medically in the next 7-10 days. We've been fortunate this year with no other injuries.
We are working on securing a certified trainer on premises. So far this year, both Athletic Directors, have filled this role including taping students and minor injuries. Both ADs are certified with first aid and CPR training, but we are looking to put someone through an EMT course to have someone onsite for all athletic events. The bigger the program, the higher the risk of injury, both for our students as well as visitors.

Question: Do staff/teachers need to be trained in CPR?
Response: No, they do not.

H. Principal Hire Update

Executive Director Walker offered the principal position to Dr. Nichole Jones, who comes to NHCSB with tremendous experience. She has been a principal all over the country and we are so fortunate to have her join our school.

Question: Where is home for her? And what is your thinking around the transition?
Response: Home is in Albany but she is in the process of relocating, she has friends in Braintree. She will start March 1st and we will work side-by-side to finish this year strong.

Question: Any indication of her length of commitment?
Response: This is her 28th year in education but she did say that she will work to retirement here at NHCSB.

I.

Approved Board Responsibilites

No discussion

III. New Business

A. Service Learning Projects

We do not yet have all of the costs associated with the trip. If the Board will allow us to move forward with the planning and remain within the budget, that will suffice.

B. Early College Travel

M. Sullivan made a motion to Motion to approve Grand Canyon Travel.
N. Christ seconded the motion.
No discussion
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.
M. Sullivan made a motion to Motion to approve HBCU Trip.
J. Charnel seconded the motion.
Dr. Sauvignon shared that two schools provide in-state tuition to MA residents. She will follow-up with Maria Fernandes to provide contact information.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.
Paula Fontes presented the following:
https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1OEiY6NevfymTL-_j-U9Ip5uTDHXiIdsphfG4gu1uke8/edit?usp=sharing

C. Staff Handbook Updates

Will Libby presented the following presentation:
https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1Wd1vJWxfEgTHVmqwyt1IRD3OeurEroBJLSQluX7WvBc/edit?usp=sharing

The Board has been in possession of hte handbook for a few months. HR Director Will Libby shared the following additions:
1. A 10, 11 and 12-month position rules for PTO
2. Black-out Days that require advance approval from the Executive Director
M. Sullivan made a motion to Approve PTO buy-back.
V. Marturano seconded the motion.
The Board did approve PTO buyback at the rate of $150 per day in 2022 and 2023.

Question: Is the PTO program competitive? It appears that between regular school vacations in December, February and April and holidays not on school vacation weeks in addition to 8-9 PTO days appears to be substantial.
Response: We are right in line with other schools, we bundle everything together instead of teasing apart sick or personal time. We elect to have all days used for sick or personal

days, there are fewer as a result, and we do not allow folks to accrue PTO days. Time on learning is the driving force behind this, to avoid loss of learning for students. This leads, we believe, to our strong teacher attendance rates.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.
J. Radzevich made a motion to Motion to approve Staff Handbook.
G. Bengen seconded the motion.
No discussion
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

D. Graduation Requirements

Linda Edmund-Hines, Lead Academic Counselor: Proposal of a graduation requirement change. Proposed changes request a shift in Foreign Language and PE/Wellness. Foreign Language will offer English Language Learners 2 years of English as a Second Language courses. And Physical Education/Wellness will shift from four units to two units. The change is due in part to space restrictions and early college students' inability to take gym at the college.

Question: How do these compare?
Response: State requires four semesters of PE or Health. Most high schools cover this in the first and second year of high school. Students must have four gradable units of PE or Health.

Question: Are there courses or any attempts to add or remove from the curriculum (such as Florida)?
Response: No, there are no plans.

Question: We are reducing the number of required units from four to two in PE/Wellness. Are students able to make up the other credits/are they penalized for the few courses? What are we doing to make up the time that was covered by those two units of PE/Wellness?
Response: Students will fulfill their requirements. If students take all of our classes, particularly in the college, take more units than required for students in non-early college programs. One semester of college (Carnegie Units) is equivalent to one year of traditional high school.
N. Christ made a motion to Motion to approve changes to the graduation requirements.
D. Sauvignon seconded the motion.
No Discussion
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

IV. Academic Excellence Committee

A. Semester 1 Grades

The Academic Excellence committee was on 1/24 which included members of the Board and members of the NHCSB staff. Presentations included Nicolas Jackson, Maria Fernandes, and Meagan Hatanaka.

Data Analysis from Nicolas Jackson:
Middle School: Each student has 6/7 grades to report. There was a change in A's assigned at all grade levels from Q1 to Q2, this is similar to last year. 42% more 7th graders made honor roll from Q1 to Q2. Sixth grade has more F's in Q2, than Q1. Seventh grade has fewer Fs in Q2 than Q1. 8th grade has the fewest Fs across the school. Comparing performance 2023 to 2024: Seventh grade saw 50% more As this year.

Discussion around the discrepancies in grades, gratitude to Renee Lewis and her team for their work in addressing Board questions and presenting student data. The disparity in this year's sixth grade data may be explained by the highest percentage of learning disabilities present in our current sixth grade class.

Question: Are we anticipating this same phenomena next year?
Response: We do not know who the students are before they come to NHCSB due to the lottery system?

Question: What are we doing to improve these students' experiences?
Response: We have a special education consultant that is currently working with us to improve our programs for students?

Question: Do we have the resources we need for students?
Response: Our consultant is on site now becuase we believe we are over resources. We have 1 teacher for every 10 students. The consultant is conducting a review of our model, over resourced should suggest over performance, and we are not over performing.

High School Grades: 9th grade had the same amount of A's as they did last year. 10th, 11th, and 12th grade had fewer As but 10th and 12th had more honor rolls. There was a significant drop in Fs in every single grade, but 12th grade had a decrease in over 90% (only five in the first semester).

Question: If someone starts in the 6th grade, how many of those 6th graders graduate?
Answer: Persistence data is typically reported for 9th graders, but we can provide that data at a future meeting. We are typically under 5 students in high school who leave.

Early College Grades: Presented by Maria Fernandes and Meagan Hatanaka: 24 courses at MCC and 3 dual enrollment courses at NHCSB this fall. We added the Early College Dean of Students to work with our students at MCC on behavior, we had our Early College Coordinator to assist students in connecting with resources at MCC, and our

liaisons and Early College Success Coach supported student success. Graphs indicate that students are doing well in college classes with an increase in over 20% in As of students enrolled in grades 10-12 at NHCSB. There is a notable difference in the number of failures (six this year, 2% of total number of students taking college classes) last year it was 11%. Ten students withdrew from college courses, last year 50 students withdrew. Three courses - Comp 101, French, and Developmental Math were the three courses were students failed. The addition of added support and tireless work of liaisons lead to the results.

Phi Theta Kappa - PTK is a national honors society for community college students that is recognized nation-wide. NHCSB students receive benefits including transferable college discounts and higher levels of curriculum. NHCSB numbers are increasing - 31 students already this fall. Induction to PTK is based on a 3.3 or higher accumulated GPA and 12-college credits at minimum. Approximately 100 students from MCC are inducted annually. This work also reflects careful work on preparation, working alongside MCC, to be particular about which students were ready for early college.

Chairman Bernard encouraged all Board members to join this committee, meeting schedules are recorded in Board on Track.

V. Finance Committee

A. October Financials

The Finance Committee met earlier today, 1/30, to update the budget narrative (thank you to Jeff Charnel for his assistance). The Board will see a difference from the actual/budget reflects more information about the budget versus the actuals, which is where the forecast line comes in.
Expenditures are approximately at 48% in actual and budget, so we are mostly in line with what we think will happen and what does happen.
This month you were provided a balance sheet, new this month, which should help make things more clear to request additional information about the line items presented. This should provided greater clarity and transparency for the Board.
Chairman Christ encourages other Board members to join, this committee meets every single month, so there is significant oversight. If you seek greater clarity or understanding about the budget I encourage you to join the committee.

Question: What do we do with surplus revenue?
Response: We cannot earn interest on public dollars on the bank account. You can invest money, but other charter schools lost money in the bank closings. We could consider investments but it would have to be Board-lead including an investment policy and the risks the Board may be willing to take on with these dollars.
Response: We should be wary of the need for possible cash reserves. Chairman Sullivan suggested Chairman Christ and CFO Graham look into possible investment.

Suggestion provided by Chairman Sullivan to provide footnotes on less obvious expenditures and to be sure to alert the Board if there are any concerns.
W. Lyttle made a motion to Motion to Approve October Financials.
S. Bernard seconded the motion.
Motion Approved no discussion
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

B. YTD Finances

G. Phillips made a motion to Motion to approve YTD Financials.
V. Marturano seconded the motion.
No Discussion
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

VI. Governance Committee

A. Board Terms & Nominations

Governance/Nominating Committee met 1/19 and would like to present Board leadership recommendations as well as renewal for three Board members pending Commissioner approval of the Bylaws.

Terms: Two Board members whose terms are expiring, Mike Sullivan and Nick Christ. Both members have agreed to a fourth term. Dr. Sauvignon's term will expire at the end of March and she, too, agreed to another term.

Leadership Terms: Board leadership terms last two years. The Governance Committee requests a vote to approve Mike Sullivan (Chair), Judge Phillips (Co-Chair), Nick Christ (Treasurer), and Steve Bernard (Secretary).

Board Orientation: This was our first onsite Board Orientation and it was excellent. A well-done orientation that we hope to duplicate in future meetings pieces of the orientation. It was thorough, informative, and engaging.

1/31 (9-11am DESE visit) and 2/1 (9-12pm MA Charter Assoc)
V. Marturano made a motion to Motion to Approve Mike Sullivan, Nick Christ and Carine Sauvignon's new term.
W. Lyttle seconded the motion.
No discussion, subject to approval to the amendment to the bylaws.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.
V. Marturano made a motion to Motion to approve Mike Sullivan as Chair, Nick Christ as Treasurer, and Steve Bernard as Secretary, and Judge Phillips as Co-Chair.
W. Lyttle seconded the motion.
No discussion
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

VII. 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 7:04 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
M. Sullivan

Documents used during the meeting

- NHCSB_Employee_Guidelines_Revised_November_2023_Final.docx.pdf
- Copy of High School Diploma, Associate's Degree Requirements.pdf
- October 2023 Finance Committee Report (1).pdf
- December 2023 Board Financial Reports.pdf
- Board Budget Explanation (1).pdf