APPROVED

New Heights Charter School Board of Trustees

Minutes

Board Meeting

Date and Time
Tuesday April 29, 2025 at 5:00 PM

Location
Zoom Link

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

ZOOM Meeting:
Description:
Zoom

Trustees Present
G. Bengen (remote), G. Phillips, J. Charnel (remote), M. Mollo, S. Bernard, S. Jackson (remote), V. Marturano, W. Lyttle

Trustees Absent
G. Gibson Sheffield, J. Radzevich, N. Christ

Trustees who arrived after the meeting opened
S. Bernard

Ex Officio Members Present

O. Walker

Guests Present
Dr. Hannah Vidmar (remote), J. Geier, K. Kendrick, M. Fernandes, M. Jean, N. Jones (remote), R. Lewis (remote), S. Graham (remote), Steve Fernandes (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 Apr 29, 2025 at 5:10 PM.

B. Approved Board Members List

8 members present - 5 physically present.

C. Roll Call

S. Bernard arrived at 5:15 PM.

D. Reading and Approval of Minutes

G. Phillips made a motion to approve the minutes from March Board meeting Board Meeting on 03-25-25.
V. Marturano seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

II. Chairperson's Report

A. Special Acknowledgment for Dr. Gail Sheffield

G.P gives a warm acknowledgment and a moment of silence for Dr. Sheffield.

There will be further discussion regarding the future role MCC will have on NHCSB Board. GP says he has asked the Governance Committee about further discussion and decision making. VM will bring it to the Governance Committee's attention at a later date.

III. Executive Director's Report

A. April Board Spotlights

- **Student Spotlight** - *Ibrahim Claxton Henry*, a graduating senior, was commended for his generosity.
- **Teacher Spotlight** - *Miss Mitchell Dennis*, 8th grade ELA teacher, was recognized for strong relationships with students and staff.

- **Staff Spotlight-** *Melissa Jean*, a founding staff member, was acknowledged for her long-term service.
- **Department Spotlight -** The *Data and Accountability Team* was thanked for their work on accurate reporting and data management.

B. Enrollment Numbers for SY 25-26

Enrollment reported 731 students enrolled for the upcoming academic year, serving grades 6–12, with the majority from Brockton.

Judge Gregory Phillips asks how are NHCSB doing in terms of recruitment efforts?

- There has been one lottery in March of 2025
- NHCSB has extended over 100 seats to incoming 6th grades and have a robust waiting list for grades 7th-11th
- Applications are still being accepted via our enrollment application software for the upcoming 25-26 school year
- Application for SY 25-26 will remain open till December 2025

C. Annual Civics Showcase - Friday, April 18th

Dr.Hannah Vidmar presents on the Annual Civics Showcase**:**

- The program is apart of the school's civics education sequence, beginning with an 8th-grade civics course and culminating into a 10th-grade civics project.
- Students are tasked with addressing a sustainable goal through civic engagement and community-based solutions.
- The showcase was attended by school staff, families, representatives from DESE, and other community members.

Student Recognition

- Select students from the showcase will be invited to present their projects at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth (UMD) at the end of May.

Discussion
Steve Bernard inquired about the grant supporting the showcase:

- DHV clarified that a civics education grant was awarded this year, which funds multiple civic initiatives, including:
  - The showcase event
  - Student meals and awards
  - A voter registration drive for the community
  - Professional development opportunities for the History department

D.

Food Pantry

Dr. Jones provided an update on the school's **food pantry initiative**, which has been established to support families experiencing **food insecurity**, especially during extended school breaks and holidays

- Food pantry initiative to assist families on weekends/holidays
- Pantry stocked with food and personal care donations
- New partnership formed with Shaw's Supermarket
- Board invited to volunteer on Saturdays

E. MCAS Testing Season

Ms. Melissa Jean provided an update on the current **MCAS testing schedule and progress**:

- **10th Grade** began MCAS testing in **late March**.
- **Middle School** began testing in **early April**, starting with **ELA**. After April break, they resumed with **Math Testing**.
  - As of Wednesday, **6th and 7th grades** will have **completed all MCAS testing** for the 2024–2025 school year.
- **8th Grade** will begin **Science MCAS** next week, followed by **Civics** the following week, concluding their testing cycle.
- **10th Grade** will officially **conclude the MCAS testing season** for the school on **May 22, 2025**.

Discussion
GP inquired about any challenges during testing:

- Ms. Jean reported that there have been **no challenges**; the school is using a **new testing software**, which both staff and students have adapted to **with ease**.

S. Bernard made a motion to accept the Executive Directors Report in its entirety.
W. Lyttle seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

IV. Old Business

A. Building Repairs

Steven Fernandes reported:

- Plumbing challenges affecting progress

- Potholes in parking lot have been filled

Roof Repairs
The board received an update regarding ongoing roof issues:

- The school is actively seeking a contractor to address existing roof leaks.
- The majority of the leaks are concentrated around the **SCI Lab**.
- A new leak in the **gymnasium** has also been identified and will be patched.
- Major repair work beyond the immediate patches will be scheduled for a later date.
- Concerns raised by board regarding costs and project timeline

V. New Business

A. International Community Service Learning Project

Dominican Republic ESL Service Trip - Summer 2025 (MidJune &July)

The board received an update on the upcoming international trip to the Dominican Republic:

- The trip will run for four weeks, from June 21 to July 19, 2025.
- NHCSB students will implement an ESL program for approximately 25 local students in the village of Carbello, in the Puerto Plata province.
- The program focuses on teaching conversational English, cultural exchange, and life skills relevant to entering the hospitality industry, where English proficiency is highly valued.
- 13 NHCSB students will participate as global ambassadors, supported by 5 staff members.
- Participants will stay in a 9-room villa in Puerto Plata for the duration of the trip.

Finance Committee Report regarding DR trip
The Finance Committee met prior to the board meeting and approved the Cambio contract and airfare for staff and students.
Discussion

- Steve Bernard inquired about immigration or travel clearance concerns for students and staff
- Omari Walker confirmed that passports are required and that Cambio has been assisting with travel preparation and communication regarding clearance requirements

S. Bernard made a motion to approve the DR ESL Project Trip for June 2025.

V. Marturano seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

B. Washington, DC Community Service Learning Project

Washington, DC Community Service Learning Trip – June 10–13, 2025

Dr. Hannah Vidmar report on the upcoming Washington, DC trip:

- This marks the 5th year of the program
- A total of 48 10th-grade students will attend, representing 55% of the grade level
- Six staff members will accompany the students with one student receiving 1:1 support

Financial Aid and Support

- 31 students have received financial aid
- 6 students have been awarded full scholarships, each valued at $1,151.
- A total of $25,153 has been awarded in scholarships, which also covers the cost of 1:1 student chaperone services.

S. Bernard made a motion to accept and allow the Washington, DC Trip taking place from June 10-13th.
J. Charnel seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

VI. Academic Excellence Committee

A. Academic Excellence Report

Steve Bernard commended the school for its strong operations and the positive impact being made on students, particularly in raising expectations and opportunities.

- Maria Fernandes continues the report by highlighting that all Juniors and Seniors are expected to attend courses on a Massasoit Community College (MCC) campus during the 2025–2026 school year, contributing to the school's expanding college-going culture.

Voorhees University Partnership

- Maria shared that following initial discussions at a **Dreams Deferred Conference** in Los Angeles in March, the school has secured several opportunities through Voorhees University, including:
    - 2025 scholarship opportunities

- An Early College Teacher pipeline
- Tuition discounts for NHCSB staff members

Discussion

- Jude Gregory Phillips inquired whether there has been further investigation into Voorhees University
- Maria responded that the institution is known for its strong student support, with a focus on ensuring graduation and career placement.
- Dr. Jess Geier and Kaitlin Kendrick will prepare a report with further details and findings regarding Voorhees.

The board was informed of new and developing partnerships with:

- UMass Boston
- Assumption University
- Pilgrim Foundation
- Sharon Credit Union

W. Lyttle made a motion to accept the AEC Report.
V. Marturano seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

VII. Finance Committee Meeting

A. YTD Finances

Jeff Charnel presented the Finance Committee report, summarizing the most recent review of the school's financial position.

Suzanne Graham reviewed the financial statements for the period of July through March:

- The school is in a strong financial position
- There was minimal variance across line items
- The current budget surplus allowed the school to fund the Dominican Republic trip
- Most budget categories are on target or under budget
- The financials are presented clearly and provide a transparent and accurate view of the school’s current standing and financial trajectory

W. Lyttle made a motion to accept Finance Committee Report.
V. Marturano seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

VIII. Governance Committee

A. 2025 Board Survey Results

The board discussed priorities identified in a recent survey:

- Develop a strategic plan
- Create a leadership succession plan
- Improve onboarding process
- Increase board retreat frequency
- Establish DEI (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion) goals
- Strengthen stakeholder engagement
- Improve data interpretation alignment

Board Membership

- The board discussed the process for selecting a new member to represent the community college, with a desire to maintain input and control in the appointment.

B. 2025 Board Survey Results

C. 2025 Board Survey Results

D. 2025 Board Survey Results

E. NHCSB Board Survey Results

F. 2025 Board Survey Results

G. 2025 Board Survey Results

W. Lyttle made a motion to accept the Governance Committee Report.
S. Bernard seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

IX. Good of the Order

A. Special Announcement

Board member Jef Charnel announced his candidacy for City Council At-Large while intending to remain on the board.

B. 2025 Graduation Regalia

Graduation Regalia Reminder from MF to Board Members - Deadline is May 2nd to get correct sizes and information.

X. 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 7:09 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
G. Phillips
S. Bernard made a motion to adjourn the April Board Meeting.
W. Lyttle seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.