APPROVED

New Heights Charter School Board of Trustees

Minutes

Board Meeting

Date and Time
Tuesday October 28, 2025 at 5:00 PM

Location
ZOOM LINK

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

ZOOM Meeting:
Description:
LINK

Trustees Present
G. Bengen (remote), G. Phillips, J. Radzevich, S. Bernard

Trustees Absent
J. Charnel, N. Christ, S. Jackson, V. Marturano, W. Lyttle

Trustees who arrived after the meeting opened
G. Bengen

Guests Present
Delroy Dennis, J. Geier, K. Kendrick, M. Fernandes, M. Jean, M. Mollo, rjoneshyde@massasoit.mass.edu

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 28, 2025 at 5:03 PM.

B. Approved Board Members List

C. Roll Call

G. Bengen arrived at 5:17 PM.

D. Reading and Approval of Minutes

G. Bengen made a motion to approve the minutes from Board Meeting on 09-30-25.
J. Radzevich seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

II. Executive Director's Report

A. State Visit Summary

Dr. Jess Geier began the ED report with a summary of the recent State Visit, including the Board focus group held on October 8th and the on-site visit conducted on October 14th at the 1690 Main Street school building. Dr. Geier reported that the visit proceeded smoothly; all staff and Board members presented themselves professionally, responded appropriately to questions, and ensured the visit reflected an ordinary instructional day at New Heights. She expressed appreciation for the community's preparation and collaboration.

Classroom Visitations
Dr. Geier reported that DESE visited 30 classrooms. The preliminary report is expected on January 6, 2026, followed by a three-week response window. She noted that the school has historically been successful in addressing findings. The final report will be released in February.

OW affirmed Dr. Geier's remarks and commended the Board for their participation and fidelity during the focus group. Dr. Jones and her school-based team were also recognized for the quality of their preparation. State representatives commented that they "saw what they expected to see."

Judge Greg Phillips commended OW and Dr. Geier for preparing the Board effectively.

B. ICE

OW reported on a recent concern involving ICE Agents observed near the school. A video shared on social media depicted an interaction between two students and ICE Agents; however, it was later confirmed that the video was not recorded on the alleged date. The actual date remains undetermined.

OW spoke with the Attorney General's Office, which offered support if needed. Should ICE be off school grounds, the school would notify families and allow students to remain on campus if they feel unsafe. The matter is considered resolved, though it raises considerations for formalizing safety procedures.

C. New Partnerships

Maria Fernandes presented updates on new and developing partnerships.

UMass Boston Agreement
Key points include:

- Guaranteed acceptance for NHCSB students with a 3.0 high school GPA and 3.0 GPA in college-level coursework.
- Scholarship opportunities based on GPA and number of earned credits.
- Transfer of up to 60 college credits earned while enrolled at NHCSB.

Boston Medical South Partnership
Although the MOU is not yet executed, opportunities include:

- Work-Based Learning experiences
- Community healthcare engagement

Steve Bernard inquired about the school's readiness to support work-study. Fernandes noted discussions about on-site panels and day-long job shadowing opportunities.

III. Old Business

A. Update on Van Purchases

Dr. Delroy Dennis and Michael Gilbert reported that the vans have been received.

- The purchase order for the 15-passenger van is complete.
- The 12-passenger van requires a seat replacement before final acquisition.
- Inspections are the next step.

Mr. Gilbert noted that one van is already in use and that DOT inspection will occur in the coming days. Both vans are expected to be fully operational in the **f**irst week of November.

B.

Update on Visa Petition

Dr. Delroy Dennis reported that the school has retained legal counsel for visa filings. All applicants have been contacted for required documentation. Teachers benefit from tax-exempt status for visa costs.

Chair Phillips asked for the law firm recommendation.
Response: **Pabian Law**, recommended by Mike Sullivan.
Steve Bernard inquired about the impact of a government shutdown; Dr. Dennis confirmed there is no impact on filing.

IV. Finance Committee Meeting

A. YTD (September)

Suzane Graham speaks on the findings from Finance Committee Meeting:

Finance from September are on track along with our spending.

Questions:
J. Radzevich made a motion to accept the September finances.
G. Bengen seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

B. Draft Staff Tuition Assistance Proposal

OW presented an overview of the Tuition Assistance Program previously discussed in Finance Committee. The proposal would provide up to $5,000 per staff member, available to approximately 10 staff, with the potential to serve 13–15 staff depending on actual award amounts required.

Judge Phillips requested a summary of the proposal’s purpose.
OW explained:

- Dr. Jones surveyed staff interested in furthering their education.
- Eligibility requires that coursework advance the staff member’s current or future leadership role.
- Participants must commit to three years of continued employment.

Dr. Hyde asked how many staff are currently pursuing degrees. While exact numbers were unavailable, OW shared Nick’s recommendation to pilot the program at $2,500 per participant for retention purposes.

Steve Bernard asked whether this program would be a standing policy or annual decision.
OW responded that all budgeted items are evaluated year-to-year and the program also strengthens recruitment and marketing.

Marybeth Mollo asked how many staff already hold degrees beyond their job requirements.

Dr. Jones noted that several paraprofessionals and substitutes hold degrees; some roles require ongoing graduate coursework to maintain licensure. Support for doctoral candidates was also discussed.

Graham Bengen asked for clarification on the funding request and approval process.
Steve Bernard confirmed that this proposal is intended as a one-time initiative.

J. Radzevich made a motion to accept the draft staff tuition assistance program.
G. Bengen seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

V. Academic Excellence Committee

A. Academic Excellence Report

Steve Bernard presents on the report from last week's Academic Excellence Committee:

Enrollment Update:

Lourdes Pires reported the school is fully enrolled:

- Grade 6: 115
- Grade 7: 114
- Grade 8: 114
- Grade 9: 116
- Grade 10: 104
- Grade 11: 86
- Grade 12: 90

- Female: 362
- Male: 377

Early College Update
Mimi Tsiane, Associate Principal of Early College, reported 167 students (juniors and seniors) are enrolled in college courses at Massasoit' Brockton and Canton Campus.

BSU Pathway Update
OW noted that program changes at BSU mean that students taking courses there can accrue credits but **cannot** earn a two-year degree, unlike the MCC pathway. Families will need clear communication regarding this shift.

Dr. Hyde asked about reverse transfer eligibility.
Response: 75% of the first cohort successfully transferred credits from BSU and earned an MCC degree.

The committee discussed benefits of the dual-pathway model and potential for piloting a mirrored structure at MCC, though not as a full program shift given MCC's historical success.

Accountability Report
Kaitlin Kendrick summarized the state's accountability data.

- Last year's growth rate: 54%.

SB asked about longitudinal data. Kaitlin noted that while data exist across multiple years, they were not included in this presentation. Despite appearances, NHCSB's progress relative to comparison schools has improved.

School Snapshot:
Progress toward improvement targets - 46% (moderate)
Accountability Percentile - 43
Criterion-referenced target - 39%

Sending High School Snapshots:
Sending HS 1
Progress toward improvement targets - 29%
Accountability Percentile - 9
Criterion-referenced target - 17%

Sending HS 2
Progress toward improvement targets - 32%
Accountability Percentile - 24
Criterion-referenced target - 24%

Sending HS 3
Progress toward improvement targets - 23%
Accountability Percentile - 16
Criterion-referenced target - 27%

NHCSB ELL + FEL (non-high school only)
Progress toward improvement targets - 43% (moderate)
Student Group Percentile - 68
Criterion-referenced target - 33%

Sending District Snapshot: ELL + FEL

Sending District 1
Progress toward improvement targets - 25%
Accountability Percentile -
Criterion-referenced target - 25%

Sending District 2
Progress toward improvement targets - 31%
Accountability Percentile -
Criterion-referenced target - 35%

Sending District 3
Progress toward improvement targets - 25%
Accountability Percentile -
Criterion-referenced target - 28%

NHCSB SPED Snapshot (non-high school only)
Progress toward improvement targets - 25% (moderate)
Student Group Percentile - 25
Criterion-referenced target - 17%

Sending District Snapshot: SPED
Sending District 1
Progress toward improvement targets - 38%
Accountability Percentile -
Criterion-referenced target - 39%

Sending District 2
Progress toward improvement targets - 32%
Accountability Percentile -
Criterion-referenced target - 38%

Sending District 3
Progress toward improvement targets - 34%
Accountability Percentile -
Criterion-referenced target - 45%

Findings:
NHCSB continues to meet state targets at a higher rate than the listed comparison schools.
G. Bengen made a motion to accept AEC report.
J. Radzevich seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

VI. Governance Committee

A. Board Terms

Chair Phillips announced Jason’s acceptance of a three-year term on the Board.
S. Bernard made a motion to accept Jason Radzevch's newly appointed three-year term.
G. Bengen seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

VII. Good of the Order

A. Dominican Republic Summer Service Learning Program - Part 1

Omari presents the first half of the documentary detailing the Service Learning Project in the Dominican Republic this past summer to the BOT.

VIII. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

S. Bernard made a motion to adjourn the meeting.
G. Bengen 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 6:25 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
G. Phillips