APPROVED

New Heights Charter School Board of Trustees

Minutes

Board Meeting

Date and Time
Tuesday March 3, 2026 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), J. Charnel (remote), L. Delgado (remote), N. Christ (remote), R. Jones-Hyde (remote), S. Bernard (remote), V. Marturano, W. Lyttle

Trustees Absent
G. Phillips, J. Radzevich, S. Jackson

Ex Officio Members Present
O. Walker

Guests Present
Angela Smagula (remote), Donnalyn Kahn (remote), Dr. Dennis, G. Cubero-Diaz (remote), M. Fernandes, M. Jean, S. Graham (remote), Shelley Rogers (remote)

I. Opening Items

A. Call the Meeting to Order

S. Bernard called a meeting of the board of trustees of New Heights Charter School Board of Trustees to order on Tuesday Mar 3, 2026 at 5:03 PM.

B. Approved Board Members List

C. Roll Call

D. Reading and Approval of Minutes

G. Bengen made a motion to approve the minutes from Board Meeting on 01-27-26.
J. Charnel seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

II. Chairperson's Report

A. New Board Member Approved

The announcement of the approval of our new board member Lucille Delgado.

III. Executive Director's Report

A. Charter Renewal Announcement

The board meeting focused on the renewal of New Heights Charter School's charter for another 5 years, which was announced by Omari. Jess explained that while DESE cited the school for not providing academic data to the board during FY25, this issue had been rectified by FY26.

B. MCSAO Tournament Update

Vinnie explains that most of the update for this will be covered in the Governance part of the meeting during Executive Session. He also ensures that board members should have the appropriate correspondence dated February 11th in which Omari sent out.

IV. Old Business

A. H1-B Visa Update

Dr. Delroy updates the group with their status of obtaining their H1-B visas and they now join Sophia Smith, bringing the total to 3.

How long is the visa good for?
6 years.

V. New Business

A. FY26 DR Service Learning Trip

Omari speaks to the group to update them on the DR project. The focus is to have 16-18 students attend a 4-week program in the Dominican Republic and work with two Dominican Republic communities. Both communities are 30-40 minutes outside of Puerta Plata. This year, we would continue our education component of teaching 30 students English from both poverty-ridden communities.

Another component to this summer project will be the building of four additional bathrooms and bring running water into all of the bathrooms as well as an outdoor shower by our students. There will also be a teacher-prep program at the school and those students in particular will have first choice to participate in this summer project.

The board already approved $100,000 in June but this does not include tips or flights which would include a $20,000 increase. Omari informs the Board of the recommendations from the Finance Committee meeting.

Is there fairness with how students are selected?
Yes, there is a rubric. Mostly our strongest students are selected.
N. Christ made a motion to approve the extra expense of 20k for the DR Summer Project.
J. Charnel seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

VI. Finance Committee Meeting

A. YTD (through January)

The Finance Committee reported that finances are on track with no material changes. The board approved continuing the plowing contract despite additional costs due to heavy snowfall as well extra finances needed for travel to the Dominican Republic for the the annual service learning trip.
V. Marturano made a motion to accept Finance Committee Report.
G. Bengen seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

B. FY26 Plowing Contract

Discussion around the contract was discussed with changes about the new overages due to more accumulation.
N. Christ made a motion to continue to plow and with agreement in our contract.
V. Marturano seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

VII. Academic Excellence Committee

A. Academic Excellence Report

The Academic Excellence Committee discussed student enrollment, which stood at 735 as of February 15th, with tuition locked in for the remainder of the year.

Maria presented data from DESE showing that New Heights students outperform state averages in college coursework, with a 96% pass rate compared to 91% state average. The presentation highlighted strong performance across various student groups, including Black students (96% pass rate compared to 86% state average) and students with disabilities (95.9% pass rate compared to 90.6% state average). Omari also reported on public school enrollment, noting that Brockton's failure to move into the lowest 10th percentile keeps the charter school cap at 9%, which could impact tuition rates for Brockton students attending charter schools.

The board reviewed academic performance data showing that charter school students, particularly Black and African American students, special education students, and multilingual learners, outperformed state averages. The group also watched a student-produced video news show called Phoenix 5, which highlighted various school events and achievements.

The board approved the academic excellence report and discussed a successful Black History Month event at Shaw's supermarket.

Bill Lyttle inquires about the last communication from Massasoit and if there were any updates. Omari informs the group that he and the president came to a healthy agreement about communication improvement.
V. Marturano made a motion to Approve AEC report.
J. Charnel seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

VIII. Governance Committee

A. Executive Session

G. Bengen made a motion to enter Executive Session to review Smagula communication.
R. Jones-Hyde seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.
The group enters Executive Session and discussed a legal matter regarding employment authority and personnel matters, with Omari explaining that the board does not have authority over employment decisions except for the Executive Director. He also explained that the board's role is to set policy and provide strategic direction, while daily operations are managed by the executive director. The discussion revealed concerns about

transparency regarding a recent governance committee meeting, with Jeff questioning why other board members weren't informed about the meeting or its minutes being taken. Vinnie maintained that the meeting was properly published and followed open meeting requirements, and agreed to share the meeting information with the board at the end of the day. The board discussed concerns about organizational dysfunction with Vinny sharing that he had informed Judge Phillips about details from the Governance meeting, who expressed disappointment but understanding. The discussion centered on clarifying board members' roles and responsibilities, with Vinny emphasizing that board members should only communicate with the chairperson or CEO about organizational matters, not staff directly. The conversation ended with Omari presenting legal guidance from Attorney Angela Smagula, who clarified that the board's authority is limited to the Executive Director's role, with all other employment matters being the responsibility of the Executive Director.
G. Bengen made a motion to move out of Executive Session.
J. Charnel seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

The group agreed to establish a special committee to plan a gala event to support the school, with Vinny Maturano as chair.
S. Bernard made a motion to establishing a committee for a gala chaired by Vinnie Marturano.
J. Charnel seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.
N. Christ made a motion to accept Governance Report.
V. Marturano seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

J. Radzevich	Absent
W. Lyttle	Aye
G. Bengen	Aye
V. Marturano	Aye
N. Christ	Aye
R. Jones-Hyde	Aye
G. Phillips	Absent
S. Bernard	Aye
L. Delgado	Aye
J. Charnel	No
S. Jackson	Absent

IX. 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 6:30 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
G. Phillips