APPROVED

New Heights Charter School Board of Trustees

Minutes

Governance Committee Meeting

Date and Time
Monday September 28, 2026 at 5:00 PM

Location
1105 West Chestnut Street
Brockton, MA 02301

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

Committee Members Present
S. Bernard, V. Marturano, W. Lyttle

Committee Members Absent
G. Phillips

Ex Officio Members Present
O. Walker (remote)

Guests Present
Luz Ocasio-Thomas, M. Jean

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

B.

Call the Meeting to Order

V. Marturano called a meeting of the Governance Committee of New Heights Charter School Board of Trustees to order on Monday Sep 28, 2026 at 5:05 PM.

II. Governance

A. Executive Director Evaluation

The Committee discussed the annual evaluation process for the Executive Director, Omari Walker, emphasizing the importance of Board member participation as a fundamental governance responsibility. Members acknowledged that although the evaluation instrument is extensive, all Board members are afforded an annual opportunity to provide feedback.

The Committee discussed documenting the number of completed evaluations and presenting the findings to the full Board. Members also considered the potential relevance of Board participation in future accountability or charter renewal reviews.

The Committee continued to discuss the Executive Director's reflections on the previous school year and priorities for the upcoming year.

Omari reflected on the challenges and accomplishments of the previous school year, particularly the departure of former Principal Dr. Jones and the subsequent leadership transition. He reported that the transition was managed with an emphasis on maintaining school stability, supporting staff, and minimizing disruptions to teaching and learning.

Approximately four to five admin and teachers associated with Dr. Jones departed, two additional teachers were not retained, and two administrative positions were filled following departures. He reported that the majority of the existing teaching staff remained.

Omari also expressed confidence in the leadership of newly appointed Principal Dr. Johnston, highlighting her collaborative approach, willingness to listen, and commitment to advancing instructional practices.

The Committee discussed lessons learned regarding leadership oversight, delegation of authority, communication, and organizational accountability. Omari acknowledged the importance of establishing clear expectations, appropriate oversight, and sufficient training before transferring significant responsibilities to new administrators.

Governance members emphasized applying these lessons to support the new Principal's continued development and the school's long-term stability.

Omari also explained that the complexity of the school's Early College model requires greater knowledge and careful coordination. He reported that restoring Dr. Maria

Fernandes' leadership responsibilities within the program has contributed to improved operations and a more successful start to the academic year.

Governance members and Omari also discussed the departure of Dr. Jess Geier and the redistribution of her administrative and regulatory responsibilities.

Omari reported that Kaitlin has assumed a significant portion of these responsibilities following a period of preparation and transition. Additional duties have been distributed among Maria, Suzanne, and other administrative staff.

Governance members emphasized the importance of maintaining continuity in regulatory reporting, annual disclosures, Board compliance requirements, and other mandated submissions.

The Committee acknowledged that the transition remains ongoing and Omari stated that Dr. Geier continues to provide guidance when needed. Members stressed. yet encouraged the administration to maintain clear accountability for regulatory deadlines and responsibilities.

The members reviewed Executive Director's goals he tends to work on during SY 26-27:

Strategic Planning: Omari identified the resumption of the school's strategic planning process as a primary priority. The process had previously been paused during the leadership transition and is expected to resume in October with the existing consultant, without additional charges for restarting the engagement.

The planning process will include input from Dr. Johnston and consideration of the school's future educational model, including the potential integration of artificial intelligence into teaching, learning, and school operations.

Launch a fundraising campaign: Omari identified fundraising as another major priority. He discussed plans to work with Paper Crane and the school's development personnel to establish a more comprehensive fundraising strategy. He also expressed an intention to engage professional and community networks to cultivate prospective donors and strengthen external support for the school.

Complete the Strategic Planning process: Omari and Maria recently discussed completing the strategic planning process with Paper Crane. Their first meeting will revisit the priorities of the school and goals set-forth for the school year and beyond.

Organizational Culture and Staff Alignment: Omari discussed the importance of rebuilding trust, strengthening communication, and promoting collaboration among school leadership, Central Office, and staff following the previous administrative transition.

Omari reported that progress has been made toward improving working relationships and establishing shared expectations. He emphasized the importance of retaining institutional knowledge while ensuring alignment with the school's leadership and organizational direction.
Additional Leadership Priorities: Governance members identified continued support for the new Principal, maintaining higher education partnerships, and ensuring continuity in regulatory and administrative functions as additional areas of focus.

The Committee supported further development of these priorities into measurable goals to be presented to the full Board and used as a framework for evaluating the Executive Director's performance during the upcoming year.

B. Potential Board Members Review

The Governance members discussed the anticipated resignation of Board member and Treasurer Nick Christ, who acquired increased professional responsibilities at his job which would inhibit him from being fully present and able to carryout his obligations and duties as Treasurer.

It was reported that Nick expressed continued support for New Heights and emphasized that his departure should not be interpreted as a reduction in his organization's commitment to the school.

Nick recommended a professional colleague as a potential Board candidate. The Committee discussed reviewing the individual's qualifications and arranging an introductory meeting before proceeding with the established nomination process.

Members also considered the need to fill the Treasurer position and Board Member vacancy.

Jeff Charnelland Jason were identified as potential candidates for Treasurer based on their financial and professional experience and recent participation in Finance Committee activities.

Omari reported initiating outreach to determine their willingness to be considered.
The Governance members discussed the importance of selecting a Treasurer capable of providing strong financial oversight and supporting the school's accounting and regulatory responsibilities.

The group clarified that interested candidates would be considered through the Governance Committee's established review and recommendation process before any action by the full Board.

That segued into discussion around the potential return of former Board member Emmanuel Daphnis, who previously served the school and participated in the Academic Excellence Commitee.

Although members acknowledged his prior contributions, the Committee emphasized that returning members should complete the established review and nomination process rather than receive expedited consideration based solely on previous service.

The Committee also discussed Rick Schwartz as a potential Board candidate who also considered coming back. Omari reported that Rick is currently focused on establishing the Friends of New Heights Foundation and is not prepared to pursue Board membership at this time.

III. 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 6:48 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
V. Marturano