

New Dawn Charter Schools Board of Trustees

January 23, 2024, Board Meeting Minutes

11:00 a.m.: Executive Committee Meeting

11:15 a.m.: Full Board of Trustees Meeting

**New Dawn Charter High School
242 Hoyt Street
Brooklyn, NY 11217**

**New Dawn Charter High School II
89-25 161st Street
Jamaica, NY 11432
347-505-9101**

Board Members present: Mr. Ronald Tabano, Chairperson, Ms. Jane Sun, Vice Chairperson
Ms. Katharine Urbati, Treasurer, Mr. Brian Baer, Secretary

Board Members Absent: Mr. Daniel Lewis, board member.

Staff Members/ Visitors Present: NDCS: Dr. Sara Asmussen, Executive Director; Mr. Steve Ramkissoo, Director of Finance & HR; Mr. Jose Obregon Director of Operations; Dr. Lisa DiGaudio, Director of Curriculum and Instruction; Ms. Emily Predmore, Data Specialist; Mr. Ashish Abraham, Recruitment and Marketing Specialist; NDCHS: Ms. Donna Lobato, Principal

I. Executive Committee Meeting

Legal status update and student hearing.

II. Resolution: January 2024 Board Meeting Agenda— Mr. Ronald Tabano

Mr. Tabano asked the board members if there was a motion to accept and approve the January 2024 Board of Trustees meeting agenda.

Motion: Ms. Katharine Urbati motioned to accept and approve the December 2023, Board of Trustees meeting agenda.

Motion Seconded: Ms. Jane Sun seconded the motion.

Vote: The board voted unanimously to accept and approve the January 2024 Board of Trustees meeting agenda.

III. Resolution: November 2023 Board Meeting Minutes—Mr. Ronald Tabano

Mr. Tabano asked the board members if there was a motion to accept and approve the November 2023 Board Minutes.

Motion: Ms. Jane Sun motioned to accept and approve the November 2023 Board minutes.

Motion Seconded: Mr. Brian Baer seconded the motion.

Vote: The board voted unanimously to accept and approve the November 2023 Board minutes.

IV. Resolution: December 2023 Minutes—Mr. Ronald Tabano

Mr. Tabano asked the board members if there was a motion to accept and approve the December 2023 Board Minutes.

Motion: Ms. Katharine Urbati motioned to accept and approve the December 2023 Board Minutes.

Motion Seconded: Ms. Jane Sun seconded the motion.

Vote: The board voted unanimously to accept and approve the December 2023 Board Minutes.

V. Financials—Mr. Steve Ramkissoon

Benchmark 4: Financial Condition

Benchmark 5: Financial Management

Mr. Ramkissoon reported to the board members that although the Brooklyn school is showing a negative net income, when depreciation is calculated, the total net income remains positive. Mr. Ramkissoon also reported to the board that the Brooklyn school's student enrollment number has increased by 39 students. Similarly, the Queens school enrollment numbers increased by 11 students. Mr. Ramkissoon stated that the recruiting efforts are working, and this factor affects both schools' net income in a positive way. He then asked the board members if there were any questions regarding the Brooklyn school. Ms. Katharine Urbati stated that there was nothing that jumped out in the Brooklyn school's financials. There were no questions from the board members.

Mr. Ramkissoon reiterated to the board members that the Queens school financials depict a positive net income. He also stated that he expects student enrollment to continue to grow. Mr. Ramkissoon further stated that one of the benefits of the increased student enrollment is the ability for the Queens school to hire new staff. Mr. Ramkissoon asked the board members if there were any questions. There were no questions.

Mr. Tabano then asked the board members if there was a motion to accept and approve the December 2023 financials.

a. Resolution: December 2023 Financials

Motion: Ms. Katharine Urbati motioned to accept and approve the December 2023 financials.

Motion Seconded: Mr. Brian Baer seconded the motion.

Vote: The board voted unanimously to accept and approve the December 2023 financials.

b. Investor's Bond Meeting

Mr. Ramkissoon informed the board that he uploaded the slide for the investor's Bond Meeting on the portal. He also stated that the slide is similar to those presented in prior years, and it depicts where the school is financially. He further stated that one of the key takeaways is the depth service coverage wage ratio. The school is at 1.38. Mr. Ramkissoon informed the board that any number greater than 1.0 is good. He stated that he believes that the investor's bond meeting call will go well. Mr. Ramkissoon also stated that he reviewed the slide with Mr. William Fossil who helped the school acquire the bond. Mr. Fossil also thought that the slide was good. Mr. Tabano also commented that the slide looked good.

Mr. Tabano asked Dr. Asmussen to quickly discuss the kitchen renovation project in Queens. Dr. Asmussen reported to the board that she sent the board members a kitchen consultant. Mr. Baer also stated that if the board decides to proceed with this consultant, then he will have to inquire if payment should be issued to the architect as part of his fees or if the kitchen consultant should be paid directly.

Mr. Tabano and Dr. Asmussen both agreed that another bid for a kitchen consultant will be necessary and appropriate especially since the State will audit all expenditures. After acquiring a second kitchen consultant bid, the board could then decide which consultant to go with.

VI. Contracts— Mr. Jose Obregon

Benchmark 1: Student Performance

Benchmark 2: Teaching and Learning

Benchmark 5: Financial Management

Benchmark 6: Board Oversight & Governance

a. Discussion: Vaping

Mr. Obregon recommended to the board members that they approve the purchase and installation of the Verkada Vape detection system for the Queens school. Mr. Obregon explained to the board members that the vape detection system is currently installed in one of the student bathrooms on a trial basis at the Queen school. The Vape Detection system is designed to detect vaping or marijuana use that may occur in student bathrooms. The system also detects bullying behavior/noise, and it notifies selected staff members that such an incident is occurring and includes the location. Mr. Obregon further reported that the system is remarkably effective. Mr. Obregon stated that Verkada has proposed a three (3) year, five (5) year, and ten (10) year licensing contract. Additionally, the sensors are fully guaranteed for the life of the contract. Mr. Obregon recommended to the board that they consider the three (3) year contract that includes licensing for nine (9) sensors, which covers all the student bathrooms in the Queen school. This contract totals \$11,200.

Mr. Tabano asked if there was wiring needed to support the system. Mr. Obregon confirmed that yes, the detectors would be wired by MSP Networks, the school's IT maintenance company and that the devices would be part of the school's IT network. Mr. Tabano asked how the system detects bullying behavior. Mr. Obregon explained that the sensors detect human voice volume and certain words that might be associated with threatening behavior. Ms. Urbati raised the concern about the legality, breach of privacy, or monitoring of conversations monitored in a restroom. Mr. Obregon explained that the monitoring device does not record conversation in any way. The system just detects and reports chemical changes in the room, such as when you smoke or vape, and the increase in noise in the bathroom which might indicate bullying or other inappropriate student behavior.

Mr. Tabano recommended to the board that if the board decides to approve of the purchase of the Verkada devices, the three (3) year license agreement should be considered to make sure that the system works as it should. He then asked if there was a motion to accept the purchase and licensing of the Verkada Vape detection devices for a three (3) year period.

Motion: Ms. Katharine Urbati motioned to accept and approve the purchase of the Verkada devices and the three (3) year licensing agreement.

Motion Seconded: Mr. Brian Baer seconded the motion.

Vote: The board voted unanimously to accept and approve the purchase of the Verkada Vape detection devices and the three (3) year licensing agreement.

Dr. Asmussen reported to the board that the school has a new expeditor named Lloyd and he will begin filing for the appropriate permits to start working on the roof project in the Brooklyn school.

VII. Staff Recruitment— Mr. Ashish Abraham

Benchmark 2: Teaching and Learning

Benchmark 5: Financial Management

a. Status of Current Hiring

Mr. Abraham reported to the board that two (2) vacant staff positions in Queens were also recently posted.

b. Status of Student Recruitment

Mr. Abraham reported that since the last board meeting, four new students enrolled at the Brooklyn school and eight (8) new students enrolled at the Queens school. Additionally, there are thirteen (13) new students that are scheduled to start in the Spring semester at the Queens school.

VIII. Student Recruitment— Mr. Ashish Abraham

Benchmark 6: Board Oversight & Governance

Benchmark 7: Organizational Capacity

a. Status of Current Recruitment

Mr. Abraham reported that student recruiting efforts are continuing and that the results continue to be positive.

VI. School Updates

a. Brooklyn—Ms. Donna Lobato

Ms. Lobato reported that the NYS Regents exams are being administered this week and that she expects a good student turn out for the scheduled Regents tests. Ms. Lobato also reported that for the next semester, one of the areas of focus will be student behavior and particularly as it relates to gang activities. She also reported that the Living Redemption grant will support this effort along with other resources available. Ms. Lobato also stated that the school will encourage parents to get involved in this initiative.

In response to Ms. Lobato's report, Mr. Tabano stated that yesterday his school wrapped up discussions with Living Redemption and he believes that the contract with Living Redemption is going to be signed. He also stated that he is looking forward to starting the initiative for all his campuses. Mr. Tabano also mentioned that Living Redemption provides mentors and they have a

great crew of counselors and staff that will come in and work with students. One of those counselors has collaborated with Wildcat Academy for a long time. Mr. Tabano further stated that the quality of the counseling services offered by Living Redemption is exceptional.

b. Queens—Mr. Muhammad Bilal

Mr. Bilal was unable to attend.

c. Curriculum & Instruction: Dr. Lisa DiGaudio

Dr. DiGaudio also confirmed that Regent's exams are being administered now. Dr. DiGaudio also stated that in the coming weeks she will be looking at individualized support for teachers. Finally, she stated that she will be working on a plan to push into classrooms more often than last semester.

VII. Facilities—Mr. Jose Obregon

Mr. Obregon reported to the board that he was finally able to contact CFS. Mr. Obregon stated that he spoke with Patricia from CFS who acknowledged that CFS received a direct deposit from the school to close out an open invoice. Mr. Obregon also stated Patricia informed him that CFS is willing to discuss the items that are still outstanding for the renewal of the permanent certificate of occupancy that is still pending. Mr. Obregon stated that Patricia will ask one of the principals at CFS to speak with Mr. Brian Baer about those items that need to be resolved.

V. New Business

Mr. Tabano asked the board members if there was any new business. Dr. Asmussen reminded the board members that the due date for evaluations is coming soon and that she will be distributing evaluation forms to all the board members. She also stated that these evaluations are due in March 2024.

VI. Public Comment

There was no public comment made.

VII. Adjournment

The board members agreed to meet next month on February 27, 2024, at 11:00 A.M. The meeting was adjourned at 11:48 A.M.