

**New Dawn Charter Schools Board of Trustees
August Meeting
Wednesday, September 28, 2022
11:00 a.m.**

**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 Chair, Mr. Brian Baer, Secretary, Ms. Katharine Urbati, Treasurer

Board Members Absent: Jonathon Carrington, Member

Staff Members/ Visitors Present: Dr. Sara Asmussen, Executive Director, NDCS, Mr. Ramkissoo, Director of Finance and HR, NDCS, Mr. Jose Obregon, Director of Operations, NDCS, Ms. Emily Predmore, Data Specialist, NDCS

AGENDA

I. Resolution: Agenda

Mr. Tabano welcomed everyone and asked the board members if there was a motion to accept and approve the September 2022 agenda.

Motion: Ms. Katharine Urbati motioned to accept and approve the September 2022, Board of Trustees meeting agenda.

Motion Seconded: Ms. Jane Sun seconded the motion.

Vote: The board voted unanimously to accept and approve the August 2022 agenda.

II. Resolution: Minutes

Mr. Tabano asked the board members if there was a motion to accept and approve the August 2022 minutes.

Motion: Mr. Brian Baer motioned to accept and approve the August 2022 Board of Trustees minutes.

Motion Seconded: Ms. Jane Sun seconded the motion.

Vote: The board voted unanimously to accept and approve the August 2022 Board of Trustees minutes.

III. Financials—Steve Ramkissoon

Mr. Ramkissoon informed the board members that NDCS has approximately \$1M dollars in a savings account with Bank of America. However, the account is not earning adequate interest and the bank fees are more than what is being earned in interest. Therefore, he asked the board members permission to move that money into a CD account with a higher interest yield. He proposed to move the moneys in increments of 250K CD account to maintain FDIC insurance. Mr. Ramkissoon also informed the board that there is also money in a banco de Ponce savings account which is not being used that can be combined with the bank of America funds.

Mr. Tabano suggested that if the money is moved, that it be moved to a three (3) and six (6) month CD only in case the rates change the money is not locked in for an extended period. Mr. Tabano also stated that he believed that the interest rates are going to change. Mr. Ramkissoon agreed that he would find out how he can do this and at the same time maintain FDIC insurability.

Mr. Tabano asked the board members if anyone had an opinion regarding moving these funds to short-term CDs. Ms. Urbati suggested that a viable way to transfer these funds in increments of \$250K to maintain FDIC insurability is to invest the money in increments of \$250K every three (3) months after each investment of \$250K. This way, there is always \$250K available before the next CD expires.

Dr. Asmussen also recommended not to withdraw money from Banco de Ponce since they are the only local bank that the school does business with and the bank also teaches finance classes at both the Queens and Brooklyn school.

Mr. Tabano asked the board members if there was a resolution that Steve Ramkissoon move the money in the Bank of America savings account to short-term CD accounts in increments of \$250K.

Motion: Ms. Katharine Urbati motioned to accept and approve the transfer of Bank of America savings account funds to short-term CD accounts in increments of \$250K.

Motion Seconded: Ms. Jane Sun seconded the motion.

Vote: The board voted unanimously to accept and approve the transfer of Bank of America savings account funds to short-term CD accounts in increments of \$250K.

IV. Benchmark 4: Financial Condition Benchmark 5: Financial Management

Steve Ramkissoon presented the Brooklyn school financials for the months of July 2022 and August 2022. Revenue for the two (2) months was at 16% and expenses at 13%. This reflects a positive cash flow. Steve Ramkissoon explained the revenue was only at 16% since enrollment numbers were not high those two (2) months. He also stated that he expects enrollment to

increase in September thereby increasing revenue. He also stated that he did not see any red flags.

Ms. Katharine Urbati stated that she noted a 20% increase in repairs and maintenance at the Queens school and asked Steve if these were unexpected costs. Steve replied that these repairs were the responsibility of the school and it included the installation of a new security system. However, none of the costs were unexpected.

Like the Brooklyn school, Steve stated that he believes the Queens school will increase in September 2022 when the school gains new students. Mr. Tabano asked if there were any other questions. There were no questions. Mr. Tabano then asked if there was a motion to accept and approve the July 2022 and August 2022 financials.

a. Resolution: Monthly Financials

Motion: Ms. Katharine Urbati motioned to accept and approve the July 2022 and August 2022 financials.

Motion Seconded: Mr. Brian Baer seconded the motion.

Vote: The board voted unanimously to accept and approve the July 2022 and August 2022 financials.

b. Audit Update

Steve Ramkissoon reported to the board that he and Dr. Asmussen are collaborating with the auditors. Steve will speak with them by telephone to gather any documentation that they will need. The auditors will be at the Brooklyn school on Friday to review student and employee files. Steve is in communication with the school's accounting firm as well and there are no red flags to date. Steve also stated that the only item which they will identify is that the school does not have a written policy for bond monies. However, the money that is still at Melon bank is managed in accordance with the school's investment policy which the board approved. Once the school gets the final C of O, the project will be closed and the monies will be withdrawn from Bank of Melon.

Mr. Tabano asked Dr. Asmussen if the outreach program was addressed with the auditors for those students that are absent. Dr. Asmussen confirmed that she did get that information to the auditors. Dr. Asmussen then asked the board to approve an increase the Queens school escrow funds to \$100K immediately rather than wait until the end of the year.

Mr. Tabano asked the board members if there was a motion to accept and approve increasing the Queens school escrow account to \$100K immediately.

Motion: Ms. Katharine Urbati motioned to accept and approve to increase the Queens school escrow account to \$100K immediately.

Motion Seconded: Ms. Jane Sun seconded the motion.

Vote: The board voted unanimously to accept and approve the motion to increase the Queens school escrow account to \$100K immediately.

V. Hiring, Recruitment, and School Updates

Benchmark 1: Student Performance

Benchmark 3: Culture, Climate, and Student & Family Engagement

Benchmark 6: Board Oversight & Governance

Benchmark 7: Organizational Capacity

a. Staff Hiring—Steve Ramkissoon

Steve Ramkissoon informed the board that the hiring process continues. The Brooklyn school continues to look for fulltime and parttime teachers. The Queens school is seeking a SPED, an aspiring teacher, and a math teacher. Venues such as Indeed and Linked-In are being utilized to seek and interview potential prospects. Steve also mentioned that Dr. Asmussen recently interviewed a candidate for the culinary cook position and that candidate appears promising.

Mr. Tabano remarked that the school is acquiring candidates, so that is a positive indicator. Dr. Asmussen further stated that the schools are even considering hiring retired personnel who are looking to work limited hours such as from 10 AM to 3:00 PM. That time includes the highest concentration of classes during the school day.

b. Student Performance—Embargoed

Mr. Tabano stated to the board that student performance is still embargoed. Subsequently, Dr. Asmussen informed the board that each school met only one of NDCS performance goals. The Queens school made the goal in living environment for June and August Regents. The other subject areas target scores were not met but were not that far below the goal. There is work to be done for Math in the Queens. However, in Brooklyn, the Algebra Regents goal was met with an XX% pass rate. Dr. Asmussen informed the board that both schools are close to meeting the Regents exam pass rate. The schools are at an average of XX% pass rate but she believes that will continue to improve. Some of the challenges include teachers who do not have the experience preparing for the Regents exam and some teachers are new and inexperienced. Regardless of the Regents score outcomes, Dr. Asmussen stated that she believes that both schools are in a good trajectory to achieve higher pass rates. Item analysis is being conducted at both schools to improve student performance. Dr. Asmussen reported that students did well in multiple choice questions but not so well in areas that required writing for a particular content area. In other content areas, students did not do well in the multiple-choice portion but did well in writing. Therefore, the school will continue to conduct the necessary analysis to improve the score outcomes in each subject area test.

Mr. Tabano commented that the State is holding schools responsible for Regents exams that were taken outside of his school even as the city of New York agrees that his school should not

be held accountable for. Dr. Asmussen concurred that NDCS is facing the same challenge. Mr. Tabano remarked that the State should revise their accountability plan to reflect a more accurate and fair rating for schools.

VI. Facilities—Jose Obregon

VII. Benchmark 6: Board Oversight & Governance

a. Resolution: Lutron Contract

Jose Obregon presented the board a maintenance contract proposal for the lighting system at the Brooklyn School submitted by Lutron Lighting Co. The proposal included the maintenance of the lighting system in the building. Although Lutron is a reputable company, Mr. Obregon informed the board that there is a need for the lighting system to be checked and adjusted since there are experiences of lighting not working properly. The lighting system is an LED lighting system which is electronically programmed and requires a technician with a programming device to do such. The contract is \$3,900 for a five-year period. Mr. Brian Barer remarked that if it covered a five (5) year span that would be acceptable. Jose Obregon recommended the silver plan which is the least expensive plan. Mr. Tabano asked the board if there was a motion to accept and approve Motion: Ms. Katharine Urbati motioned to accept and approve the lighting maintenance contract as submitted by Lutron lighting Co.

Motion: Mr. Brian Baer motioned to accept and approve the lighting maintenance contract as submitted by Lutron lighting Co.

Motion Seconded: Ms. Katharine Urbati seconded the motion.

Vote: The board voted unanimously to accept and approve the lighting maintenance contract as submitted by Lutron lighting Co.

b. Roof top

For the Queens school, Jose Obregon reported that Barone has agreed to begin work on the roof in Queens. They will begin work within the next two weeks.

For the Brooklyn school, Jose Obregon reported that Mr. Brian has indicated that he is ready to have the contractors begin work on the Brooklyn roof as soon as Dr. Asmussen gives him the green light to begin.

c. COO

Jose Obregon reported that at this time, only a final inspection of the fire alarm system is required to complete the DOB requirements for issuing a final Certificate of Occupancy for the school. Currently, the school is waiting for Metropolis to work out the final inspection with the DOB and FDNY.

d. Queens Sewer

Jose Obregon reported to the board that in the past days, there was a flood that inundated the cafeteria and much of the first floor at the Queens school. Since it was sewer water, the school had to be cleaned and disinfected to include any furniture, equipment, and walls that became contaminated. Jose Obregon reported that Barone did respond to the emergency quickly and sent a crew which cleaned and disinfected the entire space to include furniture, walls, and equipment. The cafeteria space is now available for use without limitations. Additionally, all the bathroom systems are old and do not function properly. In many cases, the old tank and pump systems constantly need to be fixed. Jose also stated that he believes that all the commodes need to be upgrade and replaced to improve performance and prevent this from happening again. Dr. Asmussen concurred and Mr. Tabano also stated that Barone must address this or it will continue to happen.

e. Brooklyn Façade and Updates

Jose Obregon reported that about a week and a half ago a slab of the stone façade that comprises the Brooklyn school outer wall came off. Mr. Tabano asked Jose Obregon to make sure that all the stones are inspected to ensure that they are properly set and installed. Finally, Jose Informed the board that an electronic strike needs to be installed on the rear door ramp to make it work properly. Mr. Ed Cinni stated that he would send the locksmith back with the correct hardware.

f. Land Use Attorney—Sara Asmussen

Dr. Asmussen reported that she submitted a request for a land use attorney to New York Lawyers for the Public Interest and they have accepted the application. NYLPI are now seeking a pro bono attorney that will assist the school so the roof project can begin.

VII. Grants & Reports—Sara Asmussen

Benchmark 1: Student Performance

Benchmark 3: Culture, Climate, and Student & Family Engagement

Benchmark 8: Mission & Key Design Elements

a. N/A

VIII. Policies and Procedures

Mr. Tabano asked Dr. Asmussen to speak about the discipline policy. Dr. Asmussen stated that the attorney reviewed the policy. The State asked the school to change some items. These changes include the length of acceptable suspension for students which increased from five to a maximum of ten (10) days, a gun safety section was added, and the DASA section needed to be re-defined which includes anti-bullying policies. Dr. Asmussen reported that all the items that the State asked the school to adjust are now addressed in the school discipline policy.

Mr. Tabano thanked Dr. Asmussen for getting these changes implemented and stated that he believes that more changes are coming that will include emergencies in the school and security.

Mr. Tabano then asked if there was a motion to approve and accept the new discipline policy for NDCHS.

a. Resolution: Discipline Police

Motion: Ms. Jane Sun motioned to accept and approve the new discipline policy for NDCHS.

Motion Seconded: Ms. Katharine Urbati seconded the motion.

Vote: The board voted unanimously to accept and approve the new discipline policy for NDCHS.

IX. New Business

Dr. Asmussen informed the board that the only change to the open meeting law is that it will allow the board to have participants on zoom with their addresses posted. Mr. Tabano asked if there was a motion to approve and accept the Open Meeting Resolution which was distributed earlier.

a. Resolution: Open Meeting Law

Motion: Ms. Katharine Urbati motioned to accept and approve the Open Meeting Resolution.

Motion Seconded: Ms. Jane Sun seconded the motion.

Vote: The board voted unanimously to accept and approve the Open Meeting Resolution.

X. Public Comment

No public comment made. Dr. Asmussen did inform the board that beginning in October 2022, there will be staff returning to the board meeting and inform the board about any projects or programs in the school.

XI. Adjournment

The board members decided that the next meeting will take place on October 25, 2022. The board adjourned at 11:45 A.M.