

**New Dawn Charter Schools Board of Trustees
April 25, 2023, Board Meeting Minutes
11:00 a.m.: Executive Committee Meeting
11:10 A.M.: Full Board 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
547-505-9101**

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. Steve Ramkissoon, Director of HR (Human Resources), Ms. Donna Lobato, Principal NDCHS, Mr. Jose Obregon Director of Operations and Acting Principal NDCHS II, Dr. Lisa DiGaudio, Director of Curriculum, and Instruction

I. Executive Session

II. Agenda

Resolution: April 2023 Agenda

Mr. Tabano asked the board members if there was a motion to accept and approve the April 2023 Board of Trustees meeting agenda.

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

Motion Seconded: Ms. Jane Sun seconded the motion.

Vote: The board voted unanimously to accept and approve the April 2023 Board of Trustees meeting agenda.

III. Minutes

Resolution: March 2023 Minutes

Mr. Tabano asked the board members if there was a motion to accept and approve the March 2023 Board of Trustees minutes.

Motion: Ms. Katharine Urbati motioned to accept and approve the March 2023 Board of Trustees minutes.

Motion Seconded: Ms. Jane Sun seconded the motion.

Vote: The board voted unanimously to accept and approve the March 2023 Board of Trustees minutes.

IV. Financials—Steve Ramkissoon

Mr. Ramkissoon reported that the Brooklyn school is projected to end the year with a positive net income. Student enrollment is increasing. Mr. Ramkissoon further stated that although the monthly financial indicate that the Brooklyn school has a negative income of 33K, depreciation is at 608K. Therefore, financially, the school is at 575K positive income. He further stated that there are still last the last quarter expenses that need to be factored in. However, Mr. Ramkissoon predicted that the Brooklyn school would finish the fiscal year close to where the school was projected to be. Mr. Ramkissoon then asked if there were any questions regarding the Brooklyn school.

Ms. Urbati indicated to Mr. Ramkissoon, that if you looked at the bar graph that depicted what was budgeted and what was expensed, it was not noticeably clear regarding the specific contract services and operations costs for next month. Ms. Urbati asked Mr. Ramkissoon for further clarification on the expenses that are being reported. Ms. Urbati further asked Mr. Ramkissoon to clarify the expenses next month so they could be easily identified. Mr. Ramkissoon replied that he would give the breakdown to Ms. Urbati at the next board meeting. Ms. Urbati also stated that the numbers are holding steady compared to prior months, but a more specific breakdown of expenses will be helpful in the next report. Ms. Urbati also noticed that there was an increase in some line items at the Queens school in maintenance and repair expenses that she was not clear about as well. Ms. Urbati stated that regardless of the lack of clarity regarding some of the expenses in the monthly financial report, both schools were sticking with the budget.

Mr. Ramkissoon stated that the Queens' school expenses did increase more than what was expected because of the installation of the new security camera system an additional electrical work.

For the Queens school, Mr. Ramkissoon reported that the school is holding steady. Although the school is not currently where it was budgeted, it is still doing well considering that the school has not met its target enrollment of 350 students. Mr. Ramkissoon predicted that the school would end the fiscal year with a positive income of approximately 845K. Mr. Ramkissoon also stated that he had projected a 1.1M positive income for the year for the Queens school. Additionally, Mr. Ramkissoon stated that despite having student enrollment drop, the Queens school is doing well and he is monitoring expenses closely.

Mr. Ramkissoon asked if there were any questions regarding the Queens school budget. Ms. Urbati stated that she had no further questions and neither did the other board members.

Benchmark 4: Financial Condition

Benchmark 5: Financial Management

a. Resolution: Monthly Financials

Mr. Tabano asked the board members if there was a motion to accept the March 2023 financials.

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

Motion Seconded: Ms. Jane Sun seconded the motion.

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

b. Update on 2023-2024 Budgeting Process

Mr. Ramkissoon informed the members of the board that during the next two weeks or so, he will be working on the budget. He also stated that Dr. Asmussen has provided him with current enrollment numbers and he will be using 18K as the per pupil enrollment rate to project next year's budget. This will be a 3.34% increase from the prior year. Mr. Ramkissoon also stated that he consulted with the school's accounting firm to make sure that this projection is viable. The school's accounting firm indicated that this is a viable number to project next year's budget. Subsequently, Mr. Ramkissoon stated that, although the per pupil rate has not yet been approved, he will use the 3.34% projected increase to plan next year's budget. Mr. Ramkissoon will also inform the Finance committee about the projection. Mr. Ramkissoon also informed the board that he will meet with Dr. Asmussen and Mr. Obregon to discuss next year's projected operational expenses. Mr. Ramkissoon stated that he can present his proposed budget to the finance committee by the middle of May so the board can vote on it. This will allow New Dawn Charter Schools to get contracts out to new employees at the beginning of June. Mr. Ramkissoon also informed the board members that he has conducted stay interviews with employees to inform them that NDCS is looking to have them return for the next school year. The plan is to get them their contract soon after the budget is approved.

c. Resolution: Phone voting for Tax Returns

Dr. Asmussen stated to the board members that she received the schools' tax returns yesterday. However, if the board members want to see the returns first and vote later by phone to accept them after the board meeting, a resolution must be approved to take that vote by phone. Mr. Tabano asked all the board members if they wanted to review the tax forms before voting and later take a vote by phone. All board members agreed that they should review first and later vote by phone. Mr. Tabano then asked if there was a motion to vote on the tax forms by phone, after they were reviewed.

Motion: Ms. Katharine Urbati motioned to vote on the tax forms by phone, after they were reviewed.

Motion Seconded: Mr. Brian Baer seconded the motion.

Vote: The board voted unanimously to accept and approve voting on the tax forms by phone, after they were reviewed.

V. Resolution/Bids

a. Tier Consulting: Charter Renewal

Dr. Asmussen reported to the board that she sent a proposal from Ms. Mary Grace Eapen regarding the renewal for NDCHS Queens renewal. Dr. Asmussen stated that Ms. Eapen did the renewal for Wildcat Academy and for NDCHS Brooklyn. Both schools were able to get a five (5) year renewal. Therefore Dr. Asmussen recommended that she be allowed to do the Queens school renewal.

Mr. Tabano asked the board if there was a motion to accept Tier Consulting to do the renewal for the Queens school.

Motion: Ms. Katharine Urbati motioned to accept Tier consulting to do the renewal for the Queens school.

Motion Seconded: Ms. Jane Sun Baer seconded the motion.

Vote: The board voted unanimously to accept and approve Tier consulting to do the renewal for the Queens school.

VI. Hiring, Recruitment, and School Updates

Benchmark 7: Organizational Capacity

a. Dashboard—Dr. Sara Asmussen

Dr. Asmussen informed the board that since Ms. Emily Predmore was out sick for several days, she was not able to obtain data for the Queens school. Therefore, Dr. Asmussen stated that she will get the information once Ms. Predmore returns. Mr. Tabano and the board concurred.

b. Staff Hiring—Mr. Steve Ramkissoon

Mr. Ramkissoon reported that this month there were two (2) new individuals hired: a counselor and writing consultant who will be replacing Ms. Josephine DiGaudio. Mr. Ramkissoon also reported to the board that last month NDCS hired two (2) SPED teachers. Mr. Ramkissoon further stated that this week he will be posting for every position despite that stay interviews that were conducted. Mr. Ramkissoon stated that this was just a safety measure in case someone decided at the last minute not to stay. Mr. Tabano asked what happened to Ms. Josephine DiGaudio and Mr. Ramkissoon stated that her schedule did not work out as she had planned. Ms. DiGaudio only worked twelve (12) hours and her full-time job and her young son's schedule made it difficult for her to continue. Dr. Asmussen stated that she expects Ms. DiGaudio to return once she works out her schedule. Mr. Tabano and the board were assured that someone would fill her position as the writing consultant for the internship program. Dr. Asmussen also mentioned to the board that with the hiring of an additional staff member in July 2023, all the grant positions will be filled.

c. Student Recruitment—Lisa DiGaudio

Dr. DiGaudio reported that NDCS is doing well with the recruitment drive. She also stated that there were satisfactory results obtained in the month of March 2023, with twenty-two (22) admissions for the Brooklyn school and twenty-five (25) for the Queens schools. Further in April 2023, Dr. DiGaudio reported that there were four (4) admissions in the Brooklyn school and eight (8) in the Queens school. Dr. DiGaudio also stated that there are five (5) pending admissions for the Brooklyn school and six (6) pending admissions for the Queens school. Dr. DiGaudio also reported to the board that there are many more applications that were submitted and received via the school's online application portal that still need to be processed. Dr. DiGaudio stated that she has several meetings scheduled this week with parents and counselors regarding new applications and admissions. Dr. DiGaudio also stated that she will continue to target the highest feeder schools to remind the feeder schools that NDCS will be open during the summer and will be able to continue to receive new students. Dr. DiGaudio informed the board that she is also working on a summer recruitment plan. She also stated that the Brooklyn school has not benefited as much from the student recruitment drive as the Queens school, but that she will focus on increasing student recruitment numbers for the Brooklyn school. Regardless, Dr. DiGaudio expressed to the board that she believes the student recruitment number is good and will continue to get better.

Mr. Tabano asked the board members if there were any questions. There were no questions. Mr. Tabano then thanked Dr. DiGaudio for her excellent work.

d. School Updates—Ms. Donna Lobato/Mr. Jose Obregon

Ms. Lobato reported to the board that finding SPED teachers is still very difficult, but we continue to work on the issue. Currently, there are thirty-seven (37) students that need CSE meetings by the end of June. Ms. Lobato stated that she is collaborating with the Queens staff to make this deadline. Ms. Lobato also stated that the newly hired SPED teachers are doing well and she expects those SPED teachers will help both schools catch up with any SPED requirement that needs to be completed by June. Ms. Lobato further stated that some LTA students have returned to school and the focus will be to catch them up and to prepare other students for end of year exams including the Regents. Mr. Tabano asked Ms. Lobato how are returning LTA students affecting the SPED compliance requirements. Ms. Lobato stated that it certainly makes it more difficult to get all the requirements done before the end of the year, but that she is working with CSC to meet the necessary requirements for both schools.

Mr. Obregon reported that at Queens school, the SAT is being administered today. Mr. Obregon also stated that forecasted in the next couple of weeks is NYSESLAT for both the Queens and Brooklyn school. He will be working with Dr. DiGaudio to coordinate the administration of that exam also. Additionally, Mr. Obregon acknowledged that he realizes that time is getting short and the Regents exam will soon happen. Mr. Obregon also stated that he believes that, overall, things are progressing at NDCHS Queens. Mr. Obregon also thanked Dr. Asmussen, Dr. DiGaudio, and Ms. Lobato for their support in helping him assume the position of acting principal in Queens.

Mr. Tabano thanked Mr. Obregon for stepping up and helping at the Queens school and complimented him for his efforts.

Mr. Tabano then asked Dr. DiGaudio if NDCHS is scheduled for field testing since Wildcat Academies has not received any testing materials yet. Dr. DiGaudio responded that NDCHS is scheduled to receive the ELA and Living Environment field tests but has not received them yet.

VII. Facilities—Mr. Jose Obregon, Director of Operations

Benchmark 6: Board Oversight & Governance

a. Update on both buildings

Mr. Obregon reported to the board that, for the Queens school, John Palmer, who was the facilities point of contact for Barone Management is no longer with Barone. The new facility person for Barone is Sandra Encarnacion. Mr. Obregon also reported that in the last couple of weeks, Barone did complete some electrical work at the Queens school including replacing some lighting that was out and, also, addressed some of the heating issues since the stairwell heating units were not functioning properly. Mr. Obregon also stated that there were some bathrooms that were fixed that were experiencing water leaks. Mr. Obregon stated that he believes that the water leaks may persist since the piping in the building is old. Nevertheless, Mr. Obregon stated that Barone continues to respond by fixing the leaks as they happen. Mr. Obregon further reported to the board that the Queens school finally acquired the necessary NYC Food Service Establishment permit from the NYC Department of Health. This Food Service Establishment permit is a requirement that the DOE has for the school to continue serving breakfast and lunch meals. As for the Brooklyn school, Mr. Obregon confirmed that he will be meeting with Dr. Asmussen and Mr. Ramkissoon next week to discuss projected facility maintenance costs for next school year's budget.

Mr. Tabano then asked Mr. Brain Baer if he knew where the Brooklyn school was with the permanent C of O since Mr. Tabano had spoken recently to Joe Barbagallo at GKV. Mr. Baer stated that his understanding is that the fire alarm drawings have been created by CFS and are now in the hands of the

electrical contractor to do the final filing. Once that has been filed, the necessary paperwork for the final certificate of occupancy can be filed as well. Mr. Tabano asked Mr. Baer if that action by GKV part of the 6K that was allegedly owed to CFS and Mr. Baer confirmed that it was. Mr. Tabano thanked Mr. Baer that the procedures for obtaining the final C of O were in motion again.

VIII. Grants & Reports—Sara Asmussen

Benchmark 1: Student Performance

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

Benchmark 8: Mission & Key Design Elements

a. Two Trees/Walentas Foundation: Community Grant

Dr. Asmussen reported that the Two Trees/Walentas Foundation grant is due this weekend. Dr. Asmussen stated the grant will be used to support the culinary program at the Brooklyn school. A specific part of culinary program must be identified for the grant. The grant totals \$25,000. The school did get the grant in 2018 and it was taken away two weeks later after it was awarded. Notwithstanding what happened in the past, Dr. Asmussen stated that she will re-apply again this year. Mr. Tabano agreed that Dr. Asmussen should reapply.

IX. Public Comment

There was no public comment made.

X. New Business

There was no new business discussed.

XI. Adjournment

The board agreed to meet again on May 23, 2023, at 11:00 A.M. The meeting adjourned at 11:44 A.M.