

**New Dawn Charter Schools Board of Trustees  
December 18, 2023**

**Board Meeting Minutes**

**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, Ms. Emily Predmore, Data Specialist, Mr. Ashish Abraham, Recruitment and Marketing Specialist  
NDCHS: Donna Lobato, Principal  
NDCHS II: Muhammad Bilal, Principal

**I. Executive Meeting**

**II. Resolution: December 2023 Agenda—Mr. Ronald Tabano**

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

**Motion:** Ms. Jane Sun motioned to accept and approve the December 2023, Board of Trustees meeting agenda.

**Motion Seconded:** Ms. Katharine Urbati seconded the motion.

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

**III. Resolution: November Minutes—Mr. Ronald Tabano**

Mr. Tabano asked the board members if they received the November 2023 Board of Trustees meeting minutes and if they had a chance to review those minutes. After a brief discussion, the board decided to table voting until the January 2024 board meeting.

**IV. Financials—Mr. Steve Ramkissoo**

**Benchmark 4: Financial Condition**

## **Benchmark 5: Financial Management**

Mr. Tabano asked if there was a motion to accept and approve the Finance Committee notes.

**Motion:** Ms. Katharine Urbati motioned to accept and approve the Finance Committee notes.

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

**Vote:** The board voted unanimously to accept and approve the Finance Committee notes.

Mr. Ramkissoon reported to the board that the monthly financials remain consistent and similar to the previous month's report. Mr. Ramkissoon reported that student recruitment and enrollment continues and we are expecting a number of students to enroll in January. Mr. Ramkissoon then asked the board members if there were any questions regarding the monthly financial report for the Brooklyn school. There were no questions and Ms. Urbati further stated that she saw nothing that jumped out. Mr. Ramkissoon then proceeded to state that the Queens school is doing well with 307 students enrolled out of the 350-student target. The school also has a depreciation of 22K and remains in a positive revenue status. He then asked the board members if there were any questions regarding the Queens school monthly financials. There were no questions. Mr. Tabano then asked if there was a motion to accept and approve the monthly financial report.

### **a. Resolution: Monthly Financials**

**Motion:** Mr. Brain Baer motioned to accept and approve the November 2023 monthly financials

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

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

### **b. Resolution: Staff Incentives**

Mr. Tabano stated that the board members had a chance to review the proposed staff incentives. He also asked Dr. Asmussen if there were any changes to the proposed staff incentives and Dr. Asmussen stated that there was a \$1,000 increase in the total amount. Mr. Tabano asked the board members if there were any objections and, if not, was there a resolution to accept and approve the staff incentives. There were no questions or objections by the board members.

**Motion:** Mr. Brain Baer motioned to accept and approve Staff incentives.

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

**Vote:** The board voted unanimously to accept and approve the Staff incentives.

### **c. Resolution: "Buy America" statement in financial policies and procedures**

Dr. Asmussen reported to the board that it was necessary, as per the ESSA desk audit conducted by the State, to add to the financial policies and procedures the statement, “that whenever possible, the school would buy America”. Mr. Tabano asked the board members if there was a motion to include this statement in the school’s financial policies and procedures.

**Motion:** Mr. Brain Baer motioned to accept and approve the statement in the school’s financial policies and procedures, “that whenever possible, the school would buy America”.

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

**Vote:** The board voted unanimously to accept and approve the statement in the school’s financial policies and procedures, “that whenever possible, the school would buy America”.

**d. Resolutions:** There were no other resolutions.

#### **V. Staff Recruitment—Dr. Sara Asmussen**

Dr. Asmussen reported to the board that the Queens school is conducting several interviews. There is still a need for more SPED teachers and Math teacher. However, the Queens school did hire a Global Studies and Science teacher. The school also hired a SPED teacher. Currently the school still needs a Math, SPED, PE, and ELL teacher to fill those four (4) open positions. Dr. Asmussen also stated that the school was able to hire a fabulous aspiring teacher.

#### **VI. Student Recruitment—Mr. Ashish Abraham**

##### **Benchmark 6: Board Oversight & Governance**

##### **Benchmark 7: Organizational Capacity**

Mr. Abraham reported that since November 21, 2023, there have been fifteen (15) new student enrollments in the Brooklyn school and eleven (11) new student enrollments at the Queens school since the last board meeting. Mr. Abraham stated that the schools are a little behind the target enrollment goals. Nevertheless, there are many new partnerships made in Brooklyn with neighboring and local schools. Mr. Abraham also stated that he has a few meetings scheduled with these neighboring schools, especially in Brooklyn, for the upcoming new year that he will introduce New Dawn Charter Schools, its mission, and enrollment process.

#### **VII. School Updates**

##### **a. Brooklyn—Ms. Donna Lobato**

Ms. Lobato informed the board that the focus now is on Regents exams. She is meeting with teachers to plan how to best prepare students for the exam. Additionally, students are being prepared by focusing on specific sections of the Regents exam. She also confirmed that the NYSTLL exams were ordered. Ms. Lobato also stated that daily attendance is improving across the board. Also, student event committees are working hard to get students involved and thereby improve their attendance. There is also now a new student council. Ms. Lobato also stated that the basketball team is also helping to create more student participation. Mr. Tabano asked the board members if there were any questions for Ms. Lobato. There were no questions.

#### **b. Queens—Mr. Muhammad Bilal**

Mr. Bilal stated that the Queens school is also focusing on Regents exams. Students are taking mock Regents exams to prepare for the actual Regents exams. Mr. Bilal further stated that the mock Regents will be graded by Wednesday. This will allow the teachers to analyze the data and have some conversations about how we are going to “prep” the students before they take the actual Regents in January 2024. Mr. Bilal also stated that he will work closely with Dr. DiGaudio to get that data, to compile that data, and to have discussions with the teachers moving forward. The goal is to increase student outcomes on the Regents exams and all subjects. Mr. Bilal also reported to the board that student mediation has started and this mediation is highly effective. Teachers are requesting these mediations and students are requesting them as well. The goal is to allow teachers and students to have conversations regarding how they feel about what is happening in class. Mr. Bilal also stated that these mediations are in alignment with restorative circles, which is one of several key initiatives in both schools. Regarding staff hiring, Mr. Bilal confirmed that there are some strong candidates that will be coming in the first week of January 2024 to interview for the Physical education teacher and Math position. The Math teacher candidate has a master’s degree in education. This candidate also is SPED certified in adolescent education and math. The candidate will do his demo lesson on Wednesday. Finally, Mr. Bilal stated that the school is also seeking an ELL teacher.

#### **VIII. Facilities—Mr. Jose Obregon**

##### **a. Update on COO for Brooklyn—Mr. Baer & Mr. Ramkissoon**

Mr. Brian Baer informed the board members he reached out to the Metropolis team to renew the temporary certificate of occupancy. He further stated that since the day of the last board meeting, Metropolis had not responded back to him. Mr. Baer called and left multiple messages for both Bruno and Kayla of Metropolis but to date has received no response. Mr. Baer stated that he expects that they are working on the TCO renewal. Mr. Baer also stated that he knows that the transfer of delegation for the place of public assembly for Brooklyn has occurred, but after checking the website on Friday, it does not show that that delegation was transferred from GKV to Metropolis. Mr. Baer also stated that he does not know if that is an IT issue or if it just takes an extra day or two to follow that through. Mr. Baer also stated all the other vendors have been notified of what they need to do and we are just waiting for them to respond. Mr. Baer stated that it is frustrating when people do not respond. Mr. Ramkissoon also stated that CFS has not responded either and he believes that the school will have to pay them \$6,800 that they claim is due to them to get them to respond. Mr. Ramkissoon stated that he will pay only after CFS completes the “as built” certifications that are necessary. Mr. Baer also stated that the plumbing contractors are waiting for CFS to complete their part.

##### **b. Update on Queens issues—Mr. Ramkissoon**

Mr. Ramkissoon informed the board that Dr. Asmussen, himself, and Mr. Obregon met with the landlord, Mr. Scott Barone, and discussed building maintenance issues that needed to be addressed. Mr. Obregon took Mr. Barone and his team around the building and showed Mr.

Barone what needed to be fixed. Mr. Barone agreed to fix the outstanding maintenance issues in the building. Mr. Ramkissoon further stated that aside from the maintenance issues that were identified by Mr. Obregon, the main issue was to go over the lease and the renovation of the kitchen including the renovation of the kitchen and the disposal of the current old kitchen equipment. The demolition of one of the kitchen walls, asbestos abatement, electrical work, and installation of new equipment were also discussed with Mr. Barone. Mr. Ramkissoon informed the board that Mr. Barone was told that he would have full ownership of the new kitchen equipment even if New Dawn vacated the premises in the future. Mr. Barone was also asked to agree to let a third party CTE program come to the school and provide medical instruction for New Dawn students. Mr. Ramkissoon stated that he will contact the school attorneys to draw up a lease amendment reflecting these proposals. Mr. Barone did not object to any of the proposals that were discussed at that meeting since culinary and medical programs will certainly bolster student enrollment that will benefit Barone Management. What Mr. Barone insisted on before he agreed to any of the proposals discussed is that the school sign the condo-lease agreement.

Dr. Asmussen also stated that she believes that letting Barone use the asbestos abatement contractor that they used for the roof project is the best solution for that project. Mr. Ramkissoon also stated that Mr. Barone is very much interested in assisting the school obtain bids for any kitchen equipment that is to be purchased.

Mr. Brian Baer cautioned that we should ensure that whoever does the asbestos removal is fully licensed. Finally, Mr. Obregon stated that the architect is still waiting for the electrical drawings and that he will push the electrician to get those completed this week.

**c. Update on Kitchen Reno— see above.**

**X. New Business**

No new business was discussed.

**XI. Public Comment**

No public comment was made.

**XII. Adjournment**

The board of trustees meeting adjourned at 11:32 A. M. The next board of trustee meeting was scheduled for January 23, 2024, at 11:00 A. M.