

New Dawn Charter Schools Board of Trustees

December 16, 2025

11:00 a.m.: 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, Brian Baer, Secretary, Mr. Jeffrey Casio, board member, Mr. Daniel Lewis, board member.

Board Members Absent: Ms. Katharine Urbati, Treasurer

Staff Members/ Visitors Present: NDCS: Dr. Sara Asmussen, Executive Director; Mr. Steve Ramkissoon, Director of Finance; Ms. Emily Predmore, Data Specialist; Ashish Abraham, Director of Student and Staff Recruiting; Ms. Nazli Flores, Director of Student Supports; Ms. Annick Aska, College and Career Manager; Mr. Philip Weiden, Grants Manager; and Ms. Dominique Fuentes, Director of HR.

NDCHS: Ms. Donna Lobato, Principal;
NDCHS II: Mr. Muhammad Bilal, Principal,

I. Introduction of new Director of HR (CHRO)

Dr. Asmussen greeted the board members and introduced the new Director of Human Resources (soon to change to Chief of Human Resources), Ms. Dominique Fuentes. Dr. Asmussen informed the board members that Ms. Fuentes has been working at New Dawn since last week. Ms. Fuentes stated that she is delighted to become part of the New Dawn family and that she is looking forward to working with the New Dawn Staff as well the New Dawn board members.

Mr. Tabano welcomed Ms. Fuentes on behalf of the New Dawn Board of Trustees.

Resolution: December 2025 Agenda—Mr. Ronald Tabano

Mr. Tabano asked the board members if there was a motion to accept and approve the December 2025 Board of Trustees meeting agenda for December 2025.

Motion: Mr. Brian Baer motioned to accept and approve the December 2025 Board of Trustees meeting agenda.

Motion Seconded: Mr. Jeffrey Casio seconded the motion.

Vote: The board voted unanimously to accept and approve the December 2025 Board of Trustees meeting agenda.

II. Resolution: November 2025 Minutes—Mr. Ronald Tabano

Mr. Tabano then asked the board members if there was a motion to accept and approve the November 2025 Board minutes.

Motion: Mr. Jeffrey Casio motioned to accept and approve the November 2025 Board of Trustees minutes.

Motion Seconded: Mr. Brian Baer seconded the motion.

Vote: The board voted unanimously to accept and approve November 2025 Board of Trustees minutes.

III. Financials—Mr. Steve Ramkissoon **Benchmark 4: Financial Condition** **Benchmark 5: Financial Management**

a. Financials

Mr. Ramkissoon reported to the board members that as of this date, both schools are on track to meet their financial objectives. Mr. Ramkissoon reported that the Brooklyn school has two hundred ninety (290) students enrolled versus the three hundred ten (310) students that were projected. Ramkissoon also reported that despite the difference in actual enrollment and projected enrollment, the Brooklyn school continues to do well financially. Mr. Ramkissoon also stated that the Brooklyn school has a financial surplus although that may change as the year progresses. Notwithstanding any changes in that surplus, Mr. Ramkissoon informed the board members that he expects the school to continue to do well financially. Mr. Ramkissoon then informed the board members that Queens school is currently at two hundred eight-seven (287) students enrolled and that that enrollment number may change once the Queens school processes students for discharge. Mr. Ramkissoon also stated that despite any drop in enrollment, he still expects the Queens school to remain financially strong. He also mentioned that student recruitment is still at a pause but that once the student committee meets and Dr. Asmussen approves, recruiting will re-start once again. Mr. Ramkissoon confirmed that he sent a copy of the monthly financial report to all the board members and asked if there were any questions. There were no questions from the board members.

Mr. Tabano then asked the board members if there was a motion to accept and approve the November 2025 financials.

Motion: Mr. Brian Baer motioned to accept and approve the November 2025 financials.

Motion Seconded: Mr. Jeffrey Casio seconded the motion.

Vote: The board voted unanimously to accept and approve the November 2025 financials.

IV. Contracts/Policies—Dr. Sara Asmussen
Benchmark 1: Student Performance
Benchmark 2: Teaching and Learning
Benchmark 5: Financial Management
Benchmark 6: Board Oversight & Governance

a. Resolution: DB Services

Dr. Asmussen explained to the board members what the DB services is about and why she is asking the board to approve it. Dr. Asmussen explained to the board members that there is a need for a separate way to collect data and that this new program will merge all the school data from the various platforms currently used. Dr. Asmussen also stated that the program will eliminate the need for manual input, which normally takes days to accomplish. Secondly, the program will decrease the possibility of human error. Dr. Asmussen also stated that the goal is to design a system, a platform, where all the existing system information is kept. This new program will also eliminate the need to train all staff members on how to use a new program. For example, all staff like the Jupiter program. The staff will continue to use Jupiter. Subsequently, DB services will be able to download information from Jupiter into a database. Dr. Asmussen further stated that DB services can be highly creative when it develops this new platform. It will be able to download all the information that is inputted into the other systems such as BOCES and ATS. Dr. Asmussen re-emphasized that this will minimize human error drastically and will allow the user to track data more efficiently. Dr. Asmussen also informed the board members that Ms. Emily Predmore and Mr. Ed Peterman have looked at several systems from four (4) different companies and that she believes that this is the best program that meets the school's needs.

Dr. Asmussen further explained that unlike the program PowerSchool, the DB Services program will not require the whole staff to be trained rather, just the two or three people that will be using it. Dr. Asmussen also stated that the advantage of DB services is it uses FileMaker, which is a database that is open source. Therefore, if the school leaves DB Services or the company ceases to exist, the school retains the data File Maker transfers. This is not the case with programs with the other programs that were looked at. If the school terminates a contract with a company that has proprietary ownership, the school will have to also give up the program. Whereas with File Maker and DB Services, the school will be able to do anything it wants with it. Dr. Asmussen further stated that the estimated cost for DB services is approximately \$13,780. Dr. Asmussen also stated that this total may increase, but not by a significant amount if the school requires any additional reports.

Dr. Asmussen recommended storing all data pertaining to DB Services on the cloud because otherwise the school will have to purchase a new server. Currently, the school has a dedicated server and there will not be sufficient room to store more information on that server. The cost for storage will be \$225 per month. There is also a license fee, which costs \$115. per user annually. Dr. Asmussen stated that there will be only three (3) users. Therefore, the total price will be under \$15,000.

Mr. Tabano then asked how long it will take to develop this database for the school. Dr. Asmussen stated that DB Services stated that it would take four (4) weeks, but she believes it

will be ready to be used by March or April 2026. Dr. Asmussen also stated that once the database is set up it will take a week or two to get familiar with it but it will be important for the schools' renewals. Mr. Tabano replied that this new program can simplify many things unlike PowerSchool and that it sounds like a good move. Dr. Asmussen also added that she spoke with school representatives from a school in Rhode Island and they confirmed that DB Services was easy to work with and they were very happy with the end product.

Mr. Tabano then asked the board member if there was a motion to accept and approve the contract offer from DB Services.

Motion: Mr. Brian Baer motioned to accept and approve the contract offer from DB Services.

Motion Seconded: Mr. Dan Lewis seconded the motion.

Vote: The board voted unanimously to accept and approve the contract offer from DB Services.

b. Friends of ND Lease

Dr. Asmussen explained to the board members that Friends of New Dawn is a vehicle by which facilities funding is managed and used to pay lease expenses at Queens school. Dr. Asmussen then asked the board for approval to proceed with the lease agreement for the Queens school with Barone Management. Mr. Tabano then asked the board members if there was a motion to accept and approve the Friends of New Dawn Lease agreement.

Motion: Mr. Brian Baer motioned to accept and approve the Friends of New Dawn Lease agreement.

Motion Seconded: Mr. Dan Lewis seconded the motion.

Vote: The board voted unanimously to accept and approve the Friends of New Dawn Lease agreement.

VII. HR & Staff Recruitment—Ms. Dominique Fuentes Benchmark 2: Teaching and Learning

a. Brooklyn: Aspiring

b. Queens: Behavior Specialist, SPED

c. Update on HR activities

Ms. Fuentes informed the board members that she is in the process of revamping the Indeed and LinkedIn NDCS pages to include the EOC statement language as well as the school's mission statement for branding purposes; she is also in the process of organizing a review of the school's job descriptions. Ms. Fuentes will also review the organization's best practices, put all pertinent documents into a library, draft and finalize the evaluation process, which will include the

Danielson Framework for teachers. There will be two separate evaluation templates which will address administration, support staff, and educators. Ms. Fuentes is in the process of initiating a full onboarding process for new staff and is working on standardizing this process. The next step will be to begin outreach for an employee assistance program.

IX. Student Recruitment—Mr. Ash Abraham
Benchmark 6: Board Oversight & Governance
Benchmark 7: Organizational Capacity

a. Status of Current Recruitment: Closed

Mr. Abraham confirmed that student enrollment is paused at both schools, but he continues to work with the student recruitment committee to update the enrollment forms including the risk categories. Details such as student age, number of credits earned, and number of Regents passed, will be reviewed before new students are enrolled, with the goal being to enroll those who are older with fewer credits and Regents passed. Mr. Abraham confirmed that he is waiting for a new student enrollment start date from Dr. Asmussen which will be by the end of January 2026. Mr. Abraham also stated that when he receives permission from Dr. Asmussen to begin, he will begin the student enrollment process and will include parent coordinators at both schools.

b. Update on Committee Work

Mr. Abraham stated that New York City has developed risk categories. New Dawn in Brooklyn has seen a drop from 87% of their students being classified at-risk to a level of 65%. New Dawn in Queens only has an at-risk population of 57%. This is not good and not who New Dawn as a transfer school is mandated to serve. These include consideration of student age, number of credits, and the number of Regents a student has passed. Mr. Abraham stated that as an example, if there was a 16-year-old student who has 11 to 22 credits, technically that student would not be considered over-aged and under-credited. Whereas if there was a 16-year-old student with no credits earned, would be considered as over-aged and under-credited. Mr. Abraham stated that these are some of the factors that will be reviewed during the new student enrollment process. Having 35% and 43% of the students on track to graduate with their cohort group in four to five years has greatly increased the graduation rate, but this is not the group of students we should be serving. We need to readjust and get back to enrolling real transfer students.

Mr. Tabano stated that it is good that these new risk factors mandated by the state of New York are recognized and implemented in the schools recruiting plans. Mr. Tabano stated that the pause in student recruiting is well-timed so that both schools can adjust recruiting plans accordingly to meet these new requirements.

X. School Updates

a. Regents Results and Attendance—Dr. Sara Asmussen

Dr. Asmussen reported to the board that she was extremely happy and excited to report that Ms. Andrea Shinghirtis, Ms. Caritas Nzeyimana, who is now retired, Ms. Althea Dinnall, Mr. Fabrice

Allais, Mr. Marcus Fennell, Ms. Kyshaya Adams, and Ms. Danielle Tennant all outperformed NY State with their student regents test results. Dr. Asmussen further stated that this is the first time that this has ever happened and that this news is inspirational for all. Mr. Tabano congratulated Dr. Asmussen. Dr. Asmussen also confirmed that these test results included the new Biology exam that was given during this Regents examination period and it demonstrated an 86% proficiency rate. Mr. Tabano stated that he was informed that the new Biology test is harder than the old Living Environment Regents which Dr. DiGaudio confirmed. Dr. DiGaudio further stated that there is a series of readings and students must analyze those readings. For example, one of the graphs on the test was a page long and students had to review and analyze it, answer questions, and provide written responses. Dr. DiGaudio stated that this involves several skills. Mr. Tabano asked if the Living Environment Regents were going to be terminated in June 2026 and Dr. DiGaudio confirmed that it was and that there will be a new ELA regents exam commencing in June 2026 as well.

b. Internship/Culinary—Ms. Nazli Flores

Ms. Flores informed the board that she will be going on maternity leave soon and will be out for the next few months. She also introduced Ms. Annick Aska as the new College and Career Manager for both schools. Ms. Aska was internship coordinator at the Brooklyn school and in her new role she will be overseeing the Internship and CTE programs at both schools. Ms. Aska greeted the board members and Mr. Tabano thanked her for taking on her new role and responsibilities.

c. Queens—Mr. Bilal

Dr. Asmussen confirmed that Mr. Bilal is still out on medical leave.

d. Brooklyn—Ms. Donna Lobato

Ms. Lobato reported to the board that the Brooklyn school has started peer mediation training. The school received a grant from New York State to fund this training. Ms. Lobato also stated that the timing for this training is perfect since the school is experiencing an increase in student conflicts. The training will take place over the course of approximately two (2) weeks. Students will be trained and will be involved in lower-level mediations. Dr. Lobato also informed the board that one student IEP was recently audited by CSC, which is normal at this time of the year.

Finally, Ms. Lobato informed the board members that upon returning from the upcoming break, Regents preparation will begin. Mr. Tabano thanked Ms. Lobato.

XI. Facilities—Mr. Jose Obregon & Mr. Brian Baer

a. Update on Kitchen work in Queens

Mr. Brian Baer informed the board members that a fourth fire alarm vendor is coming to do a tour of the Queens school facility this week. Mr. Baer stated that he hopes the school does not need to spend even close to \$400,000 on a new fire alarm system. Mr. Baer also stated that based

on the installation that was done at the Brooklyn school a few years ago and current market pricing, installation costs should not be \$400K. Mr. Baer stated that he believes it should be about half of that projected cost and he expects when the vendor does come out to the Queens school the school will be able to get better pricing. Mr. Tabano asked Mr. Baer how long the fire alarm project will take to be completed once it is approved. Mr. Baer stated that he believes it will take four to five weeks to complete. Mr. Baer stated that Mr. Jose Obregon is confident that this vendor is looking to get better pricing by researching missing documentation at the DOB.

b. TCO versus COO

Mr. Brian Baer reported to the board members that efforts to get the final CCO are continuing and that there is good movement with FDNY. Various documents have been collected and submitted to FDNY. Mr. Baer stated that the school is now waiting for FDNY's final determination, and he is hoping to get that closed out. Mr. Baer stated that it will happen after the first of the year, but he is optimistic that this will get resolved soon.

c. Roof in Brooklyn

Mr. Baer informed the board members that he has submitted the revised pricing for the Roof project in Brooklyn and final documentation must be submitted once the final COO is obtained. The final COO is required to complete the student exercise area on the rooftop of the Brooklyn school.

Mr. Tabano asked the board members and staff present if there was any new business.

XII. New Business

Dr. Asmussen informed the board that Mr. Philip Weiden is NDCS's new grant manager and that he has been busy working on several grant opportunities in the last two weeks. Dr. Asmussen also mentioned that Mr. Weiden worked with Mr. Casio regarding the YMCA Grant. Mr. Tabano welcomed Mr. Weiden.

XIII. Public Comment

No public comment was made.

XIV. Adjournment

The Board of trustees agreed to meet again on January 27, 2026, at 11:00 A.M. The meeting was adjourned at 11:40 A.M.