

New Dawn Charter Schools Board of Trustees

April 22, 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
547-505-9101**

Board Members Present: Mr. Ronald Tabano, Chairperson, Mr. Brian Baer, Secretary, Mr. Jeffrey Casio, board member, Mr. Daniel Lewis, board member.

Board Members Absent: Ms. Katharine Urbati, Treasurer

Staff Members/Visitors Present: Dr. Sara Asmussen, Executive Director, NDCS, Mr. Jose Obregon, Director of Operations, NDCS, Mr. Steve Ramkissoon, Director of Finance & HR, NDCS, Dr. Lisa DiGaudio, Director of Curriculum and Instruction

Mr. Ron Tabano called the board meeting to order and asked the board members if there was a resolution to approve and accept the April 2025 Board meeting agenda.

I. Resolution: April 2025 Agenda— Mr. Ronald Tabano

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

Motion Seconded: Mr. Jeffrey Casio seconded the motion.

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

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

Mr. Ron Tabano asked the board members if there was a resolution to accept and approve the March 2025 Board meeting minutes.

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

Motion Seconded: Mr. Daniel Lewis seconded the motion.

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

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

Mr. Ramkissoon reported that the Brooklyn school has increased enrollment. Mr. Ramkissoon also stated that despite not being at the 350-student enrollment goal, the school is on track to meet financial projections for the end of the year. Mr. Ramkissoon also stated that the Queens school has 347 students enrolled in vs. the 325-student enrollment goal. Mr. Ramkissoon also stated that because the Queens school exceeded the student enrollment goal, it has a budgetary surplus from what was originally forecasted. Given these numbers, Mr. Ramkissoon reported to the board that he sees no significant issues financially for either school. Mr. Ramkissoon then asked the board members if there were any questions regarding the March 2025 financial report. There were no questions.

Mr. Tabano then asked the board members if there was a motion to accept and approve the February 2025 financial report.

a. Financials

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

Motion Seconded: Mr. Jeffrey Casio seconded the motion.

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

VI. New Dawn Expansion – Dr. Asmussen

a. Potential Sites

Dr. Asmussen informed the Board that there had been discussions with several people about opening a new school. After discussing this with several people, it was decided that Newburgh, New York, would be the best location. Dr. Asmussen stated that she would like to open this new school with a CTE program as part of its curriculum. Dr. Asmussen also stated that Dr. Lisa DiGaudio was looking at a few potential sites in Newburgh for the new school site including the NYS Armory.

Mr. Tabano stated that Newburgh needs a school like New Dawn since they are struggling with a high drop-out rate. He did acknowledge past issues with charter schools in Newburgh but felt Newburgh may be amenable to having a New Dawn school.

b. Organizational Changes

Mr. Tabano then asked the board members if there was a resolution to submit an intent to Apply letter.

c. Resolution: Submission of Intent to Apply Letter

Motion: Mr. Brian Baer motioned to accept and approve the submission of an Intent to Apply Letter.

Motion Seconded: Mr. Daniel Lewis seconded the motion.

Vote: The board unanimously voted to accept and approve the submission of an Intent to Apply Letter.

VII. Contracts/Policies—Dr. Sara Asmussen

Benchmark 1: Student Performance

Benchmark 2: Teaching and Learning

Benchmark 5: Financial Management

Benchmark 6: Board Oversight & Governance

a. None

VIII. Staff Recruitment—NA

Benchmark 2: Teaching and Learning

a. All positions filled; always hiring SPED teachers.

Dr. Asmussen stated that there was a SPED teacher hired in Brooklyn, but Queens still needs SPED teachers.

IX. Student Recruitment—Mr. Ashish Abraham

Benchmark 6: Board Oversight & Governance

Benchmark 7: Organizational Capacity

a. Status of Current Recruitment

Mr. Ramkissoo reported for Mr. Abraham that student recruitment is paused in Queens, but it is continuing in Brooklyn. Mr. Ramkissoo stated that appointments are still being made by Mr. Abraham for potential enrollment of students in Brooklyn and that the school is striving to meet its recruitment goals before September 2025.

X. School Updates

Dr. Asmussen reported to the board members that the demographics have not changed. There is 47% SPED student population in Brooklyn and 36% in Queens which include the same racial percentages. Dr. Asmussen also stated that both schools are struggling with the attendance rate. Dr. Asmussen stated that although there are some students that come in on a regular basis, the attendance rate does not exceed 50%. Before the pandemic, attendance rates were between 60 and 65%. The outreach teams are still going out and there are some students who are returning as a result.

Dr. Asmussen stated that the school has not had its third year visit yet. Regent Pratt has come in, but the charter school office has not visited. Dr. Asmussen further stated that she wants to break it down by the group of kids that come in all the time, look at those students' grades, and compare them to those students who do not come. Dr. Asmussen also stated that bulletin boards will be put up for PBIS so students can see these results. The results will show, for example, if you come to school 80% of the time, your chances of getting A's and B's are 80%.

Mr. Tabano stated that he also faces the same challenges in his school and much of the poor attendance is a result of the COVID pandemic and which caused students to feel that they did not want to come back to school because they were older. Dr. Asmussen also stated that there is a level of despondency that many students are dealing with that makes them feel like they have nothing to look forward to.

a. Regents Results and Attendance—Dr. Sara Asmussen

Dr. Asmussen reported to the board that ELA Regents results were lower than usual and that the ELL group results in ELA were very low. Dr. Asmussen further reported that the Math Regents scores were also very low. The science results were good with a pass rate of 73% in Brooklyn and 65% in Queens. Dr. Asmussen also reported that the subgroups did very well. 80% of students in Brooklyn with IEPs passed the Science Regents and 100% passed in Queens. The Global Regents results were also exceptionally good with an 84% pass rate in Queens and a 66% pass rate in Brooklyn. U.S. History Regents resulted in an 67% pass rate in Queens and an 83% pass rate in Brooklyn. Further, Dr. Asmussen stated that these results indicate that when students understand a subject, they will do well. She further stated that this is why Math is going to continue to be challenging as will ELA be for ELL students.

b. Brooklyn—Ms. Donna Lobato

Ms. Lobato stated that she is having department meetings with English and math teachers since these were the most challenging subjects during Regents exams. Also, the school is still working and using NTN as a consultant once a month. Ms. Lobato also stated that stamina is one of the weaknesses that is being worked on school-wide since students are having difficulties working through problems or doing sustained reading. Ms. Lobato also stated that consultants also work with staff schoolwide. There is continuous PD for staff, which is scheduled during prep periods. Today, the focus is on writing. Ms. Lobato also informed the board members that C week meetings are taking place where students are informed of their credits, Regents outcomes, behaviors, and if they are ready to transition to AB week. Discipline is emphasized and

especially if a student has many infractions since negative behavior will affect the decision to send that student to an internship site or not. Ms. Lobato also informed the board members that there will be both a Living Environment and Biology Regents given this June. Students will have two (2) opportunities to take and pass at least one of those Science Regents.

c. Queens—Mr. Muhammad Bilal

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

a. Update on Kitchen work in Queens

Mr. Brian Baer informed the board members that the kitchen project is progressing very well. The new slab has been poured and the kitchen hood to outsize. Mr. Baer also stated that he had a discussion with Mr. Ramkissoo about the new gas line and the appropriate change-order value was agreed upon. Mr. Baer also stated that he has not heard back from the building owner yet, so he is assuming that all is right. The end of May 2025 is the target date for completion of the kitchen project.

b. TCO versus COO

Mr. Baer informed the board that there were conversations with the expediter and several of the subcontractors regarding conditions for the approval of the permanent COO for the Brooklyn school. Mr. Baer stated that the last time he checked, it was now in the consultants' hands. He is expecting that this process gets completed sooner rather than later. Mr. Baer also stated that the FDNY has a request for the final fire alarm inspection. Mr. Baer stated that he believes that the school is one to two weeks out from the fire alarm inspection. However, there is no exact date yet from FDNY yet.

c. Roof in Brooklyn

Mr. Baer informed the board members that the set of drawings from the architect were revised and sent to the land use attorney so that they can continue with their BSA process. Mr. Tabano asked if there were any questions. There were no questions. Dr. Asmussen asked if the ballasts were changed for the emergency lights in Brooklyn. Mr. Obregon stated that they have not yet and that he will continue to follow up.

XII. New Business

Mr. Tabano congratulated Dr. Asmussen and Dr. DiGaudio on being nominated Outstanding School Leaders by the National Charter Schools Institute and the A-Game Community. Dr. DiGaudio informed the board members what the nomination means and explained the mission of the A-Game community which includes preventing closures of charter schools and identifying some of the stressors that charter schools face. Mr. Tabano wished both Dr. Asmussen and Dr. DiGaudio well at the upcoming A-Game conference scheduled to be held in Atlanta, GA.

XIII. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

XIV. Adjournment

The board decided to meet again on May 27, 2025, at 11:00 A.M. The meeting was adjourned at 11:40 A.M.