

New Dawn Charter Schools Board of Trustees

February 25, 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, Ms. Jane Sun, Vice-Chairperson, Ms. Katharine Urbati, Treasurer, Mr. Jeffrey Casio, board member.

Board Members Absent: Mr. Brian Baer, Secretary, Mr. Daniel Lewis, board member.

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, Ms. Donna Lobato, Principal NDCHS, Ms. Nazli Askin, Director of Student Supports College & Career, NDCS,

I. Resolution: February 2025 Board Agenda—Mr. Ronald Tabano

Mr. Tabano asked the board members if there was a resolution to accept and approve the February 2025 Board Agenda.

Motion: Ms. Katharine Urbati motioned to accept and approve the amended February 2025 Board of Trustees meeting agenda.

Motion Seconded: Ms. Jane Sun seconded the motion.

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

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

Mr. Ron Tabano asked the board members if there was a resolution to accept and approve the January 2025 Board Agenda.

Motion: Ms. Jane Sun motioned to accept and approve the January 2025 Board of Trustees meeting minutes.

Motion Seconded: Mr. Jeffrey Casio seconded the motion.

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

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

a. Financials

Mr. Ramkissoon informed the board members that both schools continue to do well with the Queens school doing slightly better. He further stated that he projects that the Brooklyn school will also improve its numbers soon. Brooklyn has two hundred twenty-seven (227) students enrolled of the targeted three hundred (300) student enrollment goal. Mr. Ramkissoon also stated that the Brooklyn school is still within the budget forecast for the school. He asked if there were any questions or concerns.

Ms. Urbati stated that she did not receive the financial report until it was published in the school meeting book. Therefore, she did not have the opportunity to scrutinize the report and conduct the necessary analysis. She asked Mr. Ramkissoon to please ensure that she receives the report well before the board meeting. Mr. Ramkissoon stated that he sent the financial report to the whole board yesterday morning. Ms. Urbati confirmed that she did not receive it. Ms. Urbati also stated that she was surprised that Brooklyn's revenue was so high despite the school having only two hundred twenty-seven (227) students enrolled. Ms. Urbati asked if this was a result of additional and un-forecasted SPED funding. Mr. Ramkissoon confirmed that additional SPED funding contributed to the revenue as well as mindful spending.

Mr. Ramkissoon informed the board members that the Queens school currently has three hundred forty-eight (348) students enrolled of the three hundred fifty student (350) cap Mr. Ramkissoon also stated that at this time last year, the Queens school revenue was a little higher, but that was because the schools are allowed a 10% overage in student enrollment. He then asked the board members if there were any questions or concerns. There were no questions or concerns.

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

Motion: Ms. Catharine Urbati motioned to accept and approve the January 2025 financials.

Motion Seconded: Ms. Jane Sun seconded the motion.

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

b. Annual Bond Presentation

Mr. Ramkissoon informed the board members that Dr. Asmussen and he met last month with the bond investors for the annual presentation. Mr. Ramkissoon also stated that he uploaded the presentation slides on the portal for everyone's information. The presentation lasted 15-20 minutes and none of the bond investors had any questions or issues with the presentation. Mr. Ramkissoon also stated that all is in order and progressing as expected.

VI. Internship Presentation—Mr. Jeffrey Casio; Mrs. Nazli Flores

Ms. Flores reported to the board that Mr. Casio has graciously accepted coming to both schools to speak of his life experiences with the students. Ms. Flores also stated that Mr. Casio's presentation went well at both schools. Students had many questions for him. Ms. Askin also stated that Mr. Casio has been collaborating with her and the internship team on developing more relationships with the community. One of those relationships is with U.S. Army recruiters. Mr. Casio invited U.S. Army recruiters to the Queens school during internship to do a presentation which went well. Ms. Askin also stated that Mr. Casio is working with the YMCA so that students can use the YMCA's sport facilities to play basketball and for other events. Ms. Askin also stated that students enjoy speaking with Mr. Casio and have sent him emails asking for help finding a job or fixing their resumes.

Mr. Casio informed the board members that in December 2024, he did two (2) presentations on December 9 and December 16 at ND Queens school and two (2) presentations on December 10 and December 17 at the Brooklyn school. location, Mr. Casio stated that he shared his professional journey, his story, and his career experience. Mr. Casio further stated that he shared with the students that he started as an employee with Burger King and later became a vice president as a market sales manager for a commercial bank. During his presentation, Mr. Casio stated that he discussed his responsibilities as a market sales manager and how he used his current position to inspire others. After the presentation, Mr. Casio stated that multiple students sent him emails to share their stories and requested assistance in updating their resumes and finding part-time jobs. Mr. Casio further stated that his other presentation focused on money skills and financial health workshops. Mr. Casio also stated that he is working with Ms. Natasha Castillo, Vice President for Community Manager, at Chase bank. Ms. Castillo also worked on the preclearance process for Chase to be able to conduct money skills and financial health workshops with students. Ms. Castillo will also send calendar invites to follow up on the next steps. Mr. Casio also stated that Ms. Castillo provided him with three (3) dates. The dates are March 14 at 12:00 PM, March 17, at 11:00 AM, and March 21 at 11am. Mr. Casio stated that he will send this to board members and the school leadership team to identify which dates work best for everyone.

Mr. Casio further informed the board members that the other presentation on December 18, 2024, was with a U.S. Army recruiter. Mr. Casio stated that this is close to his heart because he is an Army veteran and knows that Mr. Jose Obregon is also an Army Veteran. During this presentation, Staff Sergeant Coney did a presentation at the Queens location. As part of the presentation, Staff Sergeant Coney shared this professional journey with the US Army. He also invited two (2) soldiers who recently graduated from boot camp and their AIT (Advance Individual Training) courses. The new soldiers shared their personal bio prior to serving in the

Army and how the Army changed their lives. Mr. Casio stated that many students were interested during the presentation, and they sent their information to do a follow up with the U.S. Army recruiter. Mr. Casio stated that he is interested in scheduling a follow-up presentation again with Staff Sergeant Coney for the second cohort in Queens. Mr. Casio also stated that if the Brooklyn school is interested, he would gladly collaborate with the recruiter in Brooklyn to do a similar presentation.

Mr. Casio also stated that he was working with the local YMCA in Queens. Mr. Casio met with the leadership team of the local YMCA on February 20. Mr. Casio stated that he met Mr. Cedric Do and Ms. Sabrina Scott. Mr. Casio stated that Mr. Do shared his initiatives at the YMCA, and how he was able to successfully transition his YMCA from the worst performing YMCA in New York into the most successful in the five (5) boroughs. Mr. Do also asked Mr. Casio to collaborate with them on supporting the initiatives for workshop development and financial literacy. Mr. Casio also had the opportunity to discuss with Mr. Do how the school can use the YMCA gym to conduct a basketball program. Mr. Casio also stated that the YMCA has a gymnasium with workout equipment that New Dawn can use as well. Mr. Casio stated that he wants to build this relationship with Mr. Do so that we can freely use the YMCA and add it as part of the school curriculum. Mr. Do asked Mr. Casio to consider joining the YMCA board. Mr. Casio stated that he thanked Mr. Do, but Mr. Casio emphasized that he wanted to initiate the relationship between New Dawn and the YMCA first. Mr. Tabano and Dr. Asmussen thanked Mr. Casio for his work and continued support for the students.

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—Mr. Ashish Abraham

Benchmark 2: Teaching and Learning

a. All positions filled; always hiring SPED teachers.

IX. Student Recruitment—Mr. Ashish Abraham

Benchmark 6: Board Oversight & Governance

Benchmark 7: Organizational Capacity

a. Status of Current Recruitment

b. C week (freshmen) is closed at both schools as per school charters

X. School Updates

a. Regents Results—Dr. Sara Asmussen

Dr. Asmussen stated that she sent out the Regents results to all the board members. At this time the results are embargoed. Dr. Asmussen stated she has asked Dr. DiGaudio and Mrs. Lobato to talk to the school's math consultant, which the school has used for several years, to determine issues in the math classes. Dr. Asmussen stated that everyone was very pleased with the Science results. ELL students performed very well. Dr. Asmussen emphasized that this is a huge accomplishment for the school, especially when other schools drop all the incoming ELL students because they cannot pass the Regents. Dr. Asmussen further reported that Global and History did very well. Dr. Asmussen stated that the goal is 75% pass rate and that the focus for the rest of the spring term would be on English and Math. Dr. Asmussen also stated that next month, Dr. DiGaudio will do a presentation regarding what the next steps will be to get those scores up.

Mr. Tabano asked Dr. Asmussen what the SPED percentages are for both schools. Dr. Asmussen replied that the ND Brooklyn school is in the high 40% and the Queens school is in the upper 30%. Dr. Asmussen also stated that regarding ELL students, the Queens school has many more than Brooklyn.

b. Brooklyn & Queens—Ms. Donna Lobato

Ms. Lobato reported to the board members that mid-year observations are almost done in both schools, and they are going very well. Ms. Lobato also reported that both schools are focusing on doing school-wide events between both schools. The plan is to start inter-school visitation soon, where some staff from Brooklyn will go to Queens and some Queens staff will visit the Brooklyn school. The goal is for teachers to spend time with their counterparts so they can troubleshoot, do curriculum planning, get to know each other, and exchange ideas. Finally, Ms. Lobato stated that both schools are conducting field trips. In Brooklyn and Queens, students went to see, "The Great Gatsby" together. This trip was funded through the literacy grant.

Ms. Lobato also informed the board that staff have started meeting C-week students to determine if they are on track to go to a B-week schedule. Ms. Lobato also stated that one of the things that are discussed with C-week students is their credits and if they are passing their classes. Another topic that is discussed with C-week students is discipline infractions that may impact and prevent them from being assigned to internship sites. Ms. Lobato stated that students are told that the internship program is half of the program at New Dawn and is equally as important as the academic portion of their school experience. Ms. Lobato also stated she will continue to work on improving Regents results.

Mr. Casio asked Ms. Lobato if she thought that a workshop of any type could help the C-week students. Ms. Lobato said she is amenable to the idea and would talk to Mr. Casio about such an initiative.

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

a. Update on Kitchen work in Queens

Mr. Obregon informed the board members that the kitchen project in Queens is approximately 50% complete as Mr. Brian Baer forecasted. Mr. Obregon stated that he was at the ND Queens school twice over the break and he observed noteworthy progress. Mr. Obregon further stated that the contractors were installing venting units on the lower rooftop of the building. Mr. Obregon also stated that Barone management also believes that they will finish the project on schedule which is in the May 2025 period.

b. TCO versus COO

Mr. Obregon informed the board members that the design sketch, which allows the ND Brooklyn school to install the required carbon monoxide detectors, was submitted and is waiting for approval from the DOB and FDNY. Mr. Obregon also stated that Mr. Brian Baer believes that the school is close to getting that sketch approved which will allow the school to get the final COO.

c. Roof in Brooklyn

Regarding the roof project in Brooklyn, Mr. Obregon stated that Mr. Baer confirmed that the final drawings were received and submitted to the Department of Buildings yesterday and were distributed to the land use attorney as well.

Finally, Mr. Obregon informed the board members that the locks on the doors the board approved were installed in the classrooms and all the shared areas and that window blinds were also installed in all the windows at the Queen school. Dr. Asmussen stated that the teachers were very appreciative of the window blinds.

XII. New Business

There was no new business discussed.

XIII. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

XIV. Adjournment

The board decided that the next board meeting will be on March 25, 2025, at 11:00 A.M. The meeting was adjourned at 11:31 A.M.