New Dawn Charter Schools Board of Trustees
May 27, 2025

11:00 a.m.: Full Board of Trustees 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: Ms. Katharine Urbati, Treasurer, Mr. Brian Baer, Secretary, Mr. Jeffrey Casio, board member, Mr. Daniel Lewis, board member.

Board Members Absent: Mr. Ronald Tabano, Chairperson

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

Ms. Katherine Urbati called the board meeting to order and asked the board members if there was a resolution to approve and accept the May 2025 Board meeting agenda.

I. Resolution: May 2025 Agenda—Ms. Katherine Urbati

Motion: Mr. Jeffrey Casio motioned to accept and approve the May 2025 Board of Trustees meeting agenda.

Motion Seconded: Mr. Brian Baer seconded the motion.

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

II. Resolution: April 2025 Minutes—Ms. Katherine Urbati

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

Motion Seconded: Mr. Brian Baer seconded the motion.

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

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

Mr. Ramkissoon reported to the Board members that the Brooklyn school is doing much better than was originally budgeted for and he sees no issues for the remainder of the fiscal year. He then asked the board members if there were any questions regarding the Brooklyn school. There were no questions.

Mr. Ramkissoon also reported that the Queens school has stopped enrollment since it has reached its enrollment limit. He also stated that the Queens school is doing much better than the forecast budget and that he sees no issues for the remainder of the fiscal year. He asked the board members if there were any questions regarding the Queens school. There were no questions.

Ms. Urbati then asked the board members if there was a motion to accept and approve the April 2025 financials.

a. **Resolution: April 2025 Financials**

Motion: Mr. Jeffrey Casio motioned to accept and approve the April 2025 financials.

Motion Seconded: Mr. Brian Baer seconded the motion.

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

Mr. Ramkissoon proceeded to speak to the board members about assumptions that he made considering several factors including UFT salary increases, which are up by 3.6%, social security taxes, and what economists are saying about the future of the economy. Mr. Ramkissoon also spoke about grants such as the Stronger Connection and Mental health grant that the school obtained. He also spoke about the turnover rates in both schools which included a 32.8% turnover rate in Queens, 7.7% in Brooklyn, and a 0% turnover rate in admin personnel.

Mr. Ramkissoon also stated that there will be a 4% salary increase. This salary increase will address bringing up to market salary certain employees. Mr. Ramkissoon stated that current data shows an average of a 3.7% salary increase in 2025. Mr. Ramkissoon also stated that he considered the UFT data indicating a 3.25% salary increase and that the New York City Metro Area always has a premium for cost-of-living expenses. Mr. Ramkissoon also stated that per pupil funding went up by 4.5%. Mr. Ramkissoon further stated that he has factored in the budget a 15% insurance cost increase. Dr. Asmussen clarified that not everybody will be getting a 4% salary increase. Some employees will get a 2% increase and other employees will get an 8% increase to ensure that all employees are brought up to market value. Mr. Ramkissoon further stated that salary increases will also be based on performance. Mr. Ramkissoon stated that the Brooklyn school will have no issues meeting its budget goals for the next fiscal year and projects the same for the Queens school. Mr. Ramkissoon also stated that student enrollment will remain at 350 students in the Queens school. The goal is to have 700 students between both schools.

Mr. Ramkissoon also stated that medical insurance has increased by 5.1% but the school will remain with Oxford Insurance company regardless. As far as Dental Insurance, the school will be moving from Guardian to Humana. The reason for the switch is that Humana offers better benefits. Also, Oxford will be covering vision care. Mr. Ramkissoon then presented to the board what the different plans would cost, such as the Oxford Liberty plan versus the Oxford Freedom plan. Mr. Ramkissoon also stated that he will ask Oxford to do a presentation where employees can ask questions about their new health insurance plan. Mr. Ramkissoon then asked the board members if there were any questions. There were no questions. Mr. Ramkissoon then asked the board members to approve the increase in budget for the health insurance plans.

b. Resolution: Increases

Motion: Ms. Katharine Urbati motioned to accept and approve the increase in budget for the school health insurance plan.

Motion Seconded: Mr. Jeffrey Casio seconded the motion.

Vote: The board unanimously voted to accept and approve the increase in budget for the school health insurance plan.

V. Contracts—Mr. Jose Obregon
Benchmark 1: Student Performance
Benchmark 2: Teaching and Learning
Benchmark 5: Financial Management
Benchmark 6: Board Oversight & Governance

Mr. Obregon informed the board members that both schools need teacher laptops to replace those that are not functioning properly and to issue to new incoming staff members. Mr. Obregon recommended that the schools go with the I7 processor instead of the I5 processor to ensure durability and features like higher RAM capabilities. Mr. Obregon further stated that he obtained three (3) quotes from Dell, Xerox, and CDW-G, which are all reputable companies. The pricing was similar with Dell coming at approximately 1K higher than both Xerox and CDW-G. However, Mr. Obregon stated that the school has done business with DELL in the past and that the company proved reliable. Subsequently, Mr. Obregon recommended going with the DELL quote. Mr. Casio then asked if he could speak with the Dell representative to try to get a reduction in price. All the board members agreed. Ms. Urbati then asked the board members, pending the price negotiation between Dell, Inc. and Mr. Casio, whether there was a motion to approve the Dell quote for the purchase of laptops.

a. Resolution: Computer contract

Motion: Ms. Katahrine Urbati motioned to approve the Dell laptop proposal pending Mr. Casio's price negotiation.

Motion Seconded: Mr. Jeffrey Casio seconded the motion.

Vote: The board unanimously voted to accept and approve the Dell laptop proposal pending Mr. Casio's price negotiation.

VI. Staff/Student Recruitment—Mr. Ashish Abraham
Benchmark 2: Teaching and Learning
Benchmark 5: Financial Management

a. Status of Current Hiring

Mr. Ramkissoon informed the board members that New Dawn Queens is still actively seeking SPED teachers. He also informed the board members that New Dawn has conducted stay interviews with employees to inform them if New Dawn would like them to remain or not and to determine if they want to stay or not. However, Mr. Ramkissoon also stated that sometimes that commitment does change when individuals change their minds just before the new contract year begins.

b. Status of Student Recruitment

Mr. Ramkissoon informed the board members that Mr. Abraham is continuing to reach out to his contacts with the goal of recruiting students for the Brooklyn and Queens schools. Mr. Abraham has also scheduled open houses on the weekends that will accommodate parents and potential students who may want to enroll at New Dawn.

VII. School Updates

a. Brooklyn—Ms. Donna Lobato

Ms. Lobato informed the board members that students were on their senior trip to Dorney Park today. She also stated that staff are preparing for the upcoming Regents exams and that preparation is being conducted during department meetings. The focus will be on the ELA and Algebra regents. Ms. Lobato also stated that she believes that the ELA results will be good and that Algebra will continue to be a challenge. Ms. Lobato also informed the board that both the Brooklyn and Queens schools were chosen to administer a Regents field test. Ms. Lobato stated that she believes that it is good practice for students and staff as well. Ms. Lobato also informed the board that the Brooklyn school hired a new SPED teacher.

b. Queens—Mr. Muhammad Bilal

Mr. Bilal reported that observations will be completed this week. The last observation is scheduled for Friday. Next week, all post observations will be completed as well. Mr. Bilal further stated that Regents is the focus of department meetings and particularly the math and ELA regents. Mr. Bilal also stated that by tomorrow, accommodation and class assignments will be completed for the Regents. Mr. Bilal confirmed that, as far as student accommodations and what classrooms will be used, those have been confirmed. As far as records, Mr. Bilal stated that he will ensure that all student records are updated, including discharged and active student records. Mr. Bilal concluded that Queens has completed the field testing.

c. **Curriculum & Instruction: Dr. Lisa DiGaudio**

Dr. DiGaudio reported to the board that the entire month was used for administering the NSESLAT exam and that she is in the process of scoring and boxing the last of those exams. Dr. DiGaudio also stated that she has begun planning for summer school. Dr. DiGaudio further stated that there are a lot of curriculum rewrites that must occur with reflection on the biology the new ELA Regents which are scheduled for next June.

Ms. Urbati asked the board members if there was a resolution to accept and approve the Chalk Invoice.

d. **Resolution: Chalk Invoice**

Motion: Ms. Katharine Urbati motioned to accept and approve the Chalk invoice.

Motion Seconded: Mr. Jeffrey Casio seconded the motion.

Vote: The board unanimously voted to accept and approve the Chalk Invoice.

Ms. Urbati asked the board members if there was a resolution to accept and approve the 2025-2026 School Calendar.

e. **Resolution: 2025-2026 School Calendar—Dr. Sara Asmussen**

Motion: Mr. Jeffrey Casio motioned to accept and approve the 2025-2026 School Calendar.

Motion Seconded: Ms. Katharine Urbati seconded the motion.

Vote: The board unanimously voted to accept and approve the 2025-2026 School Calendar.

VIII. Facilities— Mr. Jose Obregon and Mr. Brian Baer

a. COO Update

Mr. Obregon informed the board that there are two (2) modifications that are still pending for the issuance of the final COO. These two modifications need to be resolved by FIRECOMM and the licensed electrician that is doing the job. Mr. Obregon stated that Mr. Brian Baer and he are pressing to get this never-ending task completed. Mr. Obregon stated that he will speak with Mr. Baer after the meeting to find out how close this process is close to ending.

b. Kitchen

Mr. Obregon stated that the kitchen project is projected to be completed by mid-June 2025. Mr. Obregon confirmed that the new gas pipe was installed, and the kitchen appliances were delivered and were installed also. Mr. Obregon stated that he believes that the project is close to being completed.

c. Roof

Mr. Obregon stated that Mr. Brian Baer Brian was working with the land use attorney and has submitted the necessary paperwork to the land use attorney. Mr. Obregon further stated that the school is still waiting to hear back from the land-use attorney so the project can begin. Mr. Obregon stated that he believes that the school has done its part to get that project going. Finally, Mr. Obregon asked if there were any questions on regarding any of those three subjects. There were no questions.

IX. Policies & Legal—Dr. Sara Asmussen

Dr. Asmussen informed the board members that she highlighted the policies and procedures and sent them to the board members. Dr. Asmussen confirmed that these policies and procedures are being updated for the New Dawn III charter application. Dr. Asmussen also spoke about the student discipline policy and informed the board that she will use the one that is approved and already in place. The policies will all have to be resubmitted and reapproved by the state. Dr. Asmussen asked if anybody had any questions about any of the policies. There were no questions.

a. New Dawn Charter High School III

Resolution: Admissions Policies & Procedures
Resolution: Student Discipline Policy
Resolution: Proposed First Year Calendar 2026-2027
Resolution: Code of Ethics
Resolution: By-Laws

Ms. Urbati asked the board members if there was a resolution to accept and approve the Admissions Policies & Procedures, the Student Discipline Policy, the proposed First Year Calendar 2026-2027, the Code of Ethics, and the By-Laws for New Dawn III.

Motion: Mr. Brian Baer motioned to accept and approve the Admissions Policies & Procedures, the Student Discipline Policy, the proposed First Year Calendar 2026-2027, the Code of Ethics, and the By-Laws for New Dawn III.

Motion Seconded: Ms. Katharine Urbati seconded the motion.

Vote: The board unanimously voted to accept and approve the Admissions Policies & Procedures, the Student Discipline Policy, the proposed First Year Calendar 2026-2027, the Code of Ethics, and the By-Laws for New Dawn III.

Dr. Asmussen explained to the board that the $5 million mental health grant was discontinued, and the school is submitting an appeal to have it reinstated. The $7,500 legal retainer is to save the school's place in line in case there is a need to sue. Dr. Asmussen also stated that she believes that the California AG, has taken this on as well. Dr. Asmussen further stated that charter schools are attempting to get AG James involved in taking this case on as well as national and local advocacy groups.

Ms. Urbati then asked if there was a motion to accept and approve the attorney retainer for reconsideration letter.

b. Resolution: Attorney Retainer for Reconsideration Letter

Motion: Mr. Jeffrey Casio motioned to accept and approve the Attorney Retainer for Reconsideration Letter.

Motion Seconded: Ms. Katharine Urbati seconded the motion.

Vote: The board unanimously voted to accept and approve the Attorney Retainer for Reconsideration Letter.

IX. New Business

Dr. Asmussen asked the board if they could reschedule the next meeting for another day besides June 24, 2025, since that was graduation day. The Board members agreed to have the next board meeting on Monday, July 23, 2025.

X. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

XI. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:32 A.M.