



Northside Charter High School
424 Leonard Street
Brooklyn, NY 11222
(347)390-1273
www.northsidechs.org

**Northside Charter High School
Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
May 21st, 2024, 6:00 pm ET**

Present:

Kaley Childs Karaffa - Chair, via video conference
Douglas Giles - Trustee, via video conference
Danelle Redmond - Trustee, via video conference
Willie Scott - Trustee, via video conference
Rizwan Alladin - Trustee, via video conference

Guest Present:

Muhammed Chaudhry - CEO, via video conference
Rahul Patel - Chief Academic Officer (“CAO”), via video conference
Dwight Thomas - Chief Student Services Officer (“CSSO”), via video conference
Fahim Ahmed - Director of Technology, via video conference
Tony Dinh - Chief Financial Officer (“CFO”), via video conference
Ramlah Malhi - Special Projects Coordinator, via video conference
Ashanti Blackman - Director of Student Life and Community Engagement
Maria Ortega - Consultant, via video conference

Location: See meeting notice for specific locations and video conference information. All were open to the public.

- I. **May Consent Agenda:** The Board discussed the May 2024 consent agenda, which included the April 2024 Board Meeting Minutes, April 2024 Financial Reports, and April 2024 Strategic Plan Dashboard, which had been reviewed in greater detail by the Board in its committee meetings. After discussion, on motion to approve the May 2024 Board Meeting Agenda and Consent Agenda that was seconded and carried, all were in favor.

II. Management Reports:

- A. **Key Organizational Updates:** Mr. Chaudhry reported Mr. Malloy’s last day as interim Chief Academic Officer is April 17, 2024, and expressed gratitude to Matt Molloy for his service; Mr. Chaudhry noted that Mr. Malloy would provide support with the transition to the School’s new Chief Academic Officer. He then welcomed Rahul Patel as the new chief academic officer, highlighting his extensive experience in education, particularly with the New York Department of Education and various educational ventures, including work in the department’s innovation lab. The Board emphasized that while the board directly is only responsible for hiring chief executive officers, they provided guidance and advice during this process. They also mentioned their participation in the interview process and expressed excitement about Mr. Patel joining the organization following his previous consulting work with the school.



1. Mr. Patel provided a comprehensive overview of his initial activities. Mr. Patel also discussed recent initiatives such as hosting the New York State Education Department liaison and implementing a system to support students in attending Knight school to ensure timely graduation. Additionally, he highlighted partnerships with organizations like Teachers College for teacher recruitment and the New York City retirement system to provide pension benefits for Northside teachers. Looking ahead, Patel outlined plans for staff retention, certification support, summer school, and scheduling for the upcoming academic year, emphasizing data-driven decision-making and aggressive hiring targets to fill vacancies before July 1st.

III. **Graduation Credits Update:**

- A. Mr. Patel highlighted struggles with student attendance and parental involvement, alongside the meticulous work of the guidance team, spearheaded by Robert Smith, in rectifying inaccuracies in data records. Addressing early confusion regarding regents waivers, he commended the guidance team's dedication to resolving such issues. Mr. Patel celebrated achievements including the assignment of 94 core credits to seniors, facilitating timely graduation for many. He emphasized the importance of engaging with families, navigating difficult conversations to ensure clarity on student expectations and support mechanisms. Notably, Mr. Patel expressed pride in the institution's improved graduation rate, attributing this progress to the collaborative efforts of the graduation task force. Additionally, he outlined key initiatives introduced throughout the year, such as Knight school, early regents prep, and expanded summer school offerings.
- B. Mr. Smith shedding light on concerning trends and promising developments within the student body. He highlighted a 13% decrease in senior attendance during the second semester, contributing to a 43% fail rate among seniors, partly attributed to senioritis. Mr. Smith outlined efforts to support chronically absent students and address regents exam requirements, with 14 students currently at risk of not graduating, though plans are in place to assist them. On a positive note, he reported a 7% increase in overall graduation rates since December, attributing this progress to comprehensive efforts by the guidance department, Covid Appeals task force, and initiatives such as the incomplete grade initiative and night school. Smith also provided insights into the challenges faced by other grade levels, emphasizing the unprecedented involvement of non-senior students in intervention programs like regents prep and night school. The presentation included detailed breakdowns of performance metrics and graduation rates, underscoring the complexity of the academic landscape at Northside.
- C. Mr. Thomas provided an insightful overview of the comprehensive support services offered by the guidance and student support teams at the school. He highlighted targeted outreach efforts led by Maria Hernandez and Maria Ortega to



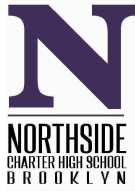
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engage with students and families, utilizing methods such as phone calls and certified mail to ensure effective communication. Mr. Thomas emphasized the importance of the attendance committee's bi-weekly meetings, particularly focusing on students facing chronic absenteeism and addressing concerns such as students living outside New York City or being over-credited. He underscored the commitment to thorough data analysis to ensure accurate classification of students and informed decision-making regarding graduation dates. Mr. Thomas also discussed ongoing initiatives to support students with special education needs, including an audit for compliance and tailored support services. Lastly, he reiterated the dedication to transparency and clarity in communicating students' graduation progress to parents, ensuring consistency and understanding through regular updates in Jupiter. Mr. Thomas recognized that there is a subgroup of students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) alongside those without. He elaborated on the tailored instructional strategies being developed for students with IEPs, emphasizing the ongoing efforts to refine and implement a Multi-Tier Systems of Support (MTSS) framework for the upcoming academic year. Mr. Thomas underscored the importance of using data to identify and address needs promptly, ensuring that all students receive appropriate support and instruction. He emphasized the holistic approach taken towards student attendance and instruction, acknowledging the diverse needs of the student body and the commitment to addressing them comprehensively.

- D.** Mr. Smith reported on the challenge posed by the conclusion of the Covid waiver for the current junior class. He observed that while seniors benefited from waived regents exams, future grades were required to sit for them, leading to a notable impact on learning and academic performance. Mr. Smith highlighted a trend of learning loss evident in students' grades and credit accumulation, as they prioritize remedial regents prep courses over advancing to more challenging content. This shift in focus has implications for academic progression, as students prioritize meeting exam requirements over broader educational growth. Smith's update underscores the ongoing impact of the pandemic on education and the importance of implementing strategic interventions to address learning disruptions.
- E.** Mr. Smith reported that each junior student will receive a letter this week outlining the specific regents exams required for graduation next year and confirming their registration for the upcoming June exams. Mr. Smith explained that the higher-than-usual number of eleventh graders registered for exams reflects this proactive approach to ensure students are prepared for graduation. Additionally, he mentioned that this information has been communicated to students through certified mail and mail merge, ensuring clarity and accountability in the process.



- IV. 10 Year Graduation Data Review:** Mr. Patel reported on the challenges revealed by a decade of graduation data analysis, noting stagnation in attendance rates and significant learning loss due to the pandemic. Despite these hurdles, Mr. Patel emphasized Northside Charter High School's above-average graduation rates and enrollment stability compared to local schools. He acknowledged the need for a comprehensive, replicable plan focusing on graduation and college access, stressing the importance of a data-driven culture and proactive accountability systems. Mr. Patel outlined strategies to strengthen talent acquisition, retention, and academic focus, with an emphasis on professional development aligned with data-driven processes. He concluded by expressing confidence in Northside's team and commitment to ongoing improvement.
- V. Student Record Example:** Mr. Thomas provided an update on efforts to streamline student enrollment processes and ensure accurate record-keeping. Collaborating with the guidance and attendance teams, Mr. Thomas outlined the creation of a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) to guide the intake and maintenance of student records. He shared a summary of the SOP's steps, highlighting its comprehensive approach from initial application to ongoing record management. Mr. Thomas noted that the SOP was developed in response to observed trends and aimed at enhancing compliance and facilitating informed decision-making. He emphasized the ongoing commitment to auditing existing records and ensuring completeness for all students, citing both compliance requirements and the need to tailor academic support appropriately. Thomas concluded by expressing openness to further improvement while affirming the effectiveness of the current SOP in enhancing enrollment processes.
- VI. New York State Education Department Matters:**
- A. Charter School Office Liaison Site Visit:** Mr. Thomas Dwight Thomas provided an overview of the recent visit of Brandy Marshall, NYSED liaison, involved in the charter renewal process for Northside. He explained that she conducted focus groups with representatives from each area of the school to gain a comprehensive understanding of Northside's operations and alignment with its charter. Thomas noted that she asked targeted questions to ensure alignment with the school's mission and vision, providing feedback on the action plan and identifying opportunities for improvement. Following the meetings, she met with the senior leadership team to share her observations and offer ongoing support for the charter renewal process. Thomas emphasized her availability as a resource for the team and underscored the importance of her insights in preparing for the renewal process.
1. Ms. Ortega noted a positive atmosphere from Brandy Marshall. She highlighted the impressiveness of Northside's 11 advanced placement classes and the interest expressed in the college readiness program. Ms. Ortega emphasized the collaborative nature of the meeting, viewing it as



an opportunity for reflection and discussion on moving forward. Overall, she conveyed a sense of optimism and cooperation in addressing the school's objectives and initiatives.

2. Mr. Patel shared additional insights from Brandy Marshall's visit, noting her emphasis on certification requirements and the need to recruit more students based on data analysis.

B. Status of Charter Revision: Enrollment Increase to 450 Students: Mr.

Chaudhry explained that while Northside has an application in process, the timeline for approval remains uncertain. The Board mentioned that the memorandum from the New York State Education Department halting reviews of enrollment increases, particularly in the New York City area. Despite this, the management and leadership teams at Northside have demonstrated consistent efforts in student recruitment, surpassing the maximum charter enrollment of 420 students. The focus remains on serving the most students effectively, with anticipation of guidance from the State Education Department in the coming months. The Board's commitment to expanding enrollment to 420 students reflects their dedication to providing quality education to a broader student body.

VII. FY 2025 Budget Narrative: Mr. Dinh provided a concise overview of the budget narrative, highlighting key changes and areas of focus for the upcoming fiscal year. He emphasized the importance of accountability throughout the organization, with directors and leads being involved in the budget-setting process and held accountable for their budgets. Monthly meetings will be held to review actual spending against budgets, and performance evaluations will incorporate budget performance. Mr. Dinh outlined changes in assessing salary increases and bonus payouts, including the implementation of a performance evaluation tool within ADP for detailed assessment. Revenue increases are attributed to approved per-pupil funding and increased student enrollment, while expenses primarily stem from additional staffing and associated costs. Despite increased expenses, the net income projection remains flat year over year. Detailed budget iterations have been provided to the board, reflecting revenue changes and expense allocations.

VIII. Committee Reports

A. Finance Committee: Mr. Alladin provided an update on financial activities, particularly focusing on reconciliations overseen by the CFO in recent months. Adjustments were made based on guidelines from auditors and generally accepted practices, particularly concerning certain expense and capital items. Despite staff changes and adjustments, the management team ensured a positive net income, highlighting the financial security of the school's finances. Mr. Alladin emphasized the adherence to accepted principles in recognizing revenue,



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including the ESSER grant and investment income, reinforcing the positive cash impact and financial strength of the school. The board remains vigilant in its fiduciary role, overseeing the organization's financial well-being.

- B. Executive Committee:** Ms. Karaffa reported that the Executive Committee discussed the transition of the Chief Academic Officer, strategies for talent retention and recruitment to support organizational success, stakeholder outreach, particularly parent engagement, was emphasized as crucial for understanding perspectives and enhancing the school's appeal. The committee also delved into graduation data, ensuring alignment between the board, committees, and the executive team. With seasoned leaders and fresh perspectives, the organization is poised for impactful growth. The meeting was characterized by rich discussions and data presentations, reflecting the board's commitment to a data-oriented focus and strategic clarity. Gratitude was expressed to the CEO and staff for their dedication, with anticipation of celebratory conversations at the upcoming board meeting and graduation.
- IX. Public Comment:** No comments were provided or questions asked.
- X. Executive Session:** There were no actions taken in an executive session; on motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded and carried, all were in favor.