



Northside Charter High School
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**Northside Charter High School
Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
October 17th, 2023, 6:00 pm ET**

Present:

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

Guest Present:

Muhammed Chaudhry - CEO
Matt Molloy - Interim Chief Academic Officer (“CAO”), via video conference
Dwight Thomas - Chief Student Services Officer (“CSSO”)
Fahim Ahmed - Director of Technology
Mahmud Ennin - Chief Financial Officer (“CFO”)
Ramlah Malhi - Special Projects Coordinator, via video conference
Ashanti Blackman - Director of Student Life and Community Engagement, via video conference
Anna Henebeng - Director of College of Readiness

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

- I. **October Consent Agenda:** The Board discussed the October 2023 consent agenda, which included the September 2023 Board Meeting Minutes and September 2023 Financial Reports, which had been reviewed in greater detail by the Board in its committee meetings. After discussion, on motion to approve the October 2023 Consent Agenda that was seconded and carried, all were in favor.
- II. **Strategic Plan Report:** The CEO presented the School’s mission, vision, core values, and key design elements from the School’s charter. The management reported to the Board on progress toward the fiscal year 2024 strategic plan goals, highlighting the Board’s goals are all progressing toward targets and milestones, the time on task goals for students are indicating improvements in student performance, recruit and retain the right talent goals are resulting in stronger employee engagement and more intentional and impactful employee performance, and replicable model are increasing operational efficiencies.
- III. **Management Reports:**
 - A. **Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) & Measures of Academic Progress (MAP):** Ms. Hennebeg reported that twenty one percent of students in



grades nine to twelve are on track for their grade levels in reading and indicated the opportunity to continue to help students achieve above the national averages. Ms. Hennebeng reported that sixteen percent of students are currently on track in mathematics for their grade level, noting a gap between their performance and the national average, that teachers observed that some students seemed less engaged and to not understand the importance of high achievement on these tests, and that she and other leaders are working with teachers to implement strategies to foster growth in this area throughout the rest of this year. Ms. Hennebeng highlighted that the ninth and tenth graders performed the best in reading and ninth graders outscored other grades in mathematics, which provides the correlation between increases in academic achievement and participation in the Summer Bridge program. Ms. Hennebeng reported the NWEA exam will be administered in mid-December and in May, to track student growth throughout the year. Mr. Molloy further highlighted the significance of the NWEA exam as a baseline assessment and a tool for socializing results with students and understanding their academic progress. He emphasized the importance of fostering a culture at NCHS where students are actively involved and engaged in discussions about their performance and the data. The Board inquired about the expected performance of high-scoring eleventh and twelfth graders on the SAT. Mr. Molloy responded that it is difficult to make an accurate prediction without more data, but that high-scoring students on the NWEA exam are generally expected to perform well on the SAT. The Board inquired about strategies for engaging students' caregivers in the testing process and ensuring they understand its importance. Mr. Chaudhry acknowledged the management team's strategic goals for better communication with caregivers and expressed plans to establish a caregiver association to improve testing culture at the School noting a national trend of declining scores among older students and emphasized the importance of developing good test-taking skills.

- B. **SAT Testing:** Mr. Molloy discussed the upcoming College Board SAT exam for seniors highlighting that the SUNY application deadline is approaching and that students will receive their SAT scores on November 16th. He explained the concept of superscoring and noted that eleventh graders will have the opportunity to take the SAT in the spring. The leadership team acknowledged the lack of space for offering a PSAT due to building constraints and informed that eleventh graders will receive practice questions through their ELA and Math classes to prepare for the spring SAT. They further reported that ninth and tenth graders will also be taking the PSAT in the spring. Mr. Molloy indicated he will continue to monitor the societal trend of de-emphasis of standardized testing and whether it is presenting as a concern in NCHS's students and caregiver communities.
- C. **CAO Department:** Mr. Molloy reported that classroom observations are occurring this week and that night school is being expanded to provide students



with more opportunities to recover credits. He noted that the School has significantly increased the resources available for special education and MLL services. He highlighted the importance of meeting New York State's mandates for these students and acknowledged the efforts of the staff to implement relevant changes and increase resources.

- D. **Regents Data:** Mr. Molloy reported the Regents data and the process for ensuring that all eligible students receive waivers and appeals. He explained that the School has identified students who should have gotten a waiver and has begun the appeals process, which is reviewed by an appeals committee that reviews requests and determines eligibility. The Board asked about the distribution of special education services across grade levels. Mr. Molloy highlighted the importance of viewing special education services as a continuum and reported the number of students that receive special education services in each grade: 32 in twelfth grade, 28 in eleventh grade, 18 in tenth grade, and 24 in ninth grade. Mr. Molloy acknowledged that the distribution of services should ideally show a downward arc as students progress through the grades, indicating a reduction in the need for specialized support; however, he noted that it is circumstance and student dependent, which may not align to the expected trend.
- E. **Attendance/Enrollment:** Mr. Thomas presented the attendance dashboard and noted the transitioning process from using Scholarship to Jupiter system, which will track daily attendance rates and identify trends in tardiness and absences and enable the Student Services Department to team to make informed decisions about interventions and programming. He noted the long-term goal is to create a comprehensive dashboard that incorporates data on teacher performance, student performance, and attendance, which will be accomplished through the use of Power BI to integrate data from various tools and provide a centralized platform for analysis and decision-making. Mr. Thomas reported this holistic view will help plan effective interventions to support students' academic success.
- F. **Caregiver Engagement:** Mr. Thomas reported that the School collects sign-in sheets for caregivers who participate in events and activities and that they are determining methods to track caregiver engagement more consistently in order to identify families who may need additional support or outreach. They further noted that the School is also working to offer more virtual engagement opportunities for caregivers. Mr. Chaudhry reported that Ms. Blackman will be presenting about the plans for the Caregiver Association at the November Board meeting. Further, he reported that the School is also hosting an event this Thursday during Latino Heritage Month to engage more caregivers and encourage them to sign up for the Caregiver Association.
- G. **Annual Report Update:** Mr. Chaudhry reported the School submitted the last component of the fiscal year 2023 annual report to the New York State Department of Education in advance of the deadline. He highlighted key data



including 86% of economically disadvantaged students were retained, 86% of English Language Learners were retained, 82% of students with exceptionalities were retained, and the School's total enrollment number was 428.

H. Early Dismissal Policy Approval: Mr. Thomas described the purpose of the early dismissal policy is to reduce early dismissals due to the negative impact on student learning and ensure student safety. The policy requires caregivers to take steps to verify their identity and explain the reason for requesting an early dismissal for a student. After discussion, on motion to approve the Early Dismissal Policy was seconded and carried, all were in favor.

IV. Committee Reports

A. Education and Accountability Committee: Mr. Scott reported the Education and Accountability Committee met with school leadership last week to align on expectations regarding the data to be presented to the committee during its quarterly meetings. Mr. Scott also indicated that the committee encouraged management to present interim updates on student performance data and request special meetings when warranted and to drive focus on student performance throughout the year.

B. Finance Committee:

1. Mr. Aladdin reported that expenditures are down due to hiring and staffing changes.
2. Mr. Alladin also reported that the School's external auditor PKF O'Connor Davies is in the process of conducting the fiscal year 2023 and that the Finance Committee will meet with the independent auditors in executive session to review the financial statements and draft IRS form 990, which will be finalized, filed, and presented at the November Board meeting.
3. Mr. Alladin further reported that the School has retained Kaizen Financial Strategies to manage its investment account, which is currently outperforming the market. He noted the Finance Committee met with Mr. Iftikhar Ahmed in September to review the portfolio's performance and will meet with him on a quarterly basis.

C. Executive Committee: Ms. Karaffa reported that the Executive Committee met with the CEO to review the draft of the early dismissal policy and discussed implementation of the strategic goals and plans to promote a data-driven and performance-based culture, as well as its focus on matters of culture for employees, students, and caregivers. She noted that there has been positive momentum in the way that the CEO has been working with key members of the leadership team to create an organization that focuses on operational excellence and continuing to strive for achieving, setting and achieving higher goals.

V. Public Comment: No questions or comments were received.

VI. 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.