

**Board Minutes**  
**The New Academy Charter School**

Minutes of the general meeting of the Board of Directors of The New Academy Charter School held on September 11, 2025.

- I. The meeting was called to order by Mr. William Nunn. Mr. Ken Curcio, Ms. Katie Micco and Ms. Susan Creighton were present. Representative Joe Preston and Mr. David Caliguiri were excused.
- II. In accordance with applicable law, Notice of Publication of the meeting was advertised in the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette on January 16, 2025 and the meeting was conducted at the 900 Agnew Road facility.
- III. Comments were requested from the public but there were none.
- IV. Minutes from the meeting of June 12, 2025 were reviewed and approved unanimously.
- V. Financial Report

The Financial Report was presented by Mr. Kenneth Curcio. Mr. Curcio indicated that the 2025 yearend audit had commenced. He then stated that the program was starting in a good position for the new fiscal year. The financial report was received unanimously.

VI. The Education Report

The Education Report was presented by Ms. Kristen Harpster and Mr. Jay Moser. Mr. Moser reported that enrollment was currently at 87 (breakdown listed below)

8 <sup>th</sup> Grade	3
9 <sup>th</sup> Grade	21
10 <sup>th</sup> Grade	18
11 <sup>th</sup> Grade	24
12 <sup>th</sup> Grade	21

He further indicated that the total number of students with Programs for Exceptionalities is 41, 29 of which are from Pittsburgh Public Schools.

Ms. Harpster then reported the status of all New Academy Charter School pending and awarded grants as of September 5, 2025. See below:

Funder	Name	Status	Amount Pending	Amount Rewarded	Term Start Date	Term End Date
<b>Dollar Bank Foundation</b>	<b>Driving Simulator</b>	<b>Application-Submitted</b>	<b>\$17,850.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>		
<b>Redevelopment Authority of Allegheny County</b>	<b>LSA-2024</b>	<b>Application-Submitted</b>	<b>\$342,919.40</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>		
<b>Classics for Kids</b>	<b>Classical</b>	<b>Awarded</b>		<b>\$1,525.00</b>	<b>11/2/24</b>	<b>11/2/25</b>

<b>Foundation</b>	<b>Instruments</b>					
<b>Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency</b>	<b>'24-'25 School Safety and Mental Health</b>	<b>Awarded</b>		<b>\$70,000.00</b>	<b>7/1/24</b>	<b>6/30/26</b>
<b>Fruit Tree Planting Foundation</b>	<b>Orchard Grant-Charter</b>	<b>Awarded</b>		<b>\$300.00</b>	<b>2/27/25</b>	<b>5/30/25</b>
<b>Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency</b>	<b>2024 School Mental Health</b>	<b>Awarded</b>		<b>\$70,000.00</b>	<b>1/1/24</b>	<b>12/31/25</b>
<b>Pennsylvania Department of Education</b>	<b>School Improvement</b>	<b>Awarded</b>		<b>\$75,000.00</b>	<b>9/13/24</b>	<b>9/30/25</b>
<b>Pennsylvania Department of Education</b>	<b>Title I</b>	<b>Awarded</b>		<b>\$40,611.00</b>	<b>8/2/24</b>	<b>9/30/25</b>
<b>Pennsylvania Department of Education</b>	<b>Title II</b>	<b>Awarded</b>		<b>\$3,359.00</b>	<b>8/2/24</b>	<b>9/30/25</b>
<b>Pennsylvania Department of Education</b>	<b>Title IV</b>	<b>Awarded</b>		<b>\$10,000.00</b>	<b>8/2/24</b>	<b>9/30/25</b>
<b>Pennsylvania Department of Education</b>	<b>IDEA</b>	<b>Pending Receipt</b>			<b>9/1/24</b>	<b>6/30/25</b>
<b>Pennsylvania Department of Education</b>	<b>READY to Learn</b>	<b>Awarded</b>		<b>\$9,277.00</b>	<b>7/1/24</b>	<b>6/30/25</b>
<b>Western PA Food Bank</b>	<b>Partner Support Impact Grant</b>	<b>Awarded</b>		<b>\$1500.00</b>	<b>9/2025</b>	
		<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$360,769.40</b>	<b>\$281,572.00</b>		

Ms. Harpster then announced that on June 25, 2025, the Board of Public Education of the School District of Pittsburgh voted at its public Legislative Session to renew the charter of The New Academy Charter School for an additional five (5) year term, extending from July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2030.

She further indicated that the Review Team found that The New Academy Charter School met all of the following renewal criteria:

- No material violations of conditions, standards, or procedures contained in the written charter.
- No failure to meet generally accepted standards of fiscal management or audit requirements.
- No violation of provisions of the Charter School Law.
- No violation of any provision of law from which the charter school has not been exempted, including federal laws and regulations governing children with disabilities.
- No conviction of fraud.

This renewal affirms the school's compliance with state and federal requirements and reflects the confidence of the District in the school's fiscal and organizational management.

The next steps in the renewal process are as follows:

- Finalize and sign the new charter agreement with the School District of Pittsburgh.
- Communicate the renewal to staff, students, and families, highlighting this milestone achievement.
- Update internal compliance documents and reporting systems to align with the new term.
- Continue focusing on academic, operational, and financial performance to ensure a strong position for future reviews and renewals.

Ms. Harpster then outlined The New Academy Charter School's ongoing strategic work to support student recruitment and retention for the 2025-2026 academic year, including expanding enrollment within the target student population while simultaneously enhancing student engagement and persistence. See below.

### **Recruitment Efforts:**

#### **1. Community Outreach & Partnerships:**

- Continuing collaboration with local organizations to build awareness of our academic offerings.
- Continue to use presentations and information sessions at various local community hubs throughout the 2025-2026 school year.
- Leverage partnerships with organizations serving vulnerable populations to identify prospective students who may benefit from our personalized, trauma-informed model.

#### **2. Marketing & Visibility:**

- Distribute updated recruitment materials (flyers, brochures, bilingual handouts) across Pittsburgh-area neighborhoods and businesses.
- Update the school website with clearer enrollment information, success metrics, and testimonials from current students.
- Offer tours for interested students to experience a typical school day.

### **Retention Efforts:**

#### **1. Student Support & Engagement:**

- Ongoing implementation of wraparound services, including mental health counseling, academic mentoring, and family outreach.
- Increase focus on student voice via surveys and student advisory groups, shaping changes to our culture and climate.

#### **2. Attendance & Re-engagement Initiatives:**

- Develop individualized attendance plans with at-risk students, supported by home visits and family conferences.
- Launch a summer bridge program for returning students who need academic or social-emotional support to successfully transition into the next grade level.

### 3. **Family Connection:**

- Strengthen two-way communication with families through regular phone calls, Remind app messaging, tours, and school events.

Ms. Harpster then explained that the recruitment and retention plan is supported by the work done every day in the school. The school believes we can effectively attract and keep students by focusing on the excellent work we do each day. The school intends to continue to utilize outreach and marketing, and the best way to support those efforts is by ensuring we're providing an outstanding experience for students. The school currently boasts a strong and dedicated staff, a new and exciting curriculum and a commitment to provide an experience for our students that provides them with the knowledge and confidence to be successful in whatever they choose to do.

Ms. Harpster then reported on the school's safety and security measures. On August 5, 2025, staff participated in the Threat Evaluation and Reporting Overview (TERO) training, a 3-hour introductory program designed for staff, the public, and community members who play a role in identifying threats or concerning behaviors. This training emphasizes:

- The importance of community involvement in violence prevention.
- A behavioral approach to assessing threats while respecting privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties.
- Identifying risk triggers, stressors, warning behaviors, and mitigating factors.

It was noted that many individuals who plan acts of targeted violence display concerning behaviors in advance and that recognizing these warning signs and knowing where to seek assistance strengthens our ability to prevent incidents and maintain safety.

Ms. Harpster then reported on the following facility upgrades

- **Exterior doors** installed to improve building access control.
- **Exterior lighting** being upgraded to enhance visibility and deter after-hours activity.
- **Exterior cameras** being upgraded to provide expanded coverage and higher-quality monitoring.

These combined efforts demonstrate our ongoing commitment to providing a safe, secure, and supportive environment for all students, staff, and visitors.

Mr. Moser then went over IXL and the school improvement goals as follows:

<b>IXL</b>	
Goal	By June 2026, 35% of all students will show positive average monthly growth on Math IXL.
Target 1	By Sept. 30, 50% of our students will be practicing at least two skills per week in Math on IXL
Target 2	By December 30, 75% of our students will be practicing at least two skills per week in Math on IXL
Target 3	By March 30, 25% of all students will show positive average monthly growth on Math IXL.
Target 4	By June 2026, 35% of all students will show positive average monthly growth on Math IXL.
Goal	By June 2026, 35% of all students will show positive average monthly growth on ELA IXL.
Target 1	By Sept. 30, 50% of our students will be practicing at least two skills per week in ELA on IXL.
Target 2	By December 30, 75% of our students will be practicing at least two skills per week in ELA on IXL
Target 3	By March 30, 25% of all students will show positive average monthly growth on ELA IXL.
Target 4	By June 2026, 35% of all students will show positive average monthly growth on ELA IXL.
<b>Think Kids</b>	
Goal	By June 2026, responders' total average on the PA School Climate Survey will be at least 2.7.
Target 1	By Sept. 30, responders' (students) total average on the PA School Climate Survey will be at least 2.6.
Target 2	By Dec. 30, responders' (staff) total average on the PA School Climate Survey will be at least 2.6.
Target 3	By Mar. 30, responders' (students) total average on PA School Climate Survey will be at least 2.7.
Target 4	By June 2026, responders' total average on the PA School Climate Survey will be at least 2.7.
<b>Attendance Goal</b>	By June 30, at least 15% of students will have regular attendance (14 or fewer absences, attending 90% of the time).
Target 1	By Sept. 30, at least 15% of students who have a history of chronic absence (attending less than 90% of the time) will have an attendance success plan.
Target 2	By Dec. 30, our average daily attendance will be 70%.
Target 3	By March 30, at least 20% of students will have regular attendance (attending 90% of the time).
Target 4	By June 30, at least 15% of students will have regular attendance (14 or fewer absences, attending 90% of the time).

Mr. Moser further reported that this academic year, the school is excited to offer a variety of opportunities for our students. Each quarter, students will receive a calendar outlining different experiences available to them throughout the school year and will have the chance to choose one opportunity per quarter to explore and learn more about the options available to them after graduation. Some opportunities scheduled are as follows:

- A tour of **Rosedale Technical Institute** on **September 19**
- The **Preferred College Partners Fair** at the **August Wilson Center** on **September 30**
- The **2025 Mon Valley Connections College & Career Fair**
- A college visit to **Point Park University**
- A tour and presentation of the **IBEW Local 5 Union Hall**.

In addition to these experiences, the school will be utilizing **Smart Futures**, a Pennsylvania-based non-profit organization that provides career planning and readiness tools through its online platform, **SmartFutures.org**. The platform is designed to help students in grades K–12 explore careers, build employability skills, and develop a personalized career portfolio.

Smart Futures enables students to complete and store essential artifacts such as interest surveys, career plans, and reflections. These components not only help guide students in identifying post-graduation goals but also support them in fulfilling their Act 158 graduation requirements. Ultimately, our goal is to help students move one step closer to discovering the post-secondary path that best aligns with their interests and aspirations.

Mr. Moser also announced the school's new **Speaker Series!**, a new lecture series that brings local leaders and change makers into our school to share their experiences with our students. He reported that the first speaker will be the Mayor of Pittsburgh, Ed Gainey and that he will be at the school on September 24<sup>th</sup> to speak to our students. Following his appearance will be PA State Representative Jessica Benham in October and the school has commitments from Fire Chief Daryl Jones and Chief of EMS Amara Gilchrist. Our plan is to host one speaker each month.

Mr. Moser concluded his report by indicating that the school has re-engaged with **Tickets For Kids** which provides free access for low-income and at-risk kids to attend the arts, cultural, educational, and athletic venues in our community. Through partnerships with youth-serving organizations here in Pittsburgh, they strive to make trips to museums, concerts, ballgames, science centers, zoos, and more part of every childhood. Through access, they provide experiences that can spark an interest, ignite a passion, and shape a future without limits.

## VII. Legal

Mr. Norris reported that there were no new claims. A discussion was then held concerning the need to appoint a parent to the Board. Efforts by the school to find a parent were then reviewed.

VIII. New Business

The next scheduled meeting of the Board is set for Thursday, December 11, 2025.

VIV. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made, seconded, and approved unanimously.