

# 10-29 Meeting: Charter School Governance, Enrollment Strategy, and IB Program Alignment

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Attendees: Luke Copley, Martha Zornow, Nick Pozek, Joe Spar, Nana Osani, Kristan Norgrove

## Meeting Summary

- The group proceeded with a quick review

## School One-Pager and Media

- A social media/marketing consultant began last Wednesday
- Scope: 10 hours/week, may expand based on performance.
- She will produce an updated one-pager for prospective board members and donors and lead school video creation (Monica); board can provide input/resources.
- Deliverables will be shared directly with the board.

## Parent Advisory and Board Representation

- Launch a monthly parent advisory group with grade-level reps.
- Two parent reps will join the board as non-voting members; additional reps will serve on the high school advisory committee.
- Recruitment starts on the 31st with a two-week nomination window.
- Selection will be staff-led to ensure representative diversity; the advisory group will vote on roles.

## High School Advisory Committee

- Members: two parent reps, two board members (likely Nick and Doug), and select community members.
- Candidate: local nonprofit leader focused on high school students (to be confirmed).
- Annie (former board member) is interested in committee work but not full board duties.
- Consider inviting Adam Aponte (Borkin Health) or his referrals.
- Keep the committee small and action-oriented.

## **Elementary School Grant Demand Letter**

- Legal counsel will include documentation of ongoing water issues before sending.
- Clarified: pertains to the elementary school.

## **HVAC Plan**

- Vendor HVAC owes a comprehensive plan by October 31.
- If missed, the school will seek a new vendor and require a plan during vetting.
- Auto-renewal at end of December is canceled due to performance concerns.

## **DOE Space Request**

- Charter executives suggest DOE denials likely tied to class size caps and space constraints; timelines can be long and proposed buildings may be insufficient.
- Preference: avoid DOE space due to cultural challenges, despite cost.

## **Bondholder and Ratings Agency**

- Bondholders: quarterly reporting now required; meeting went well. Legal follow-up planned; change needs ~two-thirds approval.
- Ratings: Garrett is tied up with the audit. Action: email S&P analyst with investor materials and offer a meeting; reuse existing deck.

## **Enrollment Overview**

- Statewide declines of at least 6.3% (2023–2024); raw data suggests up to 15% over five years. NYC down ~12%.
- Manhattan charter enrollment down ~8% from 2023–2024 to 2024–2025; Brooklyn also down.
- Drivers: affordability and relocation; families prefer neighborhood schools over cross-borough travel due to busing limits.
- Kindergarten down ~4% citywide; likely higher in Manhattan.
- Focus: engage families earlier via pre-K; explore 3K engagement within constraints.

## **Attrition and Culture**

- Sample: feedback from ~74% of 107 withdrawals; 26% gave no reason.
- Within-control attrition (~20%): classroom management and behavior were top themes; some cited curriculum, class size, and facility issues (e.g., water leaks).

- Most leavers moved to large charter networks (Success, Democracy Prep, KIPP).
- Last year's culture challenges stemmed from a critical mass of high-need students; this year shows significant improvement through clearer parent communication and targeted culture investments.
- Suggested validation: track behavior referrals, teacher feedback, parent evaluations, and teacher turnover.

## **Family Logistics**

- After-school was not a primary driver of attrition, but transportation and pickup timing were barriers.

## **Enrollment Action Plan**

- Continue enrollment meetings and belonging initiatives.
- Revise withdrawal form to capture nuanced reasons and destinations.
- Enhance marketing/digital presence: new staff connecting the school to Harlem-focused Facebook and Instagram groups to boost visibility.

## **Assessment and Equity**

- State test data shared; comparative data expected in November.
- Leadership focus: apply an equity lens to support students with strong attendance but low performance (e.g., school-funded Kumon).
- Board: balance equity interventions with performance metrics needed for charter renewal; full discussion deferred until comparative data is available.

## **Administration and Committees**

- EAC scheduling: proposed dates exist; need broader board participation to finalize.
- Finance committee cadence: set a consistent time (e.g., Fridays before board meetings) for materials; members include Joe, Ibrahim, and Speaker 2. Kristen to send a schedule accounting for school breaks.
- September minutes will be sent and voted on at the next meeting.
- Personal notes: congratulations on a new grandchild; brief housing and student schooling updates.

## **Strategy and Metrics**

### **Measuring Success**

- Use clear, simple metrics: attendance, safety, "next steps" (high school placements), growth benchmarks ( $\geq 1$  year for students with  $\geq 90\%$  attendance), and an annual family pulse survey.

- Re-enrollment can indicate satisfaction; keep it distinct from safety and “right-fit” outcomes.

## **IB Program Positioning**

- Emphasize IB in middle school; scale back formal IB in elementary while maintaining inquiry-based, interdisciplinary units.
- Invest fully in IB honors for strong scholars; acknowledge IB/AP is not for every student.
- Target IB middle school certification within 3–5 years.

## **Alumni and Outcomes**

- Maintain “right-fit” high school placement as a core, trackable metric with defined criteria (graduation rates, program quality); current placement is 100% to right-fit schools.
- Highlight selective/screened/private placements for marketing while centering right-fit for all.
- Alumni tracking is challenging; reunions and informal networks help but require improved data collection.

## **Safety**

- State-reported violent incidents are consistently zero—use this as a clear safety metric.

## **Proposed Core Dashboard**

- Attendance: % of students attending  $\geq 90\%$  of school days.
- Growth: % of students achieving  $\geq 1$  year of academic growth.
- Safety: state-reported violent incidents (target: zero).
- Next Steps: % admitted to right-fit high schools; additionally report selective/screened/private placements.
- Family Satisfaction: annual “Would you recommend the school?” rate (target  $\geq 90\%$ ).

## **Academic, Alumni, and Culture Goals**

- Align with concise, factual indicators and provide management context.
- Consider internal measures reflecting the IB model (e.g., interdisciplinary portfolios each unit).
- Growth expectation: students with  $\geq 90\%$  attendance should grow at least one year, supported by a portfolio of assessments.
- Middle school options: % earning A/B or GPA thresholds (e.g., % above 2.5).
- Elementary: use non-letter grading indicators aligned with inquiry-based learning.