



**NORTH LAWDALE**  
**COLLEGE PREP**

1615 S Christiana Ave. Chicago, IL 60623  
nlcphs.org | (773) 542-1490

# Board Meeting Minutes

## General Information

<b>Name of Meeting</b>	November Board Meeting
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	1/21/25
<b>Time of Meeting (CT)</b>	5:30 - 7:30 PM CST
<b>Number of Attendees</b>	8
<b>Quorum Present (Y or N)</b>	Y

### \*Call to Order

### Roll Call / Board Members in Attendance

- **Present:**
  - Hill Hammock
  - Robin Steans
  - John Horan
  - Carrie Stewart
  - Rob Werner
  - James Brooks
  - Alees Edwards
  - Karen Castleberry
- **Not Present**
  - Al Bennett
  - Bruce Miller
  - Wilonda Cannon



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## School Staff Attendees

- **Present:**
  - Jemia Cunningham Elder, Chief Executive Officer
  - Genessa Brown, Sr. Director of Operations
  - Keanna Greer, Special Projects Manager
  - Kyera Bradley, Principal
  - Yvette Vessel, Office Manager
  - Darryl Baker, Dean of Culture
  - Laura Buckey, Spanish Teacher
  - Erecka Matthews-Williams, Spanish Teacher
  - Sarah Shannon, Paraprofessional
  - Terrence Redmond, Counselor

## Agenda

1. Welcome
2. Call to Order
3. Approval of Last Meeting Minutes
4. Public Comment
5. Board Compliance
6. CEO Report Co-Location Presentation
7. Finance
8. Academics
9. Human Resources + Talent
10. Governance
11. Strategic Planning Update
12. Closed Session (*discretionary*)
13. Return to General Session
  - a. Vote: Grant approval for NLCP to apply to CPS for a charter amendment to co-locate the Collins campus with the Christiana Campus.
14. Public Meeting Adjournment

## Approval of the Agenda

- **Motion to Approve Agenda:** John Horan
- **Seconded by:** Hill Hammock
- **Approved/Rejected:** Yes
- **Amendments (if any):** All Finance, Academics, Human Resources & Talent, Governance, and



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Closed Session items will be postponed and reviewed at the March board meeting.

## Agenda Summary

### **Agenda Item 2:** Call to Order

- **Roll Call:**
- Hill Hammock - YES
- Robin Steans - YES
- John Horan - YES
- Carrie Stewart - YES
- Rob Werner - YES
- James Brooks - YES
- Alees Edwards - YES
- Karen Castleberry - YES
- Al Bennett - ABSENT
- Bruce Miller - ABSENT
- Wilonda Cannon - ABSENT

### **Agenda Item 3:** Approval of Last Meeting Minutes

- **Discussion Summary:** All board members reviewed the minutes from the 11/19/24 Board Meeting.
- **Action Taken:** N/A
- **Responsible Party:** N/A
- **Timeline/Deadline:** N/A

### **Agenda Item 4:** Public Comment

- **Discussion Summary:** Each speaker has 3 minutes to share public comments.
- **Yvette Vessel:** I've been the Office Manager here for 23 years, and I've seen a lot of people come and go. I've housed children in my home and helped with Phoenix Hall. I've watched the vision evolve from one layer to the next. Now, we have a new vision, and I want to see this one succeed as well. Under new leadership, I see positive changes happening, and I believe that's a good thing. Our focus is on making the kids the best they can be. That's my piece. Let's get this going
- **Laura Buckey:** I'm a 5th-year teacher and 1st-year mentor coach. We talked about this in the Community Planning meeting, and it's something I'm really excited about. I know it's immediate, but it would have amazing outcomes. At NLCP, Spanish is the only language offered, and we're splitting resources across two campuses. The idea of having one campus where we could really work together would strengthen the foreign language



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- department. I see this as an opportunity for teachers to collaborate and share resources.
- One NLCP
- **Erecka Matthews-Williams:** I'm representing Collins today. I've been with NLCP for almost 7 years. One of the things that comes to mind when thinking about this move is providing a robust high school experience, something that I had. When I first came to NLCP, it was a Foreign Language wing, and there were opportunities to bounce ideas off each other. I didn't have to wait for Friday to meet with the team. I think this move would be bittersweet, but I also believe it would be good because the kids deserve a robust high school experience. Attendance is a big issue, but when you create a strong school experience, it makes kids want to attend.
  - **Darryl Baker:** I stand in agreement with merging the campuses together under one roof. My name is Baker, and I'm currently the Dean of Culture. I've been here for 18 years. I started off as a counselor, so I've seen many changes—different counselors, principals, and even the expansion. I helped Mr. Horan put together the expansion to more of North Lawndale, but bringing us back together is bittersweet. However, it gives kids an opportunity to receive a better experience. I've seen a lot of changes, including the expansion. However, it allows us to provide things like driver's ed—things we couldn't offer before. Combining the campuses will allow teams to collaborate more with each other. This will help us build a stronger North Lawndale. We always say, 'One band, one sound.' Now, we can work as one band, one sound, together under the same roof. I believe this will set the kids up for a better experience.
    - **Board member - Robin:** This is not an easy decision; it's a hard decision. We can create a stronger school, and we're here to support it. Thank you!
  - **Sarah Shannon:** My name is Sarah, and I'm also an alumna. When I was here, we only had one campus. I support the idea of going back to one campus. What I've observed is that, with two campuses, although we have the same mission, there are different leadership styles and two different student experiences, even though it's one school. With one campus, the learning will be consistent. We will be able to provide all of our students with the same experience.
  - **Terrence Redmond:** I'm a longstanding employee and have been with NLCP for 13 years. I was born and raised in the community. I think the merge is tremendous and desperately needed. We can support our kids and all the other kids in the Lawndale area. I believe our plan will be better and more effective. The landscape is diversifying, and we need to make it happen. I'm going to stand behind it!
  - **Action Taken:** None
  - **Responsible Party:** N/A
  - **Timeline/Deadline:** N/A

## Agenda Item 5: Board Compliance

- **Discussion Summary:** All board members have successfully completed OMA! Thank you, Bruce, for completing your board training hours. The rest of the board members have not yet completed their training hours. Please sign up for the next board training session on February 10th. Compliance status emails, along with the 2025 board training schedule, will be sent to you soon.
- **Action Taken:** N/A



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- **Responsible Party:** Keanna Greer | Board Members
- **Timeline/Deadline:** 6/27/25

### **Agenda Item 6: CEO Report Co-Location Presentation**

- **Discussion Summary:**

**Where we are:** The charter renewal timeline has been pushed back.

- Public comment will be on February 4th, with Kyera speaking.
- CPS plans to vote on the charter renewal on February 27th.

#### **We are more than just a school.**

We need to stay informed about what's happening in North Lawndale. Our role in this is twofold: We aim to provide one college prep school, and graduate students who become homeowners

As new families move into the area, they will have a school they can send their children to, instead of needing to look outside the community for better schooling. The population is declining, and we want to maintain momentum while ensuring we keep the experience under one roof. We will remain the only college prep school in Lawndale. We are reimagining 16th Street and considering taking on the NLCP building, rather than just sitting in the park. We have the opportunity to acquire the full NLCP building. We become One Mission, One Campus, One NLCP.

For SY26, we aim to have an enrollment of 400 to 500 students. We will offer the following programs:

- Academic Enrichment
- Physical Fitness
- Foreign Language
- Driver's Education
- Art + Maker Space
- Business and Marketing
- Colloquium with Senior Project

We also plan to add the following:

- A Director of College and Career Extra-Curriculars
- Honors at every grade level
- Teachers coming in above grade level to retain students by offering a more challenging curriculum
- Bringing back intersession (a week bridging the gap between two semesters, teacher-led)
- Adding more sports under one roof
- Expanding extracurricular activities
- Providing social and emotional support under one roof with true guidance in that department
- Continuing our work with the Peace Warriors, now with 100 Peace Warriors under one roof, who take their jobs seriously to maintain a healthy school culture



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- Supporting students who work, with plans to bring back work opportunities for them.

## **Student Experience Arc:**

- Sophomore year: Take Driver's Ed and experience Young Scholars Professional Day (YSPD)
- Junior year: Wear gold shirts and participate in ACT Mania & ACT Bootcamp. Receive letter sweaters and become eligible for the spring break trip.
- Senior year (Red Shirt): Gain access to the senior wing, take senior seminar, and complete a post-secondary plan. Become eligible for the Phoenix Pact.

Each year, students will meet with their counselor and complete one community service project, known as Odyssey Day.

## **Facilities for SY26:**

- Senior Wing
- Counselor Suite
- Fitness and Weight Room
- Teacher and Staff Innovation Space

## **Beyond SY26:**

- Cafeteria with a café and outdoor greenspace
- Gymnasium, parking structure, and grand entrance
- Sound system in the auditorium
- Maker's Space and Art Room
- Community Partnerships
- Bridge Program for local 7th and 8th grades

**Question:** What feedback are we receiving from staff and parents? **Answer - Marie, Chief of Staff:**

There have been no complaints, and I'm excited about the vision. I'm actually surprised I haven't received many calls from parents. Students have asked if they can transfer now. While it's bittersweet for me, I believe it's necessary.

**Question:** How have we been communicating information to families? **Answer:** We have been using Parent Square to communicate with families, and we have also been sending out mailings.

**Question:** What needs to be done to fully plan for this transition? **Answer- Genessa, Senior Director of**



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**Operations:** I'm currently meeting with a team of people to evaluate IT vendors. Our goal is to ensure the move goes as smoothly as possible, knowing what we're moving and what we need to order. We're working to keep everything within budget. I've also been meeting with a lot of staff one-on-one. Ultimately, our goal is to retain our top talent.

**Question:** What are the financial Impacts? **Answer:** There are different scenarios regarding enrollment, particularly how many students we can attract in their freshman year. We do have a fair number of students who have mentioned that transferring to Christiana wouldn't be an issue for them. We need to create a checklist for all students who will be transferring. We're also working to get clarity on what CPS is expecting and what we will be responsible for paying.

**Question:** Do we have a strong alumni network? **Answer:** It's something we're still working on.

**Question:** What feedback are we receiving from students? **Answer -** We understand that things won't always go smoothly. Not everyone is happy with the situation, but the more conversations we have, the clearer the issues become. One challenge for some of our students is that they cannot come to the Christiana Campus. They want to come, but they need help to make it possible. Additionally, some families are unable to cross certain street boundaries.

**Action Taken:** One-on-one conversations are taking place, and town halls are being hosted to gather feedback from both parents and students. We have also formed a transition team made up of staff and community members.

- **Responsible Party:** Transition Team | Marie Sainvilus-Miles
- **Timeline/Deadline:** 3/07/25



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## Motions

- **Motion 1:**
  - Motion: Call meeting to order
  - Made by: Hill Hammock
  - Seconded by: Robin Steans
  - Roll Call Vote:
    - Hill Hammock - Yes
    - Robin Steans - Yes
    - John Horan - Yes
    - Carrie Stewart - Yes
    - Rob Werner - Yes
    - James Brooks - Yes
    - Alees Edwards - Yes
    - Karen Castleberry - Yes
  - Details: N/A
  
- **Motion 2:**
  - Motion: Public Comment
  - Made by: James Brooks
  - Seconded by: John Horan
  - Details: Five speakers provided public comments (see comments under agenda item 5).
  
- **Motion 3:**
  - Motion: The NLCP Board of Directors votes to approve the submission of an application for the amendment of an existing charter school agreement, seeking approval from the CPS Board of Education to relocate NLCP Collins High School and co-locate it with NLCP Christiana High School in the CPS-owned Howland Facility, currently occupied by NLCP Christiana High School.
  - Made by: Robin Steans
  - Seconded by: Carrie Stewart
- **Roll Call Vote:**
  - Hill Hammock - Yes
  - Robin Steans - Yes
  - John Horan - Yes
  - Carrie Stewart - Yes
  - Rob Werner - Yes





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- James Brooks - Yes
- Alees Edwards - Yes
- Karen Castleberry - Yes
  
- Motion 4: Public Meeting Adjournment
  - Motion: Meeting adjourned
  - Made by: Hill Hammock
  - Seconded by: Robin Steans
  - Details: N/A

## **Adjournment - Public Session**

- **Time of Adjournment:** 1/21/2025, 7:30 PM CST
- **Next Meeting:** 3/18/2025, 5:30 - 7:30 PM CST
- **Adjournment Motion Made by:** Hill Hammock
- **Seconded by:** Robin Steans
- **Approved/Rejected:** Yes