

Innovation Charter High School

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BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES

FEBRUARY 10, 2026

6:00 PM

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1. **Roll Call/Sign In** – The meeting was accessible via Zoom video conference. Chairperson Latoya Massey called the meeting to order at 6:04 PM.

Trustees Present:

- Latoya Massey, Chairperson
- Joseph Colarusso, Secretary
- Eric Reyes
- Callie Hull, Treasurer
- Yani Peña
- Portia Stanley
- Julia Baly
- Shalia Desmond (arrived at 6:04 PM)

Staff Present:

- Kezena Brown, Head of School
- Kathy Rodriguez, Director of Financial Operations

A quorum was established.

2. **Filing of Notice of Meeting** – The Chairperson confirmed that the notice of the meeting was filed in accordance with the New York State Open Meetings Law.
3. **Consent Agenda – Approval of Board Minutes** – Chairperson Massey called for a motion to approve the January 2026 Board Meeting Minutes. The motion was moved by Ms. Massey and seconded by Mr. Reyes. The January 2026 minutes were approved unanimously.
4. **North Star Data Team**

a. Family Engagement, Satisfaction, and Community Schools Deep Dive

Ms. Shalia Desmond, Community Schools Coordinator, presented a deep dive on parent satisfaction survey results and progress across the four Community School pillars. Key findings from the 2024–25 NYC DOE School Survey (administered February 10 – April 11, 2025) included:

- Response rate of 57.2%, more than double the average for high schools and charter schools citywide.
- Top-line satisfaction scores: Education (90%), Inclusive Leadership (95%), Parent-Teacher Trust (91%), Outreach to Parents (90%), Parent-Principal Trust (90%), School Facilities & Services (85%), IEP Services (84%), and Parent Involvement in School (82%).
- All categories scored above 84%; however, the school did not exceed the citywide average, which remains a key target for the current year.
- Three priority focus areas identified: (1) Family Engagement, (2) IEPs and Related Services, and (3) Facilities.

Ms. Desmond presented progress against the four Community School pillars:

- **Pillar 1 – Removing Out-of-School Barriers:** Sustained partnerships in dental services, vision services, and Union Settlement (150 dedicated job placement spots and a college counselor). Over 200 unique students served annually. A new partnership with Housing Works clinic in East Harlem will expand social-emotional and health supports.
- **Pillar 2 – Real-World Learning & Out-of-School Time:** Current programming includes Warrior Workrooms, clubs, athletics, and the HBCU tour. This pillar represents the largest area for improvement, with 23% of families identifying stronger enrichment programs as the top recommendation for school improvement.
- **Pillar 3 – Communication to Partnership:** 97% of families report the school communicates in a language they understand; 95% feel greeted warmly; 84% reported attending a family-teacher conference or school event. However, the parent involvement category reflected a 5% decline from the prior year.
- **Pillar 4 – Inclusive Leadership:** High trust scores in principal and leadership team. Ms. Desmond noted the importance of strengthening the perception of operational efficiency given recent leadership transitions.

Ms. Desmond identified ways the Board can support community schools work: connecting the school to foundations that fund enrichment (arts, sports, technology); considering staffing support to increase community schools impact; supporting the leadership team in addressing food and facilities concerns; and committing to attend a PTO or Student Council meeting to demonstrate collaborative leadership.

Discussion: Trustees engaged in substantive discussion about survey methodology and the target for participation. Ms. Desmond noted that survey changes for the current year include reduced question count and fewer redundancies, and expressed a target of 75% response rate. Mr. Colarusso asked about strategies for reaching the approximately 43% of non-responding families and about the lowest-scoring survey items. Ms. Desmond identified food quality as the lowest-scoring item and noted its significance given the school's location

in a food desert and high Title I population. Ms. Brown added that the school is also investing in adult SEL competency development and restorative justice training to strengthen advisory programming and student support structures. Mr. Colarusso offered to connect the school with restorative practice resources from prior professional experience.

Ms. Desmond offered to share PDF copies of the full survey results from the prior year and the presentation materials with the Board. Mr. Colarusso requested that copies be filed in the Board records folder.

b. Staffing Update

Ms. Brown reported that a replacement teacher has been hired for a staff member on leave and is expected to start this week. The new hire is an Earth and Space Science teacher, which addresses a staffing need within the STEM team that has been particularly challenging to fill this year. Certification renewal is in progress.

c. Board Calendar / Upcoming Events

The following upcoming events were announced:

- **February 26, 2026:** Honors Assembly (12:00 – 1:00 PM)
- **March 11, 2026:** Family-Teacher Conferences (rescheduled from February 25)
- **March 7, 2026:** Recruitment Showcase (11:00 AM – 1:00 PM) – An open house-style event for prospective families featuring hands-on demo lessons in culinary, art, and music.

Chairperson Massey requested that calendar invitations for school events be forwarded to the Trustees group email address to ensure Board members are informed. Mr. Colarusso noted that the group calendar distribution should be standardized for all future events. Mr. Colarusso also requested that, when feasible, a year-over-year enrollment and attendance trend document be prepared for Board review.

5. Committee Reports

Finance & Audit Committee (Chairperson: Callie Hull)

Ms. Hull reported that the Finance & Audit Committee's regularly scheduled meeting had been shifted and would take place the following day. She noted there were no significant updates since the last board meeting. Ms. Hull indicated that she would circulate an email to the full Board if any significant matters arose from the upcoming committee session.

Academic Excellence Committee (Chairperson: Julia Baly)

Ms. Baly reported that the AEC is scheduling a meeting with Ms. Brown this month to establish goals for the committee's work for the remainder of the school year. Chairperson Massey encouraged tying any goals to evaluation metrics and charter renewal benchmarks, noting that even a springboard objective for the following year would be valuable.

Personnel Review Committee (Chairperson: Latoya Massey)

Chairperson Massey reported that the PRC met the prior week to discuss the Head of School evaluation process. The 360 Mini survey has been distributed to the school team and is due by end of week. The PRC is developing an evaluation tool that combines quantitative metrics with qualitative assessments. The committee plans to share the draft evaluation tool with Ms. Brown for review and feedback.

Executive Committee

No emergency matters requiring Executive Committee action were reported.

6. **Other Business** – No other business was raised.
7. **Public Speaking** – No members of the public were present to address the Board.
8. **Board Retreat Planning** – The Board agreed to hold a Board Retreat on Saturday, March 7, 2026, at the school, coinciding with the Recruitment Showcase event. Trustees will participate in the showcase to engage with prospective families and then convene for the retreat session. Chairperson Massey will distribute a retreat agenda in advance. A calendar invitation was sent to all Trustees.

9. Executive Sessions

At 6:41 PM, Chairperson Massey moved to enter Executive Session for the purpose of discussing matters related to the financial operations of Innovation Charter High School. The motion was seconded. At 7:20 PM, the Board exited Executive Session for the purpose of discussing financial operations.

At 7:20 PM, Chairperson Massey moved to enter Executive Session for the purpose of discussing the Personnel Review Committee's work on the Head of School evaluation tool. The motion was seconded by Mr. Reyes. At 7:32 PM, Chairperson Massey moved to close the Executive Session. The motion was seconded by Mr. Reyes.

No formal actions were taken during Executive Session.

10. **Adjournment** – At 7:33 PM, Chairperson Massey moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Reyes. The meeting was adjourned.
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Minutes prepared by Joseph Colarusso, Secretary

Approved: _____

Date: _____