



Innovation Charter High School

Board of Trustees, September 2026 Meeting Minutes

DRAFT, unapproved. Subject to correction and approval by the Board of Trustees.

Date	September 15, 2026	Time Called to Order	6:10 PM
Meeting Type	Regular Board Meeting	Time Adjourned	7:35 PM
Location	Room 309, 410 East 100th Street, New York, NY 10029; by Zoom videoconference; and the physical locations listed on the notice of meeting, in accordance with the Open Meetings Law		
Board Members Present	Innovation Team / Staff Present		
Latoya Massey (Chair) Callie Hull (Treasurer) Julia Baly (joined after roll call) Eric Reyes	Kezena Brown (Principal/School Leader) Christina Pinks (Director of Operations) Portia Stanley (Assistant Principal of Humanities) Tereena Somayya (Director of College and Career Success and CTE)		
Board Members Absent	Also Present		
Joseph Colarusso (Vice Chair and Secretary)	None recorded.		

1. Call to Order

Latoya Massey, Board Chair, called the September 2026 meeting of the Board of Trustees to order at 6:10 PM, on a motion seconded by Treasurer Hull. Roll call recorded three of five voting trustees present, Chair Massey, Treasurer Hull and Trustee Reyes, constituting a quorum; Trustee Baly joined after roll call. The Chair confirmed that the Notice of Meeting had been filed in accordance with the Open Meetings Law. The meeting was recorded. The Secretary was absent and prepared these minutes from the recording, which has a gap of about three minutes, from approximately 6:38 to 6:41 PM, and from the School Leader's presentation slides.

2. Approval of Minutes

Motion: Approval of the August 18, 2026 Board Meeting Minutes, moved by Chair Massey.

Seconded by: Callie Hull.

Outcome: Approved on motion and second; no objection was voiced.

Note: At the opening of the meeting the Chair called for approval of the July 21, 2026 minutes in error. The Chair corrected the record at 7:16 PM and the motion above was taken on the August 18, 2026 minutes. The July 21, 2026 minutes were approved at the August 18, 2026 meeting.

3. North Star & School Leader Report

The School Leader presented the September North Star Update. The deep dive continued the summer school close-out begun at the prior two meetings, adding the August Regents results that were not available in August. The Chair noted that the format of the North Star report and of the board agenda has changed and asked trustees to bear with the transition. Figures in this section are taken from the School Leader's presentation slides.

The presentation set out the North Star deep-dive calendar for SY2026-27: September, summer school close-out and credit accumulation; October, special education and English language learners; November, graduation projection; December, credits projection; January, social-emotional learning, restorative action and counseling; February, satisfaction and community schools; March, interim assessments and Regents; April, college and career readiness and career and technical education; May, retention and satisfaction; June, attendance, at-risk students and summer school; July, Regents results and graduation rate by subgroup; August, staffing.

3.1 Enrollment Update

- Total enrollment stands at 231 students: 32 in ninth grade, 50 in tenth, 75 in eleventh and 74 in twelfth. As of September 14, 54 new students had enrolled, of whom 15 had not yet reported to school; outreach found that some have transferred, some are still to arrive, and some could not be reached, leaving 39 confirmed new enrollments. Four prospective tenth- and eleventh-grade students were scheduled to start on September 16.
- Transfers out were reported as 11 tenth-grade, 7 eleventh-grade and 7 twelfth-grade students, together with six students who have aged out and remain on the roster pending removal. Where families could be reached, reasons for leaving included moves out of state and families seeking a different fit; some families gave no reason or have not yet been reached.
- Recruitment strategy: continued social media outreach; renewed contact with families who declined a seat, now that their students have experienced a few days at another school; promotion of all-school events, beginning with Back to School Night on September 24, 2026, from 5:30 to 7:30 PM, to which trustees are invited; Common App registration; continued tours; and a standing pipeline of tenth- and eleventh-grade enrollments.
- Retention strategy: a family engagement calendar built around town halls, cultural celebrations and the launch of a PTO, so that families have reasons to come to the school beyond receiving information; and an earlier internal intent-to-return and satisfaction survey, because DOE survey results arrive too late in the year to act on.

3.2 Opening of School Year

No separate report. Opening-week attendance is recorded under 3.5 and school culture under 3.7.

3.3 August Regents Results and Summer School Close-Out

- Summer school pass rates were presented by course, showing the number of students scheduled, the number passing with a 65, and the resulting pass rate. ELA 11 and Health each had a pass rate of 100 percent, and students recovered 58 of 116 credits of deficit across all courses. The School Leader noted that every gap closed matters.
- Next step: a holistic review of each student's transcript gaps so that credit recovery is scheduled as early as possible, rather than assigning summer school only from the prior year's results, so that the school is not left struggling to get juniors and seniors into summer school.
- August Regents results were presented by exam, showing students registered, absent, sitting and passing with a 65. Across all subjects the school registered 1,133 exams; more than half were not taken, and 148 were passed, a schoolwide pass rate of about 28 percent of exams taken. The School Leader highlighted U.S. History and Government, the highest pass rate at 53 percent, and English Language Arts, as consistent with the June results and with the school's historical pattern.
- In response to the Board's August request, the School Leader examined the relationship between summer course recovery and exam results. Seven students both recovered a course and passed the corresponding exam. The School Leader characterized the relationship as present but not strong.
- Thirteen students who attended summer school and were scheduled for an exam did not sit for it. Attendance at the in-building Regents Prep sessions correlated strongly with sitting for the exam: every student with full Regents Prep attendance sat. The correlation did not extend to passing. The next step is to translate that sense of preparedness into passing performance.

Board Discussion: The Chair asked whether the absences reflected a lack of confidence, illness or other causes, noting that absenteeism appears to be depressing overall pass rates and that a student who does not sit cannot pass. The School Leader reported that staff called each scheduled student on the morning and afternoon of every exam day and agreed to review the outreach notes for trends.

3.4 Graduation: Progress and Pathways

- Additional students graduated in August, raising the Class of 2026 graduation rate to 90.7 percent, or 78 of the 86 students in the cohort. The School Leader credited a team effort of individual student conversations and family meetings, summer school follow-up with students and families on attendance and grades, and connection to credit recovery, and stated a goal of 95 percent for June 2027.
- Eight students from the Class of 2026 have not yet graduated. Some remain active, and some of these are expected to graduate in June 2027; the others have transferred or are not currently attending. The school continues outreach to re-engage students who are not attending and is helping families connect with alternative programs where appropriate.

Board Discussion: The Chair congratulated the team and offered the Board's assistance with re-engagement. Trustee Baly recommended that the school display the 90 percent graduation rate prominently at Back to School Night and throughout the building, for the confidence it builds in students and families. The School Leader agreed and proposed pairing the graduation rate with the percentage of

graduates leaving with a clear postsecondary plan; the Chair asked that the school capitalize on the 90 percent figure now.

3.5 Attendance, At-Risk, and LTA Updates

- Daily attendance over the first five days of school, September 9 to 15, ranged from 62 to 74 percent: 67 percent on the first day, a low of 62 percent on the second, and 73 to 74 percent on September 14 and 15. Between 55 and 85 students were marked tardy each day. The School Leader noted that attendance remains below the level expected at the start of a school year, when it is normally at its highest.
- Measures in place: the swipe-in system messages families when their student arrives; orientation and Back to School Night messaging reinforce the attendance partnership with families; staff are calling the families of students not yet seen; and long-term absent students are being removed from the roster so that reported attendance reflects active students.

3.6 SPED and ELL Updates

No report this month. Special education and English language learners are the scheduled deep dive for October. See 3.8 for the IEP Coordinator role.

3.7 Restorative Update / SEL

- School culture results from the SY2025-26 DOE student survey were presented: 70 percent favorable on questions of safety, 57 percent on strong student-teacher relationships, and 46 percent on personal attention and support. The Director of School Culture has set a SY2026-27 goal of 80 percent on each measure.
- Strategies, under the theme of changing behavior through healthy relationship practices and intentional language: for safety, anti-bullying workshops, increased threshold monitoring and conflict resolution opportunities; for student-teacher relationships, learning student names, intentional threshold engagement and student-led forums; for personal attention and support, trauma-informed staff training and advisory check-ins. Student council is being relaunched, and town halls are being redesigned so that students act as participants and facilitators, making them a place of engagement and joy as well as information.

Board Discussion: Trustee Baly asked whether the survey was internal or external, and recommended that the school build its own internal survey in student-friendly language, sampling juniors and seniors, so that students tell the adults what is missing rather than the adults guessing. She offered to share a fishbone framework, with staff and student versions, that surfaces where the challenges and biases sit. The School Leader accepted the offer.

3.8 Staffing Update

- Vacancies filled since the August meeting: computer science and the Software Engineering Program (SEP), Earth and Space Science, Health and Physical Education, school aide, two school counselors, and a history position. Four candidates signed offer letters on the day of the meeting.
- The Dean of Student Supports posting, open for several months and restated at a manager level without result, has been replaced by an internal move: a current teacher will become IEP Coordinator, ensuring that services are delivered, that the school remains in compliance, and that families and the Committee on Special Education have a liaison.

- Positions not yet filled: physics and senior science, special education history, culinary, and a permanent substitute. Two consultants are screening candidates, the focus is on certified teachers or teachers on a pathway toward certification, and standard sourcing is supplemented by a hiring sprint with LinkedIn posting and a referral bonus.
- The culinary teacher vacancy remains open. The program retains one culinary teacher. The school is seeking an experienced and ideally certified culinary teacher and will also consider candidates with industry experience.

Board Discussion: Treasurer Hull asked whether the culinary position requires a certified teacher, noting that the culinary program and its student certification have been a marketing point for the school. She offered to share the posting with contacts from the Culinary Institute of America network; the School Leader asked that they apply.

4. Board Composition and Trustee Terms

4.1 Slate vote of the sitting trustees

The precautionary slate vote of the sitting trustees, placed on this agenda at the August meeting, was not taken. By consensus the Board will take up its trustee slate at the November meeting, when trustee votes have historically been held, so that newly approved trustees, once the authorizer's 45-day review has run, can be considered for officer roles and committee assignments. Treasurer Hull and Trustee Baly agreed, and no trustee objected. No vote was taken.

4.2 Trustee candidate interviews and action on new trustees

Trustees Baly and Reyes reported for the trustees who conducted the candidate interviews. Not every candidate in the pipeline has yet been interviewed. Trustee Reyes noted the breadth of backgrounds across the candidates, including community public health and national grant funding for after-school programs, each offering a distinct skill set of value to the school. Trustee Baly concurred.

Motion: On the recommendation of the interviewing trustees, to approve the following candidates for nomination to the Board of Trustees, subject to the authorizer's review: Chantell Brown, Nicole Baldner, Jovonnie Garcia, Steven Ramdilal, and Nicola Bingham. Moved by Chair Massey.

Vote: Carried by voice vote. The Chair called for the ayes; ayes were heard, and no nay or abstention was voiced.

Outcome: Approved. The Chair will transmit the candidates' packets to the authorizer, which has 45 days to act.

- Three further candidates remain in process. One interview is to be scheduled no later than September 23, and two candidates have not yet responded to scheduling outreach. The Chair will take up in executive session how to move these candidates and additional prospects forward.
- Every candidate is expected to visit the school before joining the Board; a virtual tour will be arranged for a candidate who lives out of state. The Chair asked the Director of Operations to propose a visiting framework, whether an open window through the end of September, a set of days, or a single date, and to coordinate with the Chair, who will notify the candidates.

5. Bylaws Amendment Package

The Chair stated that a bylaws revision is a non-material charter revision that may need to be filed with the authorizer, so that it is not a board vote alone, and asked trustees whether any adjustment is needed to the version last circulated to them, the 2024 bylaws, before a filing is prepared. Treasurer Hull asked the Chair to confirm that the circulated version is the most recent draft and reflects the change to the board tenure requirement made at the last revision; the Chair confirmed, and the Chair and Treasurer Hull agreed that the requirement should remain as revised. No trustee proposed a change. No vote was taken. The Chair indicated that the 2024 version will be submitted to the authorizer for compliance.

6. Governance and Policy

6.1 Policy and handbook gap analysis

The Chair noted the policy and handbook analysis circulated by the Secretary. No discussion was held in the Secretary's absence.

6.2 Conflict of interest and financial disclosures

- The Chair asked every trustee to return a completed conflict of interest disclosure and a completed financial disclosure to her by Friday, September 18, 2026. The forms are required annually and are needed for the audit file, including for SY2025-26 where a trustee's forms are not on file. The Chair will assemble and send the packet the following week.
- Treasurer Hull asked that the two current forms be recirculated so that trustees complete the correct versions. The School Leader reported that one version of the form in circulation may not be the most current and will identify which. The Chair and the School Leader will determine which versions are current.

6.3 Trustee school visits, charter section 7.3

Not taken up at this meeting.

6.4 Board records and website posting status

The Chair asked whether the school maintains a public space in the building for board meeting dates and approved minutes, as was past practice; the school confirmed it will have one. Meeting notices and approved minutes will be posted there as they are issued. The Chair also intends to invite the authorizer to visit the school.

7. Board Retreat Planning

- The Board agreed to hold a single retreat at which current trustees and prospective trustees attend together from the start, rather than separate or staggered sessions.
- The retreat will be held on a Saturday, with up to 13 participants. Dates under consideration are October 24, November 7 and November 14, 2026. The Chair will circulate the options by Friday, September 18, with November 14 preferred because the core group can attend and the lead time is longer.

- New York City Charter School Conference, October 21 to 23, 2026: Trustee Reyes is unable to attend. Treasurer Hull will confirm her availability within a day or two. The Chair will confirm with Vice Chair Colarusso, and invited the School Leader and school team to attend.

8. Charter Renewal Update

8.1 Exhibit C conditions and upcoming deliverables

Not taken up at this meeting.

8.2 Enrollment condition and the pending enrollment reduction request

- The Chair opened a discussion of the enrollment figure to be carried in the Board's correspondence with the authorizer. Current enrollment is 231 against an authorized enrollment of 460, and language drafted earlier on a higher enrollment assumption will need to change.
- Treasurer Hull advised a conservative figure with a clear rationale, noting that enrollment is down across New York City and that a large mid-year increase is unlikely. The School Leader noted that the upper-grade cohorts are larger than recent incoming cohorts, which will affect total enrollment in future years. No figure was adopted.
- The Chair will consult the authorizer's office on what change is permissible and how it should be presented, and will seek further advice before the letter is finalized. The Chair asked that enrollment outreach continue every week.

Board Discussion: The Chair and Treasurer Hull agreed that current enrollment places pressure on the budget despite this year's savings measures, and asked the Finance Committee to model the budget at several enrollment levels (see 9.1).

9. Committee Reports

9.1 Finance Committee

Trustee Callie Hull, Treasurer and Finance Committee Chair, reported that the Committee has not met in recent weeks, during the summer close and the Director of Operations' transition. The Committee will meet on Tuesday, September 22, 2026 at 4:00 PM, within the standing check-in with the School Leader, as school is closed on September 21 for Yom Kippur.

- Agenda for September 22: scenario budgets at several enrollment levels, prepared by the Director of Operations; actuals against the budget adopted in June, if ready, now three months into the fiscal year; the status of the annual audit; and the financial items due to the authorizer in October, which the Treasurer understands to include recertification of cash on hand following the bank consolidation.
- Audit: the annual audit is in progress. The auditor has the minutes provided; the trustee disclosures under 6.2 are outstanding. The School Leader will check whether any other documentation remains outstanding.
- Cash on hand: the Chair stated that the school maintains a reserve account preserved to satisfy the charter's requirement of 60 days of cash on hand, and asked that the Treasurer and the Director of Operations state cash-on-hand status at every board meeting so that the record is explicit.

- TD Bank: three legacy accounts remain open with balances totaling \$316.54. The funds will be withdrawn and the accounts closed this week.
- The Director of Operations is being brought onto the school's banking and financial reporting so that she and the Treasurer report the school's financial status at each meeting.
- Scheduling: the School Leader asked that the Secretary send calendar invitations for all SY2026-27 board meetings with current videoconference links, and that the Director of Operations be included on board communications.

9.2 Academic Excellence Committee (AEC)

Trustee Julia Baly set out the Committee's approach for the year: classroom walkthroughs of roughly a half day, across classes the School Leader selects, to see both strong instructional practice and practice needing support against the school's instructional goal for the year, and to identify how the Committee, currently Trustees Baly and Reyes, can support that work. The Chair noted that the Committee has met monthly, every three weeks, every six weeks and as needed in past years, and that the cadence should follow the vision.

The School Leader described what is new instructionally this year: interim assessments and biweekly data meetings in which teachers review exit tickets, identify gaps, plan a reteach and see it delivered. She suggested that the Committee's support is best placed in sustaining those systems and in the data analysis when interim results and reteach plans emerge, which is a quarterly rather than a monthly cadence. The School Leader proposed a quarterly cadence aligned to the assessment calendar and shared the school calendar, including the assessment dates, with trustees during the meeting. Trustee Baly asked first to hold an initial conversation with the School Leader on the best-fit support and to decide the cadence afterwards; she will review the assessment dates and coordinate visits. Trustee Reyes will join for data review. The School Leader will brief the school management team.

9.3 People and Resources Committee (PRC)

The Chair reported that the Committee's recent sessions concerned staff bonuses. A payroll processing issue identified on the day of the meeting will be corrected through a one-off payroll cycle. Particulars were reserved to executive session.

9.4 Executive Committee

The Chair reported that the Executive Committee met once in August to act on the Finance Committee's recommendation regarding staff bonuses. No other meetings were held.

10. Other Business / Public Comment

The Chair invited other business; none was raised. The Chair invited public comment; none was offered.

At 7:16 PM the Chair called for a motion to close the meeting, then withdrew it to correct the consent agenda (see 2). On a motion by the Chair, seconded by Treasurer Hull, the open portion of the meeting closed at 7:17 PM.

11. Calendar of Upcoming Events

- Friday, September 18, 2026: conflict of interest and financial disclosure forms due to the Chair; retreat date options circulated by the Chair.

- Monday, September 21, 2026: school closed for Yom Kippur.
- Tuesday, September 22, 2026, 4:00 PM: Finance Committee, within the School Leader check-in.
- Thursday, September 24, 2026, 5:30 to 7:30 PM: Back to School Night; trustees welcome.
- October 2026: financial items due to the authorizer.
- Tuesday, October 20, 2026, 6:00 PM: next regular board meeting, per the SY2026-27 board meeting schedule, subject to notice.
- October 21 to 23, 2026: New York City Charter School Conference.
- Board retreat: Saturday, October 24, November 7 or November 14, 2026; November 14 preferred.
- November 2026: trustee slate, officer roles and committee assignments.

12. Executive Session

At 7:17 PM, on a motion by the Chair, duly seconded, the Board entered executive session to discuss matters leading to the appointment of particular persons to the Board of Trustees (Public Officers Law 105(1)(f)).

At 7:25 PM, on a further motion by the Chair, seconded by Treasurer Hull, the Board took up in executive session matters relating to the employment of particular persons (Public Officers Law 105(1)(f)).

On a motion by the Chair, seconded by Treasurer Hull, the Board returned to open session at 7:35 PM. The Chair reported that the Board had discussed the matters stated. No action taken in executive session was reported.

13. Adjournment

Hearing no further business, the Chair adjourned the September 2026 meeting of the Board of Trustees at 7:35 PM, on a motion seconded by Treasurer Hull.

14. Action Items & Follow-Ups

- Chair: transmit the packets for the five approved candidates to the authorizer this week.
- Trustees Baly and Reyes: complete the remaining candidate interviews, the next no later than September 23, and continue scheduling outreach.
- Director of Operations, with the Chair: propose the school-visit framework for prospective trustees, including a virtual tour for a candidate who lives out of state; the Chair to notify candidates of the arrangements.
- Chair: prepare the 2024 bylaws version for submission to the authorizer.
- All trustees: return conflict of interest and financial disclosure forms to the Chair by Friday, September 18. Chair, with the School Leader: determine which form versions are current. Chair: send the completed packet the following week.
- School Leader: identify which version of the disclosure form is current.
- School Leader: establish the public posting space in the school for board meeting dates and approved minutes.

- Chair: circulate retreat date options (October 24, November 7, November 14) by Friday, September 18.
- Treasurer Hull: confirm New York City Charter School Conference availability. Chair: confirm with Vice Chair Colarusso.
- Chair: consult the authorizer's office and seek further advice on the enrollment figure before the letter is finalized.
- Director of Operations: prepare scenario budgets at several enrollment levels and, if ready, actuals against budget for the September 22 Finance Committee.
- Treasurer Hull: recirculate the list of financial items due to the authorizer in October.
- School Leader: confirm whether any documentation remains outstanding for the audit.
- Chair: withdraw the remaining TD Bank balances and close the accounts this week.
- School Leader and Director of Operations: complete the one-off payroll cycle for the approved staff bonuses.
- Treasurer and Director of Operations: state cash-on-hand status at every board meeting.
- Secretary: send calendar invitations for all SY2026-27 board meetings with current videoconference links; include the Director of Operations on board communications.
- Trustee Baly: review the assessment calendar and coordinate AEC visit dates with the School Leader, after an initial conversation on the best-fit support. Trustee Reyes: join for data review. School Leader: brief the school management team on the AEC approach.
- School Leader: review the Regents exam-day outreach notes for trends behind the exam absences, including the 13 summer school students who did not sit.
- School Leader: continue outreach to re-engage Class of 2026 students who have not yet graduated.
- School Leader: display the graduation rate prominently at Back to School Night and in the building.
- School Leader: conduct the holistic transcript review to schedule credit recovery earlier.
- Trustee Baly: share the fishbone survey framework (staff and student versions) with the school team.
- Treasurer Hull: share the culinary teacher posting with culinary industry contacts.

Minutes Respectfully Submitted

Submitted by Joseph Colarusso, Vice Chair and Secretary, Board of Trustees, for board review and approval. Prepared from the meeting recording and the School Leader's presentation slides; the Secretary was not present.

Date Approved by Board: _____

Board Chair Signature: _____