LION LEADERS IN OUR NEIGHBORHOOD
CHARTER SCHOOL

**September Board Meeting Minutes, September 28, 2026**

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| **Board Members Present:**<br>Talal Rojas<br>Julie Medler<br>Tony Stoupas<br>Catherine Jessup<br>Nicholas Ober<br>Herb Fixler<br>David Schatsky<br>Ana Maria Gomez<br>Ruth Jarmul<br>**Board Members Not in Attendance:**<br>Deborah Dumont<br>Rosann Santos | **Members of the Public LION asked to be in Attendance:**<br>Keveney McCrillis, Director of Communications<br>Celia Sosa, CEO<br>Leslie Rich, CFO<br>Maya Severns, Director of Development and Marketing<br>Matthew Hittenmark, HS Principal<br>Ada Garcia, MS Principal<br>Miatta Massaley, ES Principal<br>**Members of the Public:** |

Tony Stoupas, Board Chair, called for a motion to begin the meeting at 6:05 PM. The motion was seconded by David Schatsky and unanimously approved.

Tony Stoupas moved to dispense with the reading of the minutes and approve the August meeting minutes, which had been shared via email before the meeting. Ana Maria Gomez seconded the motion. The August meeting minutes were unanimously approved.

Celia Sosa, LION's Chief Executive Officer, reviewed the CEO report, which was emailed before the meeting. She began discussing policy updates the Charter Center leaders shared recently. These included an anticipated Pre-K RFP and the FOCUS Act. There was a board question about how district schools are doing with kindergarten enrollment. Celia answered that question. There was a board question about the fiscal allocation for Pre-K and how LION would fund a Pre-K program. Leslie Rich, CFO, answered that question.

Celia Sosa went on to discuss how LION is currently using technology and how the FOCUS Act would affect that, which we are not sure will apply to charter schools. A board member commented on how restricting AI in classrooms would affect young people. There was a board question about training and guidelines for student use that LION has. Celia and division principals answered that question.

Celia shared LION's APPR summary and full report before the meeting and then briefed the board and took questions. There was one board question about how this year's APPR metrics compared to prior years. Celia answered that question. She then shared the leadership seminar and PD the team participated in this month, along with high-level retention, recruitment, and certification data. The board asked about teacher certification and LION's end-of-year goal. Celia said she would have that number by next month. The

board asked about the financial support provided to teachers to gain certification. Celia and the division principals answered that question. Finally, Celia shared LION's current enrollment and admissions numbers, along with year-over-year trends. She said LION leadership closely tracks which families leave and why.

Celia then turned it over to the division principals to give an academic performance update, previously given to the education committee. The principals discussed how the students in grades 3-8 performed on the NY State Exams and LION's plan for improvement. They also discussed how high school students performed on Regents exams and against SUNY APPR benchmarks year over year. There was a board question about the pattern recognized in year-over-year performance in the city, district, and state. MS Principal, Ada Garcia, answered that question. LION shared their internal goals for the 26-27 school year. There was a board question about the drop in 4th and 5th grade ELA last year. Ada answered that question. There was a board question about the Algebra I Regents performance in 8th grade and in the high school. Celia Sosa answered that question. There was a board question about college readiness numbers in comparison to Regents pass rates. HS Principal Matthew Hittenmark answered that question. There was a board question about the way LION prepares students for retaking Regents exams. Matt answered that question. The board had questions about recently updated graduation requirements in New York State. Matt and Celia answered these questions. There was a board question about the work being done in other states to drive achievement results and how they compare. ES Principal, Miatta Massaley, Ada, and Celia answered this question.

Talal Rojas had to leave the meeting at 7:00 PM.

Leslie Rich, LION's Chief Financial Officer, then presented her financial report, which was shared via email along with LION's monthly financials. Leslie Rich discussed the SUNY fiscal benchmarks and how LION performs against them. She indicated that although it is early in the year, LION is managing against budget well. Leslie Rich went on to discuss LION's revenue breakdown based on the project per-pupil funding LION will receive. She discussed student enrollment over time and how that affects budget. Leslie then discussed an expense breakdown: spending versus budget. Leslie then discussed year-end projections and how they have shifted, including per-pupil funding, charitable contributions, and expenses. Finally, Leslie reviewed the year's projected fiscal timeline.

Maya Severns, Director of Development and Marketing, then presented her fundraising plan for FY 27. She highlighted the partnership with development consultants who helped create the presentation. She discussed where she would focus her fundraising efforts. Maya called out the proposed FY 2027 fundraising goal and how that compared to the year-over-year fundraising actuals. There was a board question about how certain grants restrict funding. Maya answered that question.

Maya continued to discuss grant funding beyond Bloomberg Summer Boost, corporate giving, board giving, and individual giving. There was a board question about the board

member give/get target. Maya answered that question. She also discussed strategic priorities for the development team. There was a board question about when LION will likely hear about the Bloomberg Summer Boost grant and how LION might plan for summer school if that grant is not released. Maya and Celia answered that question. Maya Severns finished her presentation encouraging the board to attend LION's Beyond the Borough fundraiser in October. Tony Stoupas then discussed the board give/get and how Maya Severns would work with board members to achieve that goal.

Tony then asked for committee updates. Keveney McCrillis, Director of Communications, asked the board to email regarding their opinion on what to include in the Neighborhood Comparison Report to be given next month.

Tony Stoupas asked if there were any public comments. There were none.

Tony Stoupas moved to enter into executive session at 7:50 PM.

Tony Stoupas called the board back and indicated that during executive session the CEO's bonus was unanimously approved as per Julie and Deborah's recommendation. Tony then moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:17 PM. Julie Medler seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

*Notes prepared by Keveney McCrillis.*