APPROVED

Bridge Preparatory Charter School

Minutes

Board Meeting

Date and Time
Wednesday March 17, 2021 at 7:00 PM

Location
Join Zoom Meeting
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85362866716?pwd=SVFOUzNFdUN5ekhoVytsanFtWWkxZz09
Meeting ID: 853 6286 6716
Passcode: 152827
Dial by your location
646 558 8656
Meeting ID: 853 6286 6716
Passcode: 152827

Trustees Present
Azalia Volpe (remote), George Winn (remote), Laura Timoney (remote), Maria Casale (remote), Rose Kerr (remote)

Trustees Absent
Amy Margolis, Frank Santarpia, Laurel Gyimesi

Guests Present
Francesca DiCanio (remote), Geena Kuriakose (remote), Kathy Baldassano (remote), Rose Marie Illuzzi (remote), Steve Cucchia (remote), Tim Castanza (remote)

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

B. Call the Meeting to Order

Laura Timoney called a meeting of the board of trustees of Bridge Preparatory Charter School to order on Wednesday Mar 17, 2021 at 7:00 PM.

C. Approve Minutes

Laura Timoney made a motion to approve the minutes from Board Meeting on 02-24-21.
Azalia Volpe seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

D. Approve Minutes from Special Board Meeting on Academics

Laura Timoney made a motion to approve the minutes from Special Board Meeting to Analyze Academic Data on 02-23-21.
Rose Kerr seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

E. Welcome

R. Kerr welcomed all present and wished everyone a Happy St. Patrick's Day. There are many plans and actions that need to be in place between now and June; offered thanks to the members of the committees for their efforts and also to T. Castanza and his team for their work meeting deadlines.
L. Timoney stated that we don't have a timekeeper for tonight's meeting; A. Volpe volunteered to act as timekeeper tonight.

II. Committee Reports

A. Executive Committee

The *Executive Committee* met on March 10th at 8am and R. Kerr gave the following report:
On March 10th there was a briefing by T. Castanza with an update on the *Teacher Survey*. There was a lengthy discussion regarding the *Executive Director Support & Transition Plan,* which takes a lot of time; we updated attendees regarding the standing committee.
There will be another Executive Committee Meeting on March 24th at 4pm; next month's Executive Committee Meeting will be April 14th at 8am.

B. Finance Committee

The *Finance Committee* met on March 15th at 4pm.
G. Winn gave the following report:
Josh Moreau from *BoostEd* and Fahron Ebanks were guests at the last *Finance Committee Meeting;* J. Moreau spoke about a "benchmarking document" and our financial methods score; what does NYS want to see; we are in good shape but wonder what it would look like if we had facilities costs built-in. We reviewed a first draft of the proposed school budget; looking at educational programmatic hires; expect to have the

budget available for review by various committees soon and to the full board at the April general meeting; will obtain deadlines from ED for various points to getting the budget finalized by the end of the FY on June 30th. We reviewed 2 reports on safety drills. We are working on making our payroll process tight and managing any variances; trying to build-in controls and reviews so there are no surprises going forward. TriNet is the company that helps us with HR and payroll management for staff and allows us to economize purchasing benefits/insurance on a group basis; our insurance lines will renew at the end of FY; our insurance broker needs the renewal applications by early April; our broker will walk us through the required coverage; board members are welcome to listen-in to that call; will work with management to fine-tune an analysis of our finances before the April general board meeting. We are not eligible for the *Second Round PPP Loan Program* because we did not experience a quarter-over-quarter decline in revenue.
The next Finance Committee Meeting will be April 14th at 4pm.

C. Board Development & Governance

The *Board Development & Governance Committee* met on March 3rd at 8am.
Committee Chair L. Gyimesi is not in attendance tonight;
L.Timoney gave the following report on her behalf:
There was an update on recruitment efforts for new board members, the application process has formally begun; orientation for new board members being put in place so that the process will be smooth; still working on the *Board of Trustees Handbook*; update on review and changes to the *Board of Trustees Bylaws* was discussed; expect to have the bylaws ready before the June general meeting; our bylaws need to be aligned with the *Family Association Bylaws*.
The next Board Development & Governance Committee Meeting will be April 7th at 8am.

D. Academic Committee

The *Academic Committee* met on March 9, 2021 at 6pm.
R. Kerr gave the following report:
A review of the deep-dive into academic data on February 23rd was discussed; an additional and different deep-dive will be done sometime in April; February Dashboard included general data and OG data comparison from beginning of year and mid-year indicating progress of students; our students also show progress in ELA and math. We are looking to reconfigure the Dashboard format to be more well-defined with a structure that will show the real picture to NYSED; the lack of information from standardized testing should emphasize other data that will work in our favor;
we have the help of a data-source person to work with staff to get this ready for our NYSED review; thank you to F. DiCanio for her efforts. We looked at the *Organizational Chart* and the *Staffing Plan* and emphasized the need to hire a *Director of Teaching & Learning* as soon as possible. We had a discussion with committee members regarding the change in the alignment of school day - we will have a recommendation soon for the ED and board.
The next Academic Committee Meeting will be April 13th at 6pm.

E. Facilities Subcommittee

T. Castanza gave the following report:
We have been working for months on an extension of our co-location at Petrides; it is a difficult and complicated process; space acquisition has many factors, including financial costs; we are co-located for 2 years and asked DoE to consider extending our time as well as our allocated space due to the increase in our student population. A letter went out to all families on this; DoE has now officially proposed extending our temporary co-location for a period of an additional 2 years and increasing our instructional capacity by allocating additional space at Petrides for us. The proposal will be presented to the *Panel on Educational Policy* (PEP) for a vote on April 28th at 6pm; prior to the PEP meeting there will be a virtual public meeting for community feedback on April 19th at 6pm; members of our school community can show support by offering statements at that meeting; the *Family Association* is getting parent volunteers to show support.at this virtual meeting. DoE will allocate space for us in Building A; some construction and renovation will be needed on the main floor of Building A; it will include an enclosed courtyard for students and staff and provide us with access to the Borough President's Hall of Science for our students. After the PEP meeting, the board members will be kept in the loop regarding the renovations.

III. Executive Director Update

A. ED's Report

A written *Executive Director's Report* was submitted to board members and much of what is contained therein was already covered tonight in the board's committee reports; regarding budget and academics, most points were already presented by the committee chairs.

- Regarding insurance as discussed in the finance report, there will be a shared call tomorrow with Fahron and Rusty to walk through documents and new offerings; we can then present that information to the *Finance Committee.*
- Participated with R. Kerr in a virtual town hall meeting with David Frank, *Executive Director* of *NYS Charter School Office* focusing on academic data and student assessments; NYSED requested the *US Department of Education* to issue a waiver for ELA and Math exams for 3rd-8th graders; still awaiting a response to the waiver request but we received a memo telling us to be prepared if the waiver is denied. It is encouraging that the NYSED *Local Assessment Initiative* seems to be moving away from measuring schools' success on pure "proficiency" and more towards "growth"; our school already emphasizes growth in our assessments and data; we feel that we are in a good place with this; it will be announced in April or May and is state-wide; this is a separate program from the NYSED charter review that is done in in May. They will look not just quantitative data but will focus on the

whole school picture and qualitative data such as social/emotional outcomes, school culture, staff involvement, parent involvement, etc.

- Student admissions are accelerating; applications are up 35% in one week; we now have 90 applications for 50 available seats. There will be a lottery for 1st grade, 3rd grade and 4th grade; the lottery to be held on April 5th at 5pm. We may also need a lottery for 2nd grade. Applicants for 3rd and 4th grade are our target audience; 25% of 1st grade applicants are siblings; 100% of applications are students in District 31.
- Some upcoming projects: *Little Free Library/Community Garden* will be tended by our students; *Earth Day-Neighborhood Forest* gives free trees for any family who applies; *Bookworm Vending Machine* filled with with books to incentivize reading - students receive tokens for the machine as reward for positive classroom behavior.
- We were contacted by UAU regarding after-school programs and will have an update about this next month.
- Focus Group Responses - thanked the staff that participated in the focus groups; a copy of the responses was given to the board to review to see how they align with recommendations.

B. Monthly Financials

IV. Other Business

A. New Business

A. Volpe offered the following update on the *Family Association*:
At the last *Family Association* meeting a resolution was passed regarding the officers' election; this year is considered our inaugural year, which exempts the association from holding elections; therefore A. Volpe will stay in place as president through June 2022; we are in talks about changing the association's bylaws to allow the president to serve a 2-year term and all other officers serve a 1-year term - there appears to be general agreement; our pro-bono tax attorney is willing to to advise us on how to correctly meet the 501(c)3 tax exempt requirements and will represent us to obtain our tax-exempt designation; the reason that we are able to get such wonderful pro-bono assistance is because our school and T. Castanza are so well-regarded - our greatest resource is our human resource; parents appreciate the leadership of our school. ED spoke at association's meeting about the planned building expansion; parents very much support the expansion; families also approve of the adjustment of the school day from 8:15am to 3:15pm; parents would like to see after-school programs offered, a sports program or physical activity; children are online too much due to COVID restrictions; currently looking into a grant for an after-school STEM program.

M. Casale - Would like to see a qualitative assessment or an inventory sent home to parents asking them what type of after-school programs they would like to see offered;

we could then determine how many are interested in a physical activity program or an academic program so we can customize.
A. Volpe offered to get that information through the Family Association by the next regular board meeting.
T. Castanza - This is something the school has already done with a parents' survey which can be built out a little more with an after-school section via Google.
R. Kerr - UAU and other community based organizations offer a myriad of options; they break it up into segments and a single CBO can offer a number of these activities.
A. Volpe - Agreed that one vendor can offer many different types of activities or clubs, and parents can choose which activities/how many activities in which to enroll their children.
T. Castanza - We have no shortage of organizations that want to be involved with our school, i.e., CYO, UAU, chess club, etc. and we have the ability to offer a wide variety of programs.
Board members agreed to take up this topic again when they have more information.
R. Illuzzi - Families call to say they have relatives or friends who are now applying for admission; the 100-day responses are testaments to the hard work of everyone at the school, the leadership, teachers, school aides, and parents of our incredible *Family Association* - it is a privilege to see how much our school is loved; she thanked everyone for their time as volunteers.
T. Castanza - The parents' 100-day responses have not yet been given to the board but will be merged with staff's responses and shared with board members soon.

V. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 8:11 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kathy Baldassano