APPROVED

Bridge Preparatory Charter School

Minutes

Board Meeting

Date and Time
Tuesday September 20, 2022 at 7:00 PM

Location
Bridge Preparatory Charter School
715 Ocean Terrace
Building A - Atrium (Main Floor)
Staten Island, NY

Trustees Present
Azalia Volpe, Geena Kuriakose, Laurel Gyimesi, Mark Harmon-Vaught, Rose Kerr

Trustees Absent
None

Ex Officio Members Present
Tim Castanza

Guests Present
Amanda Wolkowitz, Christine Volpe, George Winn (remote), Heba Nassef-Gore, Kathy Baldassano (remote), Maria Casale (remote), Rose Marie Illuzzi (remote)

I. Opening Items

A. **Record Attendance**

B. **Call the Meeting to Order**

Geena Kuriakose called a meeting of the board of trustees of Bridge Preparatory Charter School to order on Tuesday Sep 20, 2022 at 7:07 PM.
The following board members attended via videoconference from locations not open to the public: Maria Casale and George Winn.
Quorum was met nonetheless by the 5 board members who appeared in person at this meeting.

C. Approve Minutes of August 17th 2022 Board Meeting

Geena Kuriakose made a motion to approve the minutes from Board meeting on 08-17-22.
To expedite proceedings, a proposal to approve the minutes was made by Geena Kuriakose with a call for unanimous consent As there was no objection to the proposal, the minutes are approved via unanimous consent.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

D. Welcome From Chair

L. Gyimesi welcomed attendees; she will be brief as there is a full agenda for tonight's meeting. She thanked everyone for attending and for their efforts on behalf of Bridge Prep.

II. Committee Reports

A. Academic Committee

R. Kerr reported that the *Academic Committee* met last week; there won't be a data report this month; she gave the floor to the E.D. and the leadership team to report.

T. Castanza said that their work actually started over the summer and not just with the first day of school; and there has been a lot of professional learning happening. He discussed the following:

- The school leadership team is looking at data and seeing how they can align the way that they produce data reporting with the way that all other levels of reporting are done, i.e., how Pasek Consulting will be working with us, how we do our trimester-based check-ins, and goal-based check-ins; it will help us at the school level to look at all our school-based data in one spot; we will talk about this later at the *Academic Committee* meeting.
- We are still waiting for the NYSED mid-term report; there was a change in our NYSED liaison and we've been waiting for the report since August. L. Gyimesi added that Pasek Consulting has the mid-term reports topic listed for the meeting in November, so perhaps they know when the reports are expected to be released.
- Regarding NYS testing data, it still is not available for public release, E.D. received disaggregated student-level data which is not yet cleared for public distribution; it looks like we are on target and we hope to be able to release the data in October.

E.D. is interested in looking at the differences in data between the assessments in ELA/Math/Science. When the data is released we will be able to see the district-wide data as well.

C. Volpe reported on the following topics:

- The new school year got off to a great start; we are 100% fully staffed and all of our staff has been participating in 2 weeks of professional development based on the data and feedback we received from staff;
- We have a new math program; teachers are learning about the program, and the resources available, etc. We invested in a supplementary math program called "Math & Movement", which is multi-sensory movement-based learning aligned with our charter goals.
- We offered a workshops on classroom management; on conflict resolution, crisis intervention and cognitive psychology;
- We covered special education policies and procedures; C. Otterbeck helped to set the teachers up with any special education forms or contacts they need.
- Core Collaborative professional development network is helping us to realign schedules and our priorities around the needs of our students; walking us into impact teams where teachers will be able to look at student work and determine their next steps by analyzing student tests and samples.
- Our new teachers also received OG training and refresher OG training is offered to all staff.

T. Castanza commented that we have a fantastic partnership with Core Collaborative, they ask us about our goals and what we think we need to see; their emphasis is on data and how to use data, which aligns to our charter's mission and key design elements. They have also been very helpful with comparisons of our MAP data and NYS testing data. We will talk more about this at the October *Academic Committee* meeting.
R. Kerr added that one of the goals of the *Academic Committee* is to offer the board data that really makes sense; when is the best time and what does the data tell us? We will concentrate on pulling in experts of this type of data analysis, and focus on this topic over the next weeks.

The next Academic Committee Meeting will be October 11th at 11 AM.

B. Finance Committee

G. Winn reported that *the Finance Committee* met on September 13th; he is happy to have L. Gyimesi and G. Kuriakose as members of the committee and Rebecca Peters joined as an advisor to the committee; she brings a lot of experience from the accounting area as well as charter school area; she has served as an operational and financial capacity in schools and we are grateful to have her expertise.

- E.D. is looking at a budget refresh with BoostEd; which means we will get a look at the year-to-date fiscal year budget at the October meeting.
- We are anxiously awaiting the 5-Year Budget which will guide our planning and how to consider things as a board; E.D. and his team are working on it and we hope to have a draft of the budget in October.
- We are looking for a Compliance & Budgeting Calendar to give the board the ability to look at things from a reporting standpoint for our authorizers and funders; what the management team has to be accountable to the people funding us. Pasek has done work in that area and it interweaves with our charter renewal process.
- An update of the Policy & Procedures Manual is probably not going to be considered in October because we haven't yet seen the update and we are focusing at this time on our audit, which will be shared with the board in a few weeks, and which needs to be approved by the board before the end of October.

The date of next Finance Committee Meeting is still to be determined.

C. Board Development and Governance

M. Harmon-Vaught offered the following report:

- We had a great Open Meetings Law training session, thank you K. Baldassano for putting that together and for making a complex and convoluted subject very clear; he really appreciates that.
- Following that OML discussion, the *Governance Committee* will take up the question of "extraordinary circumstances" required by the law; we must define the term to give parameters for allowing members to remotely attend meetings from locations not open to the public.
- We had submitted materials to NYSED on the 2 new board members approved at our last meeting, however NYSED requires final minutes and not draft minutes from the meeting where the board approved the new members. Since we have approved those minutes earlier tonight, the minutes can now be submitted to NYSED in final form.

The next Board Development & Governance Committee Meeting will be October 4th at 7:45 AM.

D. ED Support and Evaluation

M. Harmon-Vaught thanked the board for the Special Meeting held last week; he also thanked the E.D. for his leadership and the conversations they had. He will forgo the rest of his time so that the E.D. will have more time to discuss the goals later at tonight's meeting.

III. New Business

A.

Benchmarks for Committees

L. Gyimesi has been focusing on the 10 *NYSED Charter School Performance Benchmarks* upon which we will be evaluated for charter renewal; she has assigned various benchmarks to our existing committees to work on the benchmark goals; the committee members can meet to review progress in each area. Some parts of the benchmarks are for ownership of the leadership team of the school; she will be work with the leadership team on those areas. The definitions of each benchmark can be found on page 5 of the **Charter School Performance Framework** shared with the board tonight and accessible online at: http://www.nysed.gov/common/nysed/files/programs/charter-schools/performanceframework2019.pdf

- **ACADEMIC COMMITTEE: #1. Student Performance**; **#2. Teaching and Learning** *(crossover with school leadership team)*; **#8. Mission and Key Design Elements**
- **SCHOOL LEADERSHIP TEAM: #3. Culture, Climate and Student & Family Engagement**; **#7. Organizational Capacity**; **#9. Enrollment, Recruitment and Retention**
- **FINANCE COMMITTEE: #4. Financial Condition**; **#5. Financial Management**
- **BOARD DEVELOPMENT & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE: #6. Board Oversight and Governance**; **#10. Legal Compliance** *(#7. Organizational Capacity crossover with school leadership team)*

We will have meetings to share progress on these benchmarks; Pasek Consulting is also tying some of their meetings to these benchmarks.

A hierarchy structure interconnects these goals:
Pasek Consulting/Charter Renewal
School Goals
E.D. Goals
Leadership Team Goals

If anyone has any questions, please reach out to L. Gyimesi.

B. Revisions to Board Meeting Schedule and Committee Meeting Schedule

G. Kuriakose reviewed the changes to the Board of Trustees meeting schedule, which were previously discussed and shared with board members:

Board Meetings will be held on the 3rd Tuesday of the month at 7 PM:
September 20th
October 18th
November 15th
December 20th
January 24th *(moved from Jan 17th as school is closed for professional learning)*

February 28th *(moved from Feb 21st as school is closed for Midwinter Recess)*
March 21st
April 18th
May 16th
June 13th *(moved from June 20th to accommodate end of school year events)*

Committee Meetings:
Academic Committee - 2nd Tuesday of month at 11 AM
Finance Committee - To Be Determined
Executive Committee - 1st or 2nd Thursday of month at 7:30 AM
Board Development & Governance Committee - 1st Tuesday of month at 7:45 AM
E.D. Support & Evaluation - To Be Determined Trimesterly

The meeting schedule will be posted on the school's website, on Board on Track, and in the Staten Island Advance newspaper, as well as in our public notices.

C. ED Goals

- L. Gyimesi said that most of the work on E.D. goals is being done by board member M. Harmon-Vaught and she briefly reminds the board that the focus of the upcoming meetings will be on the goals we want to achieve; the overriding goal is to get our charter renewed with guidance from Pasek Consulting. We'll need to have a strategy session to discuss our board goals for this year; there are 4 major board goals: charter renewal, 5th grade middle school placement, charter revisions for school growth, community outreach and beginning our teacher academy. Our board goals interconnect with the E.D. goals and the hierarchy discussed earlier in tonight's meeting under "benchmarks". She then gave the floor to M. Harmon-Vaught.
- M. Harmon-Vaught reminded the board of what we committed to this year: the importance of the nested goals that we set for the school are reflected in what we ask of the school leadership team, and the other members of the school community and also of the board, so that we are all growing together. He then gave the floor to T. Castanza to discuss the school's goals.

T. Castanza agreed with M. Harmon-Vaught that these goals are "nested"; the goals for the Board of Trustees, the school leadership team and his own E.D. goals are interconnected, aligned and working in sync. Our school goals are also aligned to the charter benchmarks. He then offered a presentation on the **2022-2023 Priority School Goals**:

Benchmark #1 Academic Performance

1. **Student Growth** based on data from NWEA MAP (Literacy, Math and Fluency) and school based Orton-Gillingham assessments; student academic growth is a

critical metric in our goals of achieving our mission, establishing and maintaining trust with students and families and charter reauthorization
2. **Student Performance** using proficiency data from end of year assessments in NWEA MAP and OG; demonstrating student proficiency on both standards-based and skill-based assessments is critical

Benchmark #3 Culture, Climate and Engagement

1. **Staff Satisfaction** using data from surveys, check-ins and staff feedback sessions to measure and evaluate staff satisfaction; staff investment and buy-in are critical elements
2. **Family Satisfaction** using data from family satisfaction surveys (including End-of-Year Family Survey) to measure and evaluate family happiness; frequent assessment of the needs and experiences of our families is important; families are key members of the school community and critical partners in delivering our mission

Benchmark #5 Financial Management

1. **Budget Management** using periodic needs assessments and mindful management of our budget to deliver results and secure and maintain resources for future growth
2. **Budget Development** to help guide strategic decisions for charter renewal and in the long term; specific objectives will be identified to strategically plan and successfully operate, with collaboration between the Board of Trustees and Executive Director

Benchmark #8 Mission and Key Design Elements

1. **Key Design Elements** in end-of-year reporting to NYSED and in external communications, we will explicitly identify our key design elements in action; key design elements are critical to re-authorization and guide much of our organizational decisions

Benchmark #9 Enrollment, Recruitment and Retention

1. **Student Enrollment** we will demonstrate the continued demand for our program as well as our ability to maintain NYSED approved enrollment figures on BEDS day, lottery day and at the end of the school year; this year we are at our maximum NYSED enrollment

Other *(Non-Benchmark Specific)*

1. **Fundraising and Donor Identification** we will identify new donors, partners and funding streams that will lead to increased outside revenue; securing new revenue

from private donations, grants and fundraising will allow us to strategically plan and support initiatives and projects

2. **Space and Facilities** through collaboration with the Board of Trustees, financial services partners and strategic members of the community we will launch a Facilities Exploratory Team, to identify potential new or existing additional facilities options; securing committed, permanent public space plays an important role for the school's growth

D. Other New Business

- L. Gyimesi said that she, C. Volpe, T. Castanza and M. Harmon-Vaught met with the Wagner College provost about a partnership proposal between their college and Bridge Prep; the meeting was very beneficial and productive; we will be put in touch with the college education department chair very soon; we have an opportunity to build something wonderful.
- M. Harmon-Vaught added that he will try to get the provost and the head of the education department to visit Bridge Prep; the provost was impressed and happy with the meeting and she mentioned it at a recent Wagner College Board of Trustees meeting; the prospect is exciting. He hopes it will be a long-term partnership of building programs together.
- R. Kerr asked if the goal of the partnership is a pipeline for staffing as well as for institution-building professional development? L. Gyimesi responded that was part of the conversation at the meeting with the provost; it will be a collaborative relationship. It will be helpful with our goal of expanding community relationships and development of our teachers institute.

IV. Executive Director Report

A. ED Report

T. Castanza gave the following update:

- The first day of school was successful and for the first time we had a full family/student orientation session with a wonderful turn-out;
- A new school opened on campus and with it, more traffic
- Working with our new health benefits partner, Extensis, we are able to offer lower premium rates to our staff and additionally to provide employees with both dental and vision coverage paid for by the school.
- We are finalizing our annual financial audit with Schall & Ashenfarb, to be approved by the board in October; a draft of the audit will be given to the *Finance Committee* soon.
- The District Safety Plan has been updated, is posted on our website and presented to the board for approval at tonight's meeting. The School Safety Plan has been developed and approved by members of the Campus Safety Committee for the upcoming year and will be uploaded to NYSED by the DoE.

- We were able to offer a week of professional development OG training to teachers from our 3 middle school partners; we are awaiting clearance from DoE to announce the 3 partnership sites so that we can let the parents of our 5th graders know; G. Winn asked if our 5th grade students would be given preference for enrollment in those middle schools? T. Castanza responded that DoE felt it would be inequitable to offer admission preference to only 1 charter school in NYC; we have been talking about this with our students' families and the DoE to have a good understanding of the criteria for admission preference and how will that will trickle into our community; we are confident that they will use a language similar to our admissions process and with their IEPs our students should be in a good place to meet the preference criteria; hopefully DoE will have an answer for us within the next few weeks.

V. Votes

A. District Safety Plan

T. Castanza explained the following:
Annually, NYSED requires districts to adopt and post an annual District Safety Plan, in addition to the Building Safety Plans in place at each school. The District Safety Plan is created and developed based on the School Safety Plan, which is created and established in collaboration with other school in our building, operated by the NYCDOE. As a school co-located in a NYC DOE building, and operating under the Shared Building Safety Plan, Bridge Prep also must follow the NYC DOE's District Safety Plan, which includes all practices, procedures and protocols required for NYC public schools and those in NYC DOE buildings, in adherence to the General Response Protocols (GRP). Each year, the NYC DOE's District Safety Plan's is adopted at Bridge Prep's District Safety Plan, with modifications made to include references to school specific roles (i.e. Executive Director, Director of Operations etc.) as it relates to who serves specific roles at Bridge Prep and the school specific Code of Conduct. The building specific Safety Plan is uploaded to NYSED by the NYCDOE. The District Safety Plan is uploaded to NYSED by Bridge Prep separately.

A copy of the Bridge Prep Charter School 2022-2023 District Safety Plan has been presented to the Board of Trustees. NYSED requires that the Bridge Prep Board of Trustees vote to adopt the District Safety Plan, which will be uploaded to NYSED by the Executive Director by October 1, 2022.

Geena Kuriakose made a motion to to approve the Bridge Preparatory Charter School 2022-2023 District Safety Plan as presented to the Board of Trustees.
Laurel Gyimesi seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

B.

Modification to the School's Employee Handbook to Include a Business Travel Policy

Laurel Gyimesi made a motion to approve modification to the school's employee handbook to include a business travel policy, as presented to the Board of Trustees. To expedite proceedings, a proposal to approve the modifications to the employee handbook to include a business travel policy was made by L. Gyimesi with a call for unanimous consent. As there was no objection to the proposal, the motion is approved via unanimous consent.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

VI. Family Association Update

A. Family Association Update

A. Wolkowitz gave the following update:

- The *Family Association* held its first event on the first day of school during family orientation; they signed up 84 new family emails to share more information about our association
- A Pumpkin Patch event *(for students only)* will be held on October 12th on the grassy hill behind Building A
- Trunk or Treat *(for families)* is scheduled for October 29th in the campus parking lot
- Once a month, there will be a "Dress Down Day" at the school; students will pay $2 to participate and the school will match the funds, all of the proceeds will go to a different charity each month; the October charity is *Making Strides Against Breast Cancer.*
- We are planning some 5th grade events: the Fifth Grade Trip will be to Medieval Times on March 31st; the 5th Grade Dance is still being planned, we need to find a catering hall to host the dance, which will be held on a school day; the students will come to school dressed-up, walk a red carpet, have their picture taken, and get on a school bus to go to the dance location; the bus will bring them back before school dismissal time; speaking to yearbook companies about creating our 5th grade yearbook.
- A Thanksgiving Pie sale is being planned; parents can pre-order pies and then pick them up at the school

T. Castanza added that the 5th Grade graduation has been scheduled for June 15th at the St. George Theatre; he is working with the *Family Association* to make the event very special. It's the first graduation for our school. The members of the Board of Trustees will be invited. More details will be forthcoming.

VII. 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 8:09 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kathy Baldassano

Documents used during the meeting

- Board Meeting and Committee Meeting Schedule.docx
- performanceframework2019.pdf
- Business Travel Policy_Staff Handbook.pdf
- Bridge Prep District Safety Plan 2022_2023.pdf