APPROVED

Bridge Preparatory Charter School

Minutes

Board Meeting

Date and Time
Tuesday October 17, 2023 at 7:00 PM

Location
Bridge Preparatory Charter School
715 Ocean Terrace
Building A - Atrium (Main Floor)
Staten Island, NY 10301

232 East 6th street
Brooklyn, NY 11215

201 Pondfield Road
Bronxville, NY 10708

300 Cromwell Avenue
Staten Island, NY

Hi all,
Please review the minutes from the last meeting and send any edits to the secretary in writing 48 hours before the meeting so that we can make any necessary edits.

Thank you,

Trustees Present
Amanda Wolkowitz, Geena Kuriakose, George Winn (remote), Laurel Gyimesi, Maria Casale (remote), Mark Harmon-Vaught, Rebecca Peters (remote), Rose Kerr, Traci Frey

Trustees Absent
Heba Nassef-Gore

Ex Officio Members Present
Tim Castanza

Guests Present
Christine Volpe (remote), Francesca DiCanio (remote), Joseph Cupo (remote), Kathy Baldassano (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 Oct 17, 2023 at 7:02 PM.

C. Approve Minutes of Board Meeting on 09/12/23

Geena Kuriakose made a motion to approve the minutes from Board meeting on 09-12-23.
G. Kuriakose stated if there is no objection, the motion to approve the minutes of the 09-12-23 meeting will be adopted. As there was no objection, the motion is adopted and the minutes are approved by unanimous consent.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

D. Welcome From Chair

L. Gyimesi thanked everyone for attending and said we have a full house and a full agenda tonight; she thanked everyone for their time and their service.

II. Audit Report & Vote to Approve Audit Draft

A. Report on the Audit of the Financial Statements

G. Winn stated that we have received a clean audit this year; there were no exceptions and the auditors from SAX Accounting commented that we had taken positive action on their previous suggestions regarding how to handle debit cards vs. credit cards - the auditors noted that our management team and financial managers had come up with a good solution; it was nice to get such good feedback. We are in good stead financially and have sufficient operating funds available for approximately 2 years, if we ever

needed to be. We had a good conversation with Joe Albano and the auditing team from SAX Accounting.
T. Castanza added that the board will be asked to vote tonight on the draft audit which will then be shared with the auditing team, who will prepare the final audit to be submitted to NYSED as part of our Annual Report by November 1st.

B. Vote to Approve Financial Audit Draft

George Winn made a motion to approve the financial audit report for the prior fiscal year ending June 30, 2023 as presented to the Board of Trustees on this date.
Laurel Gyimesi seconded the motion.
L. Gyimesi commended the finance management team for receiving clean audits every year for the last 4 years.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

Roll Call

Heba Nassef-Gore	Absent
Maria Casale	Aye
Rose Kerr	Aye
Rebecca Peters	Aye
Amanda Wolkowitz	Aye
Traci Frey	Aye
George Winn	Aye
Geena Kuriakose	Aye
Laurel Gyimesi	Aye
Mark Harmon-Vaught	Aye

III. Committee Updates

A. Academic Committee

T. Frey gave the following *Academic Committee* update:

- **STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS**: T. Castanza and C. Volpe shared data with the *Academic Committee* regarding our student demographics - that information will be presented to the entire board tonight; it is important to know who our students are regarding their disability classifications, gender, ethnicity, etc. The school's data team prepared charts.
- **PRELIMINARY TEST DATA:** We have some test data for our school, full test data will be shared with the board at next month's board meeting. Some of the data being presented tonight will appear on the new data Dashboard starting next month. R. Kerr added that it's important to note that the information shown regarding breaking-down standardized testing reveals only an overview of the data - at the school level they are able to break it down to the individual student level - each child's data year-over-year in order to focus on every child's individual needs in ELA and Math.

- **TEACHER TEAMS:** The school has formed some new teacher teams, including a new data team; every staff member is a part of one of the teams;
- **PROFESSIONAL LEARNING**: Plans are in place to engage the staff in monthly professional learning sessions, including targeted professional learning for some staff members. R. Kerr added that there have been some very important structures added for teacher improvement, observation and new systems for tracking. The success of a child has much to do with the quality of the teachers. Every teacher has been designated a tier level for support. We also met our new Math Coach.

C. Volpe reported that they are very happy to have an expanded school data team because they can now look more deeply into data points; with the assistance of our new special ed. teacher, Ms. Cooke, we created a new chart showing the different IEP classifications of our students. This will be presented to the board next month. We are tracking attendance and student demographics and MAP data. We are introducing fluency and comprehension assessments soon. We are working with Jill on new way to present OG data points to show mastery of foundational skills and grade-level norms, to give a better picture of our data that will be more user-friendly.

B. Finance Committee

G. Winn gave the following *Finance Committee* update; working on some of the topics that were discussed at our last Strategy Session:

- **CASH & ASSET MANAGEMENT**: How to invest our surplus funds based on goals that the board will identify; we need to figure out how to work with cash management on an ongoing basis; we hope to have some proposals ready to present to the board at the November board meeting; we are also looking to see what other investment categories we can use.

C. Fundraising Committee

M. Harmon-Vaught gave the following *Fundraising Committee* update:
The *Fundraising Committee* will be holding its first meeting this Friday; we will discuss who we want to bring onto this committee, not necessarily just board members, but also people who can ask strategic questions and will help us to consider long-term goals. We will bring back to the full board the our recommendations.

IV. Report of Executive Director

A. Executive Director Update

T. Castanza gave the following updates:

- **BUDGET REFRESH**: This is the time of year when we budget refresh; what items are we budgeted for, what does our staffing look like and what do we anticipate as the needs of the school; we will cover the budget refresh at the November *Finance Committee* meeting; we will look at what we planned to spend, what we actually

spent and where do we need to adjust our budget lines. This helps us to plan our spending for the rest of the school year, and we'll look at the budget again in January/February to see if any further adjustment is needed.

- **NEW CONTRACTS**: We will be bringing some new contracts to the attention of the board and committees in the next few weeks; some of the planned expenses are one-time expenditures that will be presented to the board for approval due to the large amount of the expenditures. We also have a really robust staff-and-student recruitment budget. G. Winn added that these initiatives all fall within our existing budgeted amounts for this current fiscal year; financial but also programmatic in identifying the initiatives implemented now, some of which fall into multiple budget areas. We also need to think about what to do with some of our budget surplus.
- **RETIREMENT OF PETRIDES SCHOOL PRINCIPAL**: Ms. Buckheit is retiring and a new principal will be put in place immediately; we look forward to working collaboratively with the new principal as we did with Ms. Buckheit; we are continuing our good partnership with Ms. McHugh, Principal of the Hungerford School.
- **NEW PLAYGROUND**: Both the Petrides School and Bridge Prep had been notified by the School Construction Authority that we received $300,000 in Reso A funds to support the construction and renovation of playgrounds on the Petrides Campus. SCA left it up to us to determine how to share that funding; Ms. Buckheit and T. Costanza agreed to spend some on renovating the existing playground for the Petrides School and some on constructing a new playground behind the "A" building for Bridge Prep. SCA will construct the playground but we will have input on the design. We also agreed to renovate/repair some of the campus outer fencing near the new playground.
- **BUILDING "A" RELOCATION UPDATE**: We now have all our classrooms located in a single building and are settling in; we are able to look at where we still have needs; every professional now has an office; we also have a conference space for meetings; our next project is the design of the Literacy Lab/Library multi-sensory space; we've already received some funding for the space from the *Family Association* and Councilman Borelli; we now need to find a vendor to design the space for us; we hope to have some progress on that space by the end of November.
- **CAMPUS COUNCIL MEETING:** We held out first Campus Council Meeting with the leaders of the other schools located on the Petrides Campus; T. Castanza is Chair of the Council, Ms. Buckheit, Ms. McHugh and the Superintendent's team attended the meeting. Building Captain is Christine Loughlin, Executive Director of the Borough Support Team. Discussion was held on needs of the students and staff on the campus, working through space-sharing, and school safety.
- **CAMERAS FOR ALL FLOORS IN BUILDING "A"**: The 2nd and 3rd floors of our building have no cameras; the 3rd floor still has district administrative staff offices; we asked about adding cameras to our building but there are so many cameras already on campus that the system cannot accept any more; to add a new system for cameras we would need Reso A funding and there is a long list of schools in

NYC that are waiting for cameras to be installed; we asked DoE if we could use our own capital funds to purchase a new camera system for our building, and that is being looked into to see if it is possible. Superintendent Wilson agrees that we need cameras in our building for safety, so we will see what is permitted. We should have more information on adding cameras by next board meeting.

- **CHARTER RENEWAL PROCESS:** We had a great meeting with our staff cabinet to talk about our data and what we need to do as a school team to deliver a successful renewal. We talked about PROFICIENCY being THE goal and GROWTH as being A goal - and we are making goals towards the main goal. Our teachers are eager to dive into individual student data, which they will use to instruct in the classroom. We did submit our Benchmark #1 requirement for the renewal application; at the time of submission the current assessment data was still under embargo.

B. NYSED School Site Visit of November 16th & 17th

Open discussion of the upcoming NYSED site visit:

- We are now preparing for the NYSED site visit, which will be November 16th & 17th at the school; NYSED has given us a copy of their *Site Visit Protocol* and board members are encouraged to read it. Every classroom, hallway, and bulletin board will have a cabinet member assigned to make sure Benchmarks #2, #3 and #8 exist throughout the building leading up to the site visit, during the site visit and afterwards. E.D. believes we are really ready for this visit and are not worried. E.D. is proud of the way the cabinet responded to this; E.D. spoke to Paolo about the structure of the visit and we should be able to drive the agenda.
- CAP Plan looks at last year's data and wants to see how we have improved in this year's data. We need to show NYSED what we have already done and how we will grow from there. Benchmarks #2 and #3 are intended to drive Benchmark #1. When NYSED enters a classroom, they need to see: effective instruction, classroom management and positive culture.
- NYSED will visit 9 classrooms; they want to see every grade; they want to see Math, ELA, Science and Social Studies and anything that we define as "unique to our mission", so E.D. will show them Orton-Gillingham, morning meeting, and new structured reading period. NYSED wants to see a teacher focus group of 5 to 6 teachers selected by the school; they don't want a parent focus group, but E.D. is launching our 2023-2024 Family Survey and that data can be shared during the visit.
- The Board of Trustees will have a 1-hour meeting with NYSED on the morning of November 17th at approximately 9:30am. NYSED will be leaving at 12 noon on that day.
- It's important to hold a debriefing with NYSED before they leave the building; it gives us a chance to shine a light on what we want to emphasize and to hear from NYSED about what they have seen - this debriefing is essential. What needs to be covered at the debriefing and how it helps us. Pasek Consulting is willing to prep

us with a run-through of the type of questions NYSED will ask during the site visit; questions about our charter revisions and the charter key design elements; Pasek suggests a site visit rehearsal during the first week of November on a date convenient for the board - date & time to be determined.
- Our board and our leadership team need to agree on certain terms and how we present ourselves to NYSED. After the Pasek rehearsal it's a good idea for the board to discuss all of these points as a group BEFORE the site visit.

C. Review of Data Comps

T. Castanza presented the board with a chart showing the percent proficient of different grades and groups of the school. **This ELA & Math data** is looked at by NYSED as part of Benchmark #1.
A discussion followed regarding what the data means, how this data should be interpreted and how NYSED will view the data. The focus should be on the high percentage of students with disabilities in our school's population and the small number of students being assessed.

V. Family Association

A. Family Association Update

A. Wolkowitz gave the following update:

- **TRUNK-OR-TREAT** event was held last Sunday; there were about 28 cars there and a lot of new families. There was a DJ, snacks and a costume parade, a car decorating contest and a raffle.
- **BAKE SALE** last week and families donated bake items and we donated half of the proceeds toward the Trunk-or-Treat event and the other half of the proceeds to Making Strides Against Breast Cancer.
- **PUMPKIN PATCH** will be held on Halloween; every student will be given a pumpkin and teachers will be given materials to decorate the pumpkins; we take a photo of each child with their pumpkin and send the photo home with the child.
- **CONNECT SATURDAY CLOTHING DRIVE** will be coordinated with Ms. Illuzzi - details to follow.

VI. Other Business

A. New Business

M. Casale gave an overview of a study she is working on under the topic: *Creating Access & Equity in Educating Children with Dyslexia: A Teacher Training Institute Elementary Charter School Model.*
She will be studying the teachers' perceptions and experiences at Bridge Prep Charter School under the pseudo name of Oakdale Prep. She will be examining the lived experiences of teachers concerning the motivational factors associated with teacher

investment in acquiring the necessary skills to educate those with dyslexia. She will be collecting 3 forms of data: interviews, focus group questions and journal prompts. Many of the questions touch upon information that NYSED is also interested in and she believes this study will help to educate NYSED; they need to understand how Bridge Prep is incredibly different from other schools.
She will be reaching out to the teachers at Bridge Prep after the NYSED visit. All information submitted by the teachers will be confidential and protected. She hopes to sample 15-20 teachers and she will give participants a small gift card in appreciation.

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 8:20 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kathy Baldassano

Documents used during the meeting

- Bridge Prep Audit Presentation 6-30-2023 Draft (10.10.23).pdf
- BPCS Data Comps.xlsx.pdf
- nysed-charter-renewal-site-visit-protocol.pdf