APPROVED

Bridge Preparatory Charter School

Minutes

Board Meeting

Date and Time
Tuesday November 21, 2023 at 7:00 PM

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

104 Capri C
Delray Beach FL

201 Pondfield Road,
Bronxville, NY 10708

1310 Lake Angelus Shores Road
Lake Angelus, MI 48326

51 Ionia Avenue
Staten Island, NY 10312

270 College Avenue
Staten Island, NY

300 Cromwell Avenue
Staten Island, NY

Trustees Present

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

Trustees Absent
None

Ex Officio Members Present
Tim Castanza

Guests Present
Christine Volpe (remote), Joseph Cupo (remote), Kathy Baldassano (remote)

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

As per Public Officers Law, Article 7, § 103-a *(Videoconferencing by public bodies)* although board members Maria Casale, Rose Kerr, Rebecca Peters, Traci Frey, George Winn and Heba Nassef-Gore are not present in-person for this meeting, they are attending via videoconference from locations posted on the public meeting notice/agenda and open to the public; they are therefore considered to be in attendance for purposes of quorum and are permitted to vote. In addition, board member Laurel Gyimesi is attending this meeting via videoconference and has been determined to meet "extraordinary circumstances" for remote attendance at a location not open to the public; she therefore is considered to be in attendance for purposes of quorum and is permitted to vote.
QUORUM IS MET FOR THIS MEETING.

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 Nov 21, 2023 at 7:01 PM.

C. Approve Minutes of Board Meeting on 10/17/23

Geena Kuriakose made a motion to approve the minutes from Board Meeting on 10-17-23.
G. Kuriakose stated if there is no objection, the motion to approve the minutes of the 10-17-23 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 all attendees and said that she wishes to thank the school's leadership team for their efforts during the NYSED site-visit. The school looked beautiful, the visit was smooth, the agendas were great, everyone did a phenomenal job and she just wants to offer her congratulations and thanks. She asked T. Castanza to share the board's appreciation with his staff for how the visit was handled.
She wishes everyone a restful and peaceful Thanksgiving.

II. Votes

A. Proposal for Elementary Immersive Day Programs (Day Camps)

Geena Kuriakose made a motion to approve the Pathways in Education/Elementary Day Programs proposal as presented to the board.
Mark Harmon-Vaught seconded the motion.
T. Castanza said that we want to offer an immersive instructional program for all our students in the Spring; Pathways in Education offers Elementary School Day Programs. These are 5-day immersive programs held at our school. Every student in every grade will be able to participate. We may even be able to design some of these programs ourselves in the future.

Three of these programs will be offered to our students in May 2024:

- CSI-Crime Scene Investigation/Forensic Science (05/28/24-06/01/24) 55 students $29,150.00
- International Taste the World (05/20/24-05/24/24) 126 students $62,370.00
- National Parks (05/04/24-05/10/24) 64 students $31,680.00

The programs proposal and invoices are presented to the board for review and vote.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

III. Committee Updates

A. Academic Committee

T. Frey gave the following update of the Academic Committee Meeting:

- The school shared a Data Dashboard that shows OG, beginning of the year foundational skills Math & ELA data, student demographics, special ed. snapshot of our students, NYS Math & ELA comparative data. We discussed how teachers are starting to use this data to form small group instruction; emphasizing students who are approaching proficiency, setting goals with students based on the data, and using OG data to know which skills students are lacking.
- Teacher observation and support progress; every teacher in the building has been observed at least twice and formal observations will be completed before Winter Recess.

- Math & Movement was implemented during teacher professional development on Election Day; the teachers loved it and hopefully will incorporate more Math & Movement into their classrooms; the teachers also worked on common planning and to present both actionable items and deliverables that they would have completed during the time they were given.
- Professional Development on Tuesday and Thursdays divided up into Team Time, Common Planning Time, and OG Time, and there is a set schedule for what happens each month on each day.
- Preparations for NYSET site-visit

She then turned the floor over to C. Volpe who presented a copy of the Data Dashboard to the board indicating:

- Student Demographics
- Special Education Snapshot
- NYS Assessment Data (SY2022-2023)
- MAP ELA - Fall 2023
- MAP Math - Fall 2023
- MAP Achievement - Fall 2023
- Orton-Gillingham (OG) BOY Assessment Data

Each of the areas were discussed in detail.

B. Finance Committee

G. Winn gave the following *Finance Committee* update:

- The *Finance Committee* has been looking at some programmatic contracts, tonight we voted on one of those contracts.
- E.D. has been considering media and branding proposals.
- NYSED doesn't have a lot of comment on the financial aspect of our school and thanks to the team for their hard work to get us there.
- Moving forward, we are looking at a lot of things that we discussed at our July board strategy session. B. Peters and G. Winn are looking at financial options on how to manage our assets and what is possible to fund the goals that we set as a board.

He then gave the floor to T. Castanza to discuss the budget refresh.
We look at the budget we approved in June and where we are now; at this point of the year we refresh the budget by looking at what we actually spent in each bucket:

1. revenue (where are we now compared to our projections);
2. personnel (changes in hiring, etc.);
3. non-personnel (operational aid, capital expenditures, etc.)

We use all this information for forward-planning of our funds. Budgeting has a fluid nature. We will be budgeting for a new charter term for our first time. G. Winn stated that projected revenue was based on a 225 student census; we actually have 241 students and therefore our revenue increased.
Now looking at a contract with Staten Island Digital Media, but we need more information before we can approve that partnership. We will get a presentation from them and the board will be presented with the contract at the December board meeting.

C. Board Development & Governance Committee

H. Nassef-Gore stated that the *Board Development & Governance Committee* met on November 15th and the following was discussed:

- Board development and the assessment to be released in December that will help us to identify the areas that need to be developed on the board
- Expanding membership of the board to increase the number of parent representatives
- There will be further updates at our next board meeting.

IV. Report of Executive Director

A. Executive Director Update

T. Castanza gave the following update:

- Thanked his team for the hard work they put in for months leading up to the NYSED site-visit; our team adapted quickly for the additional people on the NYSED team for the visit; on the morning of the visit, the team was given a list of specific IEPs to be reviewed by the NYSED team and they pulled those files and had them ready for review, efficiently with no delays.
- The night before the NYSED site-visit, the DoE conducted a public hearing on our charter renewal; our public hearing was shared with New Dawn Charter School; even thought New Dawn is a much larger school, they didn't have any participation by speakers, our school had a great showing of public representation at the hearing; at least a dozen parents spoke; the leadership team spoke but was only allowed 10 minutes; L. Gyimesi spoke; so many supporters showed up for us that some were upset that they didn't have a chance to speak. One parent said that the family support our school offers is so important; even a CEC member spoke on our behalf.
- We are looking at the NYSED site-visit feedback and will connect with our NYSED liaison after the Thanksgiving recess for some follow-ups. Pasek was interested in how the visit went; what happens next? NYSED is aware we still have questions.
- We have trimester-based family survey results: 95% said their child is happier when they come home from school; 95% child has a new eagerness to go to

school; 96% said their child is more engaged in learning since they started Bridge Prep.

Some upcoming proposed Board of Regents policy changes for 2024:

1. Commissioner's Regulation 119.1 regarding special education funding for charter schools; it seems they are modifying how certain terms are interpreted; we don't know if this change will affect our school; there will be a webinar session on December 7th with Lisa Long, NYSED Charter Office and NYS Charter Association to clarify the policy changes; he will report back to the board afterwards.
2. Update of Board of Regents Rule 316 regarding how NYSED is working on being an efficient authorizer; adapting to the times of what it means to be an authorizer; it gives the commissioner more authority over certain charter revisions without having a full Board of Regents vote necessary.

- There is a new rule regarding what language needs to be written on charter school applications which is effective immediately.
- Tomorrow the 2nd & 4th grades will hold a Thanksgiving Day parade tomorrow.

- L. Gyimesi stated that we are following up with the information from the NYSED visit and will debrief with Pasek Consulting to get more feedback, thoughts and comments.
- There is a webinar on December 4th regarding the next steps for charter schools that are up for renewal.
- G. Winn asked if there was a document that contains all the feedback from the site-visit; L. Gyimesi said she will work with T. Castanza regarding that.
- R. Kerr added that she wants to acknowledge how awesome our Board of Trustee members were during the site-visit and NYSED was very impressed with us; each one of us shared their expertise and NYSED recognized the strength of our board. NYSED commented in the debrief that our entire board was present and they usually only see 1 or 2 board members during a site-visit.

V. Family Association

A. Family Association Update

A. Wolkowitz gave the following update:

- **Thanksgiving Pie Sale** - The Family Association is partnering with Moretti's Bakery again to sell pies for Thanksgiving; we sold 105 pies this year;
- **Winter Festival** - On December 12th we will hold our first annual Winter Festival outside under heated tents; we have over a dozen vendors lined up to sell wreaths, candles, ornament-making station, photo booth, items for children to buy; we will have food trucks there. We are starting our holiday decorations for the school

(theme: Polar Express) and will do a courtyard clean-up. We have parent volunteers coming in to help us.

T. Frey asked if there would be alternates to ornament-making for children who are Muslim, Jewish, etc. since not everyone has a tree for ornaments. A. Wolkowitz said that the children will be given the option of making a craft item that doesn't need to be an ornament and there will be options such as making a snowman or something non-denominational; the ornament station is called a "craft table" so that all students can participate. T. Castanza said that the school decorations in the courtyard are also non-denominational and called the "holiday square".

VI. Other Business

A. New Business

G. Kuriakose thanked L. Gyimesi for her efforts on the charter renewal process for over a year and for shepherding us through this so beautifully; it needs to be said that we are very grateful to you for so much work. The other board members also thanked her. L. Gyimesi responded with thanks and said that the team and E.D. did a great job.
T. Castanza added that it is critical that the school and the board chair are in sync/aligned and we were fortunate that L. Gyimesi and he were very aligned and each other's yin/yang. He then thanked all the board members for their support, often done behind the scenes. Being there for the NYSED site-visit, the board's presence and turnout was the first thing that NYSED commented on in the debriefing; the board's attendance was very reassuring and he appreciates it very much.

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 8:03 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kathy Baldassano

Documents used during the meeting

- Bridge Prep - Elementary Day Programs Proposal.pdf
- BPCS Data Dashboard SY23-24_Fall2023 (1).pdf