APPROVED

Bridge Preparatory Charter School

Minutes

Board Meeting

Date and Time
Thursday October 17, 2024 at 7:00 PM

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

3298 Victory Blvd
Staten Island, NY 10314

Trustees Present
Amanda Wolkowitz, Deidre Medina, Geena Kuriakose, Mark Harmon-Vaught, Traci Frey

Trustees Absent
Nicole DeStefano, Rebecca Peters

Ex Officio Members Present
Tim Castanza (remote)

Guests Present
Cheryl Otterbeck, Fahron Ebanks (remote), Kathy Baldassano (remote), Rose Marie Illuzzi, Tara Gore (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 Thursday Oct 17, 2024 at 7:00 PM.

C. Approve Minutes from September 12th Meeting

Geena Kuriakose made a motion to approve the minutes from Board Meeting on 09-12-24.
G. Kuriakose stated if there is no objection, the motion to approve the minutes of the 09-12-24 board 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 & Update From Co-Chairs

M. Harmon-Vaught stated that before we get started on the agenda, we are absolutely excited to officially welcome one returning board member (A. Wolkowitz) and one new board member (D. Medina). Welcome back, Amanda! Welcome to the Board, Deidre. You have both been officially approved as trustees. We're excited to have you. As K. Baldassano noted earlier, with you both joining as trustees our quorum is now 5 board members. We're still waiting to hear about our other board candidate's approval.

II. Votes

A. Approve Draft Audit

Mark Harmon-Vaught made a motion to approve the draft of Bridge Preparatory Charter School's fiscal year 2024 financial audit as presented to the Board of Trustees upon the recommendation of the Finance Committee.
Geena Kuriakose seconded the motion.
(A copy of the draft audit was shared with the trustees and is attached to tonight's meeting agenda for review by the Board of Trustees)

- M. Harmon-Vaught stated that R. Peters, Chair of the *Finance Committee* was unable to attend the committee meeting due to a death in her family, so he attended in her stead, working with T. Castanza. There was a presentation and report from the new auditors MMB & Co. *(Mengel, Metzger, Barr & Co.)* that we worked with this year for the 1st time. T. Castanza had a very positive experience with the auditors, who were very thorough and thoughtful in the work that they did. They put together a very impressive presentation which was very clear and detailed and they answered a lot of questions. It was, as it has been in prior years, an unqualified clean audit, which

is an enormous testament to the good work of the school. It's a reflection of the the sound financial practices and intentional decision-making at the school level around its budget and monies.

- T. Castanza added that the audit process was a little more intense this year because we worked with a new audit team that did a really deep dive and our school team needed to be really responsive to daily needs and polls. Everything about the audit was digital and done virtually. There was no school visit as there had been in the past. They also were able to give us some guidance on best practices in different financial areas. He found them to be not just a good partner for the audit, but a good partner for the school, so it was the right decision by the Board to bring in the new auditors.
- M. Harmon-Vaught stated that this vote is to adopt the draft audit, pending finalization, as it has been our standard practice to adopt the audit before its finalization.

The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

III. Academic Data Deep Dive

A. Academic Data Deep Dive

T. Frey said that she and M. Harmon-Vaught proposed a calendar for the board's work for this year and a different committee will be responsible for leading the meeting agenda each month. This month the *Academic Committee* is leading the work that we're doing to engage in an Academic Data deep-dive. T. Castanza and C. Otterbeck support this effort and will do most of the presenting tonight. The academic data was shared with the board members prior to tonight's meeting but there are some changes that T. Castanza will cover tonight. As they go through and present the data, keep in mind it's the beginning-of-year data. So it's not as rich as the data we'll have in February or in May, when we have a full year's worth of data. If you see something that you don't understand or a term you don't know, please ask, because we want to make sure that everyone around the table has a good understanding of what they're looking at. This is about the school and is not an indication of how we feel personally towards school leadership. We're all in this together to make the school work well, and in the end to support our students. She then gave the floor to C. Otterbeck and T. Castanza.

T. Castanza gave some overall context on the work that's being done. The beginning-of-year data is baseline data. Before we start, one of the things that we considered is what is the impact on the data of the large number of new students that we have? This is the the largest new cohort that we've taken in our history. Over 90 new students. And they come to us with varying ability levels. So as we go through the year and look at data. maybe we'll add some metrics. What does data look like for students that have been with us for 2 years? This is a data point that's been helpful to us during the renewal process. The month of September felt very assessment-heavy and the teachers did a really nice job administering the assessments. We saw a lot of improvement in practice of administering assessments, which is important to get the accurate real and true data. That was an issue that we had

last year wondering how accurate or how close the data was. We've noticed some real improvements in practice. He then gave the floor to C. Otterbeck to review the Academic data using an on-screen Excel worksheet presentation.

C. Otterbeck presented the following Academic data:

- Student Behavioral Incidents (General Ed. 36.9%; Special Ed. 63%)
- Average Daily Attendance (94%)
- Percentage of New Students in Each Grade
- Beginning-of-Year Proficiency Percentages for Math & ELA with Charts of MAP Data
- Beginning-of-Year Proficiency Percentages Disaggregated by Grade Levels
- Beginning-of-Year Acadience Benchmark Composite Scores Schoolwide & For Each Grade Level

Board members asked for specifics and clarification of some data as it was presented and a question and answer session punctuated each topic with T. Castanza adding more information in each section of the presentation and answering any questions raised by the board.

T. Frey thanked C. Otterbeck and T. Castanza for the Academic Data information and said that the board appreciates the amount of work that went into preparing this presentation and the time they spent to go through this data tonight. She also said that the trustees appreciate the fact that C. Otterbeck and T. Castanza were open about the data but also offered information on what the school is doing to improve the scores and percentages.

IV. Other Business

A. School Leadership Updates

T. Castanza said that there's a lot happening in October at the school and gave the following update:

- Schoolwide teams have been working on U.N. DAY, which will be held on October 21st.
- We celebrated DYSLEXIA AWARENESS DAY schoolwide on October 8th, and had great participation from staff and students.
- Students did a really nice job celebrating HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH. Our social media highlighted the wax museum that they held for famous Hispanic men and women from throughout history.
- On October 28th, we're hosting our 1st campus-wide event a CAMPUS COLOR RUN with our colleagues from the other campus schools, Hungerford School and Petrides School.
- We uploaded our DISTRICT SAFETY PLAN to NYCED per regulations; we updated our safety plan ahead of time since the board approved it early. We are doing really well with our safety and security drills. We must hold a certain number of drills by

October 31st and we have a drill scheduled for next week that will put us in compliance before Halloween.

- BEDS DAY *(Basic Educational Data System)* for charter schools is early October this year when charter schools need to submit annual enrollment data; we reported 260 students enrolled.
- We are working on the next big level of data reporting, the remainder of the ANNUAL REPORT, which is due November 1st.
- Right now he is at the READING LEAGUE CONFERENCE in Charlotte, with our coaches and our Director of Operations, F. Ebanks.
- Next week he will be going with some of our teachers to the INTERNATIONAL DYSLEXIA ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE*;* excited to watch our staff dive into really good content that they're going to turnkey for other staff on November 5th.
- Our EXTERNAL AFFAIRS TEAM, a new team that we started this year, met to discuss the types of information that leave the school building, whether it goes to families or the community. We are focusing on our website, refreshing and updating of our website within the next couple of weeks. Our social media is increasing its game.
- We have a NEW MESSAGING & INFORMATION APP. that we're going to be rolling out to families on October 25th. It will also help us within the school with staff members having the ability to email and message each other on the app. And we put a lot of school information on there, so it'll help us reduce the amount of paper that we are using in the building and notices that we're printing.
- At last week's *Executive Committee* meeting he gave a SEARCH FIRM UPDATE; we are looking to bring on an external search firm to help us find our new instructional leader. He spoke to *Storbeck Search* and they offered a proposal. One of the things discussed with the Executive Committee was that our *Financial Policies & Procedures Manual* has a provision about obtaining at least 2 competitive bids for proposals over $20,000. He's reached out to *Carney, Sandoe & Associates,* another well-regarded firm in the school leadership search industry; he's waiting for them to get back to him with their proposal, so that he can discuss the 2 options with the Executive Committee before presenting recommendations to the full board in November.

B. Update from the Family Association

D. Medina gave the following *Family Association* update:
It's been a very slow start, but everything's merging and meshing well.

- We're holding our 1st school event this weekend - our TRUNK-OR-TREAT in the school's parking lot on Sunday October 20th (10:30 am to 1:00 pm). We're trying to offer some new options. We have a fun DJ and a lot of interactive things for the kids, like face painting.

- On October 31st we're holding our PUMPKIN PATCH event and every student will get a pumpkin and we take pictures. Every class gets a turn coming to the pumpkin patch.

C. Public Comment

V. Closing Items

A. Review of Action Items & Next Steps

M. Harmon-Vaught wanted to mention the things that we have on our Board Business Calendar for the next meeting - just as a point of discussion.
Tonight's meeting was all about the Academic Data Dashboard and next month in November we have a few items, particularly a deep-dive on Student Enrollment and Student Support.

B. Adjourn Meeting

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 8:06 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kathy Baldassano