APPROVED

Bridge Preparatory Charter School

Minutes

Board Meeting

Date and Time
Thursday January 9, 2025 at 7:00 PM

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

557 5th St. #3
Brooklyn, NY 11215

46 Alpine Avenue
Staten Island, NY 10301

Trustees Present
Deidre Medina, Geena Kuriakose, Mark Harmon-Vaught, Nicole DeStefano (remote), Rebecca Peters (remote), Tara Gore

Trustees Absent
Amanda Wolkowitz, Traci Frey

Ex Officio Members Present
Tim Castanza

Guests Present

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 Nicole DeStefano and Becky Peters 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.
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 Thursday Jan 9, 2025 at 7:00 PM.

C. Approve Minutes from December 12 Meeting

Geena Kuriakose made a motion to approve the minutes from Board Meeting on 12-12-24.
G. Kuriakose stated if there is no objection, the motion to approve the minutes of the 12-12-24 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.

II. Vote on SI Media Contract

A. SI Media Contract

Geena Kuriakose made a motion to approve the Staten Island Advance Media Group contract for the period 01/09/25 to 01/08/26.
Tara Gore seconded the motion.
The contract for the Media Plan as presented leveraging $3,000 monthly SEO plan and seasonality focused on admissions in Q1.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

III. Monthly Deep Dive

A. Organizational Model Planning SY 2025-26+

T. Castanza gave a presentation to the Board regarding the school's revised **Organizational Model** and highlighted a copy of the **Organizational Chart** at tonight's meeting.

- We've been discussing the right side of the Organizational Chart, which is the school level team. At last month's Board meeting we discussed it and at the last Academic Committee meeting and Finance Committee meetings we covered it. We're at the point where we have a finalized recommendation for the school-based team from a roles' perspective, which we would be presenting to NYSED as part of a non-material change. There's another part of the Organizational Chart on the left side, which we'll dive much deeper into at our Strategy Session meeting in February, A huge part of the NYSED approval process for non-material vision is the Board of Trustees. We've talked about it in committee. We've taken feedback. There have been multiple iterations. I think it puts us in a strong position when we do speak with NYSED, which we've scheduled for February 5th, which will be right ahead of our Strategy Session meeting. We can take the feedback from NYSED, bring it right into our Strategy Session and hopefully finalize the recommendation of the entire Organizational Chart change. This is where we landed.
- Using a video projection of the proposed Organizational Chart, T. Castanza highlighted that the titles formerly shown as Dean of Operations, Dean of Specialized Instruction and Dean of Student Support are now shown as Assistant Principals instead of Deans. The Academic Committee's feedback indicated that since our structure has a Principal, and these 3 managers are meant to be the principal's school-based leadership team, then we should align the terminology and make it easier for students' families to understand.

Since 66% of our students have IEPs, some with compliance issues, related service provision issues and staffing issues, therefore under the ***Assistant Principal of Student Support*** *you will find:*

1. Special Education Coordinator
2. Social Workers
3. SETSS Teachers
4. External Providers (Speech & Language, OTS, PTs)

Staff lines fall under the ***Assistant Principal of Specialized Instruction*** *these are the people that are going to support our teachers and other staff members in the delivery of effective, highly rigorous instruction:*

1. Instructional Coaches
2. Speech Language Pathologists
3. Literacy Interventionist
4. ENL Teacher

We really want the Principal to be the ultimate manager of the school, and having a dedicated Dean to support classroom management, student behavior, behavioral incidents, responses, communication with families, etc. was necessary. The school-based operations

*that exist day-to-day, and happen at the school level every day fall under the **Assistant Principal of Operations**:*

1. Dean of Culture (Positive Schoolwide Culture & Student Behavioral Management)
2. Family Coordinator
3. Operations Assistants
4. School Aides

And obviously our Teachers are on the Chart but not under any of the Assistant Principal lines, since the Teachers report directly to the school Principal.

- We are beginning to launch the search for a person to serve in the role of School Principal. We're anticipating a job posting in the next couple of weeks. It is really important for us and for the search firm to have a good understanding of the reporting structure so that they can effectively market and search for someone to hire as Principal. Candidates need to see a job description and know exactly who they will be supervising and why their role is so critical. We are continuing to refine the description, using examples both from the search firm, and also from our own knowledge of highly effective schools. Part of the process of hiring a Principal is to hire someone that we trust and that Executive Director T. Castanza feels really comfortable with taking the school-based team in a direction that it needs to go.
- The next piece that we'll discuss with the Board is the left hand side of the Organizational Chart, which is still blank here. This is the rest of the work which we'll call "External" because much of that happens at the district level or with outside organizations. Having an effective and strong school-based team will enable us to do this part of the work more efficiently. And to start to do things that we haven't been able to do over the past 5 or 6 years to really focus on strategy, grants and fiscal external partnerships that we haven't been able to do yet. As a Charter School we don't have a district office; individual DoE schools within a district rely heavily upon shared services provided by district offices or central units. There are no such central units for charter schools, and so we are required to do a lot of this work ourselves, which requires additional effort. We'll talk more about these specific roles at the Strategy Session meeting in February.

A question and answer session followed along with further discussion regarding school roles; how to give the Principal space to be successful in the building and to get to know the school; flexibility to make adjustments; making sure that all roles are best positioned; ensuring that the Principal is empowered to guide some decisions, or at least be heavily involved in shaping decisions, etc. Giving people the space to do their roles in a way that enables them to lead.

IV. Other Business

A. School Leadership Updates

T. Castanza gave the following updates:

- A *Principal Search Committee* has been created with 6 staff members and 2 parents. Initial meeting to be held next week, followed by 3 additional meetings. Tentative target to hire the new Principal is March 10th with wrap up on April 7th. A job description has been submitted to the search firm, along with a salary range based on market rate with a competitive charter school salary range.
- A Wagner College partnership meeting is scheduled for February 5th with Dr. Paul Gold and Dr. Katia Gonzalez to discuss student teachers, professional learning opportunities, and possible grants for both Bridge Prep and Wagner College. More to come on this later.
- Staten Island *FerryHawks Dyslexia Awareness Night* on Friday May 16th.
- *Staten Island Economic Development Corporation* (SIEDC) *All Member Breakfast* will be held on January 23rd at Casa Belvedere.
- We will be partnering with Touro College and NYU for student teachers this year; we want to thank Dr. Carolyn Strom from NYU Steinhardt who will personally serve as the mentor faculty. Also a student teacher from the Montessori School will be at our school this year.
- *"Because We Can"* will partner with our school for recess enhancement based on student and family feedback and will launch next week, to visit each Thursday through May for structured recess programs.
- For the first time our school will march in the *St Patrick's Day Parade* this year on March 2nd,
- T. Castanza was appointed by Commissioner Rosa and Regent Young in April 2024 to serve on the *NYS Dyslexia and Dysgraphia Taskforce*. The purpose of the commission was to examine appropriate and effective evidence-based dyslexia and dysgraphia screening methods, reading interventions and other educational supports and submit these findings and make recommendations. The commission's findings and 14 policy recommendations were presented to the NYS Education Commissioner, Governor Hochul, Speaker Heastie and Leader Cousins. He was joined on the taskforce by 48 other members with diverse professional roles and expertise. The Taskforce was supported by NYSED, Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) and Policy Studies Associate (PSA).
- School budget timeline and calendar created; 1st draft to *Finance Committee* for review at March committee meeting; 2nd draft to *Finance Committee* for review at the April committee meeting; final budget to Board of Trustees for vote at May 8th Board meeting.
- Hiring Retention Milestones/Target Windows Dates: Executive Leadership: February 24-March 7; School Leadership (including new roles): March 10-April 11; Staff: March 24-June 13
- Tax filing will be done by February 15th and Organizer being completed now.
- Investment policy review by audit team, *Finance Committee* and internal leadership. Will bring to the February 8th Strategy Session Board meeting for approval.

- Cash Reallocation: we are closing our accounts at Bank of America and opening new accounts with IDB; Future conversations related to our investment accounts will be forthcoming.
- *Alma* contract being approved *(new student info system for upcoming year)*. As is the use of Vanguard for mailers and a redesign of our current website.
- Mock NYS testing is happening now.
- MAP Data is in and being aggregated. We are pleased with what we are seeing of phenomenal growth.
- *Saturday Academy* will begin on January 18th. 91 invites went out. Working through arrival and transportation needs and logistics. Looking into possible bus availability.
- Student enrollment launched. More info will be shared at February Strategy Session meeting.
- *Connect Saturday* starts on February 1st with an exciting surprise program.
- Members of our ELT and T. Frey will be going to Indianapolis to visit *Adelante Charter School.*
- *Read Across America Celebrations* scheduled for week of March 3rd; some Book Fairs with Guest Readers (women from the community).
- *PowerSchool* Cyber Security Brief: On Tuesday afternoon, we were notified that one of our 3rd party vendors (PowerSchool Student Information System) had a cyber incident, which occurred on December 28th. From a security standpoint- PowerSchool has confirmed that they have identified and secured the root cause of the incursion, the vulnerability has been rectified and data is now secure, with no known immediate risk to other data. Bridge Prep's exposure is very real, and personally identifiable data relating to students was stored in the breached systems. However, our exposure is less than others, as only limited data is stored by our school in PowerSchool, so the extent (if any) of data leakage will be limited. This does not mean it couldn't be significant, it just won't be as bad as could have been. We will not know the full extent of the breach until PowerSchool issues a detailed incident report, specific to our data currently scheduled for release on January 17th. Once these reports are available, comprehensive information and next steps will be communicated to any affected party. We have an obligation to report this incident to NYSED, which we will do at the appropriate time. Given the large number of districts and schools in NYS impacted by this national level incident, NYSED has provided a specific form for us to use. We are working with PowerSchool representatives and security officers and EdIT who has already initiated contact with NYSED’s Data Protection Team regarding timelines, and PowerSchool representatives and security officers, to file our incident report via the correct channels and include the relevant information. We also have an obligation to inform parents, teachers, and other stakeholders; again, this will be done at the appropriate time. We are working with EdIT on the drafting of an initial letter for release next week informing them of the potential leak, what has been done so far, and the next steps. Follow up will be done after we’ve had a chance to review the report and have determined which data have been leaked. We will communicate with the Cyber insurance vendor in due course to see if any action needs to be taken there, as of now, there is no indication that

we need to rush this. We will be fully transparent in sharing information regarding this, but based on counsel already received, we want to exercise caution in sharing partial information so as not to misrepresent the extent of the incident. We need time to fully digest what has happened and what the exposure is.

B. Update from the Family Association

D. Medina gave the following *Family Association* update:

- The *Family Association* is focusing on 5th grade events; the 5th grade trip and 5th grade dance.
- Fundraising plans include a Valentine's Day event that is still being planned
- *Read-a-Thon* fundraising is being planned for March.
- There will be a fundraiser event at Jimmy Max restaurant on February 11th. Jimmy Max has many gluten-free dishes to choose from. The *Family Association* receives 50% of the profits from that evening, which we can use to reduce the families' cost for the 5th grade trip.
- Also the BJs fundraising is still going on; the *Family Association* receives $10 for each new membership through February 28th.

- M. Harmon-Vaught asked if a ***Calendar of Events*** can be created with the school events and the Family Association events so that Board members can be aware of what is being held and can arrange to attend more events. T. Castanza said he would work on establishing that type of calendar when he meets with the school leadership team next week.
- M. Harmon-Vaught reminded everyone that the February Board meeting will be held as a ***Strategy Session on Saturday, February 8th from 9am-12noon*** here at the school, with lunch to follow. He hopes that the date and time is convenient for all the Trustees and said that it would be great to have everyone attend in-person, to discuss strategies in space, work structure and other matters that the Board needs a little more time to go into. This Strategy Session will replace our regular evening meeting for February. Lunch afterwards will be at the Roadhouse Restaurant.
- M. Harmon-Vaught, G. Kuriakose and N. DeStefano met this week to talk to talk about **board recruitment,** which is another factor which relates to the idea of a calendar of events, because one of the things we're thinking about are ways to get more people in the community engaged in the appropriate places to see what the school is like. We'll be launching the board self-assessment survey between now and the February Board meeting. N. DeStefano will follow up with Trustees more information on that soon. N. DeStefano agreed and added that hopefully, we can be more intentional about how we continue to grow and enhance the board, and keeping up on metrics like that.

C. Public Comment

V. Closing Items

A. Review of Action Items & Next Steps

M. Harmon-Vaught said that we had a few things come out regarding the **media contract** and the **Calendar of School Events**. We talked about the upcoming **Strategy Session**. We talked about what we're doing to do and he thinks we're good.

B. Adjourn Meeting

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 8:04 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kathy Baldassano