APPROVED

Bridge Preparatory Charter School

Minutes

Board Meeting

Special Strategy Session

Date and Time
Friday August 29, 2025 at 2:00 PM

Location
Bridge Preparatory Charter School
Petrides Campus
715 Ocean Terrace
Staten Island, NY 10301

Trustees Present
Amanda Wolkowitz, Mark Harmon-Vaught, Tara Gore, Traci Frey

Trustees Absent
Nicole DeStefano, Rebecca Peters

Ex Officio Members Present
Lauren (Liv) Livingston, Tim Castanza

Guests Present
Kathy Baldassano (remote), Rose Marie Illuzzi

I. Opening Items

A.

Record Attendance

Due to the recent departure of 2 Board of Trustee members, the Board now contains only 6 members and quorum consists of 4 members. Since 4 Board members are present at this meeting, **QUORUM IS MET.**

B. Call the Meeting to Order

Mark Harmon-Vaught called a meeting of the board of trustees of Bridge Preparatory Charter School to order on Friday Aug 29, 2025 at 2:11 PM.

C. Approve Minutes of June 10, 2025 Board Meeting

Mark Harmon-Vaught made a motion to approve the minutes from Board Meeting on 06-10-25.
M. Harmon-Vaught stated if there is no objection, the motion to approve the minutes of the 06-10-25 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. Approve Minutes of June 26, 2025 Special Meeting

Mark Harmon-Vaught made a motion to approve the minutes from Special Meeting on 06-26-25.
M. Harmon-Vaught stated if there is no objection, the motion to approve the minutes of the 06-26-25 special 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. Kickoff

A. Welcome By Co-Chairs

T. Frey welcomed everyone and said she is very excited to be here for new school year, and with our new school leader. It's very exciting.
Two of our Trustees have left the Board:

- Deidre Medina resigned as President of the *Parent Association* in May 2025 and therefore relinquished her seat on the Board of Trustees. If she chooses to be an at-large member of the Board of Trustees, she can apply and then would be subject to the same application process as everyone else has been.
- Geena Kuriakose, our Board Secretary, resigned her seat on the Board due to personal family matters. She wants to remain involved with the school, but she cannot dedicate the time that's necessary to remain as a Board member; she will remain a community member of the *Academic Committee* when she can. We invited her to please reapply to the Board when she has the time and is available to do so.

Our Board of Trustees now consists of 6 members. This is a clarion call for board member recruitment, which is something we'll return to. Board members Nicole DiStefano and Rebecca Peters are both out of the country on vacation and unable to attend today's meeting.

B. Ice Breaker: Mood Meter

T. Frey introduced an "ice breaker" at the start of the meeting with a Mood Meter developed at Yale University which contains a colored graph of moods and feelings. She asked each Trustee to choose a word from the graph that describes how they are feeling at this moment. In going around the room, the attendees chose: inspired, focused, proud, pleasant, optimistic, thoughtful and hopeful.

III. Review and Discussion of School Goals for SY 2025-26

A. Introduction of School Goals for SY 2025-26

- M. Harmon-Vaught stated that we're hopeful to hone-in on the academic goals, because we have Principal Livingston with us today and because academics are obviously a keystone part of the school's planning and work. There's some other goals that we hope to engage with more deeply in future conversations when we have other Board members in the room. Some of the agenda topics planned for today's meeting will be postponed until more Trustees are present and available to join in the discussions.
- T. Frey added that when T. Castanza presents the goals that there's a new column about specific board engagement, and which committees of the Board will be responsible for working with the school's leadership on those goals. Since R. Peters, our Treasurer, is not here today it doesn't make sense for us to deep dive into the finance goal. At our September *Academic Committee* meeting we'll dive more into the academic goals, but we can start the discussion today.
- M. Harmon-Vaught said that after we talk about the school's goals, we'll spend a little time thinking about how we can use Board meetings to best support pursuing those school goals and how we want to organize our time. Last year we tried structured meetings that were different from past meetings, and we want to think about what worked and what we want to change for the school year ahead. Finally, we have several items of new business that will require Board engagement and votes today. We'll close today with a closed Executive Session before adjournment.

B. Presentation of School Goals for SY 2025-26

T. Castanza gave the following presentation on the school's goals and the activities to be performed in service of these goals for the upcoming school year:

Goal 1 - IMPROVE SCHOOLWIDE ACADEMIC DATA/IMPROVE ACADEMIC OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS. *Bridge Prep School will show increases on the 2025/2026 NYS Assessment as follows, compared to the 2024/2025 exam:*

1. *Aggregate Standards-Based Trend Toward Proficiency(All students)*
2. *SWD Standards-Based Trend Toward Proficiency*
3. *Aggregate School Level Proficiency in Math and ELA: at least 7% points in ELA and at least 8% points in Math*
4. *SWD School Level Proficiency in Math and ELA: at least 6% points in ELA and at least 6% points in Math*

Goal 2 - ROBUST RECRUITMENT TO CAPACITY - ENROLLMENT & STAFFING. *The CEO will ensure that the organization meets the designated enrollment targets outlined in its charter, including subgroup specific targets, for the upcoming school year (26/27) and that the organization's outlined staffing plan is met and executed for the upcoming school year (26/27).*

Goal 3 - ORGANIZATIONAL PRESENCE & INVOLVEMENT IN THE EXTERNAL COMMUNITY. *In the 2025-2026 school year, the CEO will identify and develop new partnerships within the community that yield increased enrollment, increased external revenue and secure new resources for the organization.*

Goal 4 - EFFECTIVE FISCAL MANAGEMENT. *By June 2026, BPCS will remain in sound and stable financial condition according to the NYSED Charter Performance Framework and will approve a FY27 budget aligned to the school's current and future needs.*

Further details were given in each section of the presentation and a question and answer session was included throughout. The goals' document was displayed for reference during the presentation.

C. Breakout Discussions on Goals

Among the many points which were discussed:
MOVING TO A NEW BUILDING: Perhaps it's time for us to start exploring a private facility for housing certain grades or our entire school; we need a longer-term facility; although we are fortunate to be here at the Petrides campus, there are limitations on our classroom space; we also need our own gymnasium and/or auditorium; every other charter school on Staten Island has a new building; the reality is, we are competing with these other charter schools who have brand new facilities and we are losing students to them based on their better facilities. In addition, many Staten Island residents are confused about where our school is located on the Petrides campus. Strategic space planning needs to be done for our future. Can we afford a new building? It would be helpful to ask BoostEd, our finance partner, to do a deep analysis and talk about the rental assistance process with the Board. Before we think about moving, we need to make sure that our students are actually

achieving and being successful, and that the work we're doing is having an impact on them. Because we have to make sure that we're doing the work to sustain a new building.

DEEP DIVES INTO AREAS THAT NEED IMPROVEMENT: How we can appropriately structure those into our full Board meetings for this year so that all Board members can be aware and able to support/hold accountable our school colleagues, and not just the Board committee members being familiar in each area. Build trimester checkpoints into our Board calendar for the year, so that we are also stepping back to ask how the students are doing each trimester.

SCHOOL EVENT CALENDAR FOR BOARD MEMBER ATTENDANCE AT EVENTS: It would be good for the Trustees to come to the school's information sessions/recruitment sessions/teacher-recruitment sessions, or similar events with elected officials. In order for the Board to know about school events, T. Castanza offered to share (quarterly) all upcoming school events with the Board starting at the September Board meeting.

PARTNERSHIPS: With local elected officials who can champion for our school in many areas; with local hospitals for pediatrician roundtables where we can present information about our school; with higher education institutions such as Wagner College for new student teachers and establish a student field work residency - we were able to secure 10 Wagner College students to come to our school to obtain field experience for Wagner's early childhood program. how can we replicate that with some of our New Jersey partners, Seton Hall or Fairleigh Dickinson, which has a dyslexia program. Part of our work as an organization and charter school board, is reintroducing ourselves to the community to establish who we are, what we do, and where they can find us.

IV. New Business & Votes

A. Amendment to Bylaws Regarding Family Association Board Representative

Mark Harmon-Vaught made a motion to approve a proposed amendment to the Board of Trustees Bylaws [Article III, § C4(c)-(d)] regarding the Family Association representative on the Board.

Traci Frey seconded the motion.

The proposed amendment would permit the Bridge Prep Family Association (BPFA) to designate another representative to the Board of Trustees other than the Family Association president should the president be unable or unwilling to serve as the Board designee. It provides guardrails for ensuring that that representative can and will represent the interests of the FA as a whole and the Bridge Preparatory Charter School (BPCS) family community. This amendment is endorsed by the BPCS central administrative team.

PROPOSED REVISION [Article III, § C4(c)-(d)]

c) Designation and Approval.

The Bridge Prep Family Association (“BPFA”) shall designate one (1) Family Association Representative to serve on the Board. The Representative may be the BPFA President or another BPFA member chosen in accordance with BPFA bylaws. Any designee is subject to the same eligibility, election, and approval requirements, including approval by the Charter Authorizing Entity, as all other Trustees.

d) Role and Authority.
The Family Association Representative shall be expressly empowered by the BPFA to:
1. Speak on behalf of the Bridge Prep Family Association; and
2. Serve as an authoritative voice for the entire Bridge Prep Charter School parent and guardian community.
The BPFA shall provide written certification of this authority with each designation.
e) Term of Service and Vacancy.
The Representative's term shall be two (2) years and may run concurrently with, but is not contingent upon, the individual's term in any BPFA office. If the Representative resigns, is removed, or otherwise ceases to satisfy BPFA or Board requirements, the seat shall be deemed vacant and may be filled by a new BPFA designee under this subsection.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

B. Bridge Prep Charter School District Safety Plan 2025-2026

Mark Harmon-Vaught made a motion to approve the Bridge Prep Charter School District Safety Plan 2025-2026 as presented to the Board.
Amanda Wolkowitz seconded the motion.
A written copy of the District Safety Plan was shared with the Board of Trustees prior to the vote.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

C. Modifications to the Bridge Prep Charter School Staff Handbook

Mark Harmon-Vaught made a motion to approve changes to the Bridge Prep Charter School Staff Handbook as presented to the Board of Trustees.
Tara Gore seconded the motion.
This summer, through a collaboration with Extensis HR, Bridge Prep made modifications to the Employee Handbook with the intention of assuring compliance with local, state and federal law and policy, adjusting to changes in organizational structure and to refine processes and procedures that will support situational specific needs and feedback received over the course of the past year. The table of contents will be modified upon acceptance of the final changes to the document.
A written copy of the changes to the Bridge Prep Charter School Staff Handbook was shared with the Board of Trustees.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

D. Approval of BoardOnTrack Contract

Mark Harmon-Vaught made a motion to approve renewal of the Board-on-Track contract for 2025-2026 as presented to the Board of Trustees.
Traci Frey seconded the motion.
A copy of the written 1-year contract with Board-on-Track which takes effect October 15, 2025 was shared with the Board of Trustees.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

V. Proposed Executive Session

A. Proposed Executive Session

Mark Harmon-Vaught made a motion to enter into closed Executive Session to discuss the employment history of a particular person.
Traci Frey seconded the motion.
As per NYS Public Officers Law, Article 7, §105(f), the Board of Trustees entered into CLOSED EXECUTIVE SESSION to discuss the employment history of a particular person at 4:36 PM.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.
The Board returned to OPEN PUBLIC SESSION at 4:40 PM.

VI. 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 4:40 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kathy Baldassano