APPROVED

Bridge Preparatory Charter School

Minutes

Board Meeting

Date and Time
Thursday February 12, 2026 at 7:00 PM

Location
Bridge Preparatory Charter School
Petrides Educational Complex
715 Ocean Terrace, Bldg. A
Staten Island, NY 10301

Remote Viewing Locations:

- *557 5th Street, #3, Brooklyn, NY 11215*
- *1495 East 63rd Street, Brooklyn, NY 11234*
- *3298 Victory Blvd, Staten Island, NY 10314*

Join Zoom Meeting
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87699275285?pwd=Zla4rXFdeYXXnqSUYeaQGOZvwZR8qV.1

Zoom Meeting ID: **876 9927 5285**
Passcode: **717305**

One tap mobile
+16469313860,,87699275285#,,,,*717305# US
+16465588656,,87699275285#,,,,*717305# US (New York)

Trustees Present

Mark Harmon-Vaught, Nicole DeStefano, Rebecca Peters (remote), Tara Gore, Traci Frey

Trustees Absent
Amanda Wolkowitz, Jennifer Sammartino-Mallen

Ex Officio Members Present
Lauren (Liv) Livingston (remote)

Guests Present
Alyse Pecoraro, Christina Caputo (remote), Kathy Baldassano (remote), Michael Taddei, Rose Marie Illuzzi (remote), Vincenza Gallassio

---

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

As per Public Officers Law, Article 7, § 103-a *(Videoconferencing by public bodies)* although board members Rebecca Peters and Tara 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. **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 Thursday Feb 12, 2026 at 7:00 PM.

C. Welcome & Kick-Off

D. Approve Minutes

Mark Harmon-Vaught made a motion to approve the minutes from Board Meeting on 01-22-26.
Traci Frey seconded the motion.
M. Harmon-Vaught stated if there is no objection, the motion to approve the minutes of the January 22, 2026 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. New Business

A. Approval of RESOLUTION #37 Updating Bank Authorizing Representatives & Signers

Mark Harmon-Vaught made a motion to update authorizing representatives and signatories for Bridge Preparatory Charter School accounts at JPMorgan Chase Bank.
Traci Frey seconded the motion.

RESOLUTION #37 – Updating Chase Bank Authorizing Representatives and Signers

WHEREAS, the Board of Trustees of Bridge Preparatory Charter School ("Bridge Prep") deems it to be in the best interests of Bridge Prep that the following action be taken by the Board of Trustees of Bridge Prep pursuant to this Resolution:

WHEREAS, the Board of Trustees desires to update Bridge Prep's Authorizing Representative(s) and authorized signer(s) with Chase Bank;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that, pursuant to applicable law and the authorizing Charter, the Board of Trustees hereby consents to, approves, and adopts the following:

1. ADD Authorizing Representative(s): Alyse Pecoraro (CEO)
2. ADD signer(s): Alyse Pecoraro (CEO)
3. REMOVE Authorizing Representative(s) and signer(s): Timothy Castanza (CEO)

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the officers of Bridge Prep are authorized and directed to execute any and all documents and to take any and all actions necessary or advisable to effectuate the foregoing changes with Chase Bank, effective immediately upon adoption of this Resolution.

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

B. Approval of Contract With Consultant LAS Executive Search, Inc.

Mark Harmon-Vaught made a motion to approve the consultant agreement dated February 9, 2026 between Bridge Preparatory Charter School and LAS Executive Search, INC. / Cara DeAngelo.
Nicole DeStefano seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

C. Approval of Agreement with Vanguard for Student Recruitment Mailing

Mark Harmon-Vaught made a motion to approve the agreement between Bridge Preparatory Charter School and Vanguard for recruitment mailings effective February 2026.
Rebecca Peters seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

III. Special Topics & Deep Dive

A. Academic Data Update

Principal L. Livingston gave the following update on *MAPS Data Growth and Winter Assessments*:

MAPS FALL-WINTER DATA: Comparison of MAPS data from September 2025 to the 2nd week of January 2026. Our end-of-the-year, goals were to see a 7%, growth and also a 7%

jump in proficiency; with proficiency tracked only for 3rd through 5th grade, because those are the only grades that take the NYS tests. She shared a chart indicating the following:

GRADE	KDG	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
ELA Avg Growth	17.6%	10.6%	34.8%	18.6%	9.9%	-1.3%
ELA Avg Profi.	42.5%	28.5%	43.5%	40%	37%	38.3%
Math Avg Growth	16.7%	22.8%	14%	21.6%	20.2%	14%
Math Avg Profi.	58.5%	37%	25.5%	19.6%	33.6%	26.6%

Total ELA Average Profi. ***(3rd-5th)*** **38.4%**
Total Math Avg. Profi. ***(3rd-5th)*** **26.6%**

Principal Livingston covered the various grades and strategies being used to increase growth and proficiency in both ELA and Math. Teachers are setting winter-spring proficiency goals based upon the students' progress from the fall and winter, specifically MAPS-related goals, so that we can continue to push the needle. Teachers identify the students on the cusp of proficiency, so that we can develop really responsive action plans to get them over that hurdle into proficiency.

END-OF YEAR NYS TEST GOALS IN BOTH ELA & MATH:

- **3rd Grade:** 32%-42% of students will be proficient on the ELA State Test; 30%-40% of students will be proficient on the Math State Test.
- **4th Grade:** 24.7%-35% of students will be proficient on the ELA State Test; 22.8%-33.1% of students will be proficient on the Math State Test.
- **5th Grade:** 30%-40% of students will be proficient on the ELA State Test; 30%-40% of students will be proficient on the ELA State Test.
- **Whole School:** 28.9%-39% of students will be proficient on the ELA State Test: 28.3%-38.4% of students will be proficient on the ELA State Test.

She also discussed **Teacher Next Steps** and **Coach Next Steps** in the following areas: **MAPS, Rally! Math, Rally! ELA and Reading Progress Monitoring.**

A question and answer session followed the presentation.

B. Budget Check-In

R. Peters gave the following update on the school budget:
The main point that we want to discuss today is the differences, and drivers between the budget that was approved last year versus what we call a budget refresh - where we'll actually end up, or where we plan on ending up by the end of the year.
This year we have a whole new organizational chart that we are managing and figuring out what works. In addition to that, we had some one-off and some changing expenses throughout the year. The most obvious one is the change in CEO leadership at the school. So, with that being said, it's not very concerning that the budget has moved and shifted, because we know where these changes are coming from and some of them were expected.

She then shared an Excel spreadsheet with the Board which indicated *Budget vs. Actuals as of January 31, 2026*.
She presented a summary of the budget that was approved, along with a summary of the budget refreshed. We were expecting to have a net surplus of $195,000, and now we're at $58,000. This surplus number is usually much higher, even as we entered the last school year, we were still in a good spot. As things changed, the number is lower due to some positives and negatives. We actually had higher student enrollment than we had planned on, but even though we had more students, we actually spent more money recruiting students as well. Then special education funding decreased and seemed tighter. They seemed to be stricter with releasing some of those special education funds. So, while we had more students in total, the SPED funding was down. And then with salaries, the main driver would be one additional person added to payroll. That's the biggest expense, We had an overlap with the transition paying two CEO salaries for a period of time. Staff benefits also increased a little and we now have a Principal with general administration costs. We also had increases in professional services, direct educational costs, one-time legal costs, leadership search firms and the cost of student recruitment. Those are the biggest drivers in terms of spending more money. In Operations we have two buckets of money. We have Operations/Maintenance for smaller projects and Operations/Capital Expenditures (CapEx) for larger projects with $200,000 available. in that line If we needed to paint the whole school, that would be a leasehold improvement, whereas painting one classroom probably would fall within the facility renovation and repair category. We still have plenty of money on the balance sheet in CapEx, if we need to do big projects at the beginning of the summer. So, that is how we get to this $58,000 surplus and those were the main drivers of the differences between the allocated budget and the refreshed budget. M. Harmon-Vaught added that one of the things which is distinctive about Bridge Prep is the fact of our being located in DoE public space has substantially reduced our space-related costs. It has meant that, one, we've had a structural surplus, or positive operating margin and two, that we've been able to build up quite a strong reserve. R. Peters responded that in terms of our cash position we're very strong, and you can see that from the interest income we're earning. We are earning over $200,000 annually just from interest in our savings which is a great position to have and nice on our balance sheet. From a money perspective, it's a huge savings being in DoE shared space. *A question and answer session was ongoing during the presentation.*

IV. Reports & Updates

A. Academic Committee Report

T. Frey gave the following report on the *Academic Committee* meeting held on February 11, 2026:

- **STUDENT ENROLLMENT & RECRUITMENT** was covered; A. Pecoraro shared that as of yesterday, we had 30 student applicants today we have 36. There are a few recruitment events coming up. The mailers are going out this week pending Board approval today. We haven't yet heard anything about students leaving. There's an

intent-to-return email that goes out in the spring to current families, and the office follows up with phone calls, so we don't really have that information yet. R. Illuzzi said that we usually send that much later in the year, but it's changed. One year we did it sooner, one year we did it later. It was former CEO T. Castanza's decision based on what was happening in enrollment at that time. So we don't have a specific time period for the intend-to-return letters to go out. M. Harmon-Vaught said he was curious about the threshold of, we want it to be early enough that it gives us indicative information, but also late enough that it's most likely to be accurate. He doesn't know what that sweet spot is. A. Pecoraro commented that she and the school team will follow up and try to zero in on that.

- **MAP DATA GROWTH PRESENTATION** was given to the *Academic Committee* as well discussing the coaching and teaching strategies, the Rally ELA and the Rally Math and basically just a more in-depth version of what they presented to the Board at today's meeting.

B. Finance Committee Report

R. Peters gave the following report on the *Finance Committee Meeting* held on February 10, 2026:

- **BANKING DETAILS**: We went over the banking details, and one of the things the Board approved today will help navigate that.
- We talked about this **BUDGET REFRESH**, and also we started having conversations about budgeting for next year, and what that looks like, and staff contracts, mapping out milestones for budgeting this spring, etc.
- **INSURANCE POLICIES**: Interim Acting CEO A. Pecoraro is already in talks with our insurance broker, so that'll be coming to the Board in the next month or two.
- We discussed the **NEW CONTRACTS** approved by Board today.
- We talked about presenting the **BUDGET TO THE BOARD IN JUNE** rather than May this year; last year, we were able to get the budget finished by the May Board meeting, and it just seems with all the different things going on, there's no problem with having the budget approved in June, as long as it's okay with the Board. I think presenting it in June would allow for more time to navigate all the different things that incorporate the budget. So, we're planning on getting the budget to the board at the June meeting this year.

C. CEO Report

M. Harmon-Vaught stated that this is officially WEEK 1 for Interim Acting CEO Alyse Pecoraro and he wants to want to thank her so much for jumping right in, in the midst of an intense transition. Thanks for engaging with the community, for quick problem solving, for engaging with us, engaging with other members of the community, and just want to express our appreciation for the work she's already put in and she's worked so hard.

A. Pecoraro thanked him and the Board and said that because of the transition, even though I've been here, this really does feel like week one. Since the last board meeting we've

finished all of the needed actions except this one regarding the change in bank signatories. Please don't leave until it's signed. This is really important.

Last week there was a amazing send-off for Mr. Costanza, with a really emotional, heartfelt clap-out. And I don't think I've ever been a part of a clap-out before, and the energy of this one was incredible. Transitions are inherently challenging for any organization, but especially a school where you want children to feel as much consistency as possible, so that's my priority right now, clarity and consistency.

Principal Livingston shared such great momentum in student learning, and we want the student learning and the student experience to keep moving in that direction. And a big part of that is communication, so I sent a hello message to families yesterday, introducing myself formally as the Interim CEO. Along with that message, the ops team created a very fun and functional *who-to-go-to* with different questions. I think change and transition gets confusing for families, and they don't know who to reach out to, and so hopefully this helps make that easier. And I received a lot of really, warm welcomes. Thank you, Ms. Caputo. Your shiny heart was the first one I received, and that felt really good as I stepped into this role.

I sent a message to the staff at the top of the week. I've already spent a lot of time in classrooms. I've met a number of teachers, I've been in PDs, but now I want to make a deeper connection. After the February break, I'm going to schedule some more structured time with them. Maybe some coffee chats, and make myself available. Staff retention is a huge priority and relationship building is going to be foundational to that. We want to keep our great teachers, and I want to get to know them, their experiences, their perspectives, so that I can be a great partner to Principal Livingston and her team to strengthen those retention efforts as we look towards next year.

Staff recruitment is another big priority right now. I'm working closely with Kristin Gallichio, our HR specialist, on recruitment planning. We're attending a number of open houses at colleges, and hiring events, expanding our outreach efforts. We're also revisiting how and where we post our roles, you know, to ensure we're competitive and we're reaching stronger candidate pools.

Enrollment and student recruitment, is another big topic. We heard some of that already, in a deep dive last month, and since then we held our Open House, which was incredible with great staff and student participation, but it was also the weekend of the snowstorm. We had had 27 families sign up for the Open House, but only 11 families showed up. J. Dembinski has been actively making sure we reach out to those families and we have another Open House scheduled on Connect Saturday. There's also an info session, a school tour, on the 16th of March. Regarding my leadership team, I'm new, but also this organizational structure is relatively new, and as we move towards the end of the year, I'm really thinking about coherence and alignment. Today I met with, my executive leadership team, essentially Principal Livingston, F. Ebanks and support to think about how we run our leadership meetings so that we're looking at the key priorities through the end of the year, and making sure that there's cross-functional alignment. And how to bring in the rest of the district team so that we're mapping that out towards the end of the year, and that's really helpful for me, too, as I haven't been through a year before. And I'm trying to make sure we're clear on roles, and responsibilities so that we have those points of alignment mapped out at the right times.

D. Board Development & Governance Committee Report

N. DeStefano gave the following update on *Board Development & Governance:*
She has a two-fold thank you to T. Frey and to R. Peters for introducing us to Michael Taddei and Vincenza Gallassio, our 2 guests today; and thank you both for making the time to be here and also your continued interest in joining us officially. I think we've identified your areas of expertise and energy we'd love to have in the room. We think there's great alliance here, and are so excited to continue going down that path.
M. Harmon-Vaught wants to add one update which is that our new Board member approval process is a 2-step process. Once the Board votes, we then have to wait until the following meeting to approve the previous month's minutes and then the paperwork can be submitted to NYSED. We've now approved the minutes of our vote to select C. Caputo and now we'll work with A. Pecoraro to submit the documents to the state for final approval via the state portal. Previously the Board could submit the paperwork ourselves, but now we are fully reliant on our Interim CEO. A. Pecoraro added that she received her portal log-in today and she will work with M. Harmon-Vaught to go through the steps for submission via the portal.

E. Family Association Update

C. Caputo gave the following *Family Association* update:
Thank you for letting me know about submitting my Board documents to the state. Thanks for that update.

- **WHO'S WHO IN SCHOOL VISUAL GUIDE:** We had a *Family Association* meeting last night and they appreciated the staff visual guide. It was great, especially for parents who can't be at the school. Putting a face to the role staff has - our kids are the ones with the language-based learning disabilities who need visuals, but we're the parents of those kids and we totally need the visuals, too. So, thank you so much, that was very helpful. The parents were very excited about that. A. Pecoraro stated that she really has to give credit to the ops team, because parents asked for it, and she asked them for it, and they made it fun and functional. C. Caputo added just thank everybody, it is so well appreciated. It's saved, everyone has it, so please pass that message along from the Family Association, they really appreciate it.
- **FIFTH GRADE DANCE** is being held tonight.
- **FIFTH GRADE FUNDRAISING:** They're working on recalibrating this year, a revamp year building up the *Family Association*. They're trying to figure out ways to have 5th grade fundraisers, and how to work with the school for the end-of-year cost. In different years, it was different plans, who collected the money, or who booked the events. So they're working with the team at Bridge Prep to figure out what the 5th grade events will look like.
- **BOOK FAIR** is planned, but it's about 6 weeks out. she doesn't know which vendor yet. They did not say, but they are not going with one of the larger, well-known vendors, because fundraising percent is really not what it used to be, so they're going with a different, smaller scale vendor, which we are very happy about.

- **BAKE SALES**: At the end of February, early March, they're looking to have a Bake Sale, which is always fun and exciting. They will probably send home letters asking parents to send in packaged baked goods, and that's fun.
- **OPEN HOUSE:** The *Family Association* also talked about the Open House event; FA President Georgia O. was there with C. Caputo and we talked to the other parents about what a successful event it was. Great to interact with prospective incoming families from all different types of backgrounds. Some are in public school, some are just looking, some had two children with them. It was a terrific event, and J. Dembinski did a fantastic job. It was the coldest day of this Farmer's Almanac winter, and we're very thankful that another Open House event is coming up. We want more parents to join us; we want them to experience what we experience, and we want everybody to come and join our school.
- **PARENTS WANT TO GET TO KNOW THE BOARD:** When she met with them, the parents had not yet received the CEO search update so they were questioning and some were feeling a little uneasy. She told them an update is coming, and then sure enough, it arrived, right away. But, the *Family Association* feels that they do not know the Board members. And they want to know them. C. Caputo is so glad she's here, and she wants us to all know each other. And she told parents that it was so nice and welcoming when parents attended previous Board meetings. Some families were going to join tonight, but they're all at the dance. But they did want to know if something can be arranged, like a meet-and-greet on Zoom, just the Board and parents. A quick, short Zoom meeting, just to pop in and, ask what are your roles? Parents are very grateful for the work that the Board does. They just want to know the Board members. There has been so much uneasiness this year with many changes, and even though they know everything is okay, it's another way to calm anxious parents, She thought it was a really a great suggestion. They just want to connect with the Board and they understand Board members have full-time jobs, but if we could arrange a meet-and-greet, it would be great. Of course, when there are parent events in the school, they want to send invites for whoever can make it. She wants to pass that along for them. Again, parents thank everybody for all they do. They're thankful to all the staff, and everyone is happy. The *Family Association* is very positive. They're moving forward and their meetings are getting a little bigger each time. Everyone's making connections, and the parents are communicating. Even though we all can't be here, it's nice that Georgia and the parents are building a sense of community. Everything's going well. M. Harmon-Vaught said unequivocally, absolutely we are willing to meet with parents, whether it's joining an existing meeting or scheduling something special. Maybe we can touch base and figure out a time that works well. I think we're absolutely game for that. C. Caputo added even if it's a short half-hour. Even just a brief chat and a little introduction by each person, and talk about what you do and what a Board of Trustees is all about. When she was trying to explain it to them, she told parents they need to hop on, because the Board has made so many important decisions. Even seeing fiscally, what a good place we're in. This is great news! She is passing along what she gets from here, and the parents would be so

happy to know that we have a team of people who are doing so many things to move the school forward. Parents can just to hop on Zoom. Thank you for that, for listening.

F. Other Business

M. Harmon-Vaught reminds everyone that we have our *Charter Renewal* coming up next year, We've begun conversation with NYSED, but also we are going to meet soon with the vendor we've worked with previously, and then ideally look at some other options so that we can begin to have conversations with the board about the renewal process in earnest.
T. Frey said that former CEO T. Castanza's baby boy was born. His name is Cooper Joseph. He was a very healthy, large baby and he's adorable. I thought you all would want to know.

V. PROPOSED CLOSED EXECUTIVE SESSION

A. Vote to Enter Into CLOSED Executive Session

Mark Harmon-Vaught made a motion to enter into CLOSED EXECUTIVE SESSION as per as per Public Officers Law, Article 7, §105 (1)(f) to discuss the employment history of a particular person.
Traci Frey seconded the motion.
The Board entered into **CLOSED EXECUTIVE SESSION** at 8:11 PM.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

B. Return to OPEN Public Session

The Board returned to public **OPEN MEETING SESSION** at 8:42 PM.

There's one further motion before the board, before we adjourn.

C. Pre-Authorization for Future CEO Candidate Negotiations

Mark Harmon-Vaught made a motion to authorize the Board Co-Chairs to negotiate and execute the employment agreement and any related offer letter or ancillary hiring documents with the CEO candidate selected by the Board within the guardrails and parameters established by the Board of Trustees.
Tara Gore seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

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 8:43 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kathy Baldassano