APPROVED

Bridge Preparatory Charter School

Minutes

Board Meeting

Date and Time
Thursday April 16, 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:

- *5 Partridge Court, Cranbury, NJ 08512*
- *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
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+16465588656,,87699275285#,,,,*717305# US (New York)

Trustees Present

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

Trustees Absent
None

Ex Officio Members Present
Alyse Pecoraro, Lauren (Liv) Livingston (remote)

Guests Present
Adam Herskowitz (remote), Angela Monje (remote), Carmelo (No Surname Given) (remote), Christina Caputo (remote), Diana Molina (remote), Gabriel Medina (remote), Ineasha McManus (remote), Jennifer Sammartino-Mallen (remote), Kathy Baldassano (remote), Kristen Fritz (remote), Marina Pazmino (remote), Michael Taddei, Rose Marie Illuzzi (remote), Sasha (No Surname Given) (remote), Stephanie Rentas (remote), Valleria Hirsch (remote), Vincenza Gallassio

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I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

As per Public Officers Law, Article 7, § 103-a *(Videoconferencing by public bodies)* although board members Becky 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. In addition, board member Mark Harmon-Vaught 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; he 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

Traci Frey called a meeting of the board of trustees of Bridge Preparatory Charter School to order on Thursday Apr 16, 2026 at 7:11 PM.

C. Welcome & Kick-Off

D. Approve Minutes of March 6, 2026 Special Board Meeting

Traci Frey made a motion to approve the minutes from Special Board Meeting on 03-06-26.
Amanda Wolkowitz seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

E. Approve Minutes of March 12, 2026 Board Meeting

Traci Frey made a motion to approve the minutes from Board Meeting on 03-12-26.
Mark Harmon-Vaught seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

II. Contract Approvals

A. Approval of Contract with boostED Finance

Traci Frey made a motion to approve the contract between Bridge Preparatory Charter School and Victory Schools Inc. d/b/a boostEd Finance effective July 1, 2026 for a period of 12 months.
Nicole DeStefano seconded the motion.
BoostEd Finance provides financial and accounting services to our school. We have worked with them for a few years, and would like to continue to do so.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

B. Approval of Contract With Charter Renewal Consultants: Impact Charters LLC

Mark Harmon-Vaught made a motion to approve the contract between Bridge Preparatory Charter School and Impact Charters, LLC retroactively as of January 1, 2026 through December 31, 2027.
Tara Gore seconded the motion.
We are entering our charter renewal year, which means that we have to submit a packet of materials to the state of New York to demonstrate that we're making progress towards the goals outlined both in our charter and also in the standard framework that's used by NYSED for evaluating our performance. Impact Charters LLC is the new name of Pasek Consulting, a group we worked with successfully for our first charter renewal. Impact Charters LLC is a charter renewal consulting company that will help our school in preparing materials and drafting the actual renewal packet to submit to NYSED. From a budgetary perspective this contract actually covers 3 different budget years, over 3 school years, which alleviates some pressure in terms of budgeting for this item.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

III. Focus on Special Topics

A. Charter Renewal Process & Proposed Board Strategy Meeting

M. Harmon-Vaught provided an overview of what to expect between now and September, on the work that lies ahead regarding our charter renewal application.

- We are operating in a tight timeline and there's a lot of work that will have to happen before September 2, 2026. The first big step is gathering evidence in a very substantial packet of materials that shows that we are meeting, or approaching the 10 performance benchmarks that are set by the New York State Department of

Education (NYSED). Between now and June, we're going to need to compile those materials with data, reports and other documentation from our school educational leadership. Some we already have from our past charter renewal process. Many material will need to be updated substantially because we have a new organizational structure and a lot has changed the past few years.

- Since our last renewal, NYSED came to our school for a midterm visit last spring to make sure we're driving progress towards the goals that NYSED indicated are most important. During that midterm visit, they were pleased to see substantial positive growth. NYSED's midterm report was very positive regarding our school's actual performance on the benchmark goals and we moved up from "approaching" to "meeting" on several benchmarks. Due to a lot of effort from the school, we have been able to make substantial progress. We want to make sure that we appropriately document that progress with evidence for the state. And that's work that will happen between now and June. From there, it'll be a matter of actually preparing the package with substantial narrative content, working with Impact Charter LLC.
- There will be a series of Board approvals necessary, especially on any material revisions to the charter that we'll need to include in this process. Those types of changes have to be approved by the Board of Regents and the best time to do so is during the charter renewal process, as opposed to making key material revisions at a different time. We'll need to have Board Strategy Sessions to address these decisions. We expect that the charter renewal materials will need to be submitted by the Board in the beginning of September. Those will be reviewed by NYSED and the Board of Regents in the following months. The last piece of this process will be a public hearing after we submit the materials. It's very important to have parent and community representation at that public hearing. It's valuable to have parent voices, staff voices and community voices advocating for our school during this part of the process. Since we have many parents joining us tonight, we want to tell you that your presence is particularly powerful because it matters that you're part of this process, and obviously you are incredibly important members of the Bridge Prep community. Often NYSED will invite parents to be part of a focus group during the renewal visit, parents can also weigh in on the process with the submission of letters. NYSED invites everyone to submit a letter as part of the renewal process. It's very valuable to have parents' letters that speak to what the school is doing and to advocate for the school's ultimate success because the renewal determination is our long-term future. Also, parents are welcome and encouraged to give testimony at the public hearing.
- We expect that NYSED will make another renewal visit to our school; they will review data and interview staff, Board members and others. They will visit classrooms, they will test if what we wrote in the renewal materials actually bears out in what they see in the classrooms, and that is important. After that, finally, they'll make a decision regarding our charter renewal. That decision will be how long to renew our charter. Charters can be renewed for 1 year, 2 years, 3 years, 4 years, or 5 years. 5 years is a full-term renewal. At our last charter renewal they gave us 3 years; anything shorter than 3 years is concerning because it means that NYSED wants to keep a close eye on a school. We don't believe we're in that place because we've made

substantial progress in the past few years. But we have to continue to work towards the goals that we've set. When Impact Charters is on board, there'll be many more opportunities to learn more, but today's overview covers what this process will look like for us in the months ahead.

A question and answer session followed.

B. Launch of Annual Board Evaluation

M. Harmon-Vaught stated that every year we do a Board of Trustees evaluation. It's a process for us to understand what we're doing well and how we can improve. It's a self-evaluation process that's built into a tool we use, Board-on-Track. This is to notify Board members that we'll be opening that survey presently and inviting them to participate. We would appreciate full participation so that we can have a clear sense of where we are. This is particularly helpful going into renewal, because every time we meet with NYSED they ask us what kind of self-evaluation we do. And it's helpful that we have a consistent tool we use every year that gives us a benchmark of how the Board of Trustees is performing.

IV. Reports & Updates

A. CEO Report

A. Pecoraro gave the following update:

- **STUDENT ENROLLMENT:** We had our student admission lottery on April 1st, the day before the break. Typically, we give parents who are offered seats, 3 weeks to accept offers before we start going to the waitlist. We need to fill 3rd grade, or think about what our structure is, because we go from 2 classes to 3 classes from 2nd to 3rd grade. We see a big gap in open seats in 3rd grade if we continue the structure of a smaller, lower house, and a larger upper house and we're losing a lot of 5th graders. We do hope to get a few more applicants enrolled during late April and May as families start making enrollment decisions, declining other school offers or if they don't get the school offers that they wanted. We are doing a 6-week recruitment effort with an organization called Underdog Strategies that will help us with marketing campaigns, identifying leads and supporting outreach. In addition to helping us with this year's student enrollment, it will help us think about the way that we spend our enrollment dollars and be a little more intentional about where those dollars are going and how we can follow the money to students and seats.
- **STUDENT RETENTION:** We have some uncertainty about how many students we're losing from our existing, families, so we've sent some surveys out and we're now going to pivot with more outreach to families to try to confirm who intends to stay next year, so that we know if we have a larger gap to fill in some of the grades. Because grade by grade, when we release the admission seat offers that haven't accepted, we do have families on the waitlist, and it's too early to tell right now. We have an in-person registration event on May 13th to try to get more acceptances. A lot will happen over the next month.

- **NYS TESTING BEGINS:** ELA testing is coming next week.
- **DYSLEXIA WALK RESCHEDULED**: Since construction work is being done on the Petrides Campus track, our planned Dyslexia Walk was postponed. The committee has been amazing in finding us a new location, so the Walk will be held at Willowbrook Park on Saturday, June 13th from 9am-11am and there will be free carousel rides in the park.

B. Finance Committee Report

R. Peters gave the following report on the *Finance Committee* meeting held on April 14, 2026:

- **BUDGET & STUDENT ENROLLMENT ADJUSTMENTS**: We have a current draft budget with a certain number of students, but we're going to start looking into reducing that number of students, just to be as conservative as possible to ensure that we're planning according to a good estimate of what our student population will be. Josh Moreau *(our boostED advisor)* tells us that student enrollment is lower at many charter schools, so lower enrollment is not necessarily a Bridge Prep issue that we're facing. We've been working closely with Josh to update our budget with a lower enrollment number. And that also ties into the upcoming Board Strategy Session, to really think about the future of our school and what that looks like. Which obviously affects the budget and how things will be presented from a numbers perspective. A great thing we have is a cash cushion. We have a decent amount of savings, so if things are tighter this year, we do have a cushion to help us through. Budgeting is looking a little bit different this year. In the past there's been a nice surplus and we didn't have to get into each budget line item as specifically as we are this year. But we have a few good things on our side. We have one more budget draft coming at the next *Finance Committee* meeting in May, and then the final budget will be presented for approval at the June Board meeting.
- **ANNUAL FINANCIAL AUDIT:** The yearly audit is generally a clean audit, and Josh Moreau at boostED works with the auditors. That hasn't started yet, but that's certainly on the horizon as well.

C. Academic Committee Report

T. Frey gave the following report on the *Academic Committee* meeting held on April 13, 2026:

- **ORGANIZATIONAL CHART**: Principal Livingston shared a preliminary organizational chart for next school year.
- **SPECIAL ED TEACHERS:** Bridge Prop is working with CSI to bolster the special ed teacher pipeline. They plan on meeting this week to discuss getting some teachers through the CSI Education Department. They also have interviews booked through May for teaching positions, so they're building a bench.
- **GRAPHIC ART & DESIGN**: Principal Livingston hopes to add a Graphics Art & Design with Coding as a specials teacher's program at Bridge Prep. next year. All

of the changes that they're proposing are contingent on enrollment and the bigger budget picture, so that's why it's all preliminary.

- **TEACHERS' CERTIFICATION**: We talked about teacher certification and will discuss it further at a future Academic Committee meeting. As a charter school, we are entitled to hire up to 30% uncertified teachers. Just because we are allowed to do that doesn't mean we have to do that, so we're going to discuss what credentials we'd like our teachers to have moving forward, which may or may not include at least being enrolled in a master's program.
- **FIFTH GRADE EVENTS**: The 5th grade parents had a town hall meeting to go over logistics. The lack of access to the Petrides Campus field because of construction throws a wrench into a lot of plans for us as well as the other schools on the campus. Assistant Principal Laura Jones is meeting with the Family Association President to look into the use of different fields, and neighboring schools for different events. The goal is to still have all the events (Lightning Day, Carnival, etc.) just maybe they will look a little different, or will be located in a different location because of the issues with the field.
- **SUMMER BOOST GRANT**: The grant for summer school was approved, and Summer Boost will run from June 29th to August 3rd. Applications and flyers were sent home on Monday, 49 students have applied, and the goal is to raise it to 50, so they are 1 student shy.
- **RALLY! EDUCATION SCORES**: We did a data dive and reviewed the Math and ELA Rally! scores which are supposed to be indicative of how students will perform on the NYS tests next week. The school leadership team will go through what worked and what didn't work this year in preparation for next year to support Tier I students, as well as the Tier II and Tier III students. We also discussed how the Rally! score was aligned to proficiency; e wanted to see the correlation between the Rally! scores and actual proficiency (NYS exam proficiency is Tier III or higher). Principal Livingston went through those percentages with us. We noticed that, on average, the scores were below proficiency. However, Principal Livingston indicated that there are individual students who are proficient, but when you figure the average most were below proficient. They've also identified students that are on the cusp of Tier II and have the ability to potentially become Tier III and the Saturday Academic focus is on those students to help boost them up a level. Principal Livingston added that longitudinally looking at how we did 2 years prior and last year on the NYS test, and looking at where we are in the Rally! assessment, *(which is supposed to be indicative of how our students will do on the NYS tests)* we are trending at least 10% higher in Grades 3 & 4, and slightly higher in Grade 5 than students did on the NYS test, over the last 2 years. We are hoping that this is a true indicator and we can see that growth. Our goal is to continue to have those incremental gains until we get to a spot where the majority of our students are proficient. And research states that this is a 2-3 year initiative,. We feel that we are on the right track to actually achieve our goals.

D. Board Development & Governance Committee Report

N. DeStefano gave the following *Board Development & Governance Committee* update: There are no major updates. She owes Michael Taddei and Vincenza Gallassio all the instructions to officially apply, if you're still interested. We're very happy to have you at this meeting tonight, and hope that's a sign that you still want to join the Board. It'll just be paperwork and background checks through NYSED and I'll send you the paperwork. We continue to reach out and seek expertise from everyone who wishes to apply to serve on the Board as a rolling opportunity, and excited to see further robust participation from the group of guests we have here on Zoom conference call tonight.

E. Family Association Update

C. Caputo gave the following Family Association update:

- **TREASURER'S REPORT**: There's still some withdrawals that need to be made and bills paid, but the Family Association balance as of yesterday was $6,883.42. This last Bake Sale netted $611. They're just doing so much great work.
- **FAMILY ASSOCIATION EVENTS:** The next **BAKE SALE** will be April 21st, and parents can again donate and send in bakery items for sale. An **ICE SKATING** event at the Pavilion on April 25th will benefit 5th grade activities. **MUFFINS WITH MOM** will be held on May 8th. Immediately following Muffins with Mom will be a **PLANT SALE FOR MOTHER'S DAY**. Parents want to know if Bridge Prep will offer busing to participate in **DYSLEXIA ADVOCACY DAY IN ALBANY** on May 14th? R. Illuzzi responded that is a leadership question and will be discussed by the CEO and Principal. C. Caputo will email the school leadership for further information on this.
- **PENDING LEGISLATION**: There's a lot happening with NYS bills that have passed in the Assembly but haven't passed in the Senate yet, such as Assembly Bill A78A. regarding reading and literacy. These types of bills are being sent around to sign and add your names, and we were wondering if this is something parents can share with the Board and school leadership to sign onto or maybe send a letter of support. Also, the City Council has an *Education Committee* meeting every month and people can testify remotely or via written testimony. The April 29th City Council Education Committee meeting is focused on increasing school safety agents and increasing crossing guards, you can submit education-related testimony at any time. There's a portal to submit written testimony to the attention of Chair, Council Member Eric Dinowitz, anyone can do so. Parents were discussing ways to just continue to advance our advocacy, so she will share this type of information in an email to parents of the *Family Association.* If parents can support or sign our names to something, or submit a written testimony on legislation- given the population we serve and our children, we all have big voices, and even though we're not DoE, we're affected by laws and changes within the NYC DoE which will ultimately benefit all of our children.

V. Public Comment

A. Comments From Guests & the Public

KRISTEN FRITZ: I'm really happy to hear about the academic planning, because I don't know if you heard, I did mention in the past, this year was a $#!tshow. My son had 4 different teachers this year by January in his class, so the academic planning for the 26-27 year, I hope, is better. It sounds like it's going to be great if you're going through CSI, hopefully you'll find some good talent. I would love to hear what your plans are to retain the talent we already have and not lose them. I'm also a bit upset about certain things that have happened in the school, and this is probably not the board's concerns, but recess has been changed, and now the kids can only go outside two days a week during their 20 minutes of recess, maybe even less by the time they actually get out there - the principal, she says we're going to alternate Fridays to every other Fridays, but if you're splitting them up, does that mean they're only going out one Friday a month per class? And then I'm hearing from my children that there's less kids in the schoolyard, and now there's the lack of space, they can't even use the whole area, because the 4th grade class has to stay on one side, and the 5th grade class has to stay on the other, and they cannot mingle and socialize and play together. I have twins in the school so I'm a little upset. One of them is benefiting from your school tremendously. I'm a huge advocate for Bridge Prep. I love Bridge Prep. I want to continue loving Bridge Prep. But right now, I'm upset and I'm angry. It's beautiful out. We had a hard winter, and now they're not going out every day during this beautiful weather. And if you look at the DoE rules - I know we're not DoE - recess should be, as long as weather permits, 20 minutes per day outside, physical activity. Recess should not be used as a punishment. And my son told me today his class got in trouble, and they were punished, and during recess, and they had to sit there and do nothing all the time. I'm upset. And I'd like to know, what are we going to do with the staff? We were told that this happens because of incidences that are happening outside. So how could the staff be trained to lessen these incidences so that the kids could go outside and enjoy fresh air? They're sitting all day long. I was also told, coming to the school, they were going to get a century-based hands-on experience. They are sitting more and more in a traditional way. They're not interacting. They're not doing hands-on things. I was told that now gym will be outside. Gym is only once a week. I was told science might be outside. That's wonderful. It's beautiful. Let them go outside and explore. But I still think recess shouldn't be touched.

STEPHANIE RENTAS: Hi, yes, I just wanted to know if you guys were going to answer anything that Kristen just addressed.

T. Frey responded that the issue that K. Fritz discussed, while we all appreciate her bringing this to the table, it's really a school-based decision. We can speak with Principal Livingston and Interim Acting CEO A. Pecoraro to discuss it and Ms. Fritz, we would love to have you come in and have a conversation with school administration, so you can further voice your concerns and if you have suggestions, we want you to feel that you've been heard, so that we can come up with a solution that is amenable for parents and students, and staff.

KRISTEN FRITZ: I appreciate that. I actually already have a meeting scheduled on Monday with Principal Livingston. I'm still upset about the issue, and that's why I'm bringing it to the full committee.

T. Frey responded that she appreciates that, and she's glad that you brought it to us so that we could hear it, but this really is a school-based decision, and if you find, after your

meeting with Principal Livingston that you still need to have some more discussion, please reach out to us.

VI. Closing Items

A. Review of Action Items & Future Topics

M. Harmon-Vaught said that the things we've discussed that need follow up:

- We need to confirm our timeframe for our Strategy Session. We have to send out a doodle poll for the strategy session to see when everyone's available. And I just want to reiterate that for the strategy session, it would be great if everyone could be in person, the board members could be in person, so that we can have face-to-face conversations and discussions. It'll be a lot easier than doing it over the computer.
- There's some renewal-related follow-up we'll have to do.

B. Adjourn Meeting

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 7:57 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kathy Baldassano