APPROVED

Bridge Preparatory Charter School

Minutes

Board Meeting

Date and Time
Thursday May 21, 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:

- *1495 East 63rd Street, Brooklyn, NY 11234*
- *557 5th Street, Brooklyn, NY 11218*

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Trustees Present

Amanda Wolkowitz, Jennifer Sammartino-Mallen, Mark Harmon-Vaught, Rebecca Peters (remote), Traci Frey

Trustees Absent
Nicole DeStefano, Tara Gore

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

Guests Present
Alex Penfold (remote), Barbara Stella (remote), Chris Zilinski (remote), Christina Caputo (remote), Kathy Baldassano (remote), Rose Marie Illuzzi (remote), Vincenza Gallassio

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I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

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 May 21, 2026 at 7:02 PM.

C. Welcome & Kick-Off

T. Frey welcomed the attendees and said we're very excited; we're getting close to the end of the school year, and we're happy that you were all able to make some time during this busy time of year to join us today.

D. Approve Minutes of April 16, 2026 Board Meeting

Traci Frey made a motion to approve the minutes from Board Meeting on 04-16-26.
Rebecca Peters seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

II. Focus on Special Topics

A. Launch of Annual Board Self-Assessment & Annual CEO Evaluation Survey

T. Frey stated that this is the time when we launch the Board Self-Assessment and the annual CEO Evaluation Survey. As you know, we do this self-assessment every year, and so when you receive the link, please make sure you complete it. Also, one of the multiple measures that we use to evaluate the CEO is the CEO Evaluation Survey. This CEO Survey is going to be for A. Pecoraro, even though she's leaving us in August. You're going to base your answers to the survey on Interim Acting CEO A. Pecoraro.

M. Harmon-Vaught added that part of what makes these two instruments really important is that we've used them every year for several years on Board-on-Track and so we have the ability to do apples-to-apples comparisons. And that's important because one of the questions that NYSED always asks about the board is how we evaluate ourselves. So, it's helpful to have that instrument as a way of reflecting. Other stakeholders also have a say when we do focus groups as part of the QR and PPO process when we do hear from them. Since we're in a moment of transition, it's important to have the CEO survey, so thank you all for taking the time to fill the survey out. The CEO survey is one of multiple measures we have. We also use the Quality Review and the data that we gather from the school as well to make a more comprehensive, overview of the performance of the CEO.

B. Charter Renewal Process Update

M. Harmon-Vaught offered a thank you to those Board members and others who were able to join us for the Strategy Session we held on Tuesday, May 12th. It was an instructive opportunity for us to spend some time and hear from Impact Charters LLC, the partner that we're working with for the charter renewal. They've already been engaged directly with the school team and the organizational leadership group. So it was helpful for us to have that overview with good details, from the Impact Charters LLC presentation, which is attached to tonight's agenda for those who weren't able to attend. We will hold another special Strategy Session, this coming Tuesday, May 26th at 7 pm. And our aim is to hold a series of these meetings on Tuesday evenings, every other week for the time being because we have a number of critical topics relating to renewal, And so, we may not always need it, but we want to have these on the calendar so that we're able to touch base on renewal and other things that require board engagement, especially during this period of transition and make sure that everyone's engaged. Seeing the renewal timeline was helpful and learning what our responsibilities as the Board will be and what the school's responsibilities are, so we have a sense of what's coming up. One of the things raised that's a really important part of the renewal process is looking at the key design elements of the school. As you know, those are the components that we submitted in our initial charter that we said are the most essential elements of what makes Bridge Prep distinct, and they're a core component of our commitment to families, to students, and obviously to our audience. At next Tuesday's Strategy Session, we'd like to share and review our key design elements together. There have been some updates over time, but it's really important that the Board have a sense of them, and that's something that it'll be helpful for us to be able to process and plan before our NYSED renewal visit. We need to understand the key design elements well because they're critical to our charter renewal and they're the ways in which we've asked to be evaluated. We'll be asked to speak about them when NYSED meets with us in the fall.

III. Reports & Updates

A. CEO Report

A. Pecoraro gave the following update:

- **STUDENT ENROLLMENT**: We've been looking at this every month when we come together. New admissions are still tracking lower than expected. We're in the middle of a recruitment push. Registrations are moving along, but when we look at the budget, we'll look at this more closely. We're budgeting for next year on 230 students instead of 250 students. This is similar to what we did last year. In last year's budget, we budgeted for 237 students and still reached 250 students. But there's an open question right now which is student retention. That will have a big impact on where we land next year, and both our *Parent Coordinator*, Abby De Los Reyes and our *Media and Recruitment Coordinator,* Joann Dembinski have been actively reaching out to parents. Our survey didn't yield a lot of results on who was coming back, so they're making phone calls this week and next week, to get a better grasp on retention of our current students and families. Principal Livingston added that right now the survey responses are about the high 60s. We have 9 that were unsure and 4 that are not returning next year. The rest are yes to returning. So we are dividing and conquering according to cohort, and I'm probably going to reach out to those that are on the fence and have those personal conversations.
- **SCHOOL EVENT UPDATES**:

1. State testing is completed.
2. We had Lightning Day today, our big field day, which, we typically hold on campus, but this is the first time we were holding it off campus because of the athletic field construction. It was held at Nansen's Lodge Park. When our buses arrived, the rain arrived. But the school team pivoted very quickly and Nansen's Lodge does have a covered area. It was a really fun day for the kid and for me too.
3. We created the school calendar for 2026-2027, which is linked on the agenda. It's built with an eye towards the DoE calendar, A few differences: we have an earlier start which will be student half-days on the Thursday and Friday before Labor Day. Another difference is that the DoE ends on a Monday. We thought it would be better to end the Friday before. And then there's some differences in our Professional Development days, and we'll have 181 instructional days. The DOE has 177 days on their calendar. We'll be sharing that with staff and families in the coming weeks.
4. We had our karaoke fundraiser about 3 weeks ago. There were some special guests there: Salt n' Peppa and George Michael. And it wasn't only a fun-raiser, we made over $1,800 after all expenses were recovered. Not only fun was raised, but some funds as well.
5. Our first Dyslexia Walk will be held June 20th at 2pm at Willowbrook Park. We hope you all register for that and join us.

B. Review of Draft Budget for SY 2026-2027 & Finance Committee Report

R. Peters gave the following overview of the school budget for SY 2026-2027; a copy of the draft budget had previously been share with the Board:
A. Pecoraro and Josh Moreau have done a wonderful job of getting us to a budget that balances. There's a few different variables that we're looking at this year. One is enrollment,

which was covered already in tonight's meeting. We're budgeting at a very conservative number, historically speaking. Bridge Prep has been able to get more students in the building above the 230 mark and we're currently at 234 students. But in light of what was already touched on in terms of retention of current students, and just the overall environment of charter school enrollments (which Josh said is a problem with many charter schools in NYC) enrollment is just lower. So we have that 230 number to be conservative. A. Pecoraro did a really good job of combing through every line item to make sure that we maintain our programming, and making sure that we're budgeting for things based upon what we've actually spent. In the past, we've been able to put more money cushions in line items, because we had so much of a surplus each year, but as we experienced this year, we're ending very close to zero, in terms of net income. So next year is going to be a similar situation. The other thing we've done is maintaining the structure that we set up for the first time this year, and making sure that we can continue that since it is effective, especially as we move into the charter renewal period. Those are some of the highlights in terms of the budget. A. Pecoraro offered to share a little bit more: she said that looking at this budget, knowing how our expenses are outgrowing revenue, something needed to change, even if we were budgeting at 250 students, we were going to have to reduce some of those budget lines. And it's easy to look at the largest line we have, personnel. We've only had the new organizational structure for a year, and it was created in response to our last charter renewal and benchmark #7 results (Organizational Capacity). As we move into this next renewal period, then to scrap the structure in order to get some reduction did not seem like the right thing for us to do now, and I don't really think we fully maximized the potential of this structure yet, given how new it is. So, we went into this budget overhaul trying not to attack that structure or make any active personnel reductions. Now, having said that, not backfilling staff in certain places was considered in this, so that's why you'll see that that line isn't really jumping at all. And we try not to reduce professional development or curriculums. So those are pretty consistent with the spend for this year, and
we don't want to reduce student enrollment and recruitment funds, knowing what our enrollment picture is and how important it is. I do think that we should be spending those dollars differently and more strategically than we are currently but I didn't want to reduce there. I really went through every dollar that we spent this year, in every line to see where we could reduce spending without impacting teaching and learning.
M. Harmon-Vaught offered this view on the budget: I think it's important when we look at where we are now. Historically, Bridge Prep has had a substantial positive operating margin. We've had a surplus. in the last 2 fiscal years usually about $1.3 or $1.1 million, and that's much smaller this year. It was budgeted smaller, and we're expecting a relatively small surplus next year. And so, one of the things that we have to do, which this conversation is doing in a micro sense, is look at the cost basis of the model we are operating under. I think I totally agree with A. Pecoraro that we don't want to make radical changes to a model that we're still perfecting. And the other question that we'll need to ask in time is how can we ensure that the model we have is sustainable, given the realities of enrollment, which is more challenging today than it has been before. And that's not just a Bridge Prep problem, that's a sector challenge. And other factors that we have to consider. The board is not approving the budget tonight. We'll approve it in June. I'm not uncomfortable with

the smaller margin that we'll see in terms of surplus. I'm cautious about making sure that as we're looking through the next few years, we're being really thoughtful about making the appropriate adjustments so that we're maximizing resources to serve students. We will always have different personnel structures than other schools, and that's intentional, but I want to make sure that we're constantly monitoring what's really making a difference, and what things might be really wonderful but not necessarily the most important, given our resources. Thank you to R. Peters, A. Pecoraro and Josh for all for the work on this.
A question and answer session followed the budget presentation.

C. Academic Committee Report

T. Frey gave the following report on on the Academic Committee meeting held on May 14, 2026:

- **FIFTH GRADE & END-OF-YEAR EVENTS:** We covered the 5th grade and end-of-year events that A. Pecoraro already mentioned in her CEO report tonight.
- **STAFF RETENTION:** Two teachers are not being renewed. The rest of the teachers were surveyed to see if they would come back next year. Principal Livingston her team are actively engaging those that they think are at-risk of leaving, but they don't want to lose. So those conversations are ongoing.
- **STUDENT ENROLLMENT**: This was discussed and already covered tonight in A. Pecoraro's CEO report.
- **TEACHER CERTIFICATION:** This came up in our conversation with Impact Charters LLC when we were asked about how many of our teachers are certified. The percent of certified teachers right now is 71%, and we have to have at least 70% certified, so we're on the cusp. We were discussed what possible things we could do to encourage non-certified teachers to get certified. One of the things mentioned is that teachers who have an out-of-state certification get a raise in pay if they apply for NYS certification, and that boost in pay more than covers the fees and cost it would take to become NYS certified. New York State says that they have reciprocity with other states but that's not really true. You still have to take NYS exams and make sure you have all the appropriate coursework and pay the fee for your application. True reciprocity would be you that you pay the fee for your application, and they just issue you a NYS certification, and that is not what happens. There are hoops that teachers would have to jump through if they have an out-of-state certification and want to get NYS credentials. Hopefully, by showing them that they get a nice boost in salary that more than covers the one-time cost of getting NYS certification will encourage them to do so. Another thing we discussed was speaking to our partners at the College of Staten Island to see if there's some kind of tuition discount they can offer if teachers enroll in their master's program. Those are still at the beginning phase.
- **PRIORITIES FOR NEXT SCHOOL YEAR:** We spent a lot of time on next year's priorities, Principal Livingston shared with us "a day in the life" and what the schedule will look like for students and for staff. And they've been having conversations with teachers, so that they know what the expectations are when they decide whether or not they want to remain. One of the things that has been concerning parents recently

was recess, and because of the construction on the Petrides campus and field, it's been more challenging for us to get students outside on a regular basis for recess. Next school year, the proposal is to have 20 minutes of recess for each grade every day, staggered throughout the day, and not necessarily backed up to lunch. And that would be paired with a snack block. Each grade would have a different area on campus where they would have recess outside, and each grade band will have recess together. Right now, students have between 10 and 15 minutes recess as part of lunch period, and this will increase their recess time every day; it would increase from 2 days outside a week to 5 days a week outside. Students will also engage in a sustained reading and writing period during the last block for a 15-minute period of time, which will help them build stamina and give them the opportunities to both read and write on a daily basis. Science will be 50 minutes every day for grades K-4, and 60 minutes for 5th grade. The extra 10 minutes is because the 5th graders take a state assessment during 5th grade, and so we are increasing the amount of science instruction. Principal Livingston also shared that they would like to departmentalize the 5th grade for ELA Math and Science, with all teachers being responsible for teaching Math fluency and the Humanities. And because they're 5th graders, they have to get ready for middle school. Students will rotate from classroom to classroom, just like they would in middle school to get used to that transition period. We are thinking about how to support 5th graders' executive functioning challenges. This is a new thing for them, making sure that they're getting to their new classroom on time. All these things we need to do to prepare them for middle school. Students will get a full hour of lunch period - 30 minutes for the lower house, and 30 minutes for the upper house. We split lunch in half for that. Staff lunch will be reduced from 40 minutes to 30 minutes. Although there's a 10-minute decrease in their lunch time, staff will not be responsible, for delivering their students to the lunchroom. Other staff will come and pick students up at their classroom. So, teachers gain time in some ways, because they won't have to now bring kids to the cafeteria, then come back, and then eat their lunch. That's where the time-saving should be. Students will have 30 minutes of Humanities daily, and then test prep during the Friday block for grades 3 to 5. They'll have 30 minutes of Math centers daily, 50 minutes of Math instruction, 60 minutes for 5th grade, with the hope of preparing them for middle school; 60 minutes of ELA instruction; 50 minutes of electives daily, which will be either blended learning, iReady program, Phys Ed, Arts, and SEL that the YMCA will continue to come and lead. There's a possibility that some of the specials may change, the Arts may change, but we're still not sure about that.

D. Board Development & Governance Committee Report

M. Harmon-Vaught stated that regarding the *Board Development and Governance Committee* update, the main item tonight is completing the Board Self-Assessment Survey. We still have 2 prospective Board members who are very much here and the pursuit of their completed application materials. No pressure, no pressure at all. We know it's quite arduous. And prospective member, Michael Taddei has been joining our *Finance*

Committee meetings and very engaged in a positive way at our meeting earlier this week, so we remain very eager for you to complete the myriad application forms.

E. Family Association Update

C. Caputo gave the following *Family Association* update:
The *Family Association* had their meeting last night. Thanks to the new Treasurer, Polina Struits, we now have a real active ledger. The *Family Association* is getting their finances in order and sorting through records. I'm very excited to say that they have a ledger they were able to really share about where the income successes have been. As of May, their ending balance was $5,967.41. They also broke down which events brought in the most money; the Book Fair brought in a little over $1,100. That was the #1 fundraiser and a great income generator. And then they combined the Winter Holiday Fair, Bake Sale, and Telegrams for earning about $1,000. On its own. the Bake Sale would be #2 in income generating. The Dance, Coin Wars, Ice Skating, Plant Sale, Soapbox Derby, were able to make money too. So, they're really working on moving forward into next year. The *Family Association* and the parents want to work on more fundraising activities for now that they have a core group. It looks like they're going to start the year with a full board. Parents were very interested in joining, and submitted their names so it looks like there is going to be a full board to start the new school year. It's just such great news, and it just makes everything easier. Not just for the parents, but also the school staff having to plan out our events, and communicating with everyone. They also discussed the success of some of the, 5th grade events and gifts. It was a really positive meeting. The parents are looking forward to events. Families are looking forward to the Dyslexia Walk in June, so we're really excited about that. They gave a recap of events they did this year: the Bake Sales, the Sweetheart Dance, the Thanksgiving pies. Something they were really excited about is Teacher Appreciation Week this year. They were able to pay for 2 lunches for Teacher Appreciation Week, and they gifted plants and left little surprise gifts on teacher's desks. The *Family Association* thanks everyone or their continued support and patience this year as they built their officers' board and found parents who were able to commit. They're just rolling out this year voluntary optional dues, just to see what they can collect. So they sent out a letter with a suggested donation for the year. Dues are not mandatory, it's just optional to help get the year and the events going, so that is something else new. We're moving forward in a positive direction for next year, and everyone's really excited. We're looking forward to September.
T. Frey asked if the Board of Trustees can get a calendar of the Family Association events for next school year, so we can make sure that we can be represented, because we always say we want to participate in an event but then we either find out too late, or we find out after the fact. C. Caputo responded that is a great idea. The Family Association mentioned wanting to plan out for the year, putting in permits and working on their events calendar. They're also looking forward to overwhelming the new CEO Chris Zilinski with events and activities for the year.

IV. Closing Items

A.

Review of Action Items & Future Topics

M. Harmon-Vaught stated that we have a Virtual Strategy Session Tuesday, May 26th at 7pm. We'll focus on topics relating to the charter renewal, specifically a review of the school's Key Design Elements. That will be an important conversation. And then at the June Board meeting, we have a number of end-of-year votes, election of officers, approval of the final budget, and then obviously a suite of other key topics to cover then.
Invitations to the 5th Grade Graduation ceremony will be sent to the Board of Trustees soon, the graduation is on June 18th at 4 pm at the St. George Theatre.

B. Adjourn Meeting

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 7:55 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kathy Baldassano

Documents used during the meeting

- Renewal Presentation from Impact Charters LLC 05_07_2026.pdf
- SY2627 BPCS School Calendar Pending Board Approval .pdf
- BPCS Budget FY27.pdf