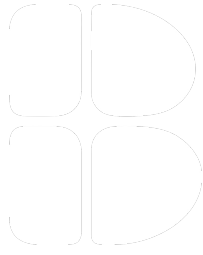


DRAFT



Breakthrough Public Schools

Minutes

BPS and School Board of Directors Meeting

Date and Time

Wednesday April 15, 2026 at 5:00 PM

Location

Hampden Professional Learning Center (10118 Hampden Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio 44108)

Meeting of the Boards of Breakthrough Public Schools, Breakthrough Southeast, Breakthrough Midtown, and Breakthrough Woodland Hills (f/k/a Citizens Academy Southeast, Village Preparatory School Cliffs, and Village Preparatory School Woodland Hills)

Directors Present

A. Amefia, A. Garg, A. KOPIT (remote), A. Lee, C. Lipscomb, G. Burrows, J. Howard, J. Johnson, J. LeMay (remote), L. Mimura, M. Hakim, R. Novak, S. Steinhouse, S. Vyas (remote)

Directors Absent

M. Harris

Directors who left before the meeting adjourned

A. Amefia

Guests Present

A. McRae (remote), C. Farmer, D. Sobel, H. Perkins, J. Kaye (remote), J. Padlan, M. Sattler, S. Ertle

I. Opening Items

A. Call the Meeting to Order

S. Steinhouse called a meeting of the board of directors of Breakthrough Public Schools to order on Wednesday Apr 15, 2026 at 5:01 PM.

A. Garg called a meeting of the school boards to order on April 15, 2026 at 5:01 PM.

B. Record Attendance

C. BPS and School Boards Vote to Approve the Minutes of the March 4, 2026 BPS and School Board of Directors Meeting

A. Lee made a motion to approve the minutes from BPS and School Board of Directors Meeting on 03-04-26.

J. Howard seconded the motion.

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

C. Lipscomb made a motion to approve the minutes from BPS and School Board of Directors Meeting 03-04-2026.

R. Novak seconded the motion.

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

II. Public Comment

A. School Boards Public Comment

Monica Marcucci, a teacher at Woodland Hills for 8 years was present for public comment to discuss burnout and looping. She commented that she has been through many changes at BPS, including changes to curriculum, school names, etc. She is here today because she loves what she does, but it feels like the network doesn't care. Some examples she gave included the calendar constantly changing, there's PD that doesn't enhance their craft which leads to burnout, and now the K-2 loop coming change. She believes this is an absurd change. The teachers know what kids need and how they develop and grow, and the difference between K-2 is so massively different. The network demands perfection but changes what they do. Changing grade levels each year is a disservice to both kids and teachers. Kids won't have experts, and teachers will be required to do too much to understand what each grade level needs as they switch grades. The K-2 teachers believe in BPS, but they're begging for change as they feel like they are drowning.

Taylor Calderon, a kindergarten teacher at Woodland Hills was present for public comment to discuss teacher voices and the looping change. She is here tonight because teachers must have a stronger voice in the decisions of our schools especially when they are on the frontlines. They see how the changes impact the students and teachers. There

is a disconnect between intention and reality. It sends a message, whether intentional or not, that their opinions don't matter including the looping K-2 decision. Teaching is a craft and refining their knowledge is built over time. This would disrupt their growth. Many teachers love the grades they teach and being required to leave a grade they love would make them lose that passion. Looping should be an option that teachers can choose based on their skills. Teachers want to collaborate to improve the education and are asking the board to reconsider this decision.

III. FOB Update

A. FOB Updates

Susan doesn't have too much to discuss tonight, and the reports are in the packets. She did have a snippet of the bash video to show. The video showcased teachers and student interviews from Woodland Hills and also showcased our BPS board member, Musa, discussing how he got involved with BPS.

Susan stamped that it's great to see Musa as a former student, and how much we appreciate all the teachers do.

IV. Network & Schools Update

A. CEO Report

Dr. McRae opened by asking if there were any questions on the packet items or the NLT reports.

What is the settling period with the changes going on and is there an opportunity for teachers to stop and take a break to see what they've accomplished?

- Given the CAO report and the conversations had over the last several months, what are the inflection points to allow folks to have feedback? First, throughout this year and spring/summer/fall, the network and school level leadership had/will have the opportunity to sit down for teacher groups. This year the focus was on the implementation on the SGS work, and so we built a series of monitoring tools to support them. Every 6-7 weeks, we'd sit down with APs to review data and set up the next arc for them to communicate to their staff. We sit down with focus groups to try to understand the impact of the shifts/changes we've made and what kids/staff want to see next year. One of the things we heard is that the PD setup didn't work and needs to change and shift. Another piece is that we need time for educators to be able to collaborate together, which we did with Wednesdays on next year's schedule. The third item we heard clearly is the idea of differentiated support and PD. There were design restraints that made it hard to do this year, but we are putting that in place for next year.

Chronic absenteeism jumped out on the page, and the 42% level is concerning. Wondering with the conditions of current economic place, do we anticipate this getting worse for those students that are dealing with this at home or do we have a forecast of what we're expecting?

- We don't expect the conditions to get worse, and we work really hard to create solutions to maximize attendance. This is also a design flaw. It's such an issue that we're making changes to our FO design to make a person's primary responsibility attendance. Feedback we received from staff is that this is really important work but there wasn't time in addition to their other expectations. How can we help address this problem and make sure we are getting kids to school everyday? That's where some of these attendance roles came into play for next year. We anticipate some uptick going into Q4, but we don't expect to see that continue moving forward.

The Board stamped that the consistency of these reports has been great and to have the quality ahead of time to be able to start the conversation here has really helped.

Strategic Readiness & Planning

- Internal alignment or coherence - this helps to breakout the process we are undergoing as a network. This builds learning intentionally across supports and requires systems coherence.
- Trajectory Changing Schools - students have access to consistent instruction in which all support worked together to advance kids toward grade-level success.

Systems Coherence

- Create conditions that allow coherent instruction to take root in schools and classrooms
- With Dr. Day, we've jumped into instructional coherence. When this and systems coherence is combined it betters the student experience. Coherence is going to boost learning.

Instructional Coherence

- Align instruction, content, and goals across all learning spaces. Making sure that all of the pieces of the puzzle work together to move the student forward.

In Action - An Example

- Jordan reads grade level texts and identifies the main idea and key details
- Intervention - Jordan practices identifying the main idea in shorter passages with teacher guidance
- Tutoring - Jordan uses graphic organizers to strengthen his skills
- Homework - Work he does at home reinforces what he worked on all day

- In order to ensure all of these pieces talk, we have to make design changes to put our educators in a place to allow them to do the work we are asking them to do
- Board Question - We appreciate the vision and example. Can we have an example of what this looks like at a campus & how close are we to this system?
 - We are about 60% of the way here and are getting aligned on what the core instruction at tier 1 looks like. We think we've done a good job at providing expectations. The challenge is folks don't feel like they have enough time to fully execute. This is a design constraint which we need to address and next year's schedule we feel does. We also feel it varies campus to campus and because of that, students also have a varied experience, and this is unlikely to change without shifts in our approach. We know that we need to make changes, the question is how do we do it in the most coherent way and also so students have excellent experiences and excellent outcomes? With the changes we are making, teachers will have the time they need next year, and we also want to be clear about how we will support them.

Strategic Readiness Assessment

- This winter, we completed a strategic readiness assessment
- Our provider completed a comprehensive multi-method discovery process across all campuses and stakeholder groups
 - 12 one-one interviews, 8 focus groups, 276 survey respondents, 1 site visit
- Areas of strength - relationships and mission commitment, philanthropic partnership, operational infrastructure, alumni program/long term commitment

The Defining Strategic Moment

- Five themes - transitioning to one Breakthrough is the defining challenge of this moment, while the transition is slow and deliberate, folks feel it.
- BPS's access to the consistent story across people data metrics gives us a very clear picture of what needs to happen
- Academic Urgency is real and widely shared
- The governance moment is one of opportunity - new alignment between BPS and FOB in a shifting Cleveland landscape
- The foundation to build from is genuine and we have unique strengths: long tenured staff, strong level culture, committed families, and a mission that people believe.

Conditions for Readiness

- Some of these we are well on the road for and others we need to focus more on as we go down the road
- Stabilize leadership trust and rebuild trust - we don't have a strong visible "you said, we did" follow through.

- Clarify and unify the BPS identity - getting clearer about what we mean as BPS, what is network wide, what is campus specific, etc. This is also about ensuring families have a predictable experience when coming to a BPS school
- Invest in Talent Services - strengthen onboarding and early career support. Differentiate PD by experience level. Address co-teaching inconsistencies. Build a more intentional recruitment pipeline.
- Accelerate Academic Progress & Strengthen Instructional Coherence - creating stability, clarity, and vision, and a pathway to create autonomy for leaders, teachers, and coaches. Also thinking about how we support all students, specifically SPED, as a network wide priority
- Strengthen BPS-FOB Alignment & Strategic Resource Deployment - Formalize the BPS/FOB relationship and deploy resources strategically and continue board development.
- Board Question - Over the years we've focused on making principals strategic leaders, what's the gap?
 - We've focused on making them instructional leaders, but when talking about strategic leadership they're talking about the leadership items outside of instruction, such as communicating the vision to all staff in the same way it was communicated to them. We're working to elevate the principals as the primary communicator, which they need more development in this area. The schools where the principals are able to deliver this have a much different culture around the initiative. We, at the network, need to think really critically about how we are supporting them in these school wide management pieces. Another place this pops up is performance management, and we aren't able to always support them in the way we should, and we end up on opposite sides of the table. We don't want the principals to feel like the home office isn't supporting them. We are looking at how we provide support, the rational, but also the space for them to advocate for items they want to be different.

Looking Ahead: Strategic Planning

- Strategic planning will process our next chapter.
- Grounded in our mission, responsive to our community's needs, and ambitious in the impact we seek to achieve.
- This process is designed to be: inclusive, rigorous and forward looking
- The SRA serves as the initial cannon document to inform the early design decisions that come in strategic planning. This makes sure everyone is aligned on the most critical items we are addressing.
- The documents we're going over next month will produce a very clear narrative allowing us to go into strategic planning confident on what issues we need to resolve

Strategic Planning: Board Role

- the process will be supported by the board and the board has created a committee that will be run by a partner to make sure it's as thorough and inclusive as we want it to be.
- Andrew Lee talked about the Strategic Committee mentioning that their job is go deeper on behalf of the board and to provide feedback but also to look at what the areas are where the full board need to digest and understand further.
- Aditi added that this committee aren't the ones making the decisions, they set the infrastructure on how they engage with other stakeholders.

FY27 Readiness - Planning for a Strong Start

- Academic Model: Structures
 - Key shifts for 26-27 SY: consistent and intentional school calendar and daily schedule in response to feedback we received on not having enough time
 - Introduction of differentiated school designs
 - New roles being added to schools: attendance manager, MTSS coordinator, Lead DOC, and additional Math/Reading interventionists
 - Attendance manager for the chronic absenteeism concerns, and the multi tier systems of support role will provide students with academic & behavioral support. Adding a lead DOC is addressing the teacher concern of needing more culture based support. By shifting our model to allow more interventionalist to provide support is how we can support the circle we addressed earlier. These are FTEs and not a part of someone else's existing role.
 - Continued PD focus on instructional coherence, including coaching and PLCs - by changing the model and people we feel we can address the concerns we hear
- Academic Model: Staffing & Programming
 - Intentional K-2 early childhood instructions - the decision to loop is evidence based the best for kids, and this ensures that all of the teachers in the K-2 space have all of the skills they need for providing instruction
 - Stronger, focused instruction in grades 3-4
 - Strategic approach to intervention and acceleration
 - Stronger foundation in literacy for all scholars
 - We partnered with a group to ensure we have the right curriculum and were told we need to focus on implementation with the teachers
 - Recess for all grades to support learning and well-being
 - Consistent connection programming across campuses
- Board Question: We want to have this franchise model across the schools/network, but can you speak to the communications on what the school is able to do autonomously vs what they need to do because it's network wide?
 - Communications start tomorrow going down the list of leadership to staff
 - The differentiated school designs - our schools have a base model but they are different sizes, have special populations, different needs, etc. So we

address these items individually within each school model. We also want to make sure we provide the support to the schools that are farther behind in the vision to get to where we want them to be

- Principals have been incredible partners on the journey. They've pushed and prodded and provided input carrying the torch in the shifts we are making. We need to better equip them in communicating what is important and why. They're not falling short. We need to make sure to equip them with the correct tools and rationale to be successful in their communication downstream.
- Board Question: We used to have a Dean of Culture role and we moved to the AP role with the rationale that instruction/culture are combined, but now we're going back. How do we as an org reflect? Would you consider this a lesson that maybe that AP role wasn't as effective?
 - We never made that transition fully, they always had Deans of Culture. It should be true, given that we have an outsized number of admins and supports, that we should be able to provide instructional and culture to schools, but the reality is that's not the case. So, how do we figure out how to provide the support moving forward?
- Workforce Planning
 - Universal staff model
 - Staff submitted intent to return
 - Retention conversations
 - Return offer letters
 - Recruitment and hiring
- New Scholar Recruitment
 - Day care visits, advertising, outbound calls, etc. The work continues to happen.
- Southeast is seeing an increase in the volume of applications compared to this same point last year
- We are on pace with enrollment with last year
- Re-enrollment, we've seen a clearer process this year and in turn we have seen an increase from family responses. 95% of families have responded and of that, 89% plan to return next year.

B. Academic Excellence Committee Update

- Aditi talked about the AEC's discussion surrounding the plan leaders made to increase the number of students completing lessons on iReady. The highlight is that more students are using the platform strategically and more lessons are being completed.
- Discussed the structural changes and the AEC went through some questions on that at their meeting.

C. CFO/Treasurer Report

Celeste gave a reminder this isn't the first time we're seeing this information, and also it is connected to all of this other work we are discussing. We want to make sure we deploy investments to accelerate everything we are talking about.

FY27 Budget

- Very comprehensive, all departments were involved in this budget as they are every year. We believe we are giving you the best ask to accomplish what we are wanting to do
- Current Reality of Financial Resources
 - We are very well resourced, exceeding our peers and the nation
 - Well above our reserves and very fortunate and grateful for the work of FOB
- Seeking Approval to Continue to Utilize Reserves to Value-Added Investments
 - We are here because the academic and community impact we make
 - Our vision is that it's in service of the broader mission and we are fortunate to the support of the board by allowing us to invest in initiatives
 - Continues to include the use of reserves next year
 - Through FY32 we have a smaller gap
 - Continue to bring in 2million annually from FOB to supplement for the schools with the greatest financial need
 - If you approve the budget for FY27, we are financially stable for the next 6 years without any big changes
- Special Education rate is increasing annually
 - Rising needs directly drive costs. This is a national trend, and a good thing so the students get the support they need. We've seen rising costs in transportation, aides, and alt placement. The FY27 budget includes an increase of allowance for these services.
 - We want to make sure we are going above and beyond for these students, so we are appreciative of the boards support.
- Current Expense Breakdown: Value Added vs Core
 - We want to make sure we are being thoughtful on expenses
 - When we broke down core vs added, 17% is for these evidence added initiatives
- Value Added Investments by Objective
 - NLT members have linked value added investments to objectives and expected results in order to prepare to monitor the effectiveness of all strategies
- Monitoring Value Added Investments
 - Developing score cards and reporting on progress to the board so when creating the FY28 budget we have clear data on these investments
- Key Benchmarks
 - CMO fee is still below 20% of revenue for all schools
 - All campuses continue to meet sponsor cash benchmarks (1-2 months of cash)

- FY27 Overview by Campus
 - Deficit overall
 - Midtown is closest to operating at break even
 - We feel confident that these are attainable numbers for the budget
 - Willard/Southeast have the greatest gap and there's always been a gap - that's why FOB exists
- Seeking approval to continue to utilize reserves for value added investments
- Board Question: How do the projects for next year come into the budget for next year?
 - FOB is funding all of these projects which didn't affect the budgets
- Sam called out that we are tracking the investments and they are not baked into the budget for next year and to have those conversations next year
- Andrew Lee discussed that what Celeste laid out is incredibly important. The model has always been that we need philanthropy to make up the difference. Our focus is on fiscal discipline so we're comfortable spending money where it has effect. In addition, we want to continue investing with FOBs support
- Woodland Hills lost it's partnership status so it had more levy funding in the original draft. The gap is 1.3million so some items were cut out to meet that 1.4million.
- Action Items
 - Asking to approve incentive threshold increase
 - Credit Card Compliance Review
 - BPS Audit Results - clean audit
 - Revised Budget for Southeast-Glenville
 - Reduced expenses so we need a reapproved budget for this year

D. Finance Committee Updates & Vote

Finance committee updates were covered during the CFO report

L. Mimura made a motion to accept the BPS Audited Financial Statements.

M. Hakim seconded the motion.

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

J. Johnson made a motion to to approve the BPS February Financials.

L. Mimura seconded the motion.

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

M. Hakim made a motion to approve the BPS FY27 Budget.

A. Amefia seconded the motion.

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

C. Lipscomb made a motion to approve the Schools February Financials.

A. Garg seconded the motion.

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

A. Garg made a motion to approve the Schools FY27 Budget.

C. Lipscomb seconded the motion.

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

C. Lipscomb made a motion to approve the Revised FY26 Budget for Breakthrough Southeast.

A. Garg seconded the motion.

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

E. NLT Reports

NLT reports were in the packet - no further questions.

V. Board Updates

A. Governance Committee

- Cecil discussed the board meeting schedule for this coming year. Only one change to October is so that Dr. McRae is able to be present. It conflicts with a conference he attends annually, so the schedule remains the same besides that.
- Overall work for the governance committee - we are actively engaged in recruiting new members. The committee reached out to 14 different candidates and are still in the process in who we will bring back to the board for full consideration. Four have said yes. Two said no, but possibly yes to a committee. This is a good mix of folks - corporate, higher ed, marketing, finance, etc. Will bring these to the May meeting.
- The conversations have been very thoughtful, so more to come, but the GC is excited
- Conversations have been had about the strategic planning process and how the board will be involved, but the GC is involved with a board development process. Meeting with a consulting firm to finalize what they will deliver at the retreat for the board development.
- We are looking at bringing on around 5 members to the board, because there are 4 members rolling off.
- Good momentum, some of the people we were talking to last year, it wasn't the right time, so it's a multiyear process. Looking at various demographics in terms of skillset.
- Committee assignments are a great on-ramp to the board so if we can have people sign up for those, it could be an on-ramp to be on the board eventually.

B. CEO Support & Evaluation

Sam discussed that Dr. McRae's contract is up at the end of the year, and we didn't really think through the next contract process. Moving forward with speed on that. No mystery other than we want to be very thorough on this and engaged an outside legal counsel to help on this. Dr. McRae has given some very thoughtful input and CGS has also provided some input. Initial call with an attorney next week.

VI. School and BPS Boards Approve Consent Agenda

A. School Board Vote to Approve Consent Agenda

R. Novak made a motion to approve the Schools Consent Agenda.

C. Lipscomb seconded the motion.

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

B. BPS Board Vote to Approve BPS Consent Agenda

A. Lee made a motion to approve the BPS Consent Agenda.

A. Amefia seconded the motion.

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

VII. BPS Board Resolution

A. Future Ready Cleveland

Sam discussed Aditi signing onto FRC who does some work for BPS. He expressed that we are identifying, outlining, and mitigating the conflict with this resolution.

J. Howard made a motion to approve and ratify the proposed Future Ready Cleveland partnership with BPS.

R. Novak seconded the motion.

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

VIII. School Board Resolution

A. CMSD Sponsor Contracts

C. Lipscomb made a motion to approve the modified CMSD sponsorship contracts with Breakthrough Midtown and Breakthrough Southeast.

G. Burrows seconded the motion.

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

IX. Sponsor Updates

A. CMSD Updates

A. Amefia left at 6:59 PM.

Matt Rado talked about the Spring Site Visits

- Aggressive schedule of visiting four locations in two days. CMSD looks at stakeholder data as a part of the visits. They frequently talk to leadership and staff, but this focus group they included teachers and families and wanted to identify any big trends across these groups
- Site visit report has the breakdown but the stakeholder part is applicable to both unless stated otherwise

- Trends noted:
 - For Southeast/Glenville - lack of clarity around the school's mission and vision - knew they were serving underserved areas, but staff didn't have a clear understanding
 - For Midtown/Willard - more consistent around what this is - closing learning gaps, getting kids college ready, serving underserved areas, etc
- Trying to understand the data and how they are supporting kids who are struggling
 - All of the locations referenced looking at different data and responding to that
 - Responses on what the help looks like, title staff, tutors, etc. was generally positive.
 - At Midtown/Willard - more references to concerns around support for students with disabilities and needing more support for the teachers to support the students
- For PD, it was pretty consistently negative towards it this year and the support from leaders
 - it was described as consistently all about SGS and concerns around differentiations (everyone getting the same PD regardless of how long they've been there)
 - Staff felt SGS had very scripted/compliance based information and not differentiated between the staff who have been there longer than others
- Matt offered that he's happy to go back through his notes and clarify for the principals if needed
- No breakout sessions included students this visit. In the interest of needing to do everything they needed to, CMSD decided to not talk to students this time.
- Asked if folks felt safe in and out of the building
 - Generally the answer was yes, except for when staff mentioned their cars being broken into/stolen. Willard also has concerns with the parking lot, which has been a consistent item.
- Discipline - do folks feel aligned on school policy on how admin responds to behaviors?
 - Disagreement across buildings on this - if I need help in my building, is help going to come? This wasn't consistent across schools. Concerns around inconsistencies with student discipline. All schools have the same policy, but the consistency in response wasn't there across schools.
- Teachers overall felt safe but we know there are the extreme cases
- Across all of the buildings, teachers have strong relationships with each other. Generally everyone within the same grade levels have good relationships. There were more times at Midtown where teachers were more open about not having a positive view toward the building/network administration.
- Data that Matt is reporting aligns to what was discussed at the beginning of the meeting.

B. Buckeye Updates

Emily thanked Reggie and Aditi for attending their Sunshine Training and reminded the board to complete theirs if they haven't.

Woodland Hills site visit is tomorrow and it's their fifth and last visit.

X. Executive Session

A. BPS Board Vote to Enter Executive Session

J. Howard switched to remote attendance at 7:08 PM.

Motion to enter executive session to discuss personnel matters to consider the appointment, employment or compensation of one or more public employees.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

A. Garg - AYE
A. Kopit - Remote
A. Lee - AYE
A. Amefia - Absent
C. Lipscomb - AYE
G. Burrows - AYE
J. Howard - Remote
J. LeMay - Remote
J. Johnson - AYE
L. Mimura - AYE
M. Harris - Absent
M. Hakim - AYE
R. Novak - AYE
S. Steinhouse - AYE
S. Vyas - Remote

B. School Boards Vote to Enter Executive Session

Motion to enter executive session to discuss personnel matters to consider the appointment, employment or compensation of one or more public employees.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

A. Garg - AYE
C. Lipscomb - AYE
G. Burrows - AYE
M. Harris - Absent

R. Novak - AYE

XI. 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 7:42 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

S. Steinhouse

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 7:42 PM

Respectfully Submitted,

A. Garg