



Breakthrough Public Schools

Minutes

BPS & School Board of Directors Meeting

Date and Time

Wednesday October 21, 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

Directors Present

A. Amefia, A. Garg, A. Lee, D. Witalec, G. Burrows, J. Freund, J. LeMay (remote), M. Hakim, M. Harris, R. Novak, S. Vyas

Directors Absent

C. Lipscomb, L. Mimura, M. Pena

Directors who left before the meeting adjourned

R. Novak

Guests Present

A. McRae, B. Fisher, C. Tate, D. Sobel, D. Youngblood (remote), H. Perkins, J. Kaye (remote), J. Padlan, K. Day, M. Sattler, R. Showalter, S. Ertle

I. Opening Items

A.

Call the Meeting to Order

A. Lee called a meeting of the board of directors of Breakthrough Public Schools to order on Wednesday Oct 21, 2026 at 5:04 PM.

A. Garg called a meeting of the School Boards to order on Wednesday October 21, 2026 at 5:04 PM.

B. Record Attendance

C. BPS and School Boards Vote to Approve the Minutes of the September 9, 2026 BPS and School Board of Directors Meeting

R. Novak made a motion to approve the minutes from BPS & School Board of Directors Meeting on 09-09-26.

J. Freund seconded the motion.

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

M. Harris made a motion to approve the minutes from BPS and School Board of Directors Meeting on 09-09-2026.

R. Novak seconded the motion.

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

II. Public Comment

A. School Boards Public Comment

No one was present for public comment

III. 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.

G. Burrows seconded the motion.

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

IV. Finance Resolutions

A. Schools Monthly Financials

G. Burrows made a motion to approve the Schools Financial Reports for June, July and August.

A. Garg seconded the motion.

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

B. BPS Monthly Financials

J. Freund made a motion to approve the BPS June Financials.

D. Witalec seconded the motion.

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

V. Sponsor Updates

A. CMSD Updates

Matt Rado had three quick things.

1) CMSD has been doing their site visits. The most exciting portion is the classroom visit part. They identify across each building and all schools which things are most and least evident. He'll debrief this at the December meeting, and for the merged schools he will be going through each school building.

2) Reminders and professional development opportunities were in the CMSD newsletter that went out

3) CMSD got effective on their sponsor rating

Annual sponsor report comes out by the end of the calendar year. Same cycle every year: the report comes out and then corrective actions go out requesting a follow up. He is aware there are plans in place already, so any CAPs are just to document it.

B. Buckeye Updates

Emily Puterbaugh gave a few quick updates. The board received a flurry of emails today. The monthly board report and what the biannual process looks like are in the report. Next year is a renewal year, and the renewal will be based on SY26-27. If it was based on last year, WH likely wouldn't have been renewed.

Biannual review will be included in the next packet, but some quick highlights:

- Strong Leadership, great retention for leaders
- Lack of autonomy for teachers and students is one thing to work on
- Students/teachers reported feeling overscheduled
- All students could name a staff member who cared about them
- Really strong systems in place

VI. FOB Update

A. FOB Updates

Susan gave a brief update naming that tomorrow is the high school fair at Midtown and in the morning they will be doing the mock interviews with scholars.

-Development update and EOY reports for Beyond Breakthrough and Development Team are in the packet. They're for the board to look at statistics and to see the Beyond Breakthrough work.

-Annual appeal will be dropping in November, so look for that in your mailbox.

Bill gave an advocacy update: good sessions with candidates and legislatures. Important election coming up on 11/3. When we have legislative visits, he would like to potentially include more of these board members for those visits. A lot of activity in Columbus for the biannual budget, so we will have to wait and see after the election.

Susan will be leaving as the president of FOB. They are beginning their searches, and Ratliff will likely support that search. This will not be a quick process, and they're targeting May 1st as the first day for the new president.

VII. Board Updates

A. Academic Excellence Committee Update

Dr. Harris wanted to thank the AEC committee members. It's been a vibrant year so far - contributing, collaborating, and asking important questions.

Covered several compelling topics at the last meeting. The topics are targeted in a guiding question and utilize the academic roadmap to discuss academic excellence. This month was regarding data and how we use it in student learning. The roadmap has seven arcs, so we discussed the first one. They discuss the arc through data driven instruction and multi-tiered support.

In terms of high quality instruction, they discussed a lot of positive data and trends that have been gathered and observed in the classroom environment (engagement and tone). If we see kids on task and there's a good tone, effective learning will happen.

Also discussed fidelity. The faculty have to execute the curriculum. Positive data was seen with fidelity at the schools. What's contributing to those positive outcomes? Buy in from faculty which looks like understanding and internalizing and executing and knowing when they need support. Also witnessed consistency in applying the content to see effectively.

MTSS launch. This was built into the schedule and it started last week and this is for every grade level. It's an extra 45 minutes built into the schedule four times a week. They'll track assessment results and each student was placed based on the September BOY data.

Students are also placed in tier two getting more ELA and math support. Some are placed in tier three which is even more support.

Reggie added that at the Midtown visit, he observed everything Dr. Harris discussed. There were at least two adults in every classroom and teachers were staying on task. It was great to see what they hear about in practice.

B. Governance Committee Update

Aditi will be covering the Governance report for Cecil. The committee is leading the way for the rest of the board on the board development project. They've done a fantastic job to find the core items that will make this board go from good to great.

-Deliverables: Gov Committee Chart - what is it about and what is the core work that they do? Other committees will be doing a similar thing.

-Down the pipeline: standard operating procedure will be coming to build. Building an onboarding manual and working on board development and how we can all strengthen ourselves.

Khafre is doing a great job in leading this work. He will go over broader information later in the meeting.

There will be an extra committee meeting in November.

Housekeeping: had beautiful headshots taken. Danielle and Catherine are working to get those on the website with a bio. So, you'll be receiving emails from them regarding those.

Reminder to go into BOT to mark if you plan to attend meetings so we can watch quorum.

C. Finance Committee Update

Reggie thanked Rob for his great work getting us back on track.

Rob discussed that we're on track with the budget. Cash is down - we are in a cash burn down time of the year. We were very close to having the September financials ready, but it was too much to add at the same time. September is trending the same way - close to budget. Keeping an eye on the number of kids in schools.

-Good news: we've been able to call back students and not lose as many kids. Things are trending upwards for us which is great news.

D. School Visits

Aditi invited board members who have been on school visits to share their highlights and observations.

Musa went on two visits last year and will be going on one this year. He is excited to be able to walk through with Dr. McRae to hear his perspective and ask questions as they walk through.

Jay went on the tour last week and found it very refreshing to walk into a classroom where things were working but also to see classrooms where we need to improve. It brought it all home and the energy of the kids is infectious. Thanked Dr. McRae for being transparent.

Grady went on the Midtown tour. Was impressed with administrators who are in the hallways and up and about. They are active and up from behind the desk being involved in the flow of the day to ensure it's seamless. Everyone seemed to be up and around which was refreshing to see. The younger children had three instructors in one class at one point. Kids were very engaged. With the older kids, the attention to staying on task is harder and this was something witnessed. In the stem class, they were very hands on and into it. But there was a math class where he observed one student who was preoccupied with something going on. This had him thinking about how we can engage the older kids more since staying on task can be difficult for some.

Jim was on the same tour as Grady and agrees. It's an exhaustive job in a classroom with small kids, but the teachers were utterly devoted to keeping the students on task and he has new appreciation for the teachers of young kids.

Aditi closed this section with encouraging board members to go on a tour. She has been on a Glenville and Midtown tour and she saw the care between the students and teachers, and that's the foundation for great learning. The facilities are also so welcoming and students feel like they belong which is also a great foundation for the students. We were also able to see the benefits of the uniform schedule and the effects that trickle down from all of the work the network has put into that.

VIII. Strategic Matters

A. CEO Report

Academics - Dr. Day joined Dr. McRae to present this data:

- Where are kids starting the year and what does that information tell us? All of this data is about baseline data, it shows where kids are and where the climb will be. We outlined the plan in the spring, so we're going to talk about what we've done in the fall.

iReady Data

- Green shows the students who are on grade level or higher, and yellow is one grade level below. This is the BOY so this is expected. We have more students that are moving into the yellow area this year, but we still have a ways to go. Very excited about Math.
- For ELA, we had a little bit of an increase where students are starting. We are continuing to slowly decrease the red.

The board took time to review the data that shows each schools progress from last year.

We moved one of our highest performing principals over to Glenville, who loves iReady, and she is getting them together. Very encouraged for what is going on at Glenville. We have to make sure Woodland Hills wins this year, so we have some tweaks to iron out.

Midtown has some rockstar math teachers that we are also very excited about.

Dr. McRae explained that anyone over the yellow bucket, we believe we can get them into the green. We have some schools in vulnerable positions, and WH is one of them. Buckeye is a very strong partner that has identified targets for us to meet. With all of the pieces that are put into place, the biggest benefit for us is getting the students to proficiency. Moving kids up significantly is the threshold. The hardest work is getting the kids from the red section of data into the yellow.

Our obsession is on the fidelity and quality of execution, and we are steadfast on what it will take to get kids where they need to be.

Teachers are working incredibly hard to make this happen. We will test again in December and then again in May.

Scholar Population - Enrollment and Retention

-Each October we discuss scholar population. As of October 16th, our scholar population is 2734.

-This still lags behind our budget floor of 2823.

-We continue to enroll 15-30 scholars each week.

-In the first two weeks of October, we've enrolled over 70 new scholars.

-We have a budget floor and academic capacity. Two of our five are meeting the budget floor. As a network, we are a little short.

First Day Enrollment SY26-27 & Previous

-We had 83% of enrollment on day one that were returning this year. This is larger than last year which is exciting to see. Summer melt is very real, so significant energy went into it. A third of the new students were kinder. This is a challenge for every school right now. If we can get kids in kindergarten and teach them to read, we don't need to do remedial work over time.

Kindergarten should make up the bulk of our new scholars. We're really focused on improving this strategy. Over the summer, we partnered a lot with early childhood centers. This will be a priority for next year to see how we can capture even more kindergarteners.

Looking at Weeks 4 and Weeks 8 of the prior year

-Week 8 Show and Go was 3% this year compared to 4% last SY - slightly better but rising

- Week 8 No-Show percentage was 14% this year compared to 11% last SY - up slightly even though retention is only slightly down.

- Week 8 Retention percentage was 83% this year compared to 85% SY

Finance

- Projected FY27 core operating deficit of 8.7 million with projected revenues of 50.3 million and expenses of 59 million.

- One time funding: 8.2 million in projected high quality funding and FOB support helps offset the operating shortfall. Woodland Hills has received the bulk of FOB support.

- Cash position: 11.46 million at August month-end, down from approx 15.1 million in July

- Enrollment 2715 FTE students compared with the budget 2823, we are 108 below the floor

- Budget performance: As of August 31, all three schools currently project no material variance from their F27 core budgets

- Financials for CMO still being compiled

Sponsor Benchmarks

- 2/3 meeting all fiscal benchmarks

- Midtown ran into a cash shortage due to implementation of eFinance Plus running payroll for the entire district through its books

- This issue is being resolved with billbacks to the other schools, and this is a non-recurring issue

BPS Highlight - TFA Summit

- 8 thousand people were there at the FOB sponsored happy hour where we were able to share everything we're doing and elevate Cleveland as a destination

- Took 32 staff members with us

- Aditi thanked FOB. It was a wonderful representation of Breakthrough. We handed out swag bags and everyone was walking around with them

- Previous employees were so excited to see BPS there and see that we've elevated

- Great chance for Dr. McRae to talk and Dr. Morgan (CMSD CEO) also talked and they both represented Cleveland so well

R. Novak left at 6:06 PM.

B. Strategic Planning Update

Strategic Review Topics - Andrew Lee will lead the board through this

- LOOM is our external partner and we have a strategic planning taskforce working with Loom at touch points

- Want to share the themes and where we're going and open the floor for discussion and questions

- We are moving into the Roadmap Development part

- Three ideas in terms of what it looks like for BPS to make good on its promise

- 1) BPS 8th graders are entering a high performing high school prepared for what's next
- 2) Alumni are graduating from a high performing high school prepared for what's next
- 3) Alumni are leading lives of meaningful and empowered choice

We heard from staff and network leaders and there was a deep anchor in the promise in getting K-8 right

Grow down and rebuild the whole child experience in K-8

There was a concern and wondering if the plan should be on the compression of the gaps opposed to the longer term goals.

- Dr. McRae reminded the board that we are working on this right now, but we need something to govern where we are going and what we are searching for. What we aspire to is having a plan that says we are going to anchor our mission in K-8 education which means addressing today's problems but also looking at the experience of the scholars who are leaving 8th. We don't offer international travel, language, etc.
- When we think of the arc of the strategic plan, we have to acknowledge where we are but also see the vision of where we're going.

Musa discussed that with infrastructure with Beyond Breakthrough we learned that students from five years ago really enjoyed a specific structure and he would be interested in seeing how they can play a role in the process of strategic planning

Where do we have the ability to impact and influence most directly? How do we use the ecosystem to help propel that? We still need to understand what freshman are experiencing, so we can anchor that work in an excellent high school. We're spending a lot of time to make sure we are answering the right problem.

Strongest signal: Adding Pre-K

The most consistent idea in the room: teachers described spending most of kinder and half of 1st grade teaching students how to be students. This feels mission aligned on delivering a good K-8 product.

The board wondered if our competitors have Pre-K? The answer to this is yes.

-Looking at creating alliances in Pre-K

Recommendation

- Point the strategic plan towards achieving a desired impact anchored on 8th grade preparedness for a high-performing high school
- Develop a set of gateways for K-8 growth
- Focus on research data and placement

We want to invest in defining and building the strongest system to serve Cleveland students. We want to offer kids exceptionally high quality education. The piece that the committee of staff is grappling with is what has to be true to ensure this is a strategic endeavor vs a really intensive improvement plan?

What happens next? There is a series of meetings where the broader Breakthrough community would get to participate in. We think the most important thing is what the broader stakeholders believe. This will happen over the next few months. Then we'll move onto phase four to define metrics and goals.

C. Board Development Project

Dr. Youngblood and Aditi will discuss Building High-Performance BPS Governance
-Repeat to remember as we endeavor on this project, we've invested resources and time so we can be the kind of board that can achieve ambitious endeavors

Building High-Performance BPS Governance

Since Phase 2 began in August, we've moved from findings to building
Phase 2 has two fronts at the same time

- Front 1 - GC is the lead implementation partner
- Front 2 - Data illumination system
 - This will let us know what the data says, means, and why it matters.

The objective is to move to create one fully integrated data management and illuminated process. Need one version of the truth for how we look at problem solving and solutions. This new format will continue to be integrated as we manage the current system

Each of the committees will begin to dig down into this work and partner to do a deeper dive into how they will use these processes

Data illuminating means reporting templates, creating dashboards that matter, that are accessible and understandable

The flow: Khafre 2+3 - Committee level product - Committee approval - Referred to the board

- This allows us to do this at scale

November: Committee operating manuals with succession plans and issues management guidelines

December: Governance Committee Charge adopted, revised charters and workplans, all three committees, training outline

February: Governance intelligence framework, aligned to strategic plan monitoring, redesigned reporting templates

March: three committee dashboards, data contextualization protocol, quarterly progress dashboard beings

June: Annual board capacity retreat, annual governance reflection, Phase 2 close-out

Building Lasting Capacity, Not a Project

Fall 2026: Khafre Leads

Winter 2026-27: Co-lead

Spring 2027: Committees Lead

July 2027 and onwards: BPS Owns

Who owns what

- Chairs will own charges

- Staff leads will own meeting workflow

- Dr. McRae and Senior Leadership will own data illumincation and board intelligence

- Governance Committee owns onboarding, training and annual reflection

For Families and Scholars: A board that decides with evidence about scholar outcomes, stewards resources toward the classroom, and stays strong for the long term

Asking folks to be engaged, begin the process of reviewing these drafts, and people are participating in every part of the process

Aditi thanked Dr. Youngblood and asked that the slides get sent out to board members in a future communication

IX. Executive Session

A. BPS Board Vote to Enter Executive Session

Motion to enter executive session to consider the appointment, employment, or compensation of public officials.

Roll Call:

A. Amefia - AYE

A. Garg - AYE

A. Lee - AYE

C. Lipscomb - Absent

D. Witalec - AYE

G. Burrows - AYE

J. Freund - AYE

J. LeMay - Remote

L. Mimura - Absent

M. Hakim - AYE
M. Harris - AYE
M. Pena - Absent
R. Novak - Absent (left early)
S. Vyas - AYE

B. School Boards Vote to Enter Executive Session

Motion to enter executive session to consider the appointment, employment, or compensation of public officials.

Roll Call:
A. Garg - AYE
C. Lipscomb - Absent
G. Burrows - AYE
M. Harris - AYE
R. Novak - Absent (left early)

X. 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 7:18 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
A. Lee

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 7:18 PM

Respectfully Submitted,
A. Garg