



Bronx Charter School for the Arts

Minutes

Monthly Board Meeting - In Person

Date and Time

Tuesday January 14, 2025 at 6:00 PM

Location

BGO Offices

399 Park Avenue, 18th Floor

New York, NY 10022

Trustees Present

Arlene Bascom, Barbara H. Scott, Charles Whites (remote), Denise Brecher (remote), Eric Osorio, Lori Biancamano, Susan Geisenheimer (remote), Zahreen Ghaznavi (remote)

Trustees Absent

Dan Vislocky, David Barnard, Evette Stair- Radlein

Guests Present

Kathy Ortiz, Lydia Bremer, Melanie Hok

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

Absent Board Member: Loretta Cargill (Parent Rep)

B. Call the Meeting to Order

Barbara H. Scott called a meeting of the board of trustees of Bronx Charter School for the Arts to order on Tuesday Jan 14, 2025 at 6:06 PM.

C. Approve Minutes

Lori Biancamano made a motion to approve the minutes from Monthly Board Meeting on 11-12-24.

Susan Geisenheimer seconded the motion.

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

II. Executive Director Report

A. Update

Update on Enrollment and Demographics

Kathy Ortiz reviewed the current enrollment and demographic statistics for Bronx Arts. The total enrollment stands at 582 students, with a 90% attendance rate across both campuses for the month of December. The demographic data remains consistent, showing a higher number of girls than boys, which aligns with local trends in the Bronx.

Mid-Year Priorities

Kathy Ortiz highlighted that this is the time of year to focus on mid-year progress. January marks the reassessment period for students, allowing for the identification of those who may need to repeat a grade or require tailored learning plans. Teachers will conduct one-on-one meetings with parents to discuss student progress.

Preparation for New State Assessment

This year, students in grades 3 through 8 will take all assessments—ELA, Math, and Science—online. Preparations for this transition have been underway since last year, especially for 3rd, 4th, 6th, and 7th graders, who will be participating in online assessments for the first time. The school is focusing on providing students with practice in typing to ensure they are well-prepared.

Additionally, January is the time for formal teacher evaluations, with Ms. Kathy Ortiz providing mid-year principal evaluations. Maintaining a positive school culture and conducting parent workshops in January is essential.

After School Programming

The school offers after-school programming five days a week, including both academic and enrichment activities on both campuses. The following programs are available:

- BAM Musical after-school rehearsals
- BAE Musical after-school rehearsals
- BAE Dance Company

- Makers Club
- Community Bots
- **Bronx Arts Ensemble Programs (Capoeira Dance, Ceramics, African Drumming, Visual Arts)**

Additionally, students can participate in the Academic Prep Club, BAM Jazz Band, Makers Club, and various sports activities. The Thrive Collection provides four programs: DJ, Beats and Rhyme, and a mural project with a professional artist.

Participation and Attendance

Participation in after-school programming at BAM is approximately 50%, while BAE sees higher engagement due to Aftercare services, achieving an impressive attendance rate of over 80%.

Recruitment and Lottery Day

Student recruitment has commenced, with Bus and Train applications now open. Ms. Milly, accompanied by a team of parents and students, is actively recruiting new students. Lottery Day is scheduled for April 1st.

Teacher recruitment will occur on one day at different universities and through the NYC Charter Fair, focusing on attracting certified teachers. Preparations for June are underway; however, uncertainty remains regarding the availability of the Summer Boost program, with final decisions expected in March based on the outcome of the Bloomberg grant.

B. Development and Communications

Kathy Ortiz provided key updates regarding fundraising efforts:

- **Giving Tuesday:** A total of approximately \$11k was raised.
- **Grants in Progress:**
 - Compliance report for the Cohen Foundation.
 - Application for NYC Council Discretionary Funding (due in February).
 - Preparation for SummerBoost 2025 (application not yet released, but in progress).
- **Engagement Initiatives:**
 - A second newsletter is scheduled for release at the end of the month.
 - The event "Jazz on Longfellow" is set for May 29th.

Barbara Scott encouraged all board members to participate in "Jazz on Longfellow," emphasizing the importance of attending school events and bringing a guest from their network, as it has been a significant time since a formal event was last held.

Kathy Ortiz highlighted the special nature of "Jazz on Longfellow," noting that it is an active event featuring a dance performance, an art show, and live music from a jazz band, including performances by former students.

Private Contributions Received YTD (Excluding Pledges)

- **Foundations:** \$128k
 - Includes second installment of Summer Boost 2024 grant, PitCCH In, and support from Peter Marsh Foundation.
- **Individuals:** \$58k
 - Contributions from Giving Tuesday and donation from Salice Family.
- **Board Giving:** \$12k
- **Special Events:** \$0
- **Corporations:** \$0 (not including pledges received).
- **In-Kind Contributions:** \$74k
 - Provided by MoMA, Wave Makers, and Bronx Arts Ensemble

Total Private and In-Kind Contributions: \$273k

C. Facilities Update

- Recent Facilities Committee meeting held on December 4th
- Focus on updating facility development timeline over the past five years
- Main discussion topics: roofing, HVAC, and lighting needs
- Need an outside project management company for building compliance and contractor management, with expertise in HVAC, lighting, and capital projects.
- Next steps include
 - Lori Biancamano reviewing nuances of current lease agreement, making recommendations and introductions to possible project management or consulting firms or professionals.
 - Kathy Ortiz to follow up with Civic Builders regarding pending questions pertaining to 950 Longfellow project

Current Issues

- Heating challenges at the elementary school
- Temporary solutions in place using space heaters
- Evaluation of HVAC system's lifespan and maintenance for the next decade
- Ensuring student comfort during winter
- Plan to complete repairs over the summer

III. Finance Report

A. Update

Melanie Hok reviewed the financial report reflecting budget vs. actuals and the balance sheet as of December 2024, noting no significant changes. State funds are projected to be under budget due to slightly lower student enrollment than budgeted, but is offset by federal grants.

IV. Upcoming Events

A. Update

Kathy Ortiz shared the following upcoming events:

- **Monthly Board Meeting:** January 14, 2025, at 6:00 PM
- **January 16:** BAM Musical, "Once on this Island Jr." at 6 PM
- **January 17:** End of Quarter Two
- **January 20:** Dr. King Day, School Closed
- **January 24:** Facilities Committee Meeting at 11 AM
- **January 29:** Lunar New Year, School Closed
- **January 31:** Executive Committee Meeting at 10 AM
- **February 4:** Program Committee Meeting at 5 PM
- **February 6:** Finance Committee Meeting at 10 AM
- **February 8:** Board Retreat at BAE, 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

V. 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 7:02 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Lori Biancamano