



Bronx Charter School for the Arts

Minutes

Monthly Board Meeting

Date and Time

Tuesday September 8, 2026 at 6:00 PM

Location

Zoom

Trustees Present

Arlene Bascom (remote), Barbara H. Scott (remote), David Barnard (remote), Evette Stair-Radlein (remote), Lori Biancamano (remote), Susan Geisenheimer (remote), Zahreen Ghaznavi (remote)

Trustees Absent

Charles Whites, Denise Brecher, Eric Osorio

Ex Officio Members Present

Kathy Ortiz (remote)

Non Voting Members Present

Kathy Ortiz (remote)

Guests Present

Juan Pimentel (remote), Krisann Vega (remote), Lydia Bremer (remote), Melanie Hok (remote), Patricia Rooney (remote), Ryan McCabe (remote)

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

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 Sep 8, 2026 at 6:04 PM.

C. Approve Minutes for July

Susan Geisenheimer made a motion to approve the minutes from Monthly Board Meeting on 07-14-26.

Zahreen Ghaznavi seconded the motion.

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

D. Approve Minutes for August

Susan Geisenheimer made a motion to approve the minutes from Monthly Board Meeting on 08-11-26.

Zahreen Ghaznavi seconded the motion.

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

II. Nominating Committee and Board Chair Update

A. Board Platform Transition

Barbara Scott announced that Diligent would replace BoardOnTrack as the board's meeting and document platform. Activation emails and reminders had been sent to board members, who were asked to complete their profiles before October.

Meeting agendas and the annual calendar were expected to be available through Diligent beginning in October. Short instructional videos would be provided to support the transition. Members with expired activation links were asked to request a new invitation.

B. Board Member Term Renewals

The board reviewed term renewals for Susan Geisenheimer, whose term ended in June; Zahreen Ghaznavi, whose term ended in August; Lori Biancamano, whose term ended in September; and Eric Osorio, whose term was scheduled to end in October.

Arlene Bascom made a motion to Approve 2 year term for Susan Geisenheimer, Zahreen Ghaznavi, Lori Biancamano, Eric Osorio.

David Barnard seconded the motion.

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

C. Board Member Recognition

Barbara Scott announced that Denise Brecher would complete her current term and would not seek renewal. She recognized Denise's longstanding financial support and

significant contributions to Bronx Arts and expressed appreciation for her generosity and commitment to the school.

III. Executive Director's Report

A. Introduction of the Director of Development and Communications

Kathy Ortiz introduced Craig Sculli, the new Director of Development and Communications. She highlighted his advancement experience at Columbia University and Dalton School, along with his expertise in donor stewardship, prospect research, board engagement, storytelling, and fundraising. She also noted his background in the arts.

Craig shared his initial goals for the school and his plans to begin individual outreach to board members.

B. Summer Institute and Staff Collaboration

Kathy Ortiz reported strong participation and positive feedback from staff and principals regarding Summer Institute. Staff particularly appreciated opportunities to work with colleagues across campuses and expressed interest in monthly opportunities to strengthen collaboration.

Summer Institute also included Operations and Leadership Retreats focused on preparation for the school year.

C. New York State Assessment Results

Krisann Vega presented assessment results and discussed areas requiring improvement. Leadership identified staffing challenges, including two upper-grade vacancies, and the timing of instructional changes as contributing factors. Findings from the prior year and current assessment data informed the school's instructional action plan. Krisann also noted concerns regarding third-grade ELA testing and scoring as part of the discussion.

Ryan McCabe reviewed middle school results, comparative performance, and areas for continued growth. He reported that Bronx Arts' middle school results exceeded those of other middle schools within a five-mile radius in ELA and mathematics and ranked second in District 8, behind MS 101. He identified Algebra I as an area requiring additional attention.

Kathy Ortiz reported that the school exceeded applicable state targets by at least ten percentage points. Leadership discussed ELA performance, supports for multilingual learners, and students' experience with computer-based testing. Mathematics performance was identified as an area of continued strength.

The board reviewed comparisons with state, city, borough, and district results, as well as grade-level outcomes. Discussion emphasized continued instructional improvement, targeted supports, and action planning to strengthen student achievement.

D. Diligent Platform Demonstration

Kathy Ortiz demonstrated the Diligent account activation and login process. She showed board members how to access the platform through their email invitations, complete their profiles, and navigate to the school's page.

She reiterated that meeting agendas, upcoming meetings, and the annual calendar would be available beginning in October and that additional instructional videos would be provided.

IV. Facilities and Real Estate Report

A. Building Improvements

David Barnard reported that lighting work had been completed. HVAC adjustments remained underway to address load balancing, and the team continued to monitor performance and coordinate necessary adjustments.

B. Real Estate Planning

David Barnard discussed ongoing conversations with Civic regarding a potential repurchase option for the school building. Further updates were expected in the coming weeks and months.

The space across the street on Longfellow Avenue remained an option. The school was also exploring broader, long-term facilities solutions.

V. Finance Report

A. Preliminary Fiscal Year-End Results.

Melanie Hok presented preliminary financial results for the prior fiscal year. The audit remains in progress, and the results are subject to auditor review and potential adjustments.

The school ended the fiscal year with approximately:

- **\$13 million in total net assets**
- **\$10 million in cash**

- **\$897,000 in net income**

Enrollment reached approximately 591 students, compared with a budget of 580. Staffing ended at 82 full-time equivalent positions, compared with 90 budgeted positions, resulting in lower than budget personnel costs.

Key expense variances included annual musicals, student uniform vouchers, substitute teaching services, professional employer organization payroll and benefits services, and construction-related consulting services.

Capital spending remained within the approved project budget. Draft audited financial statements are expected in the following month, with a detailed Finance Committee review to follow.

B. Approval of Performance Bonus Accrual

Melanie Hok requested board approval to accrue performance bonuses for the prior fiscal year, including associated employer FICA taxes.

Arlene Bascom made a motion to approve the accrual of performance bonuses for the prior fiscal year, including associated employer FICA taxes.

David Barnard seconded the motion.

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

VI. Development and Communications Report

A. Update

No separate Development and Communications update was presented.

VII. Upcoming Events

A. Update

Kathy Ortiz highlighted upcoming September activities, including Back-to-School Night, musical announcements, and Culture Dress-Down Day. Musical auditions were already underway.

She recognized Juan Pimentel, Ryan McCabe, and the arts team for their work in making a second arts rotation possible again this year.

VIII. 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 7:03 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Lori Biancamano