



MINUTES
Board of Trustees Meeting
July 29, 2025

PRESENT

Lourdes Putz, Chair
Marcenia Johnson, Trustee
John Witherspoon, Trustee
David Medina, Trustee

GUESTS

Valerie Jacobson, Head of School
Ellen Eagen, Legal
Mary Kenny, Transcriber
Additional Staff (29)

EXCUSED

Sabrina Philson, Trustee

1. EXECUTIVE SESSION

2. WELCOME

Ms. Putz thanked everyone for coming and called the meeting to order at 3:05pm.

3. APPROVAL OF MAY AND JUNE MINUTES

- Ms. Johnson made a motion to approve the May 29, 2025 Board Minutes pending counsel review. Mr. Witherspoon seconded. All were in favor.
- Mr. Witherspoon made a motion to approve the June 24, 2025 Board Minutes pending counsel review. Mr. Medina seconded. Ms. Johnson Abstained. All others were in favor.

4. ACADEMICS

Ms. Jacobson provided an overview of school events.

- July 8 - Financial Literacy Class with Brooklyn Neighborhood Services starts (every Tuesday);
- July 14-August 6 - Summer School runs from Monday through Thursday;
- August 6 - Summer School Grades Due
- August 11 - Virtual Virtual Incoming Parent Welcome Meeting with Ms. Pink
- August 12-14 - Summer Bridge Program
- August 18-22 - August All Faculty/Staff Professional Development
- August 18 - Earth Science Lab Practical Exam at 1pm in Room 425
- August 19-20 - August Regents Exams
- August 25 - First Day of School
- August 29 - August Graduation at 2pm

Ms. Martin reported that 154 students are registered for summer school. 45 students are enrolled in APEX. 87 students received credit for Trimester 1. 92 students are anticipated to receive credit for Trimester 2. Trimester 3 begins July 30 and ends August 6.

164 students graduated in June (75% of 2025 class). There are 54 remaining students. 19/54 are showing progress in Summer School and APEX. 10 students require Regents Exams only. 3 students for the Class of 2026 are on track to graduate early. The breakdown of "5th Year Students" by cohort is as follows: 25 for 2024, 9 for 2023, 6 for 2022, and 3 for 2021. 11 students are showing progress in Summer School and APEX. Ms. Martin reviewed college and career commitments. Ms. Martin said she had been making connections between students who are attending the same schools and wants to expand this into a program in the future. 153 rising seniors are in the class of 2026. 73/153 are on track or slightly on track. 80 students are off track.

Ms. Jacobson congratulated staff on recent awards. Mary Fank-Ulgen is the June Teacher of the Month. Ayisha Gomez is the Staff of the Month and Mildred Burchett is the Teacher of the Year!

5. OPERATIONS

Ms. Jacobson reviewed the projected budget for 2025-2026 which will be formally approved at the next Board meeting. The Projected FTE is 674. The anticipated revenue is \$16,063,127 and expenses are \$16,063,127. The surplus/deficit is \$0.

Ms. Jacobson presented the school's "No Cellphone/Electronic Policy" for board review. She summarized efforts made in 2024-25 to pilot the "Unplug to Connect" No Cell Phone/Electronics Policy in 2024-25. Parents, students, and families were surveyed in Fall 2024 and June 2025. Parents can contact their child via the Main Office and courtesy phone. Students should leave all personal electronic devices at home or must check them in their labeled pouch upon entry for return at the end of the school day. Devices will be stored in secured cabinets in the Dean's Office or other area as per the Principal or Principal's designee. After reviewing the cell phone survey, the school noticed that some students want quiet time in the media center during lunch as well as lunchtime games. Staff are working together to ensure this happens this upcoming year. Key provisions of the New York state-wide ban are included.

The Board reviewed the responses to the surveys and discussed the disciplinary policy associated to make sure it is equitable. No suspensions will be issued as a result of this policy.

- Ms. Johnson made a motion to approve the No Cellphone/Electronic Policy. Mr. Medina seconded. All were in favor.

6. FACILITIES

Mr. James reported. The building's boiler room repairs were made. The DOB Boiler Inspection unit was advised and scheduled to re-inspect the boiler room. No new water leaks were observed during heavy rain periods. Facilities placed tarps over the skylights as an additional precaution. There are no air conditioning issues to report. Two new water pumps were installed in the basement to replace both units that were burned out. No new flooding issues were reported for the school's basement. The FDNY Annual Fire Inspection is scheduled for August 13.

7. EXECUTIVE CONSULTANT

Mr. Rivera provided an update on the organizational condition. Mr. Rivera expressed his gratitude to the Board and leadership for their work on the budget and making hard decisions while still giving two pay increases. He has a renewed hope for the coming year by starting with a balanced budget. Enrollment needs to be tracked very closely in the future and he would like to have regular sessions with the Board, legal counsel and the Finance Committee. He is working on reviewing the formal organizational structure to ensure the school is operating within means. This will demonstrate to the authorizer that the school can be a success in the future. Ms. Eagen reiterated that it is the Board's responsibility to oversee the budget and the school's responsibility to make suggestions about line items. They both must engage together as the school year starts. She stated that Mr. Rivera is no longer a Board member but a consultant for the school at the request of the Head of School. Mr. Rivera reiterated that important decisions have to be made to keep the school open and financially healthy.

8. ENROLLMENT AND RECRUITMENT

Ms. Jacobson reported. Enrollment is 498 in PowerSchool and 573 in ATS. The FTE is 660.446. Ms. Jacobson explained that the FTE is pending approval and the ATS shows incoming freshmen. She then showed verified registrations for next year by grade.

Recent enrollment and recruitment efforts include one on one tours, attendance at Sumner Community Center Summer Camp, Tompkins Community Center, Bushwick Community Center Summer Camp and Food Pantry. Advertisements are listed on bus shelters, the Daily News Back to School Special, and the Brooklyn and Queens Family Magazine. Upcoming Events include the Virtual Welcome Session with the PLC on August 11. Summer Bridge will take place between August 12-14.

9. FINANCE

Ms. Fernandez reported. As of May 31, 2025 the reported revenue is \$13,941,505. The reported expense is \$15,332,814. The deficit is \$1,391,309, which is projected to be \$1,600,000 by June 2025. The General Audit

is on August 27. Ms. Fernandez then reviewed assets/liabilities.

10. HUMAN RESOURCE

Ms. Manion reported. There was one operations new hire and four operations separations in June. There was one instructional separation. HR sent out contracts for the 2025-26 school year. HR held an open enrollment presentation for all staff for a July 1 effective date. Mr. Kloss worked with the school's broker on setting up a new employee paid STD policy and sent out addendums for summer school, scheduling, and APEX. HR is recruiting for an Academy Leader, Science Teacher, and Spanish Teacher. Mr. Kloss is putting together a recruiting spreadsheet to document outcomes along with a daily recap email advising on efforts. HR and Finance are meeting twice a week. HR helped run graduation sign-ins.

11. ACCOUNTABILITY AND DEVELOPMENT

Ms. Manion reported. The school received the 2024-25 Check-In Memo from NYSED. The report documented needs for improvement in student performance, enrollment, and teacher certification compliance. The Board and legal counsel discussed compliance and Ms. Manion confirmed she spoke to the authorizer directly about the issue. Ms. Eagen stated that this speaks to the governance of the school and expressed that the school should take these issues very seriously.

2025-26 Title I planning has begun The SSEC Report was submitted on July 17. The Annual Report is due August 1. Disclosure of Financial Interest Forms need to be signed if they have not yet been already. Ms. Manion presented a 2025-26 Board Calendar:

- Tuesday, July 29 at 3pm;
- Tuesday, August 26 at 5:30pm;
- Tuesday, September 16 at 5:30pm;
- Tuesday, October 21 at 5:30pm;
- Tuesday, November 18 at 5:30pm;
- Tuesday, December 16 at 5:30pm;
- Tuesday, January 20 at 5:30pm;
- Tuesday, February 24 at 5:30pm;
- Tuesday, March 24 at 5:30pm;
- Tuesday, April 21 at 5:30pm;
- Tuesday, May 19 at 5:30pm; and,
- Tuesday, June 23 at 5:30pm.

The school is hosting a community night at a Brooklyn Cyclones game on August 29. Trustees and staff are welcome to attend. The school is raising funds to cover the cost of t-shirts for all attendees with the school. The school is also running a first-pitch raffle for \$5/entry. \$80 has been raised so far. Ms. Manion submitted the Walentas Grant Application for \$25,000. This would cover the costs of a Teacher Mentoring Program which would consist of Danielson training for Department Leaders, a Mentoring Program Coordinator, fees for mentors, and materials costs. The New York Civic Engagement Commission (CEC) is offering stipends for organizations who can offer space to host community engagement sessions regarding city budget education and brainstorming projects to address community needs. Stipends range from \$9,000-\$15,000. Ms. Jacobson, Ms. Pink, and Ms. Manion will meet to discuss whether this opportunity makes sense for the school.

12. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Johnson made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Witherspoon seconded. All were in favor.