Board Meeting Minutes

Organization: Pride Academy Charter School Board Meeting
President: Mr. Mitchell
Time: 6:40pm
Place: Hybrid (at Pride and virtual via Zoom)
Date: April 23, 2025
Minute Taker: Mrs. Wilson

Board Members Present: Mr. Moore, Ms. Brown, Ms. A. Taylor, Ms. D. Taylor (arrived at 6:46pm), Mr. Mitchell

Others Present: Ms. Dumenigo, Mr. Ofstad, Dr. Jones, Mrs. Dockery

Absent: Mr. Rosado, Mrs. Spence

IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER:
Next Board Meeting: Wednesday, May 29,2025 at 6:30 pm.

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 6:40pm and Roll Call was taken.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ANNOUNCEMENT OF PUBLICATIONS: The New Jersey Open Public Meetings Law was enacted to ensure the right of the public to have advance notice of and to attend the meetings of public bodies at which any business affecting their interests is discussed or acted upon. In accordance with the provisions of this act, The Pride Academy Charter School Board of Trustees has caused notice of this meeting to be published by having the date, time, and place thereof posted in the Star-Ledger and on NJ.COM under Legal Notices and posted on the school website.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA FOR THE BOARD MEETING: Resolution to Accept Agenda for April 23, Regular Meeting - Attachment 1

Motion to approve: Mr. Moore
Seconded: Ms. Brown
Vote:
Ms. A. Taylor- in favor
Mr. Mitchell- in favor
Ms. M. Brown- in favor
Mr. Moore- in favor
Motion Carried

BOARD VOTED: To Accept Agenda for April 23, Regular Meeting - Attachment 1

Resolution to Approve the minutes from March 26, 2025, Regular Meeting – Attachment 2

Motion to approve: Mr. Moore
Seconded: Ms. Brown
<u>Vote:</u>
Ms. A. Taylor- in favor
Mr. Mitchell- in favor
Ms. M. Brown- in favor
Mr. Moore- in favor
Motion Carried

BOARD VOTED: To Approve the minutes from March 26, 2025, Regular Meeting – Attachment 2

Financial Committee Report by School Business Administrator
FY26 Budget Presentation – Dr. Jones, SBA

F1. Resolution to Accept the March 2025 monthly Bills List for all funds not including payroll, as outlined below - Attachment F1

General Funds Fund 10/11: $495,105.08
Special Revenue Fund 20: $32,515.32
Food Services Fund 60: $20,494.86
Student Activities: $1,965.60

Motion to approve: Mr. Moore
Seconded: Ms. Brown
<u>Vote:</u>
Ms. D. Taylor- in favor
Ms. A. Taylor- in favor
Mr. Mitchell- in favor
Ms. M. Brown- in favor
Mr. Moore- in favor
Motion Carried

BOARD VOTED: to Accept the March 2025 monthly Bills List for all funds not including payroll, as outlined below - Attachment F1

F2. Resolution to Accept Payroll Expense for the current payroll period(s) ending March 31, 2025 ($175,428.82 and April 15, 2025 ($166,903.13) - Attachment F2

Motion to approve: Mr. Moore
Seconded: Ms. Brown
<u>Vote:</u>
Ms. D. Taylor- in favor
Ms. A. Taylor- in favor
Mr. Mitchell- in favor
Ms. M. Brown- in favor
Mr. Moore- in favor

Motion Carried
BOARD VOTED: to Accept Payroll Expense for the current payroll period(s) ending March 31, 2025 ($175,428.82 and April 15, 2025 ($166,903.13) - Attachment F2

F3. Resolution to Accept the FICA Reimbursement Report through April 15, 2025 - Attachment F3

Motion to approve: Mr. Moore
Seconded: Ms. Brown
Vote:
Ms. D. Taylor- in favor
Ms. A. Taylor- in favor
Mr. Mitchell- in favor
Ms. M. Brown- in favor
Mr. Moore- in favor
Motion Carried

BOARD VOTED: to Accept the FICA Reimbursement Report through April 15, 2025 - Attachment F3

F4. Resolution to Approve Budget Transfer(s) for 2024-2025 school year, Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:22-8.1 and N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-13.3 listed budget transfers are needed to reclass expenditures from original budget approved by the board. The amount and account information are provided in detail in the attachment. - Attachment F4

Motion to approve: Mr. Moore
Seconded: Ms. Brown
Vote:
Ms. D. Taylor- in favor
Ms. A. Taylor- in favor
Mr. Mitchell- in favor
Ms. M. Brown- in favor
Mr. Moore- in favor
Motion Carried

BOARD VOTED: to Approve Budget Transfer(s) for 2024-2025 school year, Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:22-8.1 and N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-13.3 listed budget transfers are needed to reclass expenditures from original budget approved by the board. The amount and account information are provided in detail in the attachment. - Attachment F4

F5. Board Secretary's Report & Certification – Attachment F5
Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:23-2.12, I certify that as of March 31, 2025, that no major budgetary line-item account expenditure exceeds the amount appropriated by the

district Board of Trustees and that sufficient funds are available to meet the district's financial obligations for the remainder of the fiscal year.

Charlene Jones, SBA **April 16, 2025**

F6. Resolution to Approve the NJSIG Safety Plan submission in the amount of $2,000 for the 2025-2026 school year toward cost of survey quote from Brevard Surveying and Mapping, LLC. – Attachment – F6

Motion to approve: Mr. Moore
Seconded: Ms. Brown
<u>Vote:</u>
Ms. D. Taylor- in favor
Ms. A. Taylor- in favor
Mr. Mitchell- in favor
Ms. M. Brown- in favor
Mr. Moore- in favor
Motion Carried

BOARD VOTED: to Approve the NJSIG Safety Plan submission in the amount of $2,000 for the 2025-2026 school year toward cost of survey quote from Brevard Surveying and Mapping, LLC. – Attachment – F6

F7. Resolution to Accept the School Treasurer's monthly report for March 2025 — Attachment F7

Motion to approve: Mr. Moore
Seconded: Ms. Brown
<u>Vote:</u>
Ms. D. Taylor- in favor
Ms. A. Taylor- in favor
Mr. Mitchell- in favor
Ms. M. Brown- in favor
Mr. Moore- in favor
Motion Carried

BOARD VOTED: to Accept the School Treasurer's monthly report for March 2025 — Attachment F7

ALL BOOKS RECONCILED THROUGH MARCH 31ST

F8. Resolution to Approve Drawdowns of Special Revenue Funds for ESEA Title IA, and IDEA-B as follows for the period ending April 15, 2025: Attachment F8

-Drawdown #7 – Title IA – $21,425 - Salary & Benefits Expenditures
-Drawdown #7 – IDEA-B – $11,540 - Salary & Benefits Expenditures

Motion to approve: Mr. Moore
Seconded: Ms. Brown
<u>Vote:</u>

Ms. D. Taylor- in favor
Ms. A. Taylor- in favor
Mr. Mitchell- in favor
Ms. M. Brown- in favor
Mr. Moore- in favor
Motion Carried

BOARD VOTED: to Approve Drawdowns of Special Revenue Funds for ESEA Title IA, and IDEA-B as follows for the period ending April 15, 2025: Attachment F8

F9. Resolution to Accept the Horizon Staffing Resources clinical staffing agreement for the 202-2026 school year and attached rate schedule – Attachment F9

Motion to approve: Mr. Moore
Seconded: Ms. Brown
<u>Vote:</u>
Ms. D. Taylor- in favor
Ms. A. Taylor- in favor
Mr. Mitchell- in favor
Ms. M. Brown- in favor
Mr. Moore- in favor
Motion Carried

BOARD VOTED: to Accept the Horizon Staffing Resources clinical staffing agreement for the 202-2026 school year and attached rate schedule – Attachment F9

F10. Resolution to Enter into Agreement for ACH positive pay service with Fulton Bank of NJ for select disbursement bank accounts – Attachment F10

Background on Fraudulent Activity:
Within two days of issuing a recent check, we identified suspicious activity on the account. We immediately worked with the bank, which issued a provisional credit while conducting a formal investigation. As a result, our funds have been restored, and no financial loss was incurred.

Preventative Action – Positive Pay Implementation:
To prevent future incidents, we are implementing Positive Pay, a fraud prevention service, for both our Operating Account and Food Service Account.
Here's how the system will work:

- **We will provide the bank with a list of authorized disbursements (check and ACH transactions) in advance.**
- **Any payment not on this pre-approved list will be automatically flagged or denied by the bank.**
- **All disbursements will now be shared with the bank electronically for added security.**

Cost Overview:

- **The total amount involved in the fraudulent transaction was $17,538.**

- **The estimated monthly cost for Positive Pay is approximately $100, based on our average transaction volume and account profile.**
- **Costs will vary slightly between the operating and food service accounts, with the food service account incurring fewer transactions.**

Next Steps:

- **We are reviewing contract terms and conditions with the bank to finalize the Positive Pay agreement.**
- **This proactive step enhances our financial controls and safeguards our accounts moving forward.**

Motion to approve: Mr. Moore
Seconded: Ms. Brown
<u>Vote:</u>
Ms. D. Taylor- in favor
Ms. A. Taylor- in favor
Mr. Mitchell- in favor
Ms. M. Brown- in favor
Mr. Moore- in favor
Motion Carried

BOARD VOTED: to Enter into Agreement for ACH positive pay service with Fulton Bank of NJ for select disbursement bank accounts – Attachment F10

F11. Resolution to Approve $50.00 gift cards to all teachers and staff in observance with National Teacher Appreciation Week May 5th – May 9th & National Teacher Appreciation Day – No Attachment

Motion to approve: Mr. Moore
Seconded: Ms. Brown
<u>Vote:</u>
Ms. D. Taylor- in favor
Ms. A. Taylor- in favor
Mr. Mitchell- in favor
Ms. M. Brown- in favor
Mr. Moore- in favor
Motion Carried

BOARD VOTED: to Approve $50.00 gift cards to all teachers and staff in observance with National Teacher Appreciation Week May 5th – May 9th & National Teacher Appreciation Day – No Attachment

Facilities Report
Dr. Jones presented a comprehensive update on the school's facilities improvements, ongoing maintenance, and long-range infrastructure planning efforts. See reports.

Food Service Vendor RFP Update

The Request for Proposal (RFP) process for our food service vendor is nearly complete, as our current contract expires on June 30. We received three bids, with the lowest bid coming from a new provider. We are currently working with our school attorney to finalize the selection, with the goal of presenting a recommendation at the May board meeting.

To ensure due diligence, we have contacted references provided by the lowest-bidding vendor. One reference, a charter school in New York, reported they have used this vendor for the past two years with no significant issues. They are currently undergoing a food audit and expect to share more detailed feedback upon its completion. Notably, the Business Administrator at that school mentioned they have not had to intervene in the food program due to the vendor's adequate staffing and performance.

Additional steps in our review include:

- **Vendor taste testing and space planning**
- **Final compliance checks with New Jersey state contract guidance**
  These steps will be completed prior to finalizing the award decision.

Year-End Financial Preparation

In preparation for the year-end audit, we are:

- **Finalizing journal entries**
- **Wrapping up books and confirming all year-end balances**
- **Preparing for the annual CDK year-end training, scheduled for May. This training will help ensure a smooth closeout process, with final reporting and reconciliation scheduled for July.**

We will continue to keep the Board informed as these processes move forward.

F12. Resolution to Accept the Architect proposal for contracted work outlined on the Facilities report — Attachment F12

Motion to approve: Mr. Moore
Seconded: Ms. Brown
Vote:
Ms. D. Taylor- in favor
Ms. A. Taylor- in favor
Mr. Mitchell- in favor
Ms. M. Brown- in favor
Mr. Moore- in favor
Motion Carried

BOARD VOTED: to Accept the Architect proposal for contracted work outlined on the Facilities report — Attachment F12

Principal report: see attachments

Academic Performance, Waitlist Status, and School Operations
Waitlist & Enrollment Update:
As of 4/25/2026, we have the following enrollment data:

Rising 5th graders registered

33 new 6th-grade applicants (waitlisted due to current enrollment capacity)

17 students waitlisted for 7th grade

10 students waitlisted for 8th grade

Enrollment capacity remains full unless there is student attrition over the summer. We anticipate using open spots to support 7th and 8th-grade admissions.

<u>Assessment Results and Benchmark Data:</u>
A full roster of benchmark assessment results has been compiled. A tactical data summary was provided to the board (linked in a separate PDF). While the detailed links require access through a prideacs.org account, a PDF version will be shared to ensure accessibility.

<u>Key takeaways include:</u>

Overall growth observed in Language Arts, Math, and Science across grade levels.

Performance trends place our school in the top 1% statewide in Math growth.

Growth was not consistent across all grades, with 2 out of 4 grades exceeding expected benchmarks.

Our progress continues to outpace statewide trends in both academic performance and student attendance.

We've shared this success with families via a parent letter and noted that our school was one of only two schools in New Jersey to be in the top 1% for two consecutive years.

<u>Strategic Planning and Staffing:</u>
Staffing efforts are aligned to current performance data, with new hires underway for: Language Arts, Math and Science

The 2025–2026 Strategic Plan will be presented at the next Board Meeting.

<u>Compliance & State Preparation for NJSLA:</u>
We are preparing for an upcoming compliance review scheduled two weeks from today. Updates include:

Roster verification: ensuring all current, transferred-in, and transferred-out students are accurately captured.

Testing accommodations: Confirming that AP students receive appropriate supports (e.g., text-to-speech, calculator access) based on their IEPs/504s.

Staff training: Ms. Dumenigo conducted a training session reaching 80% of staff in preparation for spring assessments. Mr Ofstad met with remaining staff members.

<u>School Climate Report – April 2025 Highlights:</u>

Total Suspensions: 70

Two investigations were conducted involving 6th-grade students. Both were ultimately deemed unfounded:

Case 1 involved a male student whose desk movements were interpreted as inappropriate but later attributed to simulated gaming behavior. No intent to offend or target others was observed.

Case 2 involved a female student alleged to have "chomped" on a male peer. This incident occurred during a social setting with peers present and was considered socially immature but non-malicious.

One additional case occurred yesterday afternoon at 2:50 PM. It is currently under investigation and will be reported in full at the next Board meeting.

<u>Community Events & Celebrations-</u> Ms. Dumenigo provided an overview

R1. Resolution to approve the district field trips as provided – Attachment R1

Motion to approve: Mr. Moore
Seconded: Ms. Brown
<u>Vote:</u>
Ms. D. Taylor- in favor
Ms. A. Taylor- in favor
Mr. Mitchell- in favor
Ms. M. Brown- in favor
Mr. Moore- in favor
Motion Carried

BOARD VOTED: to approve the district field trips as provided – Attachment R1

R2. Resolution to approve the HIB monthly report as presented – No Attachment

Motion to approve: Mr. Moore
Seconded: Ms. Brown
<u>Vote:</u>
Ms. D. Taylor- in favor
Ms. A. Taylor- in favor
Mr. Mitchell- in favor
Ms. M. Brown- in favor
Mr. Moore- in favor

Motion Carried

BOARD VOTED: to approve the HIB monthly report as presented – No Attachment

R3. Resolution to approve the district employee's renewal and non-renewals as provided – No Attachment (MOVED TO EXECUTIVE SESSION)

R4. Resolution to approve the title change from Dean of High School Placement to Social Studies Teacher

Background:
The administration presented a resolution for Board consideration to approve a title change for Mr. Geiger from *Dean of High School Placement* to *Social Studies Teacher*. This matter, initially scheduled for closed session, was moved to open session upon Mr. Geiger's request to discuss it publicly.

Context and Clarification:
- **Mr. Geiger has been fulfilling dual responsibilities—serving as both Dean and teaching Social Studies—since December 1, 2019.**
- **For the past five years, his contract title has been *Dean of High School Placement*, although he has also provided classroom instruction when needed.**
- **The proposed resolution would revise his title to reflect his teaching responsibilities, effectively restructuring his compensation (i.e., salary and stipend allocation).**
- **There is no proposed change to the overall compensation amount, only how the compensation is allocated between administrative and teaching roles.**
- **Mr. Geiger expressed his preference to retain his current structure and responsibilities.**

Legal Considerations:
- **Questions were raised regarding the legality and necessity of the title change, the dual-role structure, and implications for tenure.**
- **The board acknowledged the need for legal clarity regarding:**
  1. **Whether the current structure (administrative + teaching) is legal.**
  2. **Whether the proposed structure (teaching with a stipend) is legal.**
  3. **Whether a third option—a unified contract without a separate stipend—is permissible.**

Board Concerns:
- **Equity: Ensuring consistency with how other staff in dual roles are contracted and evaluated.**
- **Oversight: Clarifying the Board's fiduciary role in approving compensation structures.**
- **Transparency: Confirming that any structural change aligns with legal standards and district practices.**

Next Steps:
- **Dr. Jones will coordinate a meeting with legal counsel (Mr. Wenzel), the Board President, and Mr. Geiger to address the above questions.**
- **The Board agreed to postpone any vote until legal guidance is received.**
- **An emergency Board meeting may be scheduled to approve a final resolution before the next regular meeting (by May 15).**

The vote was TABLED.

New Business

- **Upcoming Events (Ms. Dumenigo)**
- **Annual Financial Disclosures – April 30th Deadline to Submit Disclosures (All)**
- **1st Read – HIB Policy and Regulation**

9. Old Business

- **Policy Updates – NJSBA Review Pending**
- **Pride Academy Charter School Strategic Plan – Update**
- **Board Training – Gov I (IR), Gov IV (MB, RM, JS, AT)**

10. Comments from the Public

11. Motion to Adjourn the meeting at 9:01pm for Non-Board members and enter Executive Session.

Motion to approve: Mr. Moore
Seconded: Ms. Brown
<u>Vote:</u>
Ms. D. Taylor- in favor
Ms. A. Taylor- in favor
Mr. Mitchell- in favor
Ms. M. Brown- in favor
Mr. Moore- in favor
Motion Carried

BOARD VOTED: to adjourn the meeting at 9:01pm

The next Regular Board Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 21, 2025
The Board may adjourn to Executive Session to discuss personnel or individual student concerns.