

Briya Public Charter School
DRAFT Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, October 14th, 2026, 6:10-7:30 p.m. on Zoom

This meeting is governed by the Open Meetings Act. Please address any questions or complaints arising under this meeting to the Office of Open Government at opengovoffice@dc.gov.

Board members present

Doris Garay, *Chair*
Dimelsa Zelaya, *Secretary*
Geovanna Izurieta, *Treasurer*
Alejandra Sandoval (left 30 minutes early)
Bill Bletzinger
Carolina Hernandez
Brenda Martinez (arrived 30 minutes late)
Mike Baer

Staff members present

Christie McKay, *Executive Director*
Joel Goering, *Director of Finance*
Judy Kittleson, *NEDP & Adult Education Manager*
Stella Wang, *Board Liaison*
Camilla Taft-Hicks, *Strategy Consultant*
Amy Houser, *Senior Advisor*
Ivana Valenzuela, *Director of Outreach and Registration*

Board members absent

Stuart Butler, *Vice Chair*
Brittany Pope
Jennifer Huang

Quorum was reached.

1. Call to Order

- The meeting was called to order at 6:16pm.

2. Approval of minutes

- August 12th Briya Board Meeting Minutes
 - **Bill Bletzinger** moved to approve the August 12th, 2026 Briya Board meeting minutes; **Geovanna Izurieta** seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
 - Roll call:
 - Alejandra Sandoval – yes
 - Doris Garay – yes
 - Dimelsa Zelaya – yes
 - Bill Bletzinger – yes
 - Michael Baer – yes
 - Geovanna Izurieta – yes
 - Carolina Hernandez – yes
 - Brenda Martinez – yes

3. Director's Report

- Fundraising update (presented by Camilla & Amy)
 - Amy and Camilla are spearheading a development initiative this year, focusing on individual giving as a priority.
 - Camilla is working on tracking donor engagement to help us intentionally cultivate donors.
 - Annual fund
 - Many people are attracted to Briya's mission and community. The annual fund communicates the fact that we need these donors to be part of our sustainable funding. We are giving donors the opportunity to connect directly with our core programming and mission.
 - The "Lighting the Way" annual fund in honor of Charlotte Baer will be launched on November 12th. Michael is offering a \$5,000 gift match for those who give to the fund.
 - This is an opportunity for the board to support: consider inviting a friend/potential Briya supporter, and/or contribute to the annual fund match incentive.
 - Geovanna thanked Camilla and Amy for revamping this fundraising effort and emphasized the importance of financial sustainability and expanding knowledge of Briya's mission. She asked all board members to consider supporting this annual fund-- it's important to show that the board supports this effort 100%.
 - Amy and Camilla thanked Michael and emphasized how special it is for Briya to get to honor Charlotte.
- Enrollment update (presented by Ivana)
 - Briya made count. The final enrollment was 800. Briya will be paid for between 774-800. The final number will be announced in December.
 - Doris shared appreciation for the outreach and registration team's every effort to make this happen despite all the challenges.

4. **Development Committee**

- New Finance Committee member: Betsy Garcia
 - Betsy used to be a volunteer at Briya and now works for a financial team in the education world. She will join the finance committee.
- Academic Committee member: Sama Sabihi
 - Sama comes from the Aspen Institute and is working on her master's degree in social work. She is doing a placement at Briya and has been serving on the Academic Committee.
- Board member nomination: David Conrad
 - Today is Michael's last board meeting. The board is grateful to him for finishing up Charlotte's term.
 - David Conrad was an advisor and architect for many Briya buildings. He is retiring and has been such an amazing support for Briya. Christie believes he would be an excellent candidate for the board.
 - Bill voiced his support for David to become a board member.

- **Bill Bletzinger** moved to approve the David Conrad as a new Briya board member; **Brenda Martinez** seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

- Roll call:

- Alejandra Sandoval – yes
- Doris Garay – yes
- Dimelsa Zelaya – yes
- Bill Bletzinger – yes
- Michael Baer – yes
- Geovanna Izurieta – yes
- Carolina Hernandez – yes
- Brenda Martinez – yes

- Board training updated information

- The deadline for required board trainings has been extended, and they have opened more options.
- We are still getting approval, but it looks like PCSB will approve the ability for board members to receive training during the April board retreat. Instead of having to do virtual training, board members will just need to come to the retreat in April and that will suffice as training that we need on an annual basis. DC Charter Alliance will be providing training at the retreat.
- If for some reason anyone can't go to the retreat in April, then board members still need to do the online trainings individually.

5. **Finance Committee** - reported by Joel Goering

- July/August monthly financials

- We did meet count, which is important because PPF is our main source of revenue. We have incorporated these early results into our forecast.
- We are going to be paid on a range of 774-800 students (this number will be finalized in the coming months). We have budgeted for the most conservative number of 774.
- Joel shared charts with more detail about budgeted and forecasted numbers.
- Geovanna shared that the finance committee carefully reviewed these numbers and that this is a good start for Briya.

- Reserves policy

- In DC there has been increased scrutiny regarding the reserves that are held by public charter schools. This is something a lot of schools are experiencing. There is a perception that schools have too much reserves and are not using cash for the mission of the schools.
- We have had many conversations about why charter schools need reserves.
 - Charter schools do not have the same backing if there is unforeseen emergencies or contingencies.
 - Charter schools need reserves to fund our own buildings, whether that means purchasing, refinancing debt, or if we missed

enrollment then we need to have some cushion to be able to deal with that.

- This perception results in reduced facilities allotment for schools. There is an increased need to articulate how schools are managing money.
- DC Charter School Alliance and Partnership for DC School Excellence have developed a sample reserves policy. They recommend individual charter LEAs customize and adopt a version of it prior to the next budget cycle.
 - Briya's finance committee has discussed an initial draft of a reserves policy and will present a final version for the full board's consideration and vote at the December board meeting.
 - This policy will define the purpose, target level(s) and permitted uses of the reserves, along with the board's oversight role. There will be a distinction made between "operating reserves" and "capital reserves".
- Briya has two long-term leases (FT and Shepherd) and short-term leases (GA and Ontario). We have been trying to get a permanent facility, and this is still the main priority for this money. Charter schools that have been active this long have needed to build a reserve to afford facilities.

6. Academic Committee

- School leader performance review (will be discussed in executive session)

7. Announcements/New Business

- 2gen Celebration November 12th
 - All board members are invited; please RSVP.
- Staff Holiday Party December 12th

8. Executive Session

Pursuant Chapter 5, Subchapter IV, Section 2-575 of the Code of the District of Columbia, the Briya Board of Trustees will enter into closed session for reason 10, "to discuss the appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, performance evaluation, compensation, discipline, demotion, removal, or resignation of government appointees, employees, or officials, or of public charter school personnel."

- ***Geovanna Izurieta*** moved to enter closed session for the reason listed on the agenda; ***Michael Baer*** seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
 - Roll call:
 - Doris Garay – yes
 - Dimelsa Zelaya – yes
 - Bill Bletzinger – yes
 - Michael Baer – yes
 - Geovanna Izurieta – yes
 - Carolina Hernandez – yes
 - Brenda Martinez – yes

- ***Bill Bletzinger*** moved to approve the School Leader Evaluation and authorize the executive director's salary and service award as presented; ***Geovanna Izurieta*** seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
 - Roll call:
 - Doris Garay – yes
 - Dimelsa Zelaya – yes
 - Bill Bletzinger – yes
 - Michael Baer – yes
 - Geovanna Izurieta – yes
 - Carolina Hernandez – yes
 - Brenda Martinez – yes

9. **Adjournment**

- The meeting adjourned at 7:41pm.