

Monday, March 31, 2025

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF
THE BRIDGEPORT BOARD OF EDUCATION,
held March 31, 2025, at Harding High School,
379 Bond Street, Bridgeport, Connecticut.

The meeting was called to order at 6:32 p.m.

Present were Chair Jennifer Perez, Vice Chair Joseph Sokolovic, Secretary Albert Benejan Grajales, Willie Medina, Andre Woodson, Akisha Cassermere*, Robert Traber, Maritza Estremera Jimenez, and Christine Baptiste-Perez.*

*remote participation

Interim Supt. Royce Avery was present

The agenda item was the second full board training session facilitated by CABE. Ms. Perez said the topics to be covered were board self-assessment and policy and bylaws.

Ms. Perez noted the board self-assessment qualified for executive session.

Jody Goeler and Nick Caruso of CABE were present.

Mr. Caruso said because the state has required the board training, after discussion, it was his recommendation to do the self-assessment in public.

Mr. Caruso said the state instructions seemed to indicate they would reassess periodically improvement on the board. He said the state would like to see performance goals based on the assessment. He said his goal tonight was to identify some problems and develop an action plan.

Mr. Caruso said Dr. Goeler had spent a lot of time digging into the board's policies and bylaws.

There was a discussion of the future sessions of board training. Mr. Traber and Mr. Sokolovic expressed concern about the lack of urban experience of the members of the state technical team.

There was a discussion of the board's self-assessment. Advocacy and funding were a topic of discussion.

Mr. Caruso said the sense he got from the state is that they don't have the confidence in the board to fix things in the way they need to be fixed.

There was a discussion of the current state of the district and decisions that were made in the past.

Mr. Caruso said he believed there was a lack of trust in the superintendency in Bridgeport over the years.

Dr. Avery discussed the trust issue that has existed in the Bridgeport district. He described his experiences with the board and the state technical assistance team.

Dr. Avery suggested the board develop a comprehensible budget plan for the next five years. Mr. Caruso said the state's expectation is to develop a plan or processes for managing the budget more effectively.

Dr. Avery suggested as additional priorities student achievement and support for social-emotional wellness for all school community matters.

Mr. Caruso said we've heard over and over about bylaws, meeting norms, and protocols.

Mr. Caruso said he would take what we've heard and share it back with the board. He said he would like to tell the state that the board is happy with the direction they're going in, but they acknowledge there is more work to be done, and the development of plans to do that will be forthcoming.

Dr. Goeler discussed board policies, including mandated policies that are not in the current version of the board's policies. He said CAFE model policies had been provided to the superintendent. He said the board had 23 missing mandated policies and 23 mandated policies that need updating.

There was a discussion of the process around board policies and the committee structures for the board.

There was a discussion of the sequencing of the presentation of board policies to the board.

Mr. Traber moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Benejan Grajales and unanimously approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:54 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John McLeod