

MINUTES OF THE  
DECEMBER 5, 2024, MEETING  
OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF  
UNIVERSITY PREP CHARTER SCHOOL

VIDEO CONFERENCE: ZOOM MEETING ID: 815 5002 2302 Passcode: BRONX

A meeting of the Board of Trustees (the “Board”) of the University Prep Charter Schools (the “Schools”) was held on Thursday, December 5, 2024, remotely via video conferencing. Trustees Steve Barr, Judy Bergtraum, Justin Pasternak, Burt Sacks and Miguel Suarez were in attendance. Also in attendance were executive director Andrea d’Amato; principals Andrew Ayers and David Patterson; assistant principals Nathaniel Bouie, Donial Rodriguez, and Denise Rodriguez, Svetlana Gnesia of CBSM, and Diane Peete of Future Is Now Schools.

Judy Bergtraum presided and called the meeting to order at 5:32 pm (Eastern Daylight Time).

The board meeting agenda was adopted with flexibility.

The minutes of the October 2024 board meeting were approved as presented.

**Executive Director Report**

Interim Director, Steve Barr, provided the board with an update on the priorities of increasing teacher voice and teacher support at the middle school. Teachers with less than five years of experience are being paired with a mentor teacher.

After the first of the year, a search for an executive director will begin.

All board members are invited to the annual holiday party on December 13, 2024.

**UP High School Update**

Principal Andrew Ayers provided the Board with an update on activities at the high school.

The University Preparatory Charter High School (UPCHS) sports team had a great fall season. The flag football team and boys’ soccer team both won their respective championships. The cheerleaders came in second at a local cheerleading tournament and are preparing for an upcoming tournament on Saturday, December 7, 2025. The girls’ volleyball team is in the competitive Public Schools Athletic League (PSAL) where they made it into the semifinals. The team continues to get better and received great exposure competing in the league.

For the first time in the school’s history, we were unable to play the annual staff versus students football game due to rain. The school pivoted playing indoor volleyball where the staff won. More than 200 students attended as observers. It was a great event for student engagement.

The Community Outreach committee annual Thanksgiving Drive raised \$2500 to give \$100 gift cards to families. The Girls and Boys clubs are coordinating additional drives to provide resources to families.

The winter concert was expanded as a Hallway of Experiences where different genres were played in the classrooms.

The upcoming parent teacher conferences will be held the week of December 9, 2024, through December 13, 2024. Parents can opt to attend in-person or virtually.

UPCHS has the largest College Now cohort and the largest National Honors Society cohort. In large part due to the more students on honor roll. The

In January, Dr. Bouie, assistant principal, will take students snowboarding for the fourth year in a row due to a grant from the Share Winter Foundation.

### **UP Middle School Update**

Principal David Patterson and Director of Operations Jahmal Carter provided the Board with an update.

Our UPrep middle school community has had many accomplishments in the past couple of weeks. On election day our PD committee, composed of Mr. Houle and Ms. Gonzalez, led a strong Professional Development for our teachers on Nearpod and Canva, which are tools that teachers can use in their classrooms to increase student engagement. We also had Ms. Gallo, our ENL teacher, lead a session on strategies for all our teachers to be able to support our ENL students, since this year we have a record high number of English Language Learners. Since then, we have seen teachers implementing what they learned on this Professional Development Day to improve their practice and to try something different. According to the feedback received from the PD committee, teachers enjoyed learning from their peers and found the information shared useful. We are looking forward to more PDs led by our teachers on future PD days.

In sports, Coach Rezcka and Coach James led our soccer team through a great season where they made it to the playoffs but sadly their journey ended there. Our cheerleaders led by Ms. Britton and Ms. Void have had an amazing start to the year and won their first championship at their first tournament and are ready to win another one this weekend. They are three weeks away from traveling to the Cheez-It Bowl in Florida and performing on live television on New Year's Eve. They have fundraised diligently to go on this adventure. Our chess team also did well in their previous tournament. They earned 4th place out of 22 schools. Thank you to Ms. Jackson for working diligently with our chess team. Our boys' and girls' basketball teams are getting ready to kickoff the season and will be hosting their first games next week.

This past month our sixth graders participated in a community field trip to Chelsea Piers. They were able to engage in different activities such as gymnastics, soccer, dodgeball, batting cages, basketball, and other games. While there they had the opportunity to get a sneak peak of Olympic medalist Suni Lee warming up for her practice.

In addition, we went on our yearly trip to Boundless Adventures, where our 5th and 6th graders completed high ropes and ziplined. They supported each other throughout the challenges and many of them felt great satisfaction once they faced their fears. The students felt fulfilled and greatly accomplished when they completed an obstacle course. Before Thanksgiving break we went on our Scholar's Trip to Dave and Busters for all students who had grades of 80 and above in all their classes, met their AR goal, and had less than ten demerits.

Coinciding with current events, we also held our student government elections. Our students campaigned with lovely posters and students voted democratically. Now that we have all our officers in place our SGO is currently planning spirit week and future school events. Earlier this week we had picture day. Students were able to take individual photos and class photos. We held a four day dental clinic where about 100 students were seen by the dentist. The Organization Just Smile complimented our students and our school for helping them run a smooth and successful dental visit. Next week the program Eye on Education will be at our school and many of our students will be receiving free eye exams along with a free pair of glasses if the optometrist prescribes them.

In preparation for the transition of the class of 2029 to the high school, on the 13th of November we had our 8th graders visit the high school. We had them meet the teachers and experience some of the classes they would be taking as high school students.

In preparation for the holidays, next week we will be hosting a holiday spirit week, and our Student Government Organization will host a dance next Friday for their peers. Everyone is looking forward to the holiday break.

### **Budget and Finance**

Burt Sacks provided an update that the schools' Budget Committee continues to meet monthly. Burt offered commendations to Svetlana Gnesina of CBSM as a great resource to the committee as well as being very knowledgeable about University Prep finances and

Svetlana Gnesina of Charter Business School Management provided the trustees with an update on the system's financial health. As of October 30, 2024, projected net operating revenues are \$25,437,615 million, projected expenses are \$25,085,990. The annual surplus is projected at \$351,625. The current balance sheet shows \$8.6 million cash in the bank. The system has a very healthy cash flow with 120 days of operating expenses on hand, the standard is 90 days. The fiscal reports include cash flow projections through year-end. The schools have higher enrollment than projected including higher SpEd enrollment with a positive impact on revenues. Additionally, the financial health of the system has benefited with interest earned on monies placed in CDs.

### **Executive Session**

The board of trustees moved into an executive session to discuss personnel matters.

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon duly made, seconded, and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 6:25 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Judy Bergtraum, Chairman of the Meeting