BRIDGEPORT BOARD OF EDUCATION
AGENDA OF REGULAR MEETING OF THE BRIDGEPORT BOARD OF EDUCATION

MONDAY, MAY 11, 2026 - 6:30 PM
BRIDGEPORT REGIONAL AQUACULTURE SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION CENTER
60 ST. STEPHENS ROAD
BRIDGEPORT, CT 06605

1. **Call to Order**
2. **Pledge of Allegiance**
3. **Roll Call**
4. **Student Representative Reports**
5. **Public Comment**
6. **Chairperson's Report**
   Update on the Board of Education's Progress to State Intervention
7. **Committee Reports/Referrals**
   Operations Committee
   Instruction and Support Services Committee
   Policy Committee
   Ad Hoc Committees
   CABE Report
8. **Superintendent's Report**
9. **Consent Agenda**
   a. Approval of the April 20, 2026, Special Meeting Minutes
   b. Approval of the April 27, 2026, Regular Meeting Minutes
10. **Old Business**
11. **New Business**
    a. Bridgeport Caribe Youth Leader Presentation
    b. * Request for Approval of the Workers' Compensation Settlement with D. Jasko
    c. * Request for Settlement Approval with S. Graham-Hunt
    d. Approval to Suspend By-Law 9310 for the Purpose of Immediate Implementation of the Following:
       1. Administration 2000 Series Policy
       2. Board By-Laws 9000 Series

    e. Approval and Immediate Implementation of the Following:
       1. Administration 2000 Series Policy
       2. Board By-Law 9000 Series
12. **Additional Public Comment (As Needed)**
13. **Adjourn**

Monday, April 20, 2026

MINUTES OF THE VIRTUAL SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BRIDGPEORT BOARD OF EDUCATION, held April 20, 2026, via Microsoft Teams, Bridgeport, Connecticut.

Present were Chair Jennifer Perez, Vice Chair Joseph Sokolovic, Secretary Maritza Estremera Jimenez, Willie Medina, Andre Woodson, and Willie Medina. Robert Traber, Lamond Daniels, Albert Benejan Grajales, and Jowanne Burks-Jennings joined subsequently as noted.

Interim Supt. Royce Avery was present.

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 p.m.

The agenda item was an amendment to the 2026-27 capital plan to add a pool complex at Central High School presentation by Shipman & Goodwin.

Jorge Garcia, chief operating officer, said the proposal is to include a $2,328,346 city match, which includes a philanthropist donation of roughly eight to nine million dollars. He displayed slides with depictions of the project.

Mr. Garcia said there has been a modification as a result of conversations with the donor and the architect. He said a splash pad has been eliminated and bleachers were added.

Mr. Traber joined the meeting.

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Mr. Garcia said there are two multipurpose rooms in the facility. He added that bleachers are often used at outdoor pools.

In response to a question, Mr. Garcia said a black line on the drawing was a proposed fence. He said there was a potential of keeping the softball field on the site. He said the project would be brought back to the board for review if approval is granted. He added that the building includes a mechanical room, pool equipment room, a first-aid room, bathroom, showers, a concession, a custodial closet, and lockers.

In response to a question, Mr. Garcia said substituting the bleachers is to encourage competitive events, the liability issues with the splash pad, and the smaller footprint.

In response to a question, Mr. Garcia said ideally the facility would be available to all the district's schools. He said the donor's passion is outdoor pools. He explained that Monroe and Trumbull have outdoor pools. He said the pool would be heated, and usage would likely be May through September. Mr. Traber said usage in other months would be possible.

Mr. Daniels joined the meeting.

In response to a question, Mr. Garcia said the district's students would have priority access during the day and for

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school-sponsored activities. He said MOUs will cover the concerns raised by Mr. Sokolovic.

Mark Anastasi of the city attorney's office said a project of this magnitude with a third party would be covered by a formalized legal document. He said the competitive season for school swimming should be investigated. Mr. Garcia said there is a lot of programming through the year that should result in usage every month the pool is open. Atty. Anastasi said the competitive swimming season may be during the winter. Mr. Garcia noted the JFK pool was completely remodeled and is Olympic-sized.

Mr. Sokolovic said we must ensure removing the softball field does not affect any Title IX issues in the district. He said the project should not limit the authority of the board in care and control of our facilities.

Nestor Nkwo, chief financial officer, said the capital plan is a five-year plan. He said the amendment is to 2026-27, which should be specified.

Ms. Burks-Jennings and Mr. Benejan Grajales joined the meeting.

In response to a question, Mr. Garcia said the request was to authorize further exploration of the agreement. Mr. Traber said we will need to resolve details subsequently.

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Atty. Anastasi said there was no harm in acting in a timely manner, but it will not preclude the board from full authority over the contract terms.

In response to a question, Dr. Avery said he was excited about the project.

Mr. Sokolovic moved "*to amend the 2026-27 capital plan to include an aquatics facility at Central High School*." The motion was seconded by Mr. Medina.

In response to a question, Mr. Garcia said the donor was on board with the project. He said there would be a presentation to the City Council on April 25th.

The motion was unanimously approved.

Mr. Medina moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Sokolovic and unanimously approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John McLeod

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Monday, April 27, 2026

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE BRIDGPEORT BOARD OF EDUCATION, held April 27, 2026, at Bridgeport Regional Aquaculture Science and Technology Education Center, 60 St. Stephens Road, Bridgeport, Connecticut.

Present were Chair Jennifer Perez, Vice Chair Joseph Sokolovic, Secretary Maritza Estremera Jimenez, Albert Benejan Grajales, Willie Medina, and Robert Traber, Andre Woodson*, Lamond Daniels*, and Jowanne Burks-Jennings* joined the meeting subsequently as noted.

*Remote participation **began the meeting remote and subsequently arrived in person as noted.

Interim Supt. Royce Avery was present.

The meeting was called to order at 6:33 p.m.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORTS:

Shannoy Fraser of Harding High highlighted the spring dance; parent report-card conferences; an incoming student night; senior pictures; teacher appreciation videos; and the renaming of the auditorium.

Mr. Woodson* joined the meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

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Lisa Balzano, a faculty member of Bridgeport Military Academy (BMA) and a delegate at large to the Bridgeport Education Association, expressed deep concern regarding the uncertainty surrounding the location of the Bridgeport Military Academy for the upcoming school year. She said this has led to disruption and stress on students, staff, and families. he described the many graduates who are serving in the armed forces, law enforcement, and fire departments. She described the school as a pipeline for service, leadership and pride for the city. She added that the school has had to move three times since 2013.

Arun Kadam, a faculty member at Bridgeport Military Academy, said there has been no communication since September regarding the location for the upcoming school year. He said as of now the students and families at BMA are assuming they will be located at Fairchild Wheeler next year, but there have been no communications. He described the achievements of students in the school and in competitions.

Mr. Traber arrived at the meeting in person.

Travis Brewster, the senior naval science instructor at BMA, said the navy side of the school was the largest pathway. He said the majority of uniforms and other items were provided by the Navy since 2019, and he described the financial contributions by the Navy to the school. He said there was the danger of the loss of funding if

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enrollment drops. He said a definite decision was needed to make a coherent plan to execute the relocation of the school.

Vanessa Arroyo read a letter on behalf of Capt. William Glass Jr. (retired). Mr. Glass said he began in 2013 as a faculty member at BMA. He said he witnessed the transformation of students at the school. He said the school has strengthened since he left and the Junior ROTC program achieved full funding status from the Navy.

CHAIR REPORT:

Ms. Perez said the City Council hearing on education funding was held last week. She thanked cabinet members, staff members, and students for coming out in support.

Ms. Perez said the board has issued an RFP for a superintendent search, and the search committee will meet in a few weeks to discuss candidates.

Mr. Sokolovic asked why the agenda was so scant, given the size of the district, and that there was basically nothing to talk about. Ms. Perez noted there was a budget update on the agenda today. She noted committees had not met in the last two weeks.

Ms. Perez acknowledged the retirement of a staff member, Ben Hatchett, the custodian at the Aquaculture School, who has been in the district for 25 years and for the last 23

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years at Aqua. She said this was Mr. Hatchett's last week in the district, and she thanked him for his years of service and keeping the school clean.

Mr. Traber described an incident where Mr. Hatchett assisted him.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Ms. Perez said the Operations Committee would meet on May 6th.

Mr. Traber referred an item for the board to get a report at meetings on new hires, resignations and retirements.

Mr. Traber said the Instruction and Support Services Committee did not meet due to a conflict with Bridgeport Day in Hartford. He said the special education reorganization will be looked at in the next meeting.

Mr. Benejan Grajales referred an item on PAC/PTSO budgets.

Mr. Woodson said the Policy Committee will meet this Wednesday with CABE representatives regarding the 2000 Series.

Ms. Burks-Jennings* joined the meeting.

Mr. Benejan Grajales said the Ad Hoc Facilities Master Plan Committee will meet on Thursday.

Mr. Daniels* joined the meeting.

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Mr. Medina said he shared a letter with Dr. Avery and Ms. Perez months ago about naming the gymnasium at Bassick High. Ms. Perez said this could go through the Operations Committee.

Mr. Traber said the Ad Hoc Committee for Advocacy has been very busy. There was an extraordinarily successful meeting with the legislative delegation. He said it is clear that the governor and legislative leadership are scrambling because they're feeling pressure from Bridgeport and other cities. He said there was a good hearing before the City Council, with a good response. He urged people to continue to contact the governor and the legislative leaders.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT:

Dr. Avery said the advocacy was strong and we need to keep that effort going.

Dr. Avery described parent workshops that were launched this month. He said SBAC and NGSS testing began today. He said Bridgeport Learning Center was recognized by the state for reducing chronic absenteeism.

Dr. Avery said playgrounds are pretty much complete at Read and Madison. Board approval has been received for work at Dunbar, Hooker, and Park City Magnet.

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Principal Chris Johnson of the IT School at Fairchild Wheeler described students who won an award from the National Council for Women in Technology.

The next agenda item was a budget update.

Dr. Avery said there are a lot of moving parts behind the scenes on finances. Nestor Nkwo, chief financial officer, said the current number is between funding of $120 and $170 million statewide, which would mean between $6.6 million and $16.6 million for Bridgeport, but there is another pot of money legislators are working on. He said he understood Hartford would be taken care of first, and Bridgeport would be next.

Mr. Traber described the figures that has been discussed in the press. Dr. Avery said as soon as we can confirm numbers, they will be passed onto the board.

In response to a question, Mr. Nkwo said we have mapped out four plans for potential budget shortfalls. Mr. Nkwo requested board members submit suggestions for possible budget savings. Mr. Sokolovic said traditionally board members were presented with a menu of potential cuts presented by the professionals as the least damaging.

Dr. Avery said his job was to advise the board on these matters, which will be presented when the numbers are final. He said anything less than $45 million in funding will require presenting plans.

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Ms. Perez said options at $23 million were presented to the Operations Committee. Mr. Nkwo said those cuts were not pretty.

Dr. Avery said there is work with the state technical assistance teams to look at reductions within the system, which total about five to six million.

In response to a question, Dr. Avery said we're also waiting on the $5 million previously mentioned. He said he would be meeting with Dr. Hughes of the state on Friday and would report back.

CONSENT AGENDA:

The sole item was approval of the April 13, 2026, Regular Meeting Minutes.

Mr. Traber moved "*to approve the consent agenda*." The motion was seconded by Ms. Estremera Jimenez and unanimously approved.

Mr. Benejan Grajales asked for a moment of silence for the passing of Jorge Garcia's grandmother.

Mr. Medina moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Sokolovic and unanimously approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:31 p.m.

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Respectfully submitted,

John McLeod

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