

**Minutes of the Regular Meeting of  
The Equity Project (TEP) Charter School Board of Trustees  
January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2026**

The **199<sup>th</sup>** regular meeting of the Board of Trustees of The Equity Project Charter School was held on **January 12<sup>th</sup>** at The Equity Project Charter School's Middle School location **at 153 Sherman Avenue, New York, NY 10034** pursuant to due notice to Trustees via electronic mail sent on 1/7/26. Public notice was posted on TEP's website at [www.tepcharter.org](http://www.tepcharter.org).

**The following Trustees were present:**

Andrew Buher, Sean Juan, Anyeli Matos, Jennifer Mulhern, Shelly Gupta  
joined via video conference from the following public locations posted in advance on TEP's  
website:

630 Park Avenue  
Brielle, NJ 08730

55 Hudson Yards  
New York, NY

1350 Massachusetts Avenue  
Richard A. and Susan F. Smith Campus Center, Cambridge, MA 02138

253 N Mountain Avenue  
NJ 07043

50 Valparaiso Ave  
Atherton, CA 94027

**The following staff members were present:**

Casey Ash, Aaron Villela, Kisis Cruz-Penalba, and Sophia Senhaji

Meeting called to order at 5:32 pm.

## **Meeting Agenda and Notes:**

### **1. Introducing TEP's new CFO!**

Kisis Cruz-Penalba, TEP's new Chief Financial Officer, joined her first Board meeting after her start at TEP on January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2026. Mrs. Cruz-Penalba introduced herself to the team and provided insight into her professional experience, referencing her specific background in finance in the nonprofit education sector for over 15 years. Mrs. Cruz-Penalba expressed excitement to serve as a new member of our school community and ensure the continued financial health of the organization.

### **2. TEP 2024-25 Teacher Bonus Proposal**

Mr. Casey Ash, TEP's Principal, presented the 2024-25 Teacher Performance Bonus to the Board of Trustees. Mr. Ash reviewed the process for calculating teacher bonuses, including eligibility requirements and measurements taken to determine the bonus once eligibility is determined.

After a comprehensive overview of the Teacher Performance Bonus and space for questions from Board members, Mr. Ash proceeded with a motion for a vote to approve the teacher bonus. All board members voted to approve the Teacher Performance Bonus.

### **3. Student Spotlight**

Stella Ma, Early Childhood Director, provided insight into an individual TEP student in the 1<sup>st</sup> grade, highlighting the student's academic and social emotional growth throughout the school year. The student's family is involved in the student's growth, often sending videos of the student working on homework to Ms. Ma to capture their improvement in literacy and math throughout the year. Ms. Ma and the student's teachers also use behavioral data collected from the student's year in kindergarten to identify areas of growth and support that the student will need in the 1<sup>st</sup> grade. Ms. Ma emphasized that TEP's support system not only starts in the classroom with teachers, but with the student's family and leadership support as well.

Meeting adjourned at 5:56 pm

Minutes recorded by Jennifer Mulhern