

**Minutes of the Regular Meeting of  
The Equity Project (TEP) Charter School Board of Trustees  
February 9<sup>th</sup>, 2026**

The **200<sup>th</sup>** regular meeting of the Board of Trustees of The Equity Project Charter School was held on **February 9<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 2/6/26. 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, Brooks Clark, 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 10001

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

600 Third Avenue  
New York, NY 10016

50 Valparaiso Ave  
Atherton, CA 94027

**The following staff members were present:**

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

Meeting called to order at 5:32 pm.

## Meeting Agenda and Notes:

### 1. Q2 Financials

Mr. Casey Ash presented the Q2 financials to the Board. Mr. Ash highlighted that current financials are on track with the allocated budget for the fiscal year 2025-2026. Enrollment is positive as TEP is currently fully enrolled. Ms. Kisis Cruz, TEP's CFO, added that the variance of a handful of misclassified SPED students is being reviewed, which will positively affect the per pupil funding.

Mr. Ash also informed the Trustees that although the budget accounts for a fully staffed TEP, we are not currently staffed due to some vacancies and staff on leave, resulting in savings on the current budget. The teacher bonus, which was recently released, is also included in the budget presented.

After a comprehensive overview of Q2 financials, Mr. Ash proceeded with a motion for a vote to approve the Q2 financials.

All board members voted to approve the Q2 financials.

### 2. Staffing Updates

Mr. Ash shared that a new hire for the Data Systems & Reporting Specialist, Morgan Jackson, began his first week on January 20<sup>th</sup>. TEP is excited about the potential for him to update many of our data systems.

Mr. Ash also shared the official start of teacher hiring season. TEP will begin a new initiative of a Teacher Professional Development series hosted by leaders of each campus, available to teachers across the city that are interested in joining the TEP community.

### 3. Safeguarding Rights in Our Community

Mr. Aaron Villela, CEO, highlighted the school's ongoing efforts to safeguard the rights of the school community, especially during the recent challenging climate around immigration for many members of the community.

Mr. Villela presented the various ways in which the school leadership is reaffirming its commitment to support the safety and wellbeing of the community, including training for school leadership, training for operations and school safety personnel, written and video communications to families and staff, providing legal resources and immigration information, sharing free and accessible mental health supports, and hosting Know Your Rights trainings, in partnership with local community-based organizations.

The Board expressed appreciation for the school's deliberate support and focus on this matter.

#### 4. Student Spotlight

Mr. Harris Brown, Assistant director of the Middle School, presented on a current 8<sup>th</sup> grade student athlete's journey at TEP. This student is recognized as a campus leader and serves as captain of the boys' basketball team. The student started his basketball journey in 6<sup>th</sup> grade, and although they initially struggled, they have demonstrated significant growth, developing leadership skills, patience, and teamwork.

The student has also shown significant academic progress and has benefited from intervention programming to support his growth.

Mr. Brown also shared a video featuring the student reflecting on their growth. In his remarks, the student credited both peers and teachers for motivating him and helping him develop as a student and individual. His family remains supportive and proud of his progress.

Meeting adjourned at 5:55 pm.

Minutes recorded by Andrew Buher.