

Boston Day and Evening Academy
Board of Trustees Minutes – Board Meeting
Date: November 19, 2025
Time: 5:30-7:30pm
Location: Zoom

Attendance:

Present: J. Barry, K. Cameron, M. Goode, A. Hramiec, A. Hunter, A. Kadagathur, M. Kothandaraman, N. Peña, C. Rothfuss, A. Shabowich, C. Walkes, D. Woodberry, C. Wright

Absent: C. Hendricks, S. Hughes-Hibbert, J. Kendrick

Others in Attendance: Michelle Allman, Irma Camacho, Adrianne Level, Blaine Yesselman

Clerk: J. Kantrowitz

Documents/Exhibits Used: October 25, 2025 minutes (for review/approval); November 19, 2025 agenda for BDEA Board
Mtg 11-19-25

Call to Order and Connecting

M. Goode called the meeting to order at 5:39pm and reviewed the agenda.

Approval of Minutes

- Motion: C. Rothfuss
- Second: J. Barry
- Vote: Approved unanimously, with the condition that the October Board meeting culture discussion be noted as centered on the decision to install metal detectors at the school.

Data Review

- M. Allman presented data on demographic and academic shifts in BDEA's student population over the past decade.
- Ms. Allman highlighted that incoming students now arrive with significantly more academic credit than in prior years.
- Attendance trends were reviewed, noting that current data reflects newly enrolled students only and distinguishes between class attendance and building attendance.
- Ms. Allman reviewed trends related to student learning needs, noting higher graduation rates for students receiving special education services and a significant increase in students entering with multiple learning designations.
- The Board discussed declining entry-level literacy, clarifying that the data reflects entry assessments and increased strength in testing practice, rather than student growth at BDEA.

Key Discussion Points:

- The Board discussed declining entry-level literacy, particularly among ELL students, noting systemic inequities in prior schooling and the need to accelerate literacy development while maintaining high expectations. Trustees examined the role and limitations of the MAP Reading assessment within BDEA's competency-based model and

acknowledged the ongoing tension between standardized measures and BDEA's commitment to rigor, intellectual challenge, and student dignity.

- Board members affirmed literacy growth as a critical priority and explored strategies to strengthen instruction—including tutoring, writing supports, peer and intergenerational learning, and higher education partnerships—while recognizing the impact of COVID-related disruption, student mobility, caregiving responsibilities, and systemic inequities, and reaffirming the strengths and potential of BDEA students.

Facilities constraints were identified as a barrier to instructional effectiveness, particularly classroom size limitations. Ms. Allman reviewed accountability implications and DESE reporting requirements, noting differentiated expectations by engagement level while maintaining high standards.

BDEA Instructional Goal

- B. Yesselman presented an overview of BDEA's instructional focus for the year, informed by MAP reading data, classroom walkthroughs, and a recent Springpoint site visit. She noted that while some students score in higher national percentiles, a significant portion score below national averages, reinforcing the need to strengthen instructional practices that support literacy growth.
- B. Yesselman emphasized that this year's focus is ensuring that students carry the cognitive load of their learning, engage in productive struggle, and take greater ownership of their thinking. She outlined next steps, including continued walkthroughs, refinement of instructional practices, and alignment of professional learning to schoolwide priorities.
- She described the role of the Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) in promoting coherence across the school and supporting shared instructional practices. C. raised questions from the Humanities perspective about balancing department-specific work with schoolwide alignment. B. Yesselman clarified that while departmental expertise remains essential, the ILT focuses on consistency in core practices that support all learners.
- B. Yesselman reviewed the evolution of Professional Learning Teams (PLTs), noting that this year they are organized by department to deepen collaboration, particularly in the context of a new schedule.
- The Board discussed accountability expectations, with J. Kantrowitz noting that BDEA remains responsible for meeting DESE requirements, while A. Hunter highlighted upward trends in attendance. Trustees emphasized the importance of maintaining strong attendance expectations alongside engaging instruction and a supportive school culture.
- A. Level shared that student goal-setting has been embedded within advisory, with goals revisited throughout the trimester, and that students in BDEA 2.0 have opportunities to provide input on course offerings.
- The Board also discussed the importance of sustaining student confidence and morale, noting practices that highlight growth and support reflection even when progress is gradual.

Connections

Board members engaged in a reflective discussion in response to the question, "As we wrap up 2025, what is an important accomplishment that you are proud of?" Trustees shared personal and professional reflections.

Vote: Memoranda of Understanding (MoU A and B)

- Alison presented an overview of the Memoranda of Understanding (MoU A and MoU B), which are required under Horace Mann charter law and define BDEA's formal operating relationships with Boston Public Schools and the Boston Teachers Union. She explained that MoU A governs BDEA's relationship with the district, including budget allocation, facilities, special education services, staffing protocols, authority over graduation requirements, and the hiring and dismissal of the Head of School. MoU B, which is embedded within MoU A, defines BDEA's relationship with the union.
- Alison reviewed key updates to the MoUs, with particular focus on changes to the indemnification language. She explained that the district's position requires BDEA to indemnify BPS for certain services it provides, including services that exceed what is required under the charter statute. Alison noted that BDEA engaged independent educational legal counsel, working in collaboration with Edward M. Kennedy Academy for Health Careers and Boston Green Academy, to negotiate these terms.
- The Board revisited questions raised during the September meeting regarding insurance coverage, liability, and risk, and discussed the implications of the revised indemnification provisions. Alison shared that other Horace Mann charter schools have accepted similar terms and that acceptance of the indemnification language is required in order to continue receiving district services. She noted that the district will not make further changes to the agreements, and that both Green and EMK have approved their revised MoUs.

Voting:

- Motion: C. Rothfuss (to accept and approve the changes made to BDEA's MoU A and MoU B for charter period SY23–28)
- Second: M. Goode
- Vote: All approved
- Motion: C. Rothfuss (to resolve any future changes to MoU B via email or return to a vote at the January Board meeting)
- Second: A. Hunter
- Vote: All approved

Following Board approval, MoU A, MoU B, and the revised Mission Statement will be presented to the Boston School Committee, with a Board member accompanying Alison to support the presentation. Upon School Committee approval, the documents will be submitted to DESE for final approval.

Vote: Mission Statement

Alison provided background on the revised Mission Statement, noting that the prior mission language no longer reflected BDEA's values. The revised mission was developed with community input in 2018–19, with facilitation support from Tammy

Tai; however, there is no record of a formal Board vote at that time. Further revisions, including consideration of explicit anti-racist language, were delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Board opened the floor for questions and comments. Alisa shared feedback regarding the phrasing “help young people to build,” noting concern that it could imply students had not already built important strengths and capacities. She stated that while she wished to name this concern, it did not prevent her support of the mission.

- Vote called by: K. Cameron
- Second: C. Walkes
- Vote: All approved; motion passed unanimously

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BDEA Competency Determination

Alison reviewed changes to graduation requirements following Ballot Question 2, noting that MCAS is no longer a graduation requirement but remains part of state accountability. BDEA will define 10th-grade equivalency courses and develop a BDEA-specific Competency Determination framework, returning to the Board for a vote in January.

BDEA Committees

Alison thanked Board members for completing commitment cards and shared that she will follow up with trustees assigned to the Finance Committee, Alumni Committee, and the newly formed School Culture Committee.

New Business

Alison reviewed upcoming events, including the BDEA 2.0 Celebration of Success, Project Month, and December Symposium, followed by the winter break. January graduation will take place in the second week of January at 4:00pm. The need for a Board welcome was discussed, with Kelly identified as a potential participant.

Adjournment

- Motion: K. Cameron
- Second: M. Goode
- Vote: All approved

The meeting adjourned at 7:28pm.

