



## Governing Board

### Meeting Agenda for January 15, 2026 at 7:00pm

#### CALL TO ORDER

Call to order by Adam Caskey at 7:09 pm.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Adam Caskey, Allie Jett, Michelle Clements, and Walter Bell were present. Head of School Neal Christian, Chief Operations Officer Jerry Lashley, Associate Heads of School Jennifer Bradley and Eddie Lovett, ESOL Teacher Ms. Jaqueline Schadel, Business Manager Gregg Stevens, and Keith Perissi were also present.

Before the approval of the agenda, Mr. Christian held a brief recognition for the work of the Governing Board to express appreciation for their volunteer efforts on behalf of BIA. Mr. Christian discussed the Board's service and commitment, highlighting the Board's impact on the BIA's academic progress, staff support, and long-term stability.

#### I. Administrative Functions

- Approval of Agenda

Chairman Caskey called for a motion to Approve the Agenda

##### **Motion to Approve the Agenda**

1<sup>st</sup> – Walter Bell; 2<sup>nd</sup> – Allie Jett; Unanimous vote of those present.

- Approval of Meeting Minutes for December 10, 2025

Chairman Caskey called for a motion to approve the meeting minutes from December 10, 2025.

##### **Motion to Approve the Agenda**

1<sup>st</sup> – Allie Jett; 2<sup>nd</sup> – Walter Bell; Unanimous vote of those present.

#### II. Public Comment

The Board heard public comment from a long-serving BIA teacher, who expressed appreciation for the Board's leadership and support. She thanked the Board for the recent staff bonus and for the purchase of the Benchmark curriculum, noting the positive instructional impact of the ESOL component and the reduced instructional burden on teachers. Mr. Christian added context regarding the Board's prior discussion and investment in curriculum resources and emphasized the importance of hearing direct feedback from classroom educators.

#### III. Academic Related Report(s) – Mr. Christian

- Head of School Report

Mr. Christian presented the Head of School Report, focusing on academic performance, enrollment, and instructional initiatives. He highlighted BIA's recognition as the Georgia state champion for Vocabulary.com participation and noted that a BIA teacher ranked as the top teacher statewide on the platform. Mr. Christian then reviewed CCRPI performance, noting year-

over-year improvement across elementary and middle school grades and continued outperformance of both the state and Gwinnett County averages. While overall scores improved, he identified student readiness—particularly attendance and literacy indicators—as an area requiring continued focus, along with closing achievement gaps among student subgroups, including special education and ESOL populations.

Mr. Christian emphasized significant middle school gains, attributing improvement to instructional consistency, targeted intervention programs, and staffing stability. He highlighted the success of double-dose math and ELA interventions and early remedial supports designed to prevent unnecessary referrals to special education. He also reported strong outcomes in accelerated coursework, with multiple eighth-grade students earning high school credit in math, science, ELA, and Spanish.

Regarding enrollment, Mr. Christian reported 513 enrolled students as of December, noting that January marks the final enrollment window for the school year. He discussed long-term enrollment strategy, including increased focus on early learning and the potential academic benefits of expanding pre-K pathways.

Mr. Christian also provided an update on behalf of the academic committee. Mr. Christian reviewed assessment data from Write Score, MAP benchmarks, and Beacon assessments. He explained recent changes to Georgia ELA standards and how those changes affect score interpretation across grade levels. While benchmark scores remain intentionally rigorous, the committee emphasized the importance of tracking growth trends rather than raw scores.

Mr. Christian reviewed MTSS data, staff attendance metrics, and accountability systems tied to performance-based bonuses. He also highlighted student engagement initiatives, including literacy competitions, math contests, and character education themes. The academic update concluded with a review of upcoming assessments, gifted testing, and continued efforts to strengthen both academic rigor and student support systems.

#### **IV. Finance Report(s) – Mr. Stevens**

- **Monthly Reports**

Mr. Stevens presented the financial report for the period ending November 2025. He reviewed cash flow trends, noting a temporary decline in cash balances driven by several planned expenditures, including curriculum purchases, playground improvements, and staff bonuses. Mr. Stevens emphasized that while cash balances were lower than recent months, the school remains financially healthy.

Mr. Stevens reviewed balance sheet trends, daily operating expense data, and the impact of benefits costs. He explained that elevated benefit expenses reflected the final reconciliation of the school's prior self-funded health plan and that the transition to a fully insured model is expected to provide more predictable costs moving forward. He reported that projected health insurance expenses under the new plan are significantly lower than what would have been expected under the prior model.

The Board discussed one-time versus recurring expenditures, with emphasis on properly planning for technology refresh cycles, curriculum replacements, and other operational necessities within future budgets. Mr. Stevens confirmed that the school is still projecting a positive financial outcome for the year, though with narrower margins than in prior years, reflecting a strategic decision to reinvest resources into programs, staffing, and student support.

- Finance Committee Highlights and Requests (Minutes Attached)

Mr. Stevens summarized recent Finance Committee discussions, including the need for a revised budget reflecting updated benefit costs and state funding adjustments. He noted anticipated state budget items, including potential one-time salary increases and security grant funding, and advised that these items will be incorporated into upcoming budget revisions presented to the Board.

## **V. Operations Report(s) – Mr. Lashley**

- Chief Operations Officer Report

Mr. Lashley presented the operations report, beginning with enrollment and staffing updates. He reported that the school is fully staffed following the addition of several instructional and support personnel and noted that intent-to-return letters will be issued to staff as part of planning for the upcoming school year.

Mr. Lashley reviewed the development of operational dashboards and key performance indicators, including attendance, enrollment, staffing, facilities, and technology metrics. He discussed efforts to improve data tracking through Monday.com dashboards and outlined plans to refine reporting over time.

He provided updates on school nutrition operations, including outstanding family meal balances and ongoing challenges with the current meal management system. Mr. Lashley reported progress toward improving system access and noted that a transition to a new platform is planned for the next school year.

Facilities, safety, and technology updates included prioritization of security upgrades, evaluation of vendors, and development of multi-year lifecycle plans for technology and facilities investments. Mr. Lashley emphasized a focus on proactive planning to reduce emergency expenditures and improve long-term cost control.

## **VI. Consultants' Report(s) – Ed Innovation Partners**

- Ed Innovation Partners

The Board received updates related to consulting support, including preparation for the upcoming strategic retreat. Planning efforts are focused on strategic priorities, capital needs, and alignment between academic, operational, and financial goals.

## **VII. Old Business**

- Strategic Planning Update

The Board discussed preparations for the February strategic retreat, including refinement of strategic priorities, capital planning, and alignment of resources. Leadership emphasized the importance of coordinating academic growth, facilities planning, and financial sustainability within a unified strategic framework. No additional dates were scheduled.

- MEBUS Integration Update

Mr. Perissi provided an update regarding the integration of the Music Education and Business program (MEBUS). Mr. Perissi reported on the continued development of the MEBUS program and related marketing and instructional initiatives. Leadership highlighted strong student interest, positive early outcomes, and the role of targeted marketing and partnerships in supporting program growth.

## **VIII. Executive Session (if required)**

Chairman Caskey called for a motion to enter into executive session to discuss personnel and real estate.

**Motion to Enter into Executive Session to Discuss Personnel and Real Estate**

1<sup>st</sup> – Walter Bell; 2<sup>nd</sup> – Allie Jett; Unanimous vote of those present.

At approximately 8:32, Chairman Caskey called for a motion to exit executive session.

**Motion to Exit Executive Session**

1<sup>st</sup> – Michelle Clements; 2<sup>nd</sup> – Allie Jett; Unanimous vote of those present.

**IX. Required Actions following Executive Session**

There were no actions following Executive Session. At approximately 8:34, Chairman Caskey called for a motion to adjourn.

**Motion to Adjourn**

1<sup>st</sup> – Michelle Clements; 2<sup>nd</sup> – Allie Jett; Unanimous vote of those present.

**X. Next Regular Meeting Date: December 11, 2025**

**ADJOURNMENT**