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Board of Trustees Meeting October 26, 2026 (Virtual)
Marion P. Thomas Charter High School of Culinary and Performing Arts
125 Sussex Avenue, Newark, NJ 07103

October 26, 2026 | 6:00 PM ET
Zoom:
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87205682710?pwd=dWh4bE5qWCtkWk9PcThPSWdLbVZZUT09

1. CALL TO ORDER – Open Public Meetings Act - 6:24 PM
   - The New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act ("Act") was enacted to ensure the right of the public to have advance notice of, and to attend meetings of public bodies at which any business affecting their interests is discussed or acted upon. In accordance with the provisions of this Act, the Marion P Thomas Charter School Board of Trustees has caused notice of this meeting to be advertised by having the date, time, and place there of posted on the district's website (www.mptcs.org), in the office of the Clerk of the City of Newark, and was published in the Star-Ledger in June 2026.

2. ROLL CALL

Board Member	Present	Absent	Board Member	Present	Absent
Briana Gilchrist	☑	☐	Toni Ince	☐	☑
Julio Valdivieso	☑	☐	Daryl Stewart	☑	☐
Allan Boomer	☑	☐	Kristine Baffo	☑	☐
Anthony Covington	☑	☐	Andre Speight	☑	☐
Vincent Rouse	☐	☑	Sha'Dira Slater	☐	☑
Dr. Princess Towe	☐	☑			

Non-Voting Board Members Present	
MaLiyah E. Griffiths (Board Secretary/Administrator)	Tina Jalloh (Board Attorney)
Angela Mincy, Chief School Administrator/Superintendent	Rick Pressler (School Business Administrator)

**: Motion Seconded

3. CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE
   - Chairman Gilchrist gave an update.

4. SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE
   - Ms. Mincy and team gave a presentation update.

6. COMMITTEE REPORTS

   Operations & Finance Committee
   - Good afternoon, good evening. I apologize for not being in person today. I was actually at the board retreat all weekend, and I just came down with a cold afterwards, so I apologize for that. I'll be brief, and I'll walk through our ops and finance Meeting Notes. First, we got… we discussed enrollment. I think we got a really thorough enrollment update from Mr. Shankar today. At the time, our K-12 enrollment was 1,104 students. And we were above the variance floor of 1,045, and just above the budgeted goal of 1,100 students. And we were aiming for our stretch goal of 1160. I'd also like to remind everyone that our state-approved charter maximum capacity is 1,950 students across, pre-K through 12, and we're currently only, kind of hoping to get to the 1,250 level, and we're… at the time, we were at about 1214, so we're just slightly off of what our goal is, but there's still opportunity in the future, maybe not this year, but future years, to expand our enrollment. Other things we talked about, we talked about student retention. We talked about the 311 new students at the time who enrolled in the village. We talked about withdrawals, and then we moved on to talk about technology. So, within technology, Mr. Avery, discussed the incident IQ tickets. There have been 201 total tickets submitted year-to-date. These are mostly computer trouble issues. 191 have been closed, only 10 were open, and our ticket volume is down about 67% versus a year ago. That's over a two-thirds decline, and that's largely because we kept our Chromebooks in our new, there's, like, these Chromebook… I want to call them racks, for lack of a better word, but these… storage devices that are used to keep the Chromebooks maintained, keep them in the classrooms as opposed to our old processes with the Chromebooks. We also talked about… cyber attacks. We have software called CyberNut that we use that reviewed thousands of emails, and was able to identify a number of I'm gonna call it phishing attempts, while also creating micro-learning and gamified environments where our staff could learn about threats that were coming towards them. They… the system quarantined a number of emails, 3 emails got quarantined, 145 got spam, got flagged, and then there were, of course, also some, Fake DocuSigns that got deleted as well, and some false positives. other recent IT activities, including a NASA downlink event with astronaut Christopher Wallace. We also talked about supporting 12th grade NJGPA exams. We talked about a new telecom upgrade cycle we're going to be entering in the next, I'm gonna say, year or so, leveraging the federal E-rate program, we're going to be doing an upgrade of our system. We currently run a Category 1 internet-connected system that's 10 gigabytes. Across all four campuses, we're going to be upgrading that infrastructure. And most of it gets paid for by the federal grant. Moving on to facilities, we tasked, the facilities team, led by Mr. Clement Collins, with presenting us with a prioritized list of Physical plant issues, emergency things, things that need to be addressed. We went through that, but we're also going to be scheduling a call with the Friends of Marion P. Thomas, which is the organization that kind of serves as our landlord that owns the properties that our schools are housed in. The biggest priority at the time was the PAC roof. That's the Impact Academy roof, which we're gonna be

**: Motion Seconded

working on a major replacement project there in the near future. We also talked about upgrading our fire alarm system as well. And so that meeting with the SBA, with the friend that Mr. Clement Collins is going to be coming up really soon. Next, we move on to finance, and you'll see there's a number of finance reports that you'll be voting on today. You'll see our board secretary report, and you'll see that our cash balance within Fund 10 is down to about $7 million, which is a really strong cash balance, but certainly lower than what it's been in the past. We've always managed our finances really, really well. We continue to do so. We just happen to be in a low point because, you know, we pay out expenses and the school year starts, but the state and the federal grants, they don't come in until later, and so we're in a little bit of a low at this present time. But we're well above the thresholds that the state would look at and say, we are in a sound financial picture, because we're only required to have about 60 days, 2 months worth of cash on hand, and we have well in excess of that. But we are, on this committee, monitoring our budgets, monitoring our budget to actual performance, and really keeping an eye on that cash balance, as well as our fund balance. Other things we talked about, we are in the process of Compiling a new, or creating a new, updated electronic funds transfer policy. We're adding in some additional, I'm going to call it checks and balances, just to make sure that we don't have any errant wires or errant ACH transactions. And so we've started that process, and we aim to present something to the board at the next board meeting. That summarizes our Finance and Operations Committee. Thank you. (Boomer)

- Mr. Covington asked about the projected year-end cash balance after receiving the outstanding funds from the state and other entities.
  - Mr. Boomer invited Mr. Pressler and Mr. Richardson to provide additional insight. Mr. Pressler explained that approximately $3.3 million in receivables remained outstanding from the current and prior fiscal years, with additional receivables including rental income. He stated that a more accurate projection of the year-end fund balance would be available after the October 15 enrollment count and the state's updated revenue figures were received. He anticipated that the final fund balance would be relatively close to the original budget.
  - Mr. Boomer estimated that the cash balance would be between $9 million and $11 million, based on his preliminary calculations. Mr. Pressler indicated that additional financial details and more precise projections would be presented at the next Finance Committee meeting.
  - Mr. Covington emphasized the importance of understanding the $2 million range in the estimate, ensuring financial transparency, and demonstrating responsible stewardship of funds intended to support student resources.
  - Mr. Boomer reported that, despite delays associated with the transition to a new SBA, the financial books had been reconciled through September 30, and the corresponding reports would be presented for board approval.

Personnel Committee

- The personnel committee met on October 15th at 5 o'clock, and it lasted approximately an hour. We discussed different school figures, and, as a part of our monthly report, we discussed vacancies, and… different resignations and… or transitions, in terms of titles or job descriptions. Right now, our outstanding vacancies are 3. and… We moved to table review of our committee resolution, and Dr. Reese, head of HR, is going to present some goals that we have for the remainder of the year. So, all in all, That is all for the report. Again, vacancies are 3. And we had two title changes. That's my report. Thank you. (Covington)

**: Motion Seconded

Curriculum & Instruction Committee

- In the Curriculum and Instruction Committee, we met on Tuesday, October 13th. generally in that committee, we provided updates, first of all, around the district assessment calendar, as I said earlier, that all of our beginning of the year assessments are completed or are closing to completion. And in the fall, we have our NJGPA, which is the second opportunity for our High school students, particularly our 12th graders who were deemed not graduation ready to take the assessment and potentially graduate by way of the first pathway. So we had about 80 students taking that assessment in math and 36 in ELA. We should have those results toward the end of this year, so then when we know their results, if any of them move towards graduation ready, then they will be able to graduate by the first pathway. If not, then, as Mr. Shankar said earlier, we can look back at their, SAT scores, PSAT scores, MJ SLA from grade 9, and other assessments to see if they could use the second pathway, and then as a last resort, the portfolio assessment. We also talked about our kindergarten transitional program that we have in place, and that is doing very well. So those are just kind of the general items that we had discussion about in our curriculum committee. And then, in terms of the actionable items, we talked about home instruction. We have 6 total cases, one is closed, so we have 5 active. cases that are in the report, and then we talked about our field trips. We have 5 field trips that are upcoming. 3 of them are to universities, one is grant-funded to Liberty Science Center, and then the final trip is part of our middle school students having an experience here at the high school. For a day. So that was on our agenda, so the field trips are actionable items, and the home instruction were actionable items. That's the report of the Curriculum Instruction Committee. (Gamble)

Culture & Climate + Alumni Committee

- Good evening, everyone. The Culture and Climate Committee met on October 21st, and had a meeting for about an hour and 30 minutes. We talked about a myriad of things, so including a couple of policies that we're hoping to discuss during our next committee meeting, as well as a readout on the parent survey results, which was broken into two. The first portion was just general overview of some of the survey results, and next meeting, we're hoping to have more of a fulsome discussion around some of the action items that the school has with the survey results, and what they're asking of the board to due to move forward. While we did not receive the report out for the student survey, we are looking forward to having that full report out from the administration next meeting in November. We also discussed bringing on the student representative to the board, with the timeline as followed, so the eligible students will be alert of the opportunity from October 19th through 20th. The campaign will be from October 21st through 27th. There'll be a candidates forum on October 28th. Student voting starts on October 29th, and the results will be verified October 30th. So, we're approaching a lot of these timelines with the first student officer meeting being the November 3rd, School Climate Committee meeting, so we're looking forward to having that representation on the board. So in terms of the policies that we're looking to put forth, the Alumni Committee is looking to really flesh out the obligations and responsibilities so that we can better track and engage the alumni population. So, with that, what we're hoping to pass, with the committee's approval and the board's approval, next meeting would be, first, just some clarification around the role of the board committee, and Mr. Stewart has been working very well on a really comprehensive report as to how we can measure our engagement with alumni, and so we are looking forward to working with the administration to review and finalize those recommendations so that we can begin engaging our

alumni. We are also looking at putting together a grievance policy which is in accordance with state law, so that would engage or give both parents and teachers the opportunity to be an advisory committee and provide non-binding recommendations to the board for very particular grievance policies against the Charter School Act. So that… that is also something that we'll review during our next committee meeting. And lastly, we were… we took a look at the MTSS contracts, so the proposed contract is with Magnolia Group, which will help strengthen and standardize our school's identity and support students. who need additional academic, behavioral, and social-emotional assistance. So, Magnolia will first conduct a needs assessment to identify what is working, where the gaps are, and what improvements are needed. And using those findings, Magnolia will help establish a more consistent procedures across the school. So, this is mandated by law, and I just want to stress that we already have this in place, so the current resolution that we're looking at today is simply expanding that partnership so that there's greater consistency, staff clarity of responsibilities, we're strengthening our documentations, and just ensuring better monitoring of existing interventions. The funding, it's fully funded by grants, so this is not something that will be coming, or any requests coming from the finance committee or any else, so that is uncovered, so I just ask that as this comes to the floor, we vote in the affirmative for the school and administration. Thank you.(Baffo)

Safety Committee

- Hi again, everybody. So, the Safety Committee met. We actually met twice this week to get business done, so that's the level of dedication that we got going on. So one of the things that we've been trying to do is that when we approve a contract, we go back and we keep checking in every week to make sure that the thing that we bought is implemented, so we're still monitoring. Again, all of our defibrillators are currently working. We still got two more on back order, but those are… it's not impacting the safety of the school. They're additional beyond the minimum replacement one for travel. The second thing is the… you guys might remember we had the satellite imaging that'll help us with faster responses from emergency services for the safety of our students, so payment was executed, and we're waiting on the satellite imaging to come in. That's where we are with that, but we keep tracking it. No student grievances this month. On student discipline nothing significant to report on the monthly reports, other than Mr. Williams has done a great job starting to revamp that, that monthly discipline report, so that we get more exact information on what we're looking at, and we're able to track the trends more accurately. And on that note, there's also Mr. Williams is preparing a report for us to examine how we've been tracking it in the past, where the holes are, how accurate they are, and anything we need to do going forward. So, on that, I wanted to, just note on the record that Mr. Williams, we did give you the, the committee agreed to give you the extension until November 2nd on that report. And I'm sorry I didn't get you the email earlier to tell you that, but figured I'd use this time to do it. Nothing significant to report on the HIB report, this is normal. And then we had the extra meeting to pass the student restraint policy, which is an important policy. And… this will replace any other current policies that do this. I would like to note, for the Trustees that saw this in advance, there's a couple of track changes on this version, so I move to… or I will… when we move to pass it, I'll move to pass it. Actually, this is the last one on my report, so I'll just move it now, if it's okay with the chair. indicating, she indicated yes, I'm gonna move to pass the student restraint and seclusion policy you have in your packets, understanding that the track changes will be finalized into final form and any of the attorney notes in there will be resolved before we finalize it. (Valdivieso)

**: Motion Seconded

Executive Committee

- No report. (Gilchrist)

6. RESOLUTIONS

I. *2026-10-26-A: Approval of the October 26, 2026 Regular BOT Meeting Agenda*

Voting Members	Motion	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent	Voting Members	Motion	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent
Briana Gilchrist	☑	☑	☐	☐	☐	Dr. Princess Towe	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑
Julio Valdivieso	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐	Toni Ince	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑
Allan Boomer	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐	Daryl Stewart	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐
Anthony Covington	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐	Kristine Baffo	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐
Vincent Rouse	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑	Andre Speight**	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐

Discussion:

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II. 2026-10-26-B: Approval of the September 29, 2026 Regular Meeting Minutes

Voting Members	Motion	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent	Voting Members	Motion	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent
Briana Gilchrist	☑	☑	☐	☐	☐	Dr. Princess Towe	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑
Julio Valdivieso	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐	Toni Ince	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑
Allan Boomer	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐	Daryl Stewart**	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐
Anthony Covington	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐	Kristine Baffo	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐
Vincent Rouse	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑	Andre Speight	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐

Discussion:

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**: Motion Seconded

III. *2026-10-26-C: Approval of October 26' Finance Report*

Voting Members	Motion	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent	Voting Members	Motion	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent
Briana Gilchrist**	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐	Dr. Princess Towe	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑
Julio Valdivieso	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐	Toni Ince	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑
Allan Boomer	☑	☑	☐	☐	☐	Daryl Stewart	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐
Anthony Covington	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐	Kristine Baffo	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐
Vincent Rouse	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑	Andre Speight	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐

Discussion:

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IV. *2026-10-26-D: Approval of October 26' Personnel Report*

Voting Members	Motion	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent	Voting Members	Motion	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent
Briana Gilchrist	☑	☑	☐	☐	☐	Dr. Princess Towe	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑
Julio Valdivieso	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐	Toni Ince	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑
Allan Boomer	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐	Daryl Stewart	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐
Anthony Covington	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐	Kristine Baffo	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐
Vincent Rouse	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑	Andre Speight**	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐

Discussion:

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**: Motion Seconded

V. *2026-10-26-E: Approval of Home Instruction Students*

Voting Members	Motion	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent	Voting Members	Motion	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent
Briana Gilchrist	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐	Dr. Princess Towe	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑
Julio Valdivieso	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐	Toni Ince	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑
Allan Boomer	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐	Daryl Stewart	☑	☑	☐	☐	☐
Anthony Covington	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐	Kristine Baffo**	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐
Vincent Rouse	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑	Andre Speight	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐

Discussion:

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VI. *2026-10-26-F: Approval of Field Trips*

Voting Members	Motion	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent	Voting Members	Motion	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent
Briana Gilchrist	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐	Dr. Princess Towe	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑
Julio Valdivieso	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐	Toni Ince	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑
Allan Boomer	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐	Daryl Stewart	☑	☑	☐	☐	☐
Anthony Covington*	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐	Kristine Baffo	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐
Vincent Rouse	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑	Andre Speight	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐

Discussion:

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**: Motion Seconded

VII. *2026-10-26-G: Approval of the MTSS Contract*

Voting Members	Motion	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent	Voting Members	Motion	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent
Briana Gilchrist**	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐	Dr. Princess Towe	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑
Julio Valdivieso	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐	Toni Ince	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑
Allan Boomer	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐	Daryl Stewart	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐
Anthony Covington	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐	Kristine Baffo	☑	☑	☐	☐	☐
Vincent Rouse	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑	Andre Speight	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐

Discussion:

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VIII. 2026-10-26-H: Approval of the Student Restraint Policy

Voting Members	Motion	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent	Voting Members	Motion	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent
Briana Gilchrist	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐	Dr. Princess Towe	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑
Julio Valdivieso*	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐	Toni Ince	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑
Allan Boomer	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐	Daryl Stewart	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐
Anthony Covington*	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐	Kristine Baffo	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐
Vincent Rouse	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑	Andre Speight	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐

Discussion:

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**: Motion Seconded

IX. [2026-10-26-I: Approval MPTCS BOT ByLaws]

Voting Members	Motion	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent	Voting Members	Motion	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent
Briana Gilchrist	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐	Dr. Princess Towe	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑
Julio Valdivieso	☑	☑	☐	☐	☐	Toni Ince	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑
Allan Boomer	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐	Daryl Stewart	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐
Anthony Covington*	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐	Kristine Baffo	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐
Vincent Rouse	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑	Andre Speight	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐

Discussion:

- Approved with number of absences of regular meeting absences before you can be removed from the board will drop to 4 from 6 and the table of contents will be updated to reflect the document.

X. [2026-10-26-J: Amendment to BOT Committee Structure and Presiding Chair Authority]

Voting Members	Motion	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent	Voting Members	Motion	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent
Briana Gilchrist	☑	☑	☐	☐	☐	Dr. Princess Towe	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑
Julio Valdivieso	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐	Toni Ince	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑
Allan Boomer	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐	Daryl Stewart	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐
Anthony Covington*	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐	Kristine Baffo	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐
Vincent Rouse	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑	Andre Speight	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐

Discussion:

- I just want to state for the public this is just a restatement of what already existed, no big changes. (Valdivieso)

**: Motion Seconded

7. PUBLIC COMMENT - It is now time for public participation. To engage in public comment, all speakers must register via the district's website no later than 5 calendar days prior to the advertised meeting by 5:00 PM ET. Please state your name and address for the record. All speakers will have 2-minutes to address the BOT.

- Kasan Little
- Eric Nixon
- Bernice Lee

GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION at 7:59 PM: Motion: Covington - Stewart** | Approved

LEAVE EXECUTIVE SESSION at 8:33 PM: Motion Gilchrist - Stewart** | Approved

8. CLOSED SESSION - 10:10 PM

9. CLOSING REMARKS FROM BOARD CHAIR:

Thank you to all for your hard work and dedication to the village. Have a great evening! Committees thank you for meeting.

10. MOTION TO ADJOURN: 8:33 PM ET Gilchrist - Covington** | Approved

Respectfully submitted at: 10/26/2026
Submitted by: MaLiyah E. Griffiths

**: Motion Seconded