



ATMOSPHERE ACADEMY

Educating Your Bright Stars

Atmosphere Academy Public Charter Schools Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes April 23, 2018

Atmosphere Academy Charter School
22 Marble Hill Avenue
New York, New York 10463
Meeting was held at the Riverdale Jewish Center
3700 Independence Avenue
Bronx, NY

Board Members Attending:

Mr. Alan Dillon
Mr. Mervin Burton
Mr. Jesse J. Greene, Jr.
Dr. Michael Lagas
Mr. James Spitzer

Board Members Absent:

Dr. Evan Powderly

Others in Attendance:

Mr. Colin J. Greene
Mr. Bryan Fryer
Mr. Ben Pah
Mrs. Katherine Brennan
Ms. Cheryl Sacco (by phone)
Ms. Elizabeth Nash
Mr. Christian Roman
Ms. Jasline Rodriguez
Ms. Rachely Crime
Ms. Katherine Tineo-Komatsu

Agenda Item 1. Call to order

At approximately 5:27 PM the meeting was called to order by Dr. Lagas.

Agenda Item 2. Pledge of Allegiance

No flag was present so no pledge was held.

Agenda Item 3. Board Reports

Mr. J. Greene reported on the Finance Committee call of April 2018. He reported that the committee received a report on the financial performance and financial condition of the school, and discussed cash needs and loans.

There was no governance committee call for April.

Agenda Item 4. Comments from the Public

There were no comments from the public and no members of the public present.

Agenda Item 5. Revision and Adoption of the Agenda

There were no revisions to the Agenda and it was adopted.

By motion of the board to adopt the Agenda:

Vote Aye: M. Burton, A. Dillon, J. Greene, M. Lagas, J. Spitzer

Nays: none

Agenda Item 6.1. New Trustee

The board moved to elect Mr. James Spitzer to the board.

By motion of the board to elect Mr. James Spitzer a Trustee of Atmosphere Academy:

Vote Aye: M. Burton, A. Dillon, J. Greene, M. Lagas

Nays: none

Agenda Item 6.2. Board Minutes

The minutes from the March meeting were reviewed and approved as drafted.

By motion of the board to adopt the March 2018 Minutes.

Vote Aye: M. Burton, A. Dillon, J. Greene, M. Lagas

Abstain: J Spitzer due to the board meeting preceding his election as a Trustee of Atmosphere Academy.

Nays: none

Agenda Item 6.3. Finance

Mr. Zottola reviewed the year to date financial results and financial condition of the school. He reviewed contributions to date and full year financial projections.

Agenda Item 6.4. School Safety Update

Mr. Greene and Mr. Pah reviewed student safety issues in the Marble Hill area and the steps the school has taken to assure student safety. They also noted discussions with the local police regarding safety issues, especially around the subway station corner. Other topic included school efforts around bullying, cyber bullying, remote door locks and security guard hiring. Ms. Nash noted the safe culture at Atmosphere and the positive impact that is having on students.

Agenda Item 6.5. Social Services Update

Ms. Tineo discussed student feeling and emotions, and her techniques to sense important developments that may be hidden. She discussed the differences between boys and girls, her knowledge of how to deal with trauma students may have suffered and how she allocates resources to deal with student needs.

She noted that there are 8 agencies in the Bronx that have resources to help on issues of abuse or suicide if needed.

Mr. Greene noted the greater awareness at the school for these issues and Mr. Roman noted students reflection on life that he has seen expressed by them.

Agenda Item 6.6. Benefits

Ms. Rodriguez reported on feedback from employees on benefit programs at Atmosphere. Surveys have been taken with about 50% response rate. She went through all of the findings and preference. Data supports the medical plans being offered but there is some concern about deductibles and copays. She reviewed what is paid by Atmosphere for these medical plans in the current structure. The current plans will be reviewed for possible change for the coming year.

Agenda Item 6.7 Enrollment

Mr. Pah introduced Ms. Rachely Crime to the board. Ms. Crime reported that the school has 607 applicants for all grades for next year. This for 410 available positions. She went through the data grade level by grade level. The intent is to fill all positions. The board was positive about the application rate and enrollment prospects, which is key priority for the school.

Agenda item 6.8. SPED Program

Ms. Nash reviewed her on going effort to recover reimbursement for instruction of SPED students. At this point not much change in the status of payments but she is working on the information supporting payment for a number of students. She noted the efforts underway to get a ruling from a senior DOE executive on the matters supporting Atmosphere's program. She noted that the total SPED population is declining slightly year to year.

Agenda Item 6.9. State Testing

Mr. Greene reported on the state testing. ELA has taken place and math is to follow. He reviewed grade level trends grade by grade through the year as testing has occurred. He explained the differences between English and math testing. He noted how English questions can be categorized and then students can be coached on how to tackle them, and how math is more difficult to develop such an approach.

Agenda Item 6.10 Achievement

He next addressed the Achievement (test prep) Program and how he is managing the teachers to make this work. This is an evolving program so changes will occur into next year.

Agenda Item 6.11. Parent Engagement

Mr. Greene reviewed positive and critical comments from parents regarding the school. He discussed some of the key drivers of dissatisfaction for those with critical comments. The vast majority of comments are positive. Board discussion ensued on the subject.

Agenda Item 7. No Consent Agenda Items

Agenda Item 8 and 9. Approval of Executive Session

The board approved an executive session to discuss personnel at approximately 9 PM

By motion of the board to enter executive session:

Vote Aye: M. Burton, A. Dillon, J. Greene, M. Lagas, J. Spitzer
Nays: none

Agenda Item 10. Executive Session

Agenda Item 11.

The board moved to return from executive session at approximately 9:35 PM.

By motion of the board to leave executive session:

Vote Aye: M. Burton, A. Dillon, J. Greene, M. Lagas, J. Spitzer

Nays: none

Agenda Item 12. Unfinished Business

There was no unfinished business.

Agenda Item 13. New Business

There was no new business.

Agenda Item 14. Adjournment

At 9:36 PM the board moved to adjourn.

By motion of the board to adjourn:

Vote Aye: M. Burton, A. Dillon, J. Greene, M. Lagas, J. Spitzer

Nays: none

Meeting adjourned.