



Atmosphere academy

Atmosphere Academy Public Charter Schools Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes December 15, 2021

Atmosphere Academy Charter School
Meeting held over Zoom

Board Members Attending

Dr. Michael Lagas
Mr. Jesse J. Greene, Jr.
Mr. Alan Dillon
Mr. Jim Spitzer
Mr. Colin J. Greene (ex officio, CEO)

Others in Attendance:

Mr. Peter Markey (Item 6.1 only)
Mr. Benjamin Pah
Mr. Gabriel Rosenblum
Mr. Christian Roman
Mrs. Katherine Brennan
Two scholars and their parents (Item 6.2 only)
Mr. Darryl Jenkins (Item 6.6 only)
No other public in attendance

Agenda Item 1. Call to Order

At approximately 5:10PM, Dr. Lagas called the Board meeting to order.

Agenda Item 2. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was not performed.

Agenda item 3. Board Reports

The Finance Committee topics will be covered later in this meeting during the Finance Update.

The Middle and High School Committee topics will be covered later in this meeting.

Agenda Item 4. Comments From the Public

There were no comments at this time.

Agenda Item 5. Revision and Adoption of the Agenda

Mr. C. Greene presented the Agenda for approval by the Board. There were a few small changes to the Agenda, including a slight change in sequence to the order of topics being covered, Costa Rica trip report by student participants, reviewing by-laws, and a COVID-19 update.

Mr. J. Greene moved to approve the Board Agenda for December 2021.
Mr. Dillon seconded the motion.

Vote Aye: Dr. Lagas, Mr. J. Greene, Mr. Spitzer and Mr. Dillon
Vote no: None

Motion adopted. Agenda approved.

Agenda Item 6.1. Finance Update

Mr. C. Greene opened with a single chart showing the topics of discussion. This included raising questions about the timing of federal grant moneys. Delays have occurred and much grant money has not been received. The reasons for this were discussed. He also discussed his work to confirm timing of DOE payment of the next per pupil. He noted that amendments to the financial policy document were approved previously, and that the budget was being updated with full actual performance data.

Mr. Markey reviewed the finance reports with the board.

Topics/reports covered:

- Scorecard – focus on # of pupils onboard, P&L performance, grant collection delays,

comparison to budget and comparison to prior years. Payables are steady but high to preserve cash.

- Statement of Activities – focus on expense items with increases over budget and prior years. Expense is front-loaded in the school year, as always, and that, coupled with delayed grants leads to cash flow concerns.
- Surplus and loss schedules – A focus chart was on expense spending line by line compared to prior years. Also, a focus chart on expense spending on a per pupil basis. The Board asked for revenue per pupil to be added to compare to expense, and rate of growth of revenue to be calculated overall years so that can be compared to CPI-U used in real estate escalator clauses. Surplus is expected to increase as we proceed in the fiscal year as expenses flatten and travel and incentives decline.
- Statement of financial position was also discussed.
- Cash flow was reviewed in detail. Timing of year-end per pupil payments was reviewed and discussed in detail. It was noted that December payment of the per pupil while expected cannot be confirmed by the DOE, so a short-term loan will be required to bridge to early January. The amount and timing were discussed and agreed upon with the lending trustee.

The board asked about risk of greater expense for high school due to more counselors, teachers, etc. Mr. C. Greene said this had been considered and was in the budget numbers.

Mr. Markey, Mr. C. Greene and Mr. J. Greene discussed the short-term loan amount and timing was agreed upon. Mr. J. Greene will prepare a loan document to be reviewed by Mr. Markey. Mr. J. Greene asked that repayment be made by wire transfer. Mr. Markey and Mr. C. Greene will prepare for that payment.

Agenda Item 6.2. Student and Parent Visit

Mr. Pah, Mr. Rosenblum and Mrs. Brennan gave a brief overview of the Costa Rica trip that Atmosphere took with 25 students (20 8th graders and 5 10th graders). Mr. Rosenblum and Mrs. Brennan spoke about the impact that this trip had on Atmosphere's scholars. Students were challenged and encouraged to explore activities outside of their comfort zone throughout the trip.

Two students and their parents joined the board meeting to discuss their experiences on the Costa Rica trip. The first scholar spoke about how much he had been looking forward to the trip since starting at Atmosphere, and his desire to work hard to be given the opportunity to attend. He touched on the amazing experiences and how much he was impacted by the trip. The scholar spoke about the sense of responsibility that the trip instilled in him. The scholar's mother spoke about how grateful she was that the scholar attended the trip. She said that her

scholar was more responsible now, especially when it comes to topics of environmental concern.

The second scholar introduced herself and spoke about how Atmosphere celebrated her birthday while on the trip, which made her feel at home. She mentioned that her favorite parts of the trip were the boat ride, snorkeling, and ziplining. She also noted that she was able to make friends with others that she had never interacted with before, including Atmosphere alumni and staff members. She too feels more responsible for her actions and was able to gain a new perspective after attending. The scholar's mother spoke about the fact that her daughter wanted to attend this trip from her first day at Atmosphere, and how her hard work paid off.

The board had the opportunity to ask questions. One board member asked what the scholars would tell an incoming 6th grader who was joining Atmosphere Academy. Both scholars noted that they would tell the incoming 6th grader to work hard and put in the necessary hours so they can enjoy these trips in the future. The board also asked if the trip changed their outlook on their future careers – both scholars noted that they are now interested in animal conservation. One specifically noted that she would like to work to help conserve sea turtle populations. Both scholars further touched on how impactful this trip was for them, and how they hope to have similar experiences in the future.

Agenda Item 6.3. Governance Update (covered after item 7)

The board discussed the updated bylaws and the changes that were made.

Mr. Spitzer moved to approve the updated bylaws.

Mr. Dillon seconded the motion.

Vote Aye: Dr. Lagas, Mr. Spitzer, Mr. Dillon and Mr. J. Greene

Vote no: None

Agenda Item 6.4. Board Meeting Minutes (covered after item 6.2.)

Mr. Rosenblum presented the November Board meeting minutes for approval by the Board. These were sent to the Board in advance for their review.

Mr. J. Greene moved to approve the Board meeting minutes for November 2021.

Mr. Spitzer seconded the motion.

Vote Aye: Dr. Lagas, Mr. Spitzer, Mr. Dillon and Mr. J. Greene

Vote no: None

Agenda Item 6.5. Middle School Update

Mr. Jenkins, Atmosphere's 8th Grade School Counselor, joined the board meeting to give a High School Update. Mr. Jenkins is publicizing high school workshops that parents can attend. Three additional high schools have been added to the list of high schools recommended by Atmosphere, given their current rankings among New York City High Schools.

73 scholars registered for Specialized High School exams. 20 scholars took the TACHS exam for Parochial Schools. Mr. Jenkins noted a few new schools within these categories that have been added. 9 scholars have applied to independent schools. 12 scholars applied to English Language Learner High Schools. 1 scholar has expressed interest in a military school. 2 scholars applied to boarding schools out of state.

Mr. Jenkins spoke about the open houses that are available for scholars and families. He encourages scholars to attend open houses to learn about the schools that they are interested in. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19, some schools are not hosting in-person school visits. 20 scholars were nominated for the TEAK program this year, which is a great accomplishment.

The board asked about the number of scholars interested in the types of high schools listed above compared to previous years. Mr. Jenkins noted that each year, more and more scholars are showing interest in these high schools, which means that scholars will have more options and opportunities.

Mr. Rosenblum presented the current application numbers for SY 22-23. Numbers are currently strong, especially compared to previous years. Atmosphere will continue to expand its community outreach to capture as many applications as possible, and therefore to serve as many students as possible next year. The board requested that a few additions be made to the presentation in future meetings, including application numbers from previous years at the same time, goals for this year, and targeted enrollment for next year for each grade level.

Mrs. Brennan presented a Q1 Academic Update. Mrs. Brennan noted that Atmosphere has a low number of Fs relative to previous years. A review of rigor is being done with leaders and teachers during professional development sessions. The submission rate of summer assignments has gone up by almost 20% compared to previous years. Overall, Atmosphere does not have a single scholar with 4 or more Fs.

Mr. Greene noted that Atmosphere has not seen an impact of the Omicron variant of COVID-19 in our schools. There have not been any COVID-19 outbreaks in our school. Atmosphere continues to take proper precautions to ensure that there is no community spread within their buildings. The board asked a few procedural questions about what Atmosphere does in the case that a scholar or parent of a scholar tests positive. Contact tracing is always done properly

while following state guidelines to ensure that all impacted individuals are notified if a positive COVID-19 case arises.

Mr. Greene discussed vendor performance and the impact that COVID-19 has had on supply chain. Certain vendors are unable to deliver due to these issues, which has put a strain on some of Atmosphere's processes. Atmosphere is actively working to fix these issues with vendors.

Agenda Item 6.6. High School Update

This item will be covered at a future board meeting.

Agenda Item 7. Executive Session

At approximately 7:02PM, the Board moved to enter Executive Session to discuss:

- a) the medical, financial, credit, or employment history of a particular person or corporation, or matters leading to the appointment, employment, promotion, demotion, discipline, suspension, dismissal, or removal of a particular person or corporation.
- b) the proposed acquisition, sale or lease of real property or the proposed acquisition, sale, or exchange of securities, but only when publicity would substantially affect the value.

Mr. J. Greene moved to enter Executive Session.

Mr. Spitzer seconded the motion.

Vote Aye: Dr. Lagas, Mr. J. Greene, Mr. Spitzer and Mr. Dillon

Vote no: None

After the discussion, at approximately 7:19PM, the Board moved to exit executive session.

Mr. J. Greene moved to exit Executive Session.

Mr. Dillon seconded the motion.

Vote Aye: Dr. Lagas, Mr. J. Greene, Mr. Spitzer and Mr. Dillon

Vote no: None

Agenda Item 8. Consent Agenda

There were no consent agenda items.

Agenda Item 9. Unfinished Business

There was no unfinished business.

Agenda Item 10. New Business

There was no new business.

Agenda Item 11. Adjournment

At approximately 7:22PM the Board moved to adjourn the meeting.

Mr. J. Greene moved to adjourn.

Mr. Spitzer seconded the motion.

Vote Aye: Mr. J. Greene, Dr. Lagas, Mr. Spitzer and Mr. Dillon

Vote no: None

Meeting adjourned.