



Atmosphere academy

Atmosphere Academy Public Charter Schools Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes October 26, 2021

Atmosphere Academy Charter School
Meeting held over Zoom

Board Members Attending

Dr. Michael Lagas
Mr. Jesse J. Greene, Jr.
Mr. Alan Dillon (joined during item 6)
Mr. Jim Spitzer (joined during Item 6)

Others in Attendance:

Mr. Colin J. Greene
Mr. Peter Markey (joined for Item 7.1 only)
Ms. Shelby Stenson (joined for Item 7.1 only)
Mr. Benjamin Pah
Mrs. Elizabeth Kelly
Mr. Gabriel Rosenblum
Mr. Christian Roman
Mrs. Katherine Brennan
No other public in attendance

Agenda Item 1. Call to Order

At approximately 5:03PM, 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.

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 no changes to the Agenda.

Mr. J. Greene moved to approve the Board Agenda for October 2021.
Dr. Lagas seconded the motion.

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

Motion adopted. Agenda approved.

Agenda Item 6. Executive Session

At approximately 5:04PM, 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.
Dr. Lagas seconded the motion.

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

After the discussion, at approximately 5:53PM, 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. Spitzer, Mr. Dillon and Mr. J. Greene
Vote no: None

Agenda Item 7.1. Finance Update

Ms. Shelby Stenson joined the board meeting to discuss the Annual Audit. Mr. C. Greene introduced Ms. Stenson and had her update the board on her audit findings and outstanding items. Ms. Stenson noted that she will issue a final audit report to the finance committee next month. The board noted that they had no problems with any of the information that was submitted to them.

The Board moved to approve the Annual Financial Audit Report.

Mr. J. Greene moved to approve.
Mr. Spitzer seconded the motion.

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

Mr. Markey went on to present the work that he has been doing over the past few weeks to get up to speed on Atmosphere's financials now that Mr. Fryer has left MMJ. The board emphasized the importance of real estate financing and cash projections to ensure that financials are accurate.

Mr. Markey went on to present the financials for the month ending 9/30/2021. Mr. Markey spoke about Atmosphere's cash position. Atmosphere is still waiting on the next per pupil payment to come in, which should arrive very soon. Mr. Markey noted some higher operating expenses this year when it comes to furniture, facilities, etc. Mr. Markey spoke about Atmosphere's grants receivable and when to expect this cash to arrive in Atmosphere's bank account.

The Board asked about the percentage of funds spent on real estate versus compensation versus operating expenses. Mr. Markey noted that he would include that information for the board moving forward. The Board also discussed some upcoming large bills that will be paid in the coming months. Mr. C. Greene noted that even though Atmosphere's enrollment is below the maximum enrollment, Atmosphere is still making great use of its funds this year.

Agenda Item 7.2. Governance Update

Mr. C. Greene opened this item by speaking about the different evaluations that the board will complete. The board discussed what board evaluations will look like moving forward. Mr. C. Greene spoke about the importance of completing the evaluations on time moving forward.

Mr. C. Greene discussed a few potential board member candidates and their qualifications. Atmosphere believes that each of these potential candidates would be great additions to the board, as they are upstanding members of the community who have worked with Atmosphere on various initiatives in the past. The board discussed different pros of having each potential candidate on the board. This included the ability to recommend and help build pathways for career exploration for scholars, something that Atmosphere will be integrating into its High School curriculum.

The Board discussed the need for a new Treasurer. Mr. J. Greene offered to move into the Treasurer position and give up the Secretary position.

The Board moved to approve Mr. J. Greene as the Treasurer.

Mr. Spitzer moved to approve.
Mr. Dillon seconded the motion.

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

The Board moved to designate Mr. Rosenblum as the person who will function as the Secretary and carry out the responsibilities of the Secretary position.

Mr. Spitzer moved to approve.
Mr. J. Greene seconded the motion.

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

Agenda Item 7.3. Board Meeting Minutes

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

Mr. Dillon moved to approve the Board meeting minutes for September 2021.
Mr. J. Greene seconded the motion.

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

Agenda Item 7.4. Middle School Update

Mr. C. Greene kicked off the Middle School Update by speaking about Atmosphere's Achievement program and the progress in Achievement that has been made this year. Mr. C. Greene also spoke about Atmosphere's infrastructure and organizational learning, including the work that he has done to "restart" the school post-COVID. There are many aspects to this, from academics to facilities, and Atmosphere's program is moving back to the place that it was in prior to COVID-19. Mr. C. Greene also shared photos of officers meeting with key staff members to build capacity among the leadership team. Mr. C. Greene discussed some of the new classroom posters that will be created to support students with their academics while in the classroom.

Mrs. Brennan presented a curriculum update and discussed the Regents curriculum that Atmosphere offers. Mrs. Brennan included helpful links for the board to review that show historical academic data. Atmosphere has seen an increase of As and decrease of Fs in academic data. Atmosphere will verify this data through a review of summer assignments and the rigor review process. Upon further analysis, Mrs. Brennan will be able to share more information at the next board meeting. Atmosphere's priority is always to maintain rigor in the classroom and ensure that students are fully prepared for High School.

Mr. Rosenblum discussed certain operational priorities and updates. Atmosphere has hired two new operations managers and a new operations associate who will start next month. This will help the operations team build capacity and ensure that all core tasks are completed at a high level. Atmosphere's current enrollment is 656, and they hope to add more students over the course of the next few weeks. Mr. Rosenblum also discussed technology and attendance. Atmosphere will be auditing its attendance data over the course of the next few weeks to ensure that all data is reflected properly in PowerSchool, Atmosphere's student information system.

Mr. Roman discussed the current behavior management systems that are in place at Atmosphere, including the use of merits and demerits. Mr. Roman also discussed the culture programs that are in use, such as Advisory, Restorative Justice, and Counseling. Atmosphere uses these programs to help prepare students for the future and the challenges that they may face down the road. Mr. Roman also discussed high schools and the information that the culture team is sending over to families to ensure they stay attuned to the high school options that are available to them.

Mr. Pah presented STARS status and the projection for the number of students who will receive STARS status at the end of the quarter. Currently, the number of 8th graders who will receive STARS status is lower than last year. Mr. Pah is putting supports in place to ensure students can reach their full potential and earn STARS status. Mr. Pah also touched on the upcoming trips, which include a trip to Costa Rica with a group of students which is coming up in mid-November. Mr. Pah displayed pictures from different trips that scholars have taken this year to Frost Valley, Brooklyn Boulders and more.

Mrs. Kelly spoke about the Student Learning department and her push to audit the department for efficiency. Mrs. Kelly mentioned Mr. Diaz, the Special Education Manager, and his seamless integration into Atmosphere's culture and ability to support special education students at a high level. Mr. Diaz developed a centralized special education platform that is used by key stakeholders across the school to ensure that services are being provided for students who need them. Mrs. Kelly further discussed the ELL Data Tracker and goals that are being set to support students.

Agenda Item 7.5. High School Update

Mr. C. Greene gave an update on High School preparation. This includes building a class schedule and enrolling students into their proper courses. Students will be grouped based on their 8th grade academic data. Mr. Greene also discussed Atmosphere's career pathways. For example, Atmosphere will create a Business Career Pathway, where students will be enrolled in business courses that they are interested in. Mr. C. Greene also discussed the Law Career Pathway and the curriculum that Atmosphere can use to engage students and provide materials for instructional use.

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

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At approximately 7:42PM 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. Dillon and Mr. Spitzer

Vote no: None

Meeting adjourned.