



# Atmosphere academy

## Atmosphere Academy Public Charter Schools Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes January 27, 2021

Zoom Conference Call  
Atmosphere Academy Charter School  
5959 Broadway  
New York, New York 10463

### **Board Members Attending:**

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

### **Board Members Absent:**

### **Others in Attendance:**

Mr. Colin J. Greene  
Mr. Bryan Fryer (left after item 6.1)  
Mr. Peter Markey (left after item 6.1)  
Mr. Christian Roman  
Mr. Benjamin Pah  
Mrs. Katherine Brennan  
Mrs. Elizabeth Kelly  
Mr. Gabriel Rosenblum  
Ms. Lena Litvak (left after item 6.3)  
No other public in attendance

### **Agenda Item 1. Call to Order**

At approximately 5:08PM, Dr. Lagas opened the conference call and called the Board meeting to order.

### **Agenda Item 2. Pledge of Allegiance**

No Pledge of Allegiance was performed.

### **Agenda item 3. Board Reports**

The Accountability Committee did not meet this month. The Finance Committee and Governance Committee topics were reviewed during subsequent agenda items, so no committee reports were given.

### **Agenda Item 4. Comments From the Public**

There were no comments.

### **Agenda Item 5. Revision and Adoption of the Agenda**

The board had no objections or additions.

### **Agenda Item 6.1. Finance Update**

Mr. Fryer presented the topics that were discussed during the Finance Committee meeting. Atmosphere's financials are strong right now. There is a higher cash balance than in previous months and years. This is one of the strongest cash positions Atmosphere has ever had. Accounts Payable is lower than in previous years as well. Most bonuses were paid out in December 2020.

Mr. Fryer also presented a cash balance report and discussed the per pupil funding that Atmosphere is expecting to receive. Even if the per pupil funding comes in late, Atmosphere would still project retaining a positive cash flow balance.

Mr. C. Greene discussed the Accounts Payable and payment statuses of some of the vendors that we are working with.

Mr. Fryer presented changes to the Financial Policy that coincide with the rollout of credit cards to the Officers. There are limits on the amount of money that each Officer can approve for spending. There are multiple checks and balances for this process to ensure all spending is in compliance.

Mr. J. Greene moved to approve the changes to the Financial Policy.  
Mr. Dillon seconded the motion.

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

Motion adopted. Financial Policy changes approved.

### **Agenda Item 6.2. Board Minutes**

Mr. J. Greene presented the December 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 December 2020.  
Mr. Dillon seconded the motion.

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

Motion adopted. December minutes approved.

### **Agenda Item 6.3. Achievement Update**

Ms. Litvak provided an update on Achievement, specifically on the two Achievement days that were held for students on 1/21/2021 and 1/22/2021. She touched on some of the struggles that Atmosphere faces related to remote learning.

Students are understanding the content, but teachers are required to slow down and pace out their instruction due to the challenges that we face over Zoom. We are still seeing promising results as students master the content.

Ms. Litvak is continuing to enlist help from many staff members for Achievement days, which is making the sessions more effective. Atmosphere may also utilize summer sessions or weekends to ensure that students are not falling behind with instruction.

The board asked about vaccination efforts for staff members. Mr. C. Greene explained our actions of rolling out information to our staff members so they can sign up for appointments and get vaccinated.

We discussed the efforts of our Culture Team to ensure students are applying to high schools, especially well-ranking high schools. Atmosphere has provided and continues to provide information to families on high school applications, high school virtual fairs, and open houses. Mr. Jenkins, School Counselor, will join us at the February board meeting to present on this topic. The second part of the presentation will cover Atmosphere alumni and where they are now. The board also discussed the option to partner with high schools and provide them with information about Atmosphere so they want our scholars to enroll and attend.

### **Agenda Item 6.4. Atmosphere High School – Career Exploration Program and College Now Program**

Mr. C. Greene discussed our progress on the SUNY high school application, specifically the Career Exploration and College Now programs that Atmosphere will incorporate into our high school curriculum.

Mr. Greene went through one of the documents that is part of our SUNY application. Atmosphere will make their curriculum experiential in nature to ensure that students are exposed to a wide variety of industries and professions. Atmosphere would offer a very rich high school academic program to prepare students for college and beyond.

Mrs. Brennan went into detail about the College Now program. Atmosphere wants to offer opportunities for our high school students to actually visit college campuses and take college courses. Mrs. Brennan also spoke about the possibility of having college professors come teach a course at Atmosphere to expose students to a college level course. This would provide a very rich experience for our students. This program would also ensure that colleges are looking favorably upon our students when they apply.

The board asked how students would be selected for the College Now program. As of now, it requires a certain set of scores on the Regents exam.

Mr. C. Greene presented on the facilities portion of the SUNY high school application. This includes a breakdown of square footage per student, and how it will increase as we expand and utilize more buildings. Atmosphere continues to exceed the average amount of square footage per student in NYC schools. Mr. C. Greene also discussed a new building where Atmosphere could potentially house its high school.

Mr. C. Greene presented the Board Resolution to apply for a high school for the Board to vote on.

Mr. J. Greene moved to approve the Board Resolution.  
Mr. Burton seconded the motion.

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

Motion adopted. Board Resolution approved.

#### **Agenda Item 6.5. MLK Event**

Mr. Roman presented on the MLK Day event that Atmosphere held last week in conjunction with SAR. The event went very well. The students thoroughly enjoyed it. The day finished with speeches and a performance by certain students, which Mr. Roman presented to the Board. We will continue to hold this event each year, given how successful it was.

#### **Agenda Item 6.6. CPO Welcome**

The board congratulated Mr. Pah on his promotion to Chief Program Officer.

#### **Agenda Item 6.7. Q1 Stars**

Mr. Pah presented on the Q1 Stars data. Atmosphere scholars are committed to the Stars program. There was a slight regression in Q1 as compared to Q4 last year. Our school goal remains at 65% for Star Status. Mr. Pah is putting strategies in place to increase our Stars numbers. This includes restoring trips and rewards, which would include virtual rewards, newsletters, social media postings, etc.

Mr. Pah and Mr. C. Greene also presented on scholars who are excelling and the number of students at

each Stars level.

#### **Agenda Item 6.8. Student Recruitment**

Mr. Rosenblum, Mr. Pah and Mr. C. Greene presented information on student recruitment to the board, including current application numbers, marketing pushes, and next steps.

As the numbers are currently lagging behind previous years, Mr. Rosenblum assured the board that Atmosphere will be diligent in our follow-up to ensure that our application numbers increase rapidly.

#### **Agenda Item 6.9. Board Roles**

The Board discussed having term limits on their positions. The Board will continue in their current roles for the time being. We will continue to track the amount of time that each board member spends in each position. We will reevaluate positions in one year, and every January moving forward.

#### **Agenda Item 7. Consent Agenda**

There were no consent agenda items.

#### **Agenda Item 8. Executive Session**

At approximately 7:27PM 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 and
- b. The proposed acquisition, sale or lease of real property or the proposed acquisition, sale or exchange of securities, because publicity could substantially affect the value.

Mr. Dillon moved to enter Executive Session.

Mr. J. Greene seconded the motion.

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

Vote no: None

After discussion, at approximately 7:53PM, the Board moved to exit Executive Session

Mr. J. Greene moved to exit Executive Session.

Mr. Dillon seconded the motion.

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

Vote no: None

#### **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 7:54PM the Board moved to adjourn the meeting.

Mr. J. Greene moved to adjourn.

Mr. Dillon seconded the motion.

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

Vote no: None

Meeting adjourned.