



Atmosphere academy

Atmosphere Academy Public Charter Schools Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes March 31, 2021

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

Board Members Attending Board Members Absent: Others in Attendance:

Dr. Michael Lagas
Mr. Jesse J. Greene, Jr.
Mr. Mervin Burton (joined during item 6.1)
Mr. James Spitzer (left after item 6.5)
Mr. Alan Dillon

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 6.4)
No other public in attendance

Agenda Item 1. Call to Order

At approximately 5:04PM, 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 met this month. The Committee provided a summary of the meeting. A full in-person re-opening plan was discussed, as well as the New York State Exam. Mr. C. Greene discussed Atmosphere's plan for the New York State Exam, which gives parents the option to have their students attend school in-person and take the exam on the selected days, or keep their students remote and opt out of the exam.

The Governance Committee met this month as well. The Committee provided a summary of the meeting, which included a walkthrough of the new space at 5959 Broadway, a summary of new real estate opportunities and the possibility of adding additional board members in the future. The Governance Committee also discussed additional programs for students, from nature field trips to international trips. The SUNY high school application, board evaluations, Atmosphere foundation, and July IMAT conference in Spain were also discussed.

The Finance Committee topics were reviewed during subsequent agenda items, so no report was given.

Agenda Item 4. Comments From the Public

There were no comments.

Agenda Item 5. Revision and Adoption of the Agenda

There was one change to the Agenda – item 6.3 (Guests) would not be discussed during this meeting.

Agenda Item 6.1. Finance Update

Mr. Fryer presented the financials for the month ending 2/28/21. Atmosphere continues to hold a strong cash position. Due to higher enrollment, Atmosphere's per-pupil funding is providing a small cushion, and there has been a decrease in operating expenses and discretionary expenses related to previous years. Our ratios of compensation expenses to facilities expenses to all other expenses are strong.

Mr. Fryer presented a cash forecast through November 2021. Projected cash balance through November 2021 shows a positive financial future for Atmosphere. If for some reason the first per pupil payment for next school year (2021-2022) is not paid when anticipated, Atmosphere would still have ample funds to cover all expenses.

Mr. Fryer touched on the different per-pupil payment periods and what we should expect for FY 22. Mr. C. Greene mentioned that there may be large expenses coming up as we build-out new spaces, and buy furniture and materials for those spaces.

Agenda Item 6.2. Board Minutes

Mr. Rosenblum presented the February 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 February 2021.
Mr. Burton seconded the motion.

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

Motion adopted. February minutes approved.

Agenda Item 6.3. Guests

This agenda item would not be discussed at this meeting.

Agenda Item 6.4. Achievement Update

Ms. Litvak presented on the Midline Data. Considering the New York State Exam, Atmosphere's focus is currently on multiple choice questions. Ms. Litvak provided a comparison between each graduating class to gauge how our scholars are performing. If teachers are noticing any gaps, Ms. Litvak is setting aside extra time for scholars to review those topics during Achievement.

Ms. Litvak mentioned that the Achievement curriculum is starting to line-up with the core curriculum, which is giving students important background knowledge that is expanded during Achievement.

Mr. C. Greene and Ms. Litvak spoke about Atmosphere's efforts to have more students attend school in-person, and the process that Atmosphere is employing moving forward. Mr. Roman also discussed his experiences working with families as we encourage them to start attending school in-person. Some families are concerned about their household and what it might mean for elderly family members if their students start coming back to school. Mr. Roman has granted extensions for certain families who have medical concerns.

Mr. Rosenblum presented the current number of students that we have in-person, and spoke about our efforts to encourage families to get vaccinated. This would include a panel with a doctor who is knowledgeable about the vaccine.

Ms. Litvak then continued her presentation, going over the 7th and 8th grade math multiple choice midline data. She then presented the English multiple choice midline data. It is important to note that this data is being compared to previous years, but most students are developing online testing skills, rather than testing on paper as in previous years. In 7th grade English, Atmosphere's proficiency gap

compared from this year to last year is decreasing with each passage, which is positive news.

Atmosphere's students are doing well with material that they learned last year in-person, but are not retaining as much of the information that they have learned remotely, even though it is more recent. This is a very interesting trend that Ms. Litvak will continue to monitor.

Agenda Item 6.5. Academics Update

Mrs. Brennan spoke about the Algebra Regents Exam, which will take place in June. The midline results are extremely promising, and prove to be better than the previous year. Based on past midline predictions from 2019, we had a 93% proficiency rate and achieved the same exact proficiency rate on the Regents Exam itself. This year, our proficiency rate is 82%, and we anticipate that our proficiency rate on the actual exam will be between 90% and 95%.

Mrs. Brennan also presented Atmosphere's Quarterly Grade Distribution. The number of failing students has decreased throughout the year for each grade level. This is true for students with 2 or more Fs, 3 or more Fs and 4 or more Fs. This data is quite promising, but there is still work to be done to get all students up-to-speed. Mrs. Brennan is relieved to see that the data is starting to improve. Some of the crises are specific to certain classes, and Atmosphere is implementing targeted changes to ensure that the data improves further.

Mr. C. Greene spoke briefly about the major benefits of in-person learning, and how we have seen high-need students turn their grades around by coming back to school in-person.

Agenda Item 6.6. Student Learning Update

Mrs. Kelly spoke about Atmosphere's targeted intervention efforts to support students. Teachers, Grade Leaders, and the Culture Team worked together to determine which students needed to return in-person to receive extra support. As Mrs. Kelly was working to roll out the new Intervention Program, some students had already started returning to the building.

Contracts were sent out to families today, which included information about the extended school year. Most families have been quite supportive in ensuring their scholars get the support that they need. It has truly been a team effort, with all departments assisting in at least one part of this process.

Agenda Item 6.7. Culture Update

Mr. Roman spoke about the culture team's efforts to support families over the course of the last few weeks. Mr. Roman discussed using data to get families on the same page as Atmosphere to ensure that they start sending their students in-person. Mr. Roman and the culture team sent out a video on our safety practices to make families feel more comfortable sending their students to school.

Mr. Roman presented on the merits and demerits data. Many behaviors that we are seeing have been addressed, so not as many demerits are being given. Having more students in-person also allows the

culture team to manage behavior more closely. Atmosphere continues to utilize restorative practices when handling any and all issues.

Agenda Item 6.8. Operations Update

Mr. Rosenblum presented on a new work-from-home policy for staff members, which allows staff to work remotely in very specific situations.

Mr. J. Greene moved to approve the new policy.

Mr. Dillon seconded the motion.

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

Vote no: None

Motion adopted. New policy approved.

Mr. Rosenblum and Mr. C. Greene also presented on vendor performance and accountability. Atmosphere is working to find vendors who adhere to Atmosphere's standards for customer service, high-quality work product, and innovation.

Mr. Rosenblum presented on the lottery, which will take place on Friday, April 2nd. The Board discussed the number of students that we will be enrolling as Atmosphere plans for next year. This included a conversation around students that will be retained, and how that will impact the enrollment numbers.

Agenda Item 6.9. Programs Update (discussed after item 6.10)

Mr. Pah spoke about Atmosphere's upcoming presentation at the ESIC IMAT Conference, which is taking place in July in Spain. Atmosphere's Officers will be presenting at the conference virtually. We are excited to be included in this conference so we can showcase many of Atmosphere's key design elements.

Agenda Item 6.10. School Update (discussed prior to item 6.9)

Mr. C. Greene discussed the SUNY high school application, and our process for completing the work that SUNY had assigned. These practices will need to be memorialized for future application and expansions. Atmosphere's Officers worked to create documents for SUNY that highlight the need for an Atmosphere High School.

Mr. C. Greene also presented some of the documents that we created, and further emphasized the need for Atmosphere High School. The Board commended the Officers for creating comprehensive documents that highlight this need.

Agenda Item 6.11. Form 990

In an additional session held on 4/1/2021, Dr. Lagas, Mr. Burton, Mr. J. Greene and Mr. C. Greene met to approve a single item, the Form 990, which is a tax return that must be filed every year.

Mr. J. Greene moved to approve the Form 990.
Mr. Burton seconded the motion.

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

Motion adopted. Form 990 approved.

Agenda Item 7. Consent Agenda

There were no consent agenda items.

Agenda Item 8. Executive Session

At approximately 7:14PM, the board moved to enter Executive Session to discuss:

- a. discussions regarding proposed, pending or current litigation
- 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.
- c. 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.

Mr. J. Greene moved to enter Executive Session.
Mr. Dillon seconded the motion.

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

After the discussion, at approximately 7:37PM, the Board moved to exit executive session.

Dr. Lagas moved to exit Executive Session.
Mr. J. Greene seconded the motion.

Vote Aye: Mr. Burton, Mr. Dillon, Mr. J. Greene, Dr. Lagas
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 7:38PM the Board moved to adjourn the meeting.

Dr. Lagas moved to adjourn.

Mr. J. Greene seconded the motion.

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

Vote no: None

Meeting adjourned.