



Atmosphere academy

Atmosphere Academy Public Charter Schools Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes July 7, 2021

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

Board Members Attending

Dr. Michael Lagas (by Zoom)
Mr. Jesse J. Greene, Jr.
Mr. Mervin Burton
Mr. Jim Spitzer
Mr. Alan Dillon (by Zoom)

Others in Attendance:

Mr. Colin J. Greene
Mr. Bryan Fryer
Mr. Peter Markey
Mr. Benjamin Pah
Mr. Christian Roman
Mrs. Elizabeth Kelly
Mrs. Katherine Brennan
Mr. Gabriel Rosenblum
No other public in attendance

Agenda Item 1. Call to Order

At approximately 5:10PM, Mr. J. Greene opened the conference call and called the Board meeting to order.

Agenda Item 2. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was performed.

Agenda item 3. Board Reports

The Governance Committee met this month to discuss the board self-evaluation. The Board discussed materials and timelines for these self-evaluations.

The Accountability Committee did not meet this month.

The Finance Committee did not meet this month, but finance topics will be reviewed in subsequent agenda items.

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 July 2021.

Mr. Burton seconded the motion.

Vote Aye: Mr. Spitzer, Mr. Burton, and Mr. J. Greene

Vote no: None

Motion adopted. Agenda approved.

Agenda Item 6.1. Finance Update

Mr. Fryer presented the financials for the month ending 6/30/2021.

Atmosphere's net operating income is far exceeding what it was at this point last year. Mr. Fryer discussed the State and Federal grants and how they are positively impacting the current financials. Mr. Fryer also discussed certain outstanding items for the interim audit. He is actively working with the auditors to furnish any additional documents that are needed, specifically around reconciliation and deferred rent.

Atmosphere received its per pupil funding in July instead of June, but still had a positive cash balance without it. The trustee loan is in the process of being paid. Mr. Fryer also presented different expenses that are upcoming, such as bonuses, and how they relate to the per pupil payments that Atmosphere will receive throughout the year.

The Board asked about the capital improvements that will be taking place at Atmosphere's 8th grade building. Mr. C. Greene discussed some of those capital improvements and the financing structure for those projects. The Board also asked Mr. Fryer about his outlook for next year and to touch on any potential points of concern. Mr. Fryer noted that enrollment is the number one driver of funding, and expenses can be adjusted to account for lower enrollment.

Agenda Item 6.2. Board Minutes

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

Mr. Spitzer moved to approve the Board meeting minutes for June 2021.
Mr. Burton seconded the motion.

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

Motion adopted. June minutes approved.

Agenda Item 6.3. 5959 Building Tour

Mr. C. Greene and Mr. Rosenblum gave the Board a tour of the new space at 5959 Broadway.

Agenda Item 6.4. School Update

Mr. C. Greene showed Atmosphere's graduation video. Atmosphere's 8th grade scholars and families had a great time at graduation, and were able to spend a meaningful day with their peers and family members.

Mr. C. Greene also discussed plans for the gala dinner, which will take place at the beginning of the school year. Trustees will be invited to attend. Atmosphere will also invite certain external partners to continue to build relationships.

Mr. C. Greene and Mr. Rosenblum discussed summer cleaning and the work that the custodians are currently doing. This includes painting, waxing and buffing floors, deep cleaning of classrooms, etc.

Mr. C. Greene also discussed the leadership team building activity that will take place during leadership professional development session during the week of August 5th. Atmosphere's leaders will go sailing with Hudson River Community Sailing, one of our school partners, for their team building activity. The rest of the staff will also be participating in a team building activity when they return to school in mid-August.

Agenda Item 6.5. Academics Update

The Board asked how Atmosphere compared to other schools this year. Mr. C. Greene responded that Atmosphere does not yet have State Exam results, and would not be able to give an accurate answer at this time. The Board also asked how SUNY would view Atmosphere's algebra regents exam scores. Mrs. Brennan noted that SUNY will likely look favorably upon the fact that most Atmosphere students who were eligible for the exam did take the exam.

Mrs. Brennan presented grade distributions for each grade level. From year to year, Atmosphere's data is improving. Atmosphere is seeing less failures. Additionally, the number of failures is decreasing from the middle of the quarter to the end of the quarter for each grade level. Atmosphere continues to reduce the number of scholars that are being retained from the middle of the year to the end of the year, which is a positive trend.

Mrs. Brennan also gave a high school preparation update. Mrs. Brennan presented a High School Curriculum Development Process that was created to keep organized and on-task while creating curriculum. Atmosphere is sending many Instructional Leaders to a professional development session in the summer to better prepare them for writing high school curriculum. All Instructional Leaders have been assigned High School Curriculum development as a core task for this upcoming year. All leaders will be creating handbooks and supporting documentation to support a uniform adherence to procedure in Middle School.

Agenda Item 6.6. Student Learning Update

Mrs. Kelly also presented on high school preparation and how it relates to the Student Learning team. Atmosphere will have a Student Learning Manager and a Special Education Manager for this upcoming school year. A major change is that the Special Education Manager will be taking over all CSE communication, something that Mrs. Kelly has been managing herself. Mrs. Kelly also presented a snapshot of the Student Learning Handbook, which will encompass all outcomes, items and tasks that the Student Learning team works on.

Agenda Item 6.7. Culture Update (presented after item 6.8)

Mr. Roman presented the current high school application and acceptance data. 55 scholars will be attending public high schools, 35 will be attending charter schools, and 4 will be attending international schools. 3 students will attend independent schools, 4 students will attend specialized schools, and 12 students are attending parochial schools. A handful of students are moving out of New York City or out of New York State.

The Board asked how the public high schools that Atmosphere students will be attending rank. Mr. Roman noted that Atmosphere is making improvements in this area. Compared to last year, Atmosphere has a higher percentage of students attending schools in the top 300 and between 300-600. Compared to last year, Atmosphere has a lower percentage of students attending schools in the bottom 600. The

Board discussed partnerships with other high schools moving forward as well.

Agenda Item 6.8. Operations Update (presented before item 6.7)

Mr. Rosenblum presented the current enrollment numbers for the 2021-2022 school year. Numbers are currently strong, but Atmosphere will be pulling more students from the waitlist to increase numbers and get to the maximum enrollment of 720 to educate as many students as possible. The Board asked about recruiting for the high school, and Atmosphere's confidence to recruit new students in high school. Mr. C. Greene responded that Atmosphere is confident in being able to recruit students for the high school, as Atmosphere has a strong alumni network to call on. Atmosphere has also heard from many current families and alumni that they are interested in enrolling in Atmosphere's high school once it opens.

Agenda Item 6.9. Programs Update

Mr. Pah discussed the delay of the Florida trip due to the Hurricane Elsa. Atmosphere pushed back the Florida trip a few days to account for this. Unfortunately, the price of flights did increase due to the change of dates. No other changes were made to pricing (lodging, food, etc.).

Mr. Pah also discussed Atmosphere's partnership with GLA. GLA has been a fantastic partner of Atmosphere's. They were able to make quick changes in the moment to ensure that the Florida trip could still take place.

The Board asked about what students would be doing on the trip, and Mr. Pah discussed some of the activities, such as studying ecology, swimming with marine animals, etc. Mr. Pah also discussed the criteria for determining which staff members go on trips.

Agenda Item 7. Consent Agenda

There were no consent agenda items.

Agenda Item 8. Executive Session

At approximately 7:05PM, 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. Burton moved to enter Executive Session.

Mr. Spitzer seconded the motion.

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

After the discussion, at approximately 7:27PM, the Board moved to exit executive session.

Mr. Burton moved to exit Executive Session.
Mr. Spitzer seconded the motion.

Vote Aye: Mr. J. Greene, Mr. Spitzer, Mr. Burton
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 7:27PM the Board moved to adjourn the meeting.

Mr. Spitzer moved to adjourn.
Mr. Burton seconded the motion.

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

Meeting adjourned.