



Atmosphere academy

Atmosphere Academy Public Charter Schools Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes November 22, 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 (joined for Item 6.1 only)
Mr. Benjamin Pah
Mrs. Elizabeth Kelly
Mr. Gabriel Rosenblum
Mr. Christian Roman
Mrs. Katherine Brennan
Ms. Lena Litvak (joined for Item 6.4 only)
No other public in attendance

Agenda Item 1. Call to Order

At approximately 5:05PM, 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 no changes to the Agenda besides a slight change in sequence to the order of topics being covered.

Mr. J. Greene moved to approve the Board Agenda for November 2021.
Mr. Spitzer 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 (this item was covered after item 6.2)

Mr. Markey presented the financials for the month ending 10/31/2021. Mr. Markey presented the financial scorecard, including the vendors that Atmosphere utilizes the most. Mr. Markey discussed the process for monitoring high expenses to determine how Atmosphere can lower them over the course of the year. Mr. Markey noted that the Debt to Asset ratio is improving, which is a positive.

The board asked a few questions about the financial scorecard. The board requested to see a comparison for the 2019-2020 school year as compared to this school year. Mr. Markey will prepare that information for the board.

Mr. Markey also touched on the grants receivable that Atmosphere expects in the coming months. Mr. C. Greene presented the budget for the board to show projections for next school year based on the number of potential students.

Mr. C. Greene discussed finances as well. Atmosphere was able to pay merit bonuses without any loans or assistance. Mr. C. Greene also suggested increasing the threshold for board approval on purchases. Currently, the amount is \$20,000. The board will create specific categories for approval. Additionally, anything that the board has approved previously, such as leases, would not have payments that need to be approved, such as rent payments.

Mr. Spitzer moved to approve the increase of the board approval threshold from \$20,000 to \$40,000.

Mr. J. Greene seconded the motion.

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

Vote no: None

Motion adopted. Threshold approved.

Agenda Item 6.2. Governance Update

Mr. C. Greene noted that the bylaws will be delayed until the next board meeting. Mr. C. Greene also noted that potential board member candidates will also be reviewed at the next meeting.

Agenda Item 6.3. Board Meeting Minutes

Mr. Rosenblum presented the October 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 October 2021.

Mr. Dillon seconded the motion.

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

Vote no: None

Agenda Item 6.4. Middle School Update (partially presented prior to item 6.1)

Ms. Litvak presented Achievement data. Ms. Litvak presented the Baseline Exam data and discussed trends related to previous years. Scores are close to the 2019-2020 cohort of students, which is promising given that students in that cohort were in-person throughout their Atmosphere careers, whereas this is the first year in-person for many students in our school now. The board asked how far behind students are due to the pandemic and remote learning. Ms. Litvak noted that it's hard to put an exact number on it. Some teachers have to re-teach

material, but students are eager and excited to learn Atmosphere's systems and improve academically.

Mr. C. Greene spoke about some of the obstacles that he sees while teaching Achievement courses in terms of being further behind in writing skills and multiple choice ability, but we are seeing maximum effort from students. Some writing practices still need to be better structured, but quick progress is being made as Atmosphere increased the amount of Achievement classes and assemblies.

Ms. Litvak also spoke about the Sprint data. Atmosphere scholars are improving their scores each month. Ms. Litvak presented some of the upcoming assignments, including timelines and data that we hope to gather from these assessments. This includes the Midline Exam.

The board asked about the New York State Exam and whether the state will offer it this year. Atmosphere believes that the test will be offered.

Mr. C. Greene switched gears to speak about the school resets that are underway on each grade level. Things are moving in the right direction and the meetings regarding the reset were quite productive. Mrs. Kelly and Mr. Rosenblum further discussed the need for the resets and the best practices that were implemented to increase school functionality. Mr. C. Greene spoke about the fact that Atmosphere must hold stakeholders accountable to the systems and best practices that have been instituted.

Mr. Roman discussed classroom management expectations and the process to roll these expectations out to teachers and further review the toolbox that teachers have access to. Atmosphere wants to ensure that teachers are effectively engaging with students, whether it be verbal or non-verbal. This includes coordinating with other stakeholders in the building: for example, if a student is not feeling well, send them to the nurse. If a student is in emotional distress, we can call on the culture team for support.

Mrs. Brennan discussed the Instructional Rounds, which have taken place in 6th grade. 7th and 8th grade rounds are upcoming. She touched on the rubric that is used for each component, and what instructional leaders and officers are looking for while doing rounds (for example, differentiation to plan for the individual needs of students).

Mr. Rosenblum discussed the upcoming Operational Rounds and the need to nail down key dates for these rounds. Mr. Rosenblum discussed the components of the rubric and anecdotally spoke about some of what Atmosphere is seeing so far this year in these areas.

Mr. Roman discussed the upcoming Culture Rounds and touched on the rubric for each component, which includes Classroom Culture, Restorative Justice, Classroom Management and more. Mr. Roman noted that the Classroom Management rubric will be revamped slightly

prior to the Culture Rounds to break out the important classroom management components and what Atmosphere expects staff members to do when addressing Tier 1 infractions.

The board asked about current hiring and the quality of candidates Atmosphere is seeing, as well as the current application numbers. Mr. C. Greene and Mr. Rosenblum spoke about the High School Intent survey that will be sent out to Class of 2021 and Class of 2022 families to gauge interest in Atmosphere's high school.

Mr. Pah spoke about the Programs rounds that will take place. Mr. Pah discussed scaling the programs team and building the capacity of the team, officers and other leaders to run trips and events in the absence of Mr. Pah.

Agenda Item 6.5. High School Update

Mr. C. Greene spoke about the Mock Class Schedule that Atmosphere's officers worked on. This will be reviewed in the next board meeting once it is further built out. Mr. C. Greene also spoke about the career pathways that will be available to high school students. The class schedule will determine the elective structure for career pathways. Mr. C. Greene created a structure so that students are taking an intro course for specific career pathways to see what they are interested in. Students would then take a course in the secondary branch which goes more in depth into each career pathway. Scholars are able to get a precursor and understanding of some of these career pathways in 8th grade, before they even enter Atmosphere's high school.

Mrs. Brennan spoke about the Frontline platform, which will be the main source of evaluations for instructional team members. Mrs. Brennan discussed the application of Frontline for the AP program. The College Board will soon look to approve our application to ensure that Atmosphere can get materials for AP exam preparation.

Agenda Item 7. Executive Session

At approximately 7:06PM, 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.

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

After the discussion, at approximately 7:22PM, 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, 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 7:23PM the Board moved to adjourn the meeting.

Mr. J. Greene moved to adjourn.
Mr. Dillon seconded the motion.

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

Meeting adjourned.