



# Atmosphere academy

## Atmosphere Academy Public Charter Schools Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes March 30, 2022

Atmosphere Academy Charter School  
Meeting held over Zoom

**Board Members Attending**

Dr. Michael Lagas.  
Mr. Jesse J. Greene, Jr.  
Mr. Alan Dillon  
Mr. Colin J. Greene (ex officio, CEO)

**Board Members Not In Attendance:**

Mr. Jim Spitzer

**Others in Attendance:**

Mr. Peter Markey (Item 6.1 only)  
Mr. Gabriel Rosenblum  
Mrs. Elizabeth Kelly  
Mr. Christian Roman  
Mrs. Katherine Brennan  
Mr. Benjamin Pah  
No other public in attendance

**Agenda Item 1. Call to Order**

At approximately 5:09 PM, 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 met this month. Those topics were covered later in this meeting. The outstanding facility allowance and tax reimbursements from the DOE was briefly discussed.

The Middle and High School Committees met this month. Those topics were 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.

Mr. Dillon moved to approve the Board Agenda for March 2022.  
Dr. Lagas seconded the motion.

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

Vote no: None

Motion adopted. Agenda approved.

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

Mr. Markey presented the financials for the month ending 2/28/2022. Mr. Markey noted a deficit for the month of February, largely due to the lack of grant payments in February. Grant funding is being received on a consistent basis. Filing for future grants are also being done consistently.

Atmosphere is still waiting for a large facility allowance payment. Atmosphere has an operating surplus of almost \$1.2 million year-to-date. Many expense categories are under budget for the year through February.

Mr. Markey noted that funds from Yonkers and Mount Vernon have been received on a consistent basis. Mr. Markey further noted that if the grant funding comes in on time, Atmosphere will have a total cash balance of almost \$500,000 at the end of April.

The board went on to discuss the merit bonus, which will be paid out in late October/early November. Mr. Markey noted that he used historical data to determine the maximum exposure that Atmosphere has when it comes to this bonus payment. Mr. Markey, Mr. C. Greene and Mr. Rosenblum will plan for this expense and ensure that there is enough cash on hand at the time of payment.

Lastly, Mr. Markey presented a grants dashboard and explained the process for the remaining funds that Atmosphere is expecting.

### **Agenda Item 6.2. Board Meeting 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 2022.  
Mr. Dillon seconded the motion.

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

### **Agenda Item 6.3. Middle School Update**

Mr. C. Greene started the middle school update by recapping the New York State ELA Exam, which took place on March 29<sup>th</sup> and March 30<sup>th</sup>. Scholars are showing great effort and putting their skills to the test. Atmosphere has found that students have improved since the Midline Exam, especially when it comes to their display of effort. Mr. Rosenblum described his experience in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade building.

Atmosphere was able to effectively prepare scholars for this exam by teaching them to analyze different texts and use Atmosphere's systems. The environment in every building was extremely positive. The scholars felt this positive energy and channeled it into the exam.

Mr. C. Greene discussed a change that will be made to Atmosphere's Achievement structure to allow for a better instructional setting for scholars. Atmosphere's Achievement Days, where scholars participate in a full day of Achievement, will take place on Wednesdays moving forward. Achievement instruction will be given the entire day. This will allow Atmosphere to

have more fidelity to the systems, and ensure that all students receive the same information about Atmosphere's systems. This will allow for better quality control.

Mr. C. Greene also spoke about the pep rally that Atmosphere held last week in preparation for the State Exam. Scholars were able to do fun activities in teams to pump themselves up for the exam. For examples, some students made a rap about doing well on the exam. This allowed for scholars to bring their energy on exam day.

Mr. C. Greene presented some of the Atmosphere systems that instructors use during Achievement Days to prepare scholars for the state exam. The board discussed their takeaways from Mr. C. Greene's presentation of Achievement Days. Teachers are also happy with the Achievement Day structure and think that the days are very effective.

Mrs. Kelly added that Atmosphere scholars are quite data driven. There is full transparency into their academic data, and they are always looking to improve their scores based on where they currently are. Mrs. Brennan noted that Achievement Days allow Atmosphere staff to get ahead of any behavioral or social emotional issues that may arise during a long day of testing.

Mrs. Brennan went on to present the current grade distribution, and compared it with the grade distribution of Atmosphere scholars in previous years. The failure rate among all grade levels has improved compared to previous years, but Atmosphere is still working to lower this number further. Mr. C. Greene discussed further norming Atmosphere's grading process, and the efficacy of Achievement Days in collecting accurate scholar data to provide targeted support. Mr. C. Greene noted that, previously, there was some misalignment between curriculum and intended outcomes, but that has since been addressed and is in the process of being resolved.

Mr. Rosenblum and Mr. C. Greene presented a student recruitment update. At the moment, Atmosphere has strong application numbers. Applications for 10<sup>th</sup> grade remain the lowest. The board discussed more ideas for spreading the word about Atmosphere, but demonstrated their satisfaction with the current application numbers. Mr. C. Greene noted that Atmosphere will continue to tell its story, especially related to the high school next year, to further recruit students. Additionally, Atmosphere will need to determine concrete numbers on how many students will be returning to Atmosphere next year in order to ensure the lottery pull numbers are accurate.

Mrs. Kelly provided an intervention update. Mrs. Kelly has been addressing a lack of adherence to intervention process from Atmosphere's local teams. Atmosphere's local teams should closely monitor progress around attendance, behavior, and social emotional areas. These teams should be preparing success plans to ensure Atmosphere scholars who are struggling in these areas are put back on track. Some students are properly being put on success plans, but others are not. We have seen the local teams make a lot of progress in these areas.

#### **Agenda Item 6.4. High School Update**

The officers began by speaking about hiring for their respective departments.

Mrs. Brennan discussed the current new hires that are in place for the high school. She went on to discuss future hires that are in progress. When Mrs. Brennan meets with the academic team, she will determine how many interviews have been held and how many hires have been made. She will ensure that the academic team is strategic in their process.

The board asked if new hires are okay with their start date, which is in August. Mrs. Brennan noted that this is the norm in education, and that most teachers do not want to leave their current roles mid-year.

Mrs. Kelly spoke about the process that she has put in place for hiring for the Student Learning team. This includes a concrete plan with timelines for hiring.

The officers presented information regarding the high school information sessions that were held for current and prospective families in mid-March. Families were excited to apply. They asked many questions that officers were able to answer and left notes of thanks and excitement around the high school.

#### **Agenda Item 7. Executive Session**

At approximately 7:31 PM, 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.

Mr. Dillon seconded the motion.

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

Vote no: None

After the discussion, at approximately 8:18 PM, the Board moved to exit executive session.

Mr. J. Greene moved to exit Executive Session.

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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 8:22 PM 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.