



# Atmosphere academy

## Atmosphere Academy Public Charter Schools Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes October 31, 2022

Atmosphere Academy Charter School  
5959 Broadway, Bronx, NY 10463

**Board Members Attending**

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

**Board Members Not In Attendance:**

**Others in Attendance:**

Mr. Gabriel Rosenblum  
Ms. Elizabeth Nash  
Mrs. Katherine Brennan (over Zoom)  
Mr. Benjamin Pah  
Mr. Christian Roman  
Mr. Peter Markey (for item 7.1 and 7.2)  
Ms. Lona Nguyen (after item 6)  
Ms. Lena Litvak (for item 7.4)  
No other public in attendance

**Agenda Item 1. Call to Order**

At approximately 5:11 PM, Dr. Lagas called the Board meeting to order.

**Agenda Item 2. Pledge of Allegiance**

The Pledge of Allegiance was performed.

**Agenda item 3. Board Reports**

The Finance Committee met this month. Those topics will be covered later in this meeting.

The High School Committee and Middle School Committee met this month. Mr. C. Greene gave a brief update on both of these committee meetings, which were centered on scholar support. The Officers have created a Culture/Operations Duty Handbook which allows members of the team to more easily see their core tasks during the day and how to handle certain situations.

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

There were no comments offered.

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

Mr. C. Greene presented the Agenda for approval by the Board.

Mr. J. Greene moved to approve the Board Agenda for October 2022.  
Dr. Lagas seconded the motion.

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

Motion adopted. Agenda approved.

**Agenda Item 6. Executive Session**

At approximately 5:13 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.
- c) discussions regarding proposed, pending or current litigation.
- d) matters which would imperil the public safety if disclosed;

Mr. J. Greene moved to enter Executive Session.

Dr. Lagas seconded the motion.

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

Vote no: None

After the discussion, at approximately 6:26 PM, the Board moved to exit executive session.

Mr. J. Greene moved to exit Executive Session.

Dr. Lagas seconded the motion.

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

Vote no: None

### **Agenda Item 7.1. Finance Update**

Mr. Markey presented the financials for the month ending 9/30/2022. Atmosphere's enrollment was 1,108. Atmosphere has demonstrated revenue growth from prior years. At the end of September, Atmosphere's cash position was \$2.1 million. Mr. Markey went on to present the budget vs. actual document which shows Atmosphere's expected revenue and expenditures versus what was actually received or paid out.

Atmosphere received the outstanding lease assistance from the DOE in per pupil 3. At this point, Atmosphere's current enrollment has seemed to plateau around 1,110, but they continue to recruit students.

The board asked what Mr. Markey predicts in terms of year end cash. Mr. Markey noted that this number was in the range of \$600,000, but he will have a deeper analysis this week.

Mr. Markey also updated the board on the outstanding grants. Title 1, Title II and Title IV is 20% of the allocation not yet received by Atmosphere. Mr. Markey expects to receive this within the

next two months. Ms. Markey is escalating certain grant payments to ensure that they are received soon, as they were submitting for approval a month ago.

### **Agenda Item 7.2. Audit Approval**

Mr. Rosenblum presented the audit document for approval by the Board. This was sent to the Board in advance for their review.

Mr. J. Greene moved to approve the audit for FY 2021-2022.  
Dr. Lagas seconded the motion.

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

Motion adopted. Audit approved.

### **Agenda Item 7.3. Board Meeting Minutes**

Mr. Rosenblum presented the September 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 September 2022.  
Mr. Dillon seconded the motion.

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

Motion adopted. September minutes approved.

### **Agenda Item 7.4. 2022 NYS Test Results**

Ms. Lena Litvak presented Atmosphere's 2022 NYS Test Results. Atmosphere did very well in English and hit record highs for all grade levels in proficiency and proficiency level. This means the entire grade level average has gone up, rather than just the students with the highest academic scores. This is a key takeaway from the English Exam. While Atmosphere's Math scores went down, New York City's scores went down much further, showing that Atmosphere students did not regress as much as students across the city.

In 8<sup>th</sup> grade, Atmosphere scholars increased the scoring gap between themselves and other students in District 10 on the English Exam. Ms. Litvak noted the same change in 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade.

The board noted that the NYC DOE may not have taken enough steps to mitigate learning loss and run as much of a real school program as possible during remote learning. Atmosphere was able to make greater strides in recreating the classroom over Zoom and provide great instruction, even if it was not in person. The board commended Atmosphere administrators and teachers on their efforts during COVID, and noted that the state exam scores are a testament to the hard work that went into building the academic program.

On the English exam, the proficiency level average across grade levels demonstrates that most students are increasing proficiency level, not just the highest performing students. Ms. Litvak noted two subgroups that went up by 20%. Students with IEPs went up by 22% in terms of proficiency. African American students went up 22% in terms of proficiency. Atmosphere reached a record level of 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade students who got at least 60% of multiple choice questions correct on the English State Exam. The same goes for 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders on constructed response. Atmosphere scholars are outperforming NYC in writing proficiency.

This school year Atmosphere will spend more time breaking down data by question type to see if there is a trend around performance. Based on Ms. Litvak's initial observation, there is no clear trend, but the questions will be broken down further to determine why some students are succeeding and why some are struggling with certain key elements. For example, some students may struggle with central idea, and some may excel.

In Math, Atmosphere's overall proficiency level decreased but New York City's proficiency level decreased much further. It was noted that the SY 21-22 state exam was the first experience with the state exam due to COVID-19. Many of Atmosphere's scholars, especially 6<sup>th</sup> graders, came from DOE schools where learning was largely interrupted for two years. Ms. Litvak shared a brief summary of subgroup levels in the Math State Exam. For example, females and economically disadvantaged students decreased in proficiency by more than 10%. Ms. Litvak also displayed a breakdown of question types and how scholars performed on each type.

The board asked how we are doing so far this year. Ms. Litvak noted that the scholars have an exam coming up that will provide more data for her to share with the board in late November. This will show Atmosphere staff members where efforts need to be further focused to ensure improvements in proficiency.

### **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 7:25 PM the Board moved to adjourn the meeting.

Mr. J. Greene moved to adjourn.

Dr. Lagas seconded the motion.

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

Vote no: None

Meeting adjourned.