



# ATMOSPHERE ACADEMY

## taking learning to new heights

### Atmosphere Academy Public Charter Schools Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes August 25, 2016

Atmosphere Academy Charter School Building  
22 Marble Hill Avenue  
New York, New York 10463

**Board Members Attending:**

Mr. Mervin Burton  
Mr. Alan Dillon  
Mr. Jesse J. Greene, Jr  
Dr. Michael Lagas  
Dr. Evan Powderly

**Board Members Absent:**

Father Thomas Lynch

**Others in Attendance:**

Mr. Colin J. Greene  
Mr. Bryan Fryer  
Ms. Elisabeth Nash  
Mr. Nethaneel Cleary  
Mr. Michael Livolsi  
Mr. Christian Roman  
Mrs. Jane Tulley  
Mr. Simeon Stolzberg  
Mr. Ben Pah

At approximately 2:30 pm, Dr. Powderly called the meeting to order.

There were no revisions to the agenda.

A motion was made to approve the minutes of December 2015, January, February, March, April and May of 2016. The motion was passed and the minutes approved.

#### **Agenda Item 5.1 Audit/Finance Update**

Mr. Bryan Fryer informed the board that the annual audit will begin the following week. It will be managed by CSBM and M Group. They expect the on-site phase of the audit to last 2 to 3 days.

M group is building a financial dashboard that will be given to the board regularly.

Mr. Fryer reviewed the latest financial reports. The notable items were the increase in compensation payments due to new hires, as expected, the temporary higher rent until October driven by the lease agreement and the positive cash flow for the month driven by the receipt of per pupil funds. The school ended the month with a positive cash balance. Grants received dropped for the month following the payout of the DYCD grant.

He also reviewed a comparison of July 2016 financials to July 2015 financials. Overall numbers are higher as the school has matured and grown in the past year.

Mr. Fryer pointed out the pressure on cash flow in the October time frame and the need to improve cost and expense management to take the cyclical pressure off cash flow in the future.

Mr. Fryer showed a comparison of Atmosphere's major categories of revenue and expense to other charter schools.

The board requested the creation a cash reserve for unexpected financial needs and encouraged continued financial vigilance.

Regarding next year, Mr. C. Greene discussed the pursuing at least 10,000 square feet of additional space for the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Mr. C. Greene will look for added space to lease.

## **Agenda Item 5.2 Meeting with Staff**

At approximately 3:30 the board meeting was suspended so that the board members could meet with the staff of the school.

## **Agenda Item 5.3 Academic Program**

Mr. C. Greene reviewed student performance. He presented charts which described the level of performance of Atmosphere students on the state test. His charts showed the number of students at each of 4 levels and the percentage at each level. The strategy is to progressively move students through the score levels towards higher achievement.

Mr. Simeon Stolzberg and Mrs. Jane Tulley discussed the use of student performance data by Atmosphere.

Mr. C. Greene and Mrs. Tulley discussed standardized test performance, letter grade performance, and report card grades.

Mrs. Tulley then presented charts showing the academic program. She reviewed each element of the program. Mr. Burton asked about homework assignment levels and expectations at each grade level. Mrs. Tulley responded and explained the type of assignments and assessments. Mr. C. Greene noted that generally parents welcome more challenge for the students.

## **Agenda Item 5.4 Achievement Program**

Mr. C. Greene and Mr. Cleary then reviewed the achievement program designed to improve the performance of students. The program focuses on areas of weak performance on standard tests. It is a small group structure designed around a 60 day cycle of work. There are weekly and biweekly monitoring of achievement. It is data driven analysis that tells the directors and teachers what they need to do.

Mrs. Tulley next discussed the template used to create the standard syllabus structure. This contains the timing of classes, the assignments, project details, test requirements and other details. She discussed how these are prepared for each student by the teacher and shared with parents.

Mr. C. Greene demonstrated an online question database that can be used to generate tests that measure students' abstract application of skills. This creates standards and is better than only using teacher-generated assessments. This supports making decisions on instruction with real data.

### **Agenda Item 5.5 Family and Medical Leave Policy**

Mr. Pah reviewed the proposed FMLA policy for Atmosphere. This complex topic, resulting from new law on the topic, was discussed. It was decided to table this for future consideration.

### **Other Business**

Mr. Simeon Stolzberg was proposed as consultant to Atmosphere on academic and other matters. He worked with Atmosphere in the application process and is known to the management and certain members of the board. He presented his salary requirements for 2 days a month of consulting. The board agreed to hiring Mr. Stolzberg on an hourly basis, but asked that much of his time be spent with the staff and not with the board. The board also asked for reports on his work from time to time. It was also agreed that the agreement can be canceled by any party at any time.

No executive session was held.

A motion was made to adjourn and this was adopted by the board.