



# ATMOSPHERE ACADEMY

## taking learning to new heights

### Atmosphere Academy Public Charter Schools

#### Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

December 16, 2015

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. Evan Powderly

**Board Members Absent:**

Mr. Grant Grastorf  
Father Thomas Lynch  
Dr. Michael Lagas

**Others in Attendance:**

Mr. Colin Greene  
Mr. Nethaneel Cleary  
Mr. Christian Roman  
Ms. Heather Blumberg (on phone)  
Ms. Karen Daniels (on phone)  
Ms. Angela Turmala  
Ms. Vishrani Prag

Members of the public were in attendance at this meeting.

Dortheah Edwards  
Felicia Thompson  
Helen Redd  
Jelennais Garcia Valdez  
Flores Rhoas Patricia

At approximately 5PM Dr. Powderly called the meeting to order.

He then led those in attendance in the pledge of allegiance.

Dr. Powderly opened a public comment period of 5 minutes. He advised all in attendance that no personnel items would be discussed during this session.

A question was asked about the purpose of the meeting. Dr. Powderly explained. Alan Dillion translated his comments into Spanish.

- The second question asked whether comments could be made on the administration of the school.
- Mr. Colin Greene replied that comments can be made on anything.

- The speaker then went on to say that the administration of the school was very efficient. Her daughter was doing well and had improved with this school. She was doing better than the prior school. She was behaving better as well.
- Dr. Powderly thanked the parent for her comments.
- Another comment was made that they liked the access that parents have to apply for help from teachers and staff.
- Another speaker asked about the school's position on common core. This person had been a teacher for 11 years. She argued that the main purpose of the testing was to grade the school and not the student.
- Dr. Powderly explained that under Atmosphere's authorizers rules, standardized testing was required, and Atmosphere would follow that requirement.
- The speaker then asked for information on how to approach SUNY on how to opt out of the testing. Dr. Powderly agreed to give that information to the speaker.
- The speaker noted that her child would not be taking the standardized tests.
- Mr. Colin Greene restated the school's promotion and stated that SUNY's contact information had already been shared with the speaker.
- Dr. Powderly assured the speaker that they would re-share SUNY's contact information.
- Another speaker then commented that she was happy with the school, but she wanted a full kitchen. Mr. Colin Greene responded that we would have one in one year as Atmosphere installed a bigger food preparation center.
- The public comment session ended. Substantially more than 5 minutes had been allocated to this part of the meeting.

Mr. Jesse Greene next asked to move item 5.3 into executive session to address facilities. A motion was made and passed.

#### Item 5.1

Ms. Heather Blumberg gave a report on the finances of Atmosphere Academy.

- The school is now at 131 students.
- There have been 3 personnel expense increases dealing with increased teacher responsibilities related to the academic coaching program.
- Food is now being fully paid for by the city. The school had paid a few hundred dollars so far which will come back to the school.
- Some adjustments have been made between capital expense and operating expenses which impacts timing of expenses and (benefits) profits for the school year.
- CSBM is projecting a small profit of \$176,000 for this school year.
- Colin Greene asked for summary of this to be provided.

#### Item 5.2

Ms. Karen Daniels next discussed the changes to the Financial Policy.

- She discussed the use of debit cards and the threshold for approval of spending.
- She noted that the changes had been approved by the school's accounting firm and that final language will go to Colin Greene and the Board for approval.

Item 5.3 moved to executive session.

Item 5.4

Atmosphere's Discipline Policy was discussed.

- The suspension rate was reviewed.
- The school wants to be sure its approach is reasonable and wants intervention to take place before suspension action is taken.
- Mr. Colin Greene handed out the Discipline Policy Amendment proposal. He then explained that the specific issue addressed is threats. He then went over the items listed in the amendment.
- An Atmosphere teacher explained that plagiarism/cheating is one of the issues to be addressed.
- Alan Dillion translated the comments into Spanish for the public attendees.
- Graffiti and vandalism provisions were explained by Colin Greene. Also physical altercation provisions were discussed at this point.
- A motion was made to adopt the amendment. A vote was taken and the amendment was adopted by the Board.

Item 5.5 and 5.6

- Mr. Colin Greene next reviewed his thinking on the school's website and graphic design.
- He presented pictures of the school's enrichment trips to Westmoreland Sanctuary in Westchester County and explained the impact on some of the students. He noted that he had done the website work, but it needed more professional work and that he intended to work on that improvement by hiring a firm to assist with this.
- He then went on to explain other activities benefiting the students. Pictures of the Japanese class were shown. Photography activities, art sketch book creation, community photos, and school clubs such as school newspaper using Publisher software were described.
- The school has agreed to participate in a mock trial competition. Students will participate in a round robin tournament in May with trial arguments to be held in a real court house and court room.

Dr. Powderly at this point asked for comments from public attendees, suspending meeting rules for the moment.

- One parent said the school's program was perfect for her son. Another said the student government was a good idea. Colin Greene agreed and noted that it was run by Mr. Roman.
- Another parent asked about dress code for faculty. She noted that sometimes staff were not dressed up as much as she expected. Did the staff have rules? Mr. Colin Greene said yes and that the dress code was business casual, but that the staff were allowed a dress down day every two weeks, which may have caused the confusion.

Christian Roman joined the meeting at this point and explained the Student Government program.

- He noted that they would be vote December 17, 2015.
- He showed a video of the work the students created to support the campaign. Campaign poster art work was shown and the amount of student interaction was explained by Mr. Roman. He noted that quite a few students were participating and had demonstrated talent.

A parent commented that her daughter's artwork was shown and the program was a wonderful system.

Item 5.7

The charter center has requested to attend an Atmosphere Board meeting. The Board agreed that January 12 would be the next meeting and they should attend.

Dr. Powderly explained that the Heavenly Productions Foundation had gifts for the students and that they wanted to come to the school to give those out.

Dr. Powderly next explained that the meeting would move into executive session and he explained to the public attendees what executive session meant.

The public then left the meeting.

#### Executive Session

The executive session followed. Mr. Colin Greene and Mr. Jesse Greene explained the facilities options the school was working through and received the support of the board to execute the plan as described.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned.