

Atmosphere Academy
February 28, 2024



Atmosphere
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**Atmosphere Academy Public Charter Schools
Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
February 28, 2024**

Atmosphere Academy Charter School
Zoom Meeting

Board Members Attending

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

Board Members Not In Attendance:

Dr. Tzvi Bar-David

Others in Attendance:

Mr. Gabriel Rosenblum
Ms. Elizabeth Nash
Mr. Benjamin Pah
Mr. Christian Roman
Ms. Katherine Brennan
Ms. Lona Nguyen (through item 6.6)
Ms. Lena Litvak (for item 6.2)
4th Sector Solutions
Mr. Bob Keogh (through item 6.1)
Ms. Lizbeth Santana (through item 6.1)
Mr. Joe Keeney (through item 6.1)
No other public in attendance

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Agenda Item 1. Call to Order

At approximately 5:05 PM, Dr. Lagas called the Board meeting to order.

Agenda Item 2. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was not performed as the meeting was held over Zoom.

Agenda Item 3. Board Reports

The Middle School Committee and High School Committee did meet this month. Those updates will be provided as part of the remaining agenda.

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 agenda for January.

Dr. Lagas 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. Board Approvals

The board moved to approve the board meeting minutes from January 2024.

Mr. J. Greene moved to adjourn.

Mr. Spitzer seconded the motion.

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

Vote no: None

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Minutes approved.

The board moved to approve the board meeting minutes from Special January Session of the board.

Mr. J. Greene moved to approve.
Mr. Spitzer seconded the motion.

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

Minutes approved.

Agenda Item 6.2. Middle School Data Update

Ms. Litvak provided an overview of the Midline Exam Data, which was recently scored. Ms. Litvak noted that Atmosphere has lowered their prediction for scores based on the midline data. For Math, 7th and 8th grade scores dropped this year compared to last year's midline. For Math, 6th grade scores dropped, but not as much.

Ms. Litvak noted that English midline scores were higher this year in 8th grade, compared to last year. In 7th grade, English scores were a little lower, but English leaders are looking into whether there may be a scoring issue that could increase scores slightly. In 6th grade, English scores were higher this year.

Based on this data English is less of a concern than Math. Ms. Litvak also spoke about the different question types on the exams and how data around those question types are being reviewed to ensure students receive targeted instruction for the areas that they are struggling in. New student groupings will start next week along with reassigning staff based on need. There are more Saturday/Break day sessions upcoming, which will also allow Atmosphere to provide extra help. There have been some attendance obstacles with the Saturday/Break days. These obstacles are being addressed by providing required afterschool extra help for students who have been invited and missed Saturday/Break sessions.

The board asked about consistent instruction, which Ms. Litvak mentioned in her analysis of the data. Ms. Litvak noted that in previous years, some math classes did not have a primary instructor for a period of time due to a hiring gap. Atmosphere has determined that this gap may have hurt students in retaining certain information.

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The board asked about parent involvement in this structure, especially around the Saturday/Break sessions. Ms. Litvak noted that there is a wide range of involvement when it comes to Atmosphere's families. Some families are more responsive than others, but Ms. Litvak works closely with the operations team to ensure all students who are supposed to be in attend.

Mr. C. Greene noted that Ms. Litvak will discuss Computer Based Testing, a new state-wide testing initiative, in a future meeting.

Agenda Item 6.3. High School Data Update

Mrs. Brennan noted that her and Ms. Nguyen would be presenting on the Baseline to Midline growth among Atmosphere's HS scholars. Ms. Brennan noted that all scholars took Regents Baseline and Midline exams, but some of the scholars who took those exams may not be taking the actual Regents exam in those topics.

Ms. Nguyen noted that students who took the January Regents had not taken that course in at least one year. They were prepared by Atmosphere through Atmosphere's achievement and Regents prep programs. Additionally, students who have attempted and failed the test before were in this testing group. In January, English, Algebra I, Geometry, US History, Living Environment and Earth Science Regents Exams were all administered. Ms. Nguyen presented the growth among students for each subject area between the Baseline Exam and the January Regents. Students were able to utilize a multitude of Atmosphere programs to prepare for the exams, even if they were not taking the course currently.

Mr. C. Greene spoke about how Atmosphere is ensuring students can graduate with Advanced Regents Diplomas, or at least, Regents Diplomas. Atmosphere can provide checkpoints and mandatory programs to increase engagement and force students to take advantage of the great programs that are offered. For example, rather than having scholars opt for a lesser degree, Atmosphere is trying to educate families on the importance of graduating with an Advanced Regents Diploma.

Ms. Nguyen then transitioned to speak about the Midline Regents Exam. Ms. Nguyen presented a chart that displayed the demographic breakdown of the Atmosphere scholars who tested in January and how results can be viewed through that demographic lens. Ms. Nguyen then provided a breakdown of the scores based on student class groups, which are called tracks at Atmosphere. This will help instructional leaders focus on certain tracks and provide more targeted support.

To wrap up, Ms. Nguyen spoke about some of the steps that are being taken to improve student data. This includes identifying which students need intervention based on their lack of

growth, providing students with their data via data letters and utilizing last years Regents Data to

Agenda Item 6.4. Recruitment/Enrollment Update

Ms. Joye Rice joined the board meeting to discuss the Student Recruitment and Enrollment efforts she and her team have been working on. These have included visits to partner schools, exclusive partner school virtual info sessions, open house events, weekly virtual info sessions, external school fairs and email blasts with key information. Ms. Rice spoke more about the virtual info sessions that allow families to ask targeted questions about Atmosphere. Additionally, the NYC Charter Center provides a platform for schools to advertise their open houses. This is something that Atmosphere has taken advantage of.

Ms. Rice spoke about some of the future recruitment efforts. These will include community canvassing with parent alliance members, street marketing campaigns to distribute flyers to apartment complexes, and outreach to churches. The board asked about the reaction to Atmosphere's recruitment efforts this year compared to last year. Ms. Rice noted that some of the efforts have been slower this year. There is also added competition in the area from other schools that have opened. Ms. Rice and Mr. Rosenblum further spoke about the data that is being presented to the board, which includes application goals, application data from previous years as a comparison and applications numbers per grade.

Mr. C. Greene spoke about some of the additional efforts that Atmosphere will take to increase application numbers, including utilizing our current families to help spread the word.

Agenda Item 6.5. Finance Update

Mr. Pah opened the finance update by presenting the fundraising numbers that Atmosphere raised ahead of the international trips.

Ms. Lizbeth Santana presented the financials from 1/31/2024. Ms. Santana commented on the format of the Financial Scorecard, given the board's feedback at the last meeting. Overall, Atmosphere is seeing a decline in enrollment over the course of the past few months. Ms. Santana reviewed the compensation section of the financial scorecard and how the number has changed over the course of the past four months. Bonuses/Stipends drove this number higher in November and January.

Ms. Santana moved on to present the Balance Sheet. She noted the addition of two columns to the balance sheet – Change from FY23 year end and Change from FY23 January Year to Date. This will allow a better comparison point for Atmosphere's financials to previous years.

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Certain payables are driving up the fixed assets line item in FY 23-24. Ms. Santana spoke about the trustee loan and Mr. J. Greene further expanded on the recent need for a loan at the end of February. Mr. C. Greene asked Mr. Rosenblum if there was an update on Chase, whom Atmosphere is pursuing a line of credit with. Mr. Rosenblum noted that there was not yet an update but that he would follow up.

Ms. Santana presented Budget vs. Actuals report, and specifically, the Revenues vs. Expenses chart, which the board further expanded on. This will be a helpful tool for trustees to dig into what expenses may be too high. The board commented on how great the new financial reports have been in terms of being able to have a clear outlook of Atmosphere's financials. Ms. Santana continued to present the Budget vs. Actuals report and touched on some of the key line items.

Mr. C. Greene noted that the budget should be reconciled with the financial reports to ensure that they align. Ms. Santa finished her presentation by speaking about the cashflow projections for the remainder of the year.

Agenda Item 6.6. Other School Updates

Agenda Item 7.1. Executive Session

At approximately 6:57 PM, the Board moved to enter Executive Session to discuss:

- a) 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
- b) discussions regarding proposed, pending or current litigation
- c) 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

Mr. J. Greene moved to enter Executive Session.

Mr. Spitzer seconded the motion.

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

Vote no: None

The board made a motion to accept Dr. Tzvi Bar-David's resignation from Atmosphere's board of trustees.

Mr. J. Greene moved to accept Dr. Bar-David's resignation from the board of trustees.

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Mr. Spitzer seconded the motion.

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

The board made a motion to renew Dr. Michael Lagas' as Atmosphere Chair of the Board of Trustees for another year.

Mr. J. Greene moved to approve.
Mr. Spitzer seconded the motion.

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

After the discussion, at approximately 7:31 PM, 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, Mr. Dillon and Mr. Spitzer
Vote no: None

Agenda Item 7. Consent Agenda

There were no consent agenda items.

Agenda Item 8. Unfinished Business

There was no unfinished business.

Agenda Item 9. New Business

There was no new business.

Agenda Item 10. Adjournment

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At approximately 7:31 PM the Board moved to adjourn the meeting.

Mr. J. Greene moved to adjourn.

Mr. Dillon seconded the motion.

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

Vote no: None

Meeting adjourned.