

Atmosphere Academy  
April 17, 2024



**Atmosphere**  
academy

**Atmosphere Academy Public Charter Schools  
Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes  
April 17, 2024**

Atmosphere Academy Charter School  
Zoom Meeting

**Board Members Attending**

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

**Board Members Not In Attendance:**

**Others in Attendance:**

Mr. Gabriel Rosenblum  
Ms. Elizabeth Nash  
Mr. Benjamin Pah  
Mr. Christian Roman  
Ms. Katherine Brennan  
Ms Lona Nguyen (through item 6.3)  
**4<sup>th</sup> Sector Solutions**  
Mr. Bob Keogh (for item 6.1)  
Ms. Lizbeth Santana (for item 6.1)  
Mr. Joe Keeney (for item 6.1)  
No other public in attendance

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### **Agenda Item 1. Call to Order**

At approximately 5:07 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 March.

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 February and March 2024.

Mr. J. Greene moved to approve the minutes from February and March.

Mr. Dillon seconded the motion.

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

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Vote no: None

Minutes for February and March 2024 approved.

### **Agenda Item 6.2. Finance Update**

Ms. Santana presented the financials for the month ending March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2024. The cash balance at March month end was above \$800k. The last per pupil payment received was at the end of February, so no per pupil payment was received in March. Ms. Santana went over the enrollment data. There was a decline in students from February. Ms. Santana discussed the AP aging, as there is a higher number of AP aging this year compared to previous years. She noted that Atmosphere has payment plans set up with many of these vendors, some of which have outstanding invoices that are being paid in May or July. Ms. Santana noted that the compensation number went up in March due to stipends that were paid out for work done in quarter 2.

Ms. Santana continued by discussing the outstanding grants receivable that Atmosphere was expecting to receive by now. The finance committee has met regarding this issue and briefed the board.

The board mentioned that they would like to discuss the ERC Tax Credit that Atmosphere has applied for through the IRS. Aprio, a third-party firm, is handling the filing and processing of that tax credit. The board mentioned that they had concerns around Atmosphere's eligibility for this tax credit due to the language in the IRS guidelines. Specifically, the IRS guidelines speak to the need for a considerable revenue loss during the COVID-19 outbreak to be eligible for the tax credit, which Atmosphere did not have. Mr. Keeney provided his understanding of the guidelines and why Atmosphere would be eligible. Atmosphere will be this discussing with their auditors and attorneys in order to ensure they are eligible. The board wants to ensure we are fully entitled to this tax credit. The board discussed the parties that they would be speaking to in order to get advice on this item. That will include an attorney that 4<sup>th</sup> Sector knows who handled 140 ERC filings.

Ms. Santana continued by presenting the balance sheet, which contains a comparison to last year's end and last year at the same month end. The board asked to go back and discuss the grants receivable and recent loan. The board was updated that a \$750k trustee loan was received to close a gap to April. Mr. Rosenblum updated the board on the outstanding grants receivable that Atmosphere is waiting for. Ms. Santana noted that Grants Finance seems to be expediting our request based on historical timelines and the quick turnaround that we are seeing with the paperwork that was recently mailed in. Mr. C. Greene discussed some of the budget cuts that were made this year to save money. The Washington DC and Philadelphia trips were rescheduled to next school year. This way, scholars will get the experience, just a little

later. Mr. C. Greene noted that there are some items we need clarity on, such as when the ERC tax credit accrues, as that will have a major impact on the budget.

The board discussed enrollment and some of the additional work that is being done right now to improve application numbers and enrollment numbers for next year.

The board discussed the possibility to pay key vendors via ACH. These payments would include items like rental payments, utilities payments, and payments for healthcare. Mr. Keogh noted that there is a level of security with wiring funds through bill.com as they act as an intermediary. The board approved of making a change to the Finance Policy, which will be amended and presented at a future board meeting for formal approval.

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

Ms. Nash spoke about the committee approach to intervention (immediate academic/attendance/behavioral support) that Atmosphere instituted this school year. There is one committee for each grade level which includes the Grade Leader, Officers and other key academic leaders. Ms. Nash noted that Atmosphere is tracking scholars that are in crisis for any combination of academics, attendance or behavior. Atmosphere scholars are then put on an intervention “tier” that tells Atmosphere staff members which scholar supports need to be prioritized. The board asked about the attendance crisis that is being reported on across the country. Ms. Nash noted that Atmosphere has seen some major attendance issues post-COVID but has worked diligently to ensure attendance percentages stay raised. The board asked if intervention data can be analyzed against the New York State Exam results, once they are received. Ms. Nash noted that all metrics, including the State Exam, are factored in when determining what intervention students need.

The board asked how parents are responding to the intervention that is being conducted. Ms. Nash noted that Atmosphere approaches parents from the lens of wanting to support their scholar, which usually puts parents and Atmosphere on the same page. Additionally, a lot of follow up is required to get certain parents to attend meetings or use student information systems to monitor how their students are doing in school. Ms. Nash noted that it is important for the local team to get in front of the crises by analyzing data and targeting students who need additional support from the beginning of the school year.

Mr. C. Greene presented on Computer Based Testing, which the 8<sup>th</sup> grade underwent for the first time during the ELA State Exam. Mr. C. Greene noted that the testing days went well. Computers were prepared in advance for scholars and charging stations were set up to ensure no interruptions. Internet remained strong throughout the day. The paper-based test in 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade also went very well. About 80% of students showed fidelity to Atmosphere systems on the exam, which shows that Atmosphere’s program is working to teach students the systems needed to succeed on these critical exams.

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

Similar to the Middle School, Ms. Nash spoke about the committee approach to intervention (immediate academic/attendance/behavioral support) that Atmosphere instituted this school year. There is one committee for each grade level which includes the Grade Leader, Officers and other key academic leaders. Ms. Nash noted that Atmosphere is tracking scholars that are in crisis for any combination of academics, attendance or behavior. Atmosphere scholars are then put on an intervention “tier” that tells Atmosphere staff members which scholar supports need to be prioritized.

Mrs. Brennan discussed credit acquisition for Atmosphere’s high school scholars. In 9<sup>th</sup> grade, scholars have not yet accumulated credits for Regents Exams, so those columns on the Data Dashboard are largely blank. Mrs. Brennan noted that there is a large correlation between attendance and grades via the high school data that Atmosphere is analyzing.

Mrs. Brennan then discussed the High School Retention and Promotion Policy and the High School Grading Policy. Both documents were previously approved, but they are being amended to include specific information for the high school such as credit acquisition, different diploma types and requirements for students retention and promotion, etc. The board requested to be emailed the documents for review, but to vote to approve now pending any minor changes.

The board moved to approve the updated High School Retention and Promotion Policy and High School Grading Policy.

Mr. Spitzer moved to approve policies.

Mr. J. Greene seconded the motion.

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

Vote no: None

Motion carries. Policies approved.

#### **Agenda Item 7.1. Executive Session**

At approximately 5:10 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,

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demotion, discipline, suspension, dismissal, or removal of a particular person or corporation

Mr. Spitzer moved to enter Executive Session.  
Mr. J. Greene seconded the motion.

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

After the discussion, at approximately 7:11 PM, the Board moved to exit executive session.

Mr. J. Greene moved to exit Executive Session.  
Mr. Spitzer seconded the motion.

Vote Aye: Dr. Lagas, Mr. J. Greene, Mr. Spitzer 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 7:11 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, Mr. Spitzer and Mr. Dillon  
Vote no: None

Meeting adjourned.

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