

Ascend Public Charter Schools
Meeting of the Schools Board of Trustees
March 19, 2019 6:30 pm

Location
Ascend Learning
205 Rockaway Parkway and via videoconference
Brooklyn, NY

Meeting minutes

Trustees in attendance

Stephanie Mauterstock (chair), Kathleen Quirk (vice chair), Amanda Craft (secretary), Shelly Cleary (treasurer), Kwaku Andoh (trustee), Nadine Sylvester (trustee) [all via videoconference]

Ascend staff in attendance

Andy Epstein, Kelly Garnes, Susan Pollock, Dylan Schaffer, Brandon Sorlie, Steven Wilson

Stephanie called the meeting to order at 6:35 pm.

I. Public comment

No members of the public offered comment.

II. Public comment update

No members of the public offered comment at the previous board meeting.

III. Executive session (minutes recorded separately)

At 6:36 pm Amanda moved to enter into executive session to discuss the appointment of school directors to fill existing vacancies and planned openings at new schools, in some instances as related to greenlighting. Kwaku seconded, and the motion was carried unanimously.

IV. Exit executive session; resumption of open meeting

At 7:06 pm Amanda moved to exit executive session and to resume the open meeting; Kathleen seconded and the motion was carried unanimously.

Amanda moved to appoint Nadine Rubenstein as school director of Lefferts Gardens Ascend Lower School, Shannon Re-Ismael as school director of East Flatbush Ascend Lower School, and Shani Foster as school director of Central Brooklyn Ascend Lower School for school year 2019-20, with precise start dates to be determined by Brandon Sorlie. Kathleen seconded, and the motion was carried unanimously.

Steven summarized the status of greenlighting the third planned new lower school and, based on the analysis presented in executive session, recommended that the board greenlight the opening of the third school with two sections of kindergarten only, and to be sited at the location of Cypress Hills Ascend, in its first year. Following discussion, the trustees agreed to the greenlighting recommendation as presented.

V. Approval of board meeting minutes

Stephanie presented to the board the minutes of the February 12 meeting, and the minutes of the February 12 executive session.

Shelly moved to approve the February 12 board meeting minutes and the February 12 executive session minutes. Kathleen seconded and the motion was carried unanimously.

VI. Financial report

Andy and Shelly presented the January 31 financial dashboards and accompanying narrative for the schools and the consolidated education corporation, reviewing major findings. There followed a discussion of the status of the FY 2020 budgeting process. Andy noted that a draft budget was shared two weeks prior to the meeting with the chairs of the ACS Board's and AL Board's Finance Committees and that at this time seven of 15 schools' budgets are nearing completion. He discussed several key drivers of the budgets, including per pupil allocation and management fee assumptions, as well as the net income target.

VII. School and network updates

a. Academic update: Benchmark 3 results, Mastery update

Brandon presented an update on students' progress towards proficiency on the NYS exams by providing revised proficiency projections based on Ascend's third benchmark exams in ELA and math, showing the network falling short of their +10 goal in ELA and just short of goal in math. Brandon discussed efforts undertaken in ELA to recover ground and meet the network goal. He then detailed the network's plan for identifying and targeting students on the cusp of proficiency in math during the last six weeks before the exam, including recent work with school directors and deans of instruction to develop intervention plans.

b. Talent update

Betsy presented the February Talent dashboard, noting that the Talent team now has a fairly accurate picture of anticipated staff retention based on data collected from school directors. There followed a discussion about the status of retention efforts, efforts to decrease renegees and withdrawals, and increased outreach efforts underway to close the gap between current hiring and end-of-campaign goals.

c. Student recruitment update

Kelly discussed the status of unique kindergarten applications received, noting that the team is tracking the number of unique applications carefully with previous years' data. She then detailed efforts to bolster recruitment at the newly-launching lower schools, including open houses, phone banking to families who previously applied but were not accepted to Ascend in kindergarten, and targeting of early applicants to ensure they remain with Ascend. There followed a discussion of efforts to ensure matriculation and successful transition from lower to middle school and from middle to high school.

d. Ascend Admission Policy update

Jenny Markus, Ascend's director of student recruitment and enrollment, and Genevieve de Gaillande, director of school operations, presented a set of proposed changes to Ascend's admissions policy that would extend the existing sibling preference to apply across all Ascend

schools, and to extend the community school district preference to those who apply after the enrollment lottery. There followed a brief discussion of other charter network's admissions policies.

Amanda moved to adopt a Resolution to amend the Admissions Policy as presented; Shelly seconded, and the Resolution was adopted unanimously.

- e. Development update
- f. Real estate update

Stephanie proposed that the board table the development and real estate updates to the April meeting of the board, without objection.

VIII. Board matters

- a. Nominating committee update
- b. CMO evaluation tool

Stephanie proposed that the board table the board matters to the April meeting of the board, without objection.

At 8:33 pm Amanda moved to adjourn the meeting; Nadine seconded, and the motion was carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by:

Name:

Date