

**Ascend Public Charter Schools
Meeting of the School Board of Trustees
January 22, 2020
6:30 pm**

Location:
East Flatbush Ascend Lower School
870 Albany Avenue
Brooklyn, NY

Meeting minutes

Trustees in attendance

Shelly Cleary (treasurer), Amanda Craft (trustee), Glenn Hopps (trustee), Stephanie Mauterstock (chair), Christine Schlendorf (secretary, via teleconference), Nadine Sylvester (trustee), Oral Walcott (trustee)

Ascend staff in attendance

Andy Epstein, Shani Foster (via teleconference), Sophie Kramer, Lisa Margosian, John Miller, Carl-Anthony Watson

Stephanie called the meeting to order at 6:51 pm.

I. Public comment

No members of the public offered comment.

II. Public comment update

No public comments were offered at the prior meeting.

III. Approval of board meeting minutes

Stephanie presented to the board the minutes of the December 18 meeting and the December 18 executive session. Amanda moved to approve both the December 18 board meeting and executive session minutes. Oral seconded, and the motion was carried unanimously.

IV. Financial report

Shelly presented the November 30 financial reports and highlighted that we are on budget relative to the Revised Plan. Ascend's current construction projects are also on schedule and on budget. Andy has spoken with SUNY CSI regarding the lease coverage ratio, which is falling below the loan covenant requirements, and they support Ascend's plan to address this with its lenders. There was also a discussion of Ascend being over budget on medical benefits.

V. School and network updates

a. Schools

Amanda reported that following the second benchmark exams, slight growth in ELA and math is projected across the network. Schools and network staff are working hard to accelerate progress to realize greater gains.

b. Student enrollment

Carl reported an uptick in applications for SY20-21 compared to the same time last year, which is attributed to the recruitment activities underway. In particular, lower schools are partnering with neighborhood daycare centers as feeder programs, and school directors are meeting with community organizations.

c. Diversity, equity, and inclusion

Lisa presented on Ascend's work to advance diversity, equity, inclusion, and anti-racism. By the end of the month, the equity steering committee will finalize Ascend's commitment language and organizational priorities. Ascend staff is simultaneously engaged in numerous workstreams across the areas of hiring, curriculum, and training, and is moving forward with a short-term organizational structure to ensure implementation of best practices.

VI. CMO evaluation tool

Stephanie provided an update on the development of the CMO evaluation tool. Amanda, Lisa, and Marty Linsky will assist in adapting it into a tool that can be piloted at the end of this year.

VII. Executive session (minutes recorded separately)

At 7:25 pm Amanda moved to enter executive session to discuss litigation matters. Nadine seconded, and the motion was carried unanimously.

VIII. Exit executive session; resumption of open meeting

At 7:38 pm Shelly moved to exit executive session and to resume the open meeting. Nadine seconded, and the motion was carried unanimously.

IX. Board matters

a. SD-Trustee buddy initiative

Trustees continue to meet with and visit the schools of the school directors with whom they're paired. Feedback received will be discussed at the February board meeting.

b. Nominating committee

The nominating committee is continuing to identify candidates for the board with the goal of voting in a new trustee in June.

X. Adjournment

At 7:47 pm Amanda moved to adjourn the meeting; Glenn seconded, and the motion was carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by:

Name:

Date