

**Ascend Charter Schools
Meeting of the Board of Trustees
October 12, 2020
6:00 pm**

**Location:
Dial-in**

Meeting Minutes

Trustees in attendance

Kwaku Andoh (Trustee), Shelly Cleary (Co-treasurer), Amanda Craft (Trustee), Christine Schlendorf (Trustee), Nadine Sylvester (Trustee), Oral Walcott (Trustee) (all via videoconference)

Ascend staff in attendance

Jordan Akhurst, Nancy Alexander, Sulafa Bashir, Jordan Bean, Amanda Cunniff, Nicole Duckett, Chanel Francis, Janna Genzlinger, Sophie Kramer, Lisa Margosian, Tanneka McIntosh, Anastasia Michals, Aaron Obrochta, Christina Pena, Stephannie Samuel, Brenda Smith, Brandon Sorlie, Leyde St. Leger, Anjya Thomas, Jodian Thomas, Richard Tucker, Thomas Vitola, Carl Watson, Nahla Ward, Zelda Washington (all via teleconference or videoconference)

Kwaku called the meeting to order at 6:09pm.

I. Public comment

There was no public comment.

II. Public comment update

No public comments were offered at the prior meeting.

III. Consent agenda

Kwaku presented to the Board the minutes of the September 16 meeting. Amanda moved to approve the minutes, and Christine seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

Sophie reviewed with the Board Ascend's data privacy and security policy. Christine moved to approve the policy. Amanda seconded and the motion was carried unanimously.

IV. Finance report

Shelly reviewed with the Board key elements of the income statement and discussion from the finance committee meeting. The finance team is establishing an investment policy and brokerage account and seeks to refinance the organization's debt.

V. School and network updates

Anjya shared with the Board that overall students are engaged in online learning, and a high level of effort is being made by teachers in remote settings. Early assessment data shows that students are learning while in their remote classrooms, yet there is some evidence of a "COVID slide" in student performance. Brandon shared that attendance has increased since beginning synchronous instruction. Ascend's attendance goal is 96% and while average attendance to date is 95.2%, attendance last week across the network was 96.1%. This high attendance rate during synchronous instruction is a result of the successful launch of one to one technology for students.

While calls to our technology support vendor were high during the first few weeks of school, the number of daily calls has since stabilized as students are adjusting to the technology.

Carl noted that Ascend is in phase two of its school year and is discussing what phase three, which begins November 30, will look like. Ascend is actively pursuing in-person instruction and supervision for the network's most vulnerable students. In approaching the phase three decision, Ascend is considering six factors: the state of public health, plans of other schools, key stakeholder perspectives, ways we can support students in person, learning programs, and readiness to return in-person. Carl provided an overview of the state of affairs for each of these considerations, as well as the input being gathered from school leaders, staff, and families to inform the learning model for phase three.

Carl reviewed current student enrollment with the Board, noting Ascend's over-enrollment as compared to the budget and January's enrollment goal. He provided an analysis of the enrollment data, as well as the community engagement plans currently underway.

Aaron shared a staffing update with the Board, noting that eleven schools are fully staffed and efforts are underway to fill the remaining teacher vacancies.

Lisa introduced Jordan Akhurst, Director of Strategic Initiatives, DEIA. Jordan presented the key pillars of Ascend's DEIA work through which Ascend is actualizing its commitment to becoming more diverse, equitable, inclusive and anti-racist. The pillars are staff capacity building, student support, curriculum, staff systems and culture, family and community engagement, and accountability and communication. Jordan highlighted two pieces of this multi-faceted work. She announced that Ascend is establishing the Equity Advisory Committee, which will serve as a cross functional advisory group with representatives from each school and Ascend Learning. In addition, all managers across the organization are about to begin trainings with The Management Center.

VI. Executive session (minutes recorded separately)

At 7:00 pm, Amanda moved to enter executive session to discuss two Trustee candidates presented to the Board by the nominating committee. Kwaku seconded the motion, and all Trustees voted in favor and entered executive session.

VII. Exit executive session; resumption of open meeting

At 7:20 pm, Christine moved to exit executive session. Shelly seconded and the motion was carried unanimously.

VIII. Election of Trustees

Kwaku moved to elect Stanley Taylor and Tracy Dunbar to the Board of Trustees of Ascend Charter Schools. Oral seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

IX. Adjournment

Kwaku moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:25pm. Amanda seconded and the motion was carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by:

Name _____ Date _____