

# NYCAUTISM

## CHARTER SCHOOLS

### **Board Meeting Minutes**

**April 6th, 2020 – 5:00PM**

The Board of Trustees of NYC Autism Charter Schools (NYCACs) met on Monday, April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2020 Via Video Conference

#### **Attending Trustees:**

Ashley Garrett  
Alvin Shih  
Ben Hartman  
Carol Santiago  
Christine Sandler  
Elaine Florio  
Hannah Hoch  
Ilene Lainer  
Mitchel Baum  
Naeema Livingston  
Paul O’Neill

#### **Absent Trustees:**

Alberto Garcia  
Alysia Steinmann

#### **Attendees at the Invitation of the Board:**

Julie Fisher, Executive Director  
Tiffney Jones, Director of Finance  
Christina Secharan, Operations Manager

#### **1. Call to order**

**Action:** Ms. Santiago called the NYCACS general meeting to order at 5:04pm.

#### **2. Board Business**

##### **a. Minutes from Board Meeting February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2020**

- At 5:04pm the minutes of the February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2020 Board meeting were reviewed. **Action:** Ms. Sandler motioned to approve the February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2020 minutes. Ms. Garrett seconded the motion in which the Board voted, and the minutes were unanimously approved.

##### **b. Minutes from Board Meeting March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020**

- At 5:05pm the minutes of the March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020 Board meeting were reviewed. **Action:** Ms. Garrett motioned to approve the March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020 minutes. Ms. Hoch seconded the motion in which the Board voted, and the minutes were unanimously approved.

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### c. Minutes from Board Meeting March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020

- At 5:06pm the minutes of the March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020 Board meeting were reviewed. **Action:** Ms. Livingston motioned to approve the March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020 minutes. Mr. Baum seconded the motion in which the Board voted, and the minutes were unanimously approved.

### 3. COVID19-Related Items

#### a. Remote Learning Update

- At 5:07pm Ms. Fisher provided an update on the average amount (in hours) of remote learning taking place across each school. The data collected includes both direct instruction (provided by NYCACS staff) as well as instructional engagement (provided by parents or through independent learning platforms). Both schools showed an increase in instructional time (both categories) from week one to week two. NYCACS is continuing its efforts to ensure all students have up-to-date technology that will maximize instructional time. The Director of Transition and Community Outreach is also currently conducting individual calls with each family to assess additional needs outside of instruction. Direct reports from the senior leadership team will take place at the next Board meeting.

#### b. Lottery Implications

##### • Updated Lottery Process

- i. At 5:20pm Ms. Fisher provided an overview of the NYCACS admissions and lottery process. Due to the current COVID19 pandemic, the external review by the Committee on Special Education (CSE) has become challenging. Ms. Fisher reached out to SUNY CSI for guidance and was given approval to remove the CSE review from this year's lottery process. Ms. Fisher presented updated language for the Admissions and Enrollment policy to be voted on. Additionally, Ms. Fisher discussed adjusting the timing of the lottery given that most applications are sent by mail that there are currently delays in mail retrieval. **Action:** Ms. Lainer motioned that due to the unusual circumstances created by COVID19 crisis, NYCACS should amend the Lottery process for this year. Mr. Baum seconded the motion in which the Board voted, and it was unanimously approved. **Action:** Mr. Hartman motioned to change the lottery date to June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2020. Mr. Baum seconded the motion in which the Board voted, and it was unanimously approved.

#### c. Staff Benefits and Paid Sick Leave

##### • Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA)

- i. At 5:29pm Ms. Fisher discussed the new FFCRA and the need for user-friendly information to provide to staff to explain the leave options contained in the Act. Mr. O'Neill suggested reaching out to the school's counsel as well as Little Bird (PEO).

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#### 4. Funding Updates and Lobbying Efforts

##### a. Budget Concerns and Status Moving Forward

- At 5:40pm Ms. Fisher updated the Board that there is no movement on the per pupil increase due the understandable shift in priorities. The school's contract with its lobbyist will be paused for now. Information from the State Budget indicates that almost all streams will be frozen, including the more universal per pupil allocation for all other charter schools.

#### 5. Committee Updates

##### a. Finance

###### • FY2020 YTD Financials (Feb)

- i. At 5:47pm Ms. Jones informed the board that we received two grants the schools had not budgeted for. One from Charter School Growth Fund for \$20k to be used for COVID-19 expenses. Ms. Jones provided a financial snapshot for the month of February. Due to Title grants, more fundraising revenue than planned, and savings in Classroom Instruction, NYCACS is expected to end the year with more funds than budgeted. Ms. Jones notified the board that at the May/ June board meeting a revised financial policies and procedures manual will be reviewed.

###### • Budget Process

- i. At 5:51pm Ms. Fisher discussed the budgeting process for the upcoming school year, including the creation of two budgets – one assuming an increase and one assuming no increase (our eighth year of the per pupil amount being frozen). The latter leaves NYCACS with a growing deficit next year and beyond. As information changes due to the ongoing impact of COVID19, Ms. Fisher will continue to update the Board. The Board will likely not be asked to vote on the budget until the June meeting in order to ensure such changes are accounted for.

##### b. Governance

###### • SUNY Webinar

- i. At 5:55pm Ms. Fisher discussed the SUNY Governance webinar distributed to trustees (linked in the Board agenda). Some of the guidelines have been updated due to COVID19.

###### • New Trustee Candidate

- i. At 6:01pm Ms. Fisher presented a new candidate, Mr. Mark Saretsky the former Chief Financial Officer, to join the Board and the Finance Committee. Ms. Santiago opened the topic for discussion. **Action:** Mr. Baum motioned to approve Mr. Saretsky as the newest member of the NYCACS Board. Ms. Livingston abstained from the vote. Ms. Florio seconded the motion in which the Board voted, and it was approved by majority.

###### • Revised Dates

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- i. At 6:05pm Ms. Fisher informed the Board that the next couple of Board meeting dates will be revised and she will email the new dates to all trustees in the coming week.

### **c. Fundraising**

- **COVID19 Response Efforts**

- i. At 6:06pm Ms. Fisher provided an update on fundraising efforts, as many of the families that NYCACS serves are now in need during this time. Ms. Fisher asked the Board to be on the lookout for additional avenues of support.

### **6. Miscellaneous**

#### **a. Follow up on Staffing Concerns**

- At 6:13pm Ms. Fisher provided a brief update on staffing concerns that were discussed during a previous meeting.

### **7. Closing Items**

#### **a. Adjourn Meeting**

- At 6:15pm Ms. Lainer motioned to adjourn the NYCACS April Board meeting. Ms. Hoch seconded the motion in which the Board voted, and the meeting was adjourned.