

Board Meeting Minutes

August 29th, 2022 – 12:00PM

The Board of Trustees of NYC Autism Charter Schools (NYCACS) met on Monday, August 29th, 2022 via videoconference

Attending Trustees:

Alysia Steinmann
Alvin Shih
Ashley Garrett
Ben Hartman
Carol Santiago
Christine Sandler
Elaine Florio
Ilene Lainer
Mitchel Baum
Paul O’Neill

Absent Trustees:

Hannah Hoch
Mark Saretsky
Naeema Livingston

Attendees at the Invitation of the Board:

Julie Fisher, Executive Director
Tiffany Jones, Director of Finance
Jennifer Jaye, Head of School Bronx
Rebecca Wells, Head of School East Harlem
Christine Poli, Director of Development

1. Call to order

Action: Ms. Garrett called the NYCACS general meeting to order at 12:05pm.

2. Board Business

a. Minutes from Board Meeting 07-11-2022

- At 12:06pm the minutes from the July 11th, 2022 Board meeting were reviewed.
Action: Mr. Baum motioned to approve the July 11th, 2022 minutes. Mr. Hartman seconded the motion (Ms. Florio abstained as she was not in attendance at the July meeting), in which the Board voted and the minutes were approved by majority vote.

3. School Updates

a. New Students and Staff

- At 12:07pm Ms. Fisher provided an update on number of student applicants, new student enrollment, staff turnover, and staff recruitment/hiring.

b. COVID Protocol Updates

- At 12:15pm Ms. Fisher reviewed changes to the NYC DOE/DOH COVID protocols, including the elimination of daily screeners, daily reports, and weekly PCR testing. Rapid home tests will still be distributed for students who show signs of illness. Additionally, staff and students who test positive will still be required to isolate for five days and then mask consistently for the following five. As a result, Ms. Fisher requested approval to provide staff with 5 COVID-specific sick days for the year (in addition to accrued PTO) for approved use only after supplying documentation of a positive test result.
- **Action:** At 12:23pm Ms. Lainer motioned to approve the provision of 5 additional sick days to staff for the year for use only after supplying documentation of a positive test result. Ms. Sandler seconded the motion in which the Board voted and the provision was unanimously approved.

c. Future Per Pupil Rate Adjustment

- At 12:24pm Ms. Fisher discussed the 5-year budget projection which shows growing deficits moving forward, as well as the timeline issued by the DOE, after the last per pupil rate adjustment, which allows for a review of that rate in FY24. To gear up for these discussions with the DOE, Ms. Fisher met with Mr. Andrews, lobbyist from Patrick Jenkins and Associates, to begin to develop a strategy. Ms. Lainer suggested that, in addition to offering a window into financials and the deficits that loom ahead, we provide a history of how rates were adjusted in the past (e.g., every two years). Several Trustees agreed to be part of a task force dedicated to planning for this process.

d. Health Benefits Overview

- At 12:30pm Ms. Jones provided an overview of changes to the health benefit plans that will be offered moving forward. To contain costs, one plan previously offered will be replaced by another. Additionally, the cost of co-pays across all plans has risen. An additional \$50 will be added to each staff person's Clarity/HRA card (currently at \$250 per year) to mitigate this increase.

e. Staff Bonuses

- At 12:35 Ms. Fisher discussed the exceedingly high taxation rate for supplemental income such as bonuses. The percentage utilized to gross up staff bonuses this year did not sufficiently counter the decrease after taxes. It was agreed that the only way to address this would be to budget additional money for the bonus pool and to gross up by 50% moving forward.

4. Fundraising Update

a. Review of Actions to Date and Future Planning

- At 12:42pm Ms. Poli discussed the various fundraising initiatives and steps taken to date (those that have panned out and those that have not), as well as future

plans to grow support for the organization.

5. Closing Items

a. Adjourn Meeting

- At 12:53pm Ms. Florio motioned to adjourn the August 29th, 2022 Board meeting. Ms. Lainer seconded the motion in which the Board voted and adjourning the meeting was unanimously approved.