

## **Board Meeting and Retreat Minutes**

**September 16, 2024 – 5:00PM**

The Board of Trustees of NYC Autism Charter Schools (NYCACS) met on Monday, September 16, at 5:00PM at Fox Rothschild LLP; 101 Park Avenue (between 40th and 41st Streets), 17th floor

### **Attending Trustees:**

Ashley Garrett  
Ben Hartman  
Carol Santiago-DeJesus  
Christine Sandler  
Hannah Hoch  
Elaine Florio  
Ilene Lainer  
Jason Stock  
Mark Saretsky  
Naeema Livingston  
Paul O'Neill

### **Absent Trustees:**

Alysia Steinmann  
Mitch Baum

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

Julie Fisher, Executive Director  
Tiffney Jones, Director of Finance  
Malcolm Green, Facilities and Technology Manager

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

- **Action:** The NYCACS general meeting was called to order at 5:06PM

### **2. Board Business**

- **Minutes from the 08-27-2024 Board Meeting**
  - At 5:07PM, the minutes from the Tuesday, August 27, 2024 Board meeting were reviewed.
  - **Action:** At 5:07PM, Mr. Hartman made a motion to approve the minutes. Ms. Garrett seconded the motion, and the Board voted, unanimously approving the minutes.

### **3. Finance Committee**

- **YTD July 2024 Financials**

- At 5:08PM, Ms. Jones reviewed the year-to-date financials. Both schools are operating very close to plan with small deficits as budgeted.
- At 5:09PM, Ms. Jones discussed the recent audit. A draft audit overview and presentation will be provided to the Finance Committee and larger Board at the next meetings.
- At 5:10PM, Ms. Jones requested that money in our required escrow account be moved to a money market mutual fund in order to increase interest accrued.
  - **Action:** At 5:11PM, Mr. Hartman made a motion to transfer escrow account funds to a money market mutual fund. Ms. Sandler seconded the motion, and the Board voted, unanimously approving the transfer.
- At 5:12PM, Ms. Fisher provided an update on efforts to seek an increase in per pupil funding from the NYC DOE. Based on the letter supplied to the school at the time of the last increase, the increase was meant to be reviewed and next steps determined at the end of this past school year (2023-2024).

#### **4. Governance Committee**

- At 5:17PM, Mr. O’Neill reviewed the content of the last Governance committee meeting. The committee is working on incorporating changes discussed at prior Board meetings into proposed by-laws as well as creating a draft description of a future Advisory Board.

#### **5. Re-Imagining Leadership Task Force**

- At 5:19PM, Ms. Lainer reviewed the work being done as part of the Re-Imagining Leadership Task Force as well as by staff. A draft org chart has been created along with task lists for each position. Job descriptions will follow. This work will be shared in more detail with the larger Board at future meetings.

#### **6. 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Planning**

- At 5:22PM, Ms. Fisher updated the Board on progress with 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Planning, including both the video (filming to be done next week) and celebration (to be held on April 24<sup>th</sup> at NYC Autism Charter School East Harlem). There was some discussion with additional ideas. More details to come at future Board meetings

#### **7. School Opening Updates**

- **New Students and Families**
  - At 5:30PM Ms. Fisher gave an overview of the start of the school year, specifically some of the new students/families to join as well as the Bronx students who transferred to East Harlem to join the Upper School.
- **Learnings from Exit Interviews/Departures**
  - At 5:35PM, Ms. Fisher reviewed some feedback from staff who departed over the last year. While salary was an issue for many, it wasn’t the only reason for departure. Many left due to life circumstances (e.g., moving out of the area, enrolling in graduate school full time) but for others there were other areas highlighted. The leadership team spent time reviewing that feedback and building in changes for the 2024-2025 school year.
- **School Culture Shifts**

- At 5:46PM, Ms. Fisher discussed some of those changes, including more face time with staff from leadership, more individualized reinforcement for staff, more appreciation events (e.g., breakfasts, gift cards, a stocked staff lounge), etc. Some interventions to attempt to reduce Monday callouts were also discussed.

#### **8. Executive Session**

- At 5:51PM, Ms. Garrett made a motion to move into executive session to discuss ED performance evaluation and future planning. Mr. Hartman seconded the motion at which point the board voted and the motion was unanimously approved.
- At 6:56PMPM, Ms. Lainer made a motion to move out of executive session. Ms. Sandler seconded at which point the board voted and the motion was unanimously approved.

#### **9. Closing Items**

- **Action:** At 6:57PMPM, Ms. Sandler made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Saretsky seconded the motion at which point the Board unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting.