



Advanced Math & Science Academy Charter School

Minutes

Board Meeting

Date and Time

Thursday November 17, 2016 at 6:30 PM

Location

Upper School Cafeteria

Trustees Present

Christopher O'Keeffe, Ev Reynolds, Ken Estabrook, Liz Saul, Michael Glass, Pauline Ryan, Rick Kamal (remote), Tom Azeredo

Trustees Absent

Allyson Cohen, Scott Ladner, Thomas Taverna

Guests Present

Lucy Ferrante

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance and Guests

B. Call the Meeting to Order

Pauline Ryan called a meeting of the board of trustees of Advanced Math & Science Academy Charter School to order on Thursday Nov 17, 2016 at 6:40 PM.

Chair Pauline Jen Ryan announced that the meeting was being videotaped and Rick Kamal was participating in the meeting remotely due to personal illness. The Chair

reminded the Board that any vote taken during the meeting would require a roll call. Lucia Ferrante has joined the Board, but official approval has not yet been sent from DESE and Ms. Ferrante will serve as a non-voting member at this time. The Chair mentioned there would be no report from the Fundraising and Development Committee or the Finance Committee and hoped the Board would be able to cover all business within two hours.

The Chair noted that Liz Saul will be delivering her Parent Rep report after the ED Report.

Michael Glass offered to serve as Timekeeper.

C. Approve Minutes

The Chair called for a motion to approve the draft October 27, 2016 BOT Meeting Minutes. Chris O'Keefe requested a change to the last sentence in the Parent Representative Report. It reads now, *"He stated that the attendees are all buy into the notion of the uniform but there is concern about a sole vendor"* and should be changed to *"He stated that the attendees **seem to** buy into the notion of the uniform but there is concern about a sole vendor."*

Thomas Azeredo pointed out that he abstained during the roll call vote when the majority of the Board agreed to sign a resolution in support of ballot Question 2, which would lift the cap on charter schools, allowing up to 12 new charter school in Massachusetts. Thomas Azeredo was recorded as voting Aye and that will be corrected and recorded as Abstain in the final minutes.

Liz Saul asked to have a comment added to the Parent Representative Report that lists the rigidity of the uniform policy as a parent concern. The Chair responded that ""rigidity of policy" can be added in the final sentence describing comments regarding the Parent Roundtable.

The Chair asked for a motion to approve the draft minutes with these two corrections. Christopher O'Keefe made a motion to approve minutes with changes. Board Meeting on 10-27-16.

Ev Reynolds seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

Roll Call

Ken Estabrook	Aye
Rick Kamal	Aye
Scott Ladner	Absent
Thomas Taverna	Absent
Liz Saul	Aye
Pauline Ryan	Aye
Christopher O'Keefe	Aye
Allyson Cohen	Absent

Roll Call

Ev Reynolds	Aye
Michael Glass	Aye
Tom Azeredo	Aye

D. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

E. Faculty Representative Update

Thomas Azeredo provided a general overview of the faculty feedback he has received since the last meeting. He said he would summarize into five points.

1. He would begin with what is going well at AMSA. Each day, students bring great joy to teachers. As an example, the Fall Sports Awards Night event brought sincere happiness and joy for students and teachers. Watching them celebrate their triumphs and success was a pleasure. The math teams are doing very well in competitions. The Latin Certamen team is as well.
2. The mentor program is initiating. Teachers were notified as to who their mentors would be this week. They are hopeful but are still concerned with confidentiality. They want to believe the mentor program will exist in the spirit of support and building better teachers.
3. Scheduling is a huge issue. Teachers have faith that next year will bring wisdom and a new approach to the scheduling process.
4. The issue of attrition is always there. There is a pervasive feeling that the faculty is dissolving away.
5. The Evaluation Process is now in its first stages. Both the union and the BOT wanted this and teachers are hopeful that the process will help the school to be more successful, helping the teachers, students and community to be better. Department head and Administration observations are occurring. There are some concerns but faculty is acutely sensitive to any ulterior motive.

Chris O'Keeffe added that it sounded like the overall sentiment was a "*Pessimistic Optimism*."

II. Executive Director Report

A. Monthly Update

Dr. McCleary provided an overview of the new mentor program. The program began in September with the Principal and the Department Chairs determining the goals of the program. The purpose of the program is to build academic community, increase teaching capacity and explain the learning objectives at AMSA. The department chairs have been mentoring teachers and now the formal part of the mentor program is starting. The

feedback has been encouraging. Dr. McCleary thanked Principal O'Connor, the Department Chairs, and the Mentor Teachers for their hard work.

Dr. McCleary reported that the Parent Advisory Council for Special Education (PAC) has been meeting regularly, attended by the Special Education Co-Coordinator. There is a new speech/language pathologist with experience in social pragmatics for those students who require this type of assistance. Last year there were some special education timeline lapses in documentation due to the transition in the department, but Dr. McCleary was happy to report that we are 100% in compliance so far this year. The professional development program has included training for general education teachers that includes an in depth understanding of what is needed in the general education classroom to help students with learning disabilities. AMSA is helping to promote the PAC by forwarding communications to Special Education and 504 families. The focus is on improvement and collaboration. AMSA is now a member of MassPAC. Membership includes a Basic Rights workshop for parents. PAC will also offer an executive functioning skills workshop for parents. Executive functioning training was held for Special Education staff.

Dr. McCleary introduced the newly hired Communications Officer, Michael Finkel. Michael Finkel will be working on the newsletter, managing the website and social media for AMSA, and he will be involved with the interaction with outside entities and marketing efforts. Michael Finkel introduced himself and provided a brief summary of his work history and shared his interest in helping AMSA achieve its mission to celebrate knowledge and have the opportunity to be impactful to the school.

Dr. McCleary reported on the success of the parent coffees. Due to requests from parents, Dr. McCleary will hold the December coffee in the evening to accommodate parents who are unable to attend mornings. At the last coffee, there were over 30 people in attendance and there was discussion of academic honesty and character development. Dr. McCleary will be putting together an Executive Director Advisory Group, hopefully in December, meeting once a month and whose function will be to serve as a think tank, working on problems and offering solutions. The group will consist of a diverse sampling of members from multiple constituencies including faculty, staff, students, parents, and administration. Dr. McCleary has been holding individual meetings with teachers at the suggestion of the Faculty Representative and feels this has been constructive to date.

Dr. McCleary reported on the desire to move from the current software program Rediker to a PowerSchool. This is an unbudgeted item for this year and Thomas Taverna wanted the Board to see the impact of the expenditure. Adam Bisson, our new IT Director has worked with PowerSchool in the Springfield school system and believes it is more efficient and is far more user friendly than Rediker. One advantage is the schedule builder that will offer greater flexibility for AMSA's needs, allowing for building multiple schedule scenarios which was a capability Rediker did not have. Adam Bisson met with

the Department Chairs to present the program and they agreed that it should be an improvement.

Thomas Azeredo said he has heard good things about PowerSchool, but he said no program should be considered a "panacea" for fixing the pervasive issues that have occurred with the schedule this year. The problems cannot be solved by a program, but rather, with better planning. Ken Estabrook asked if teachers have been involved with the decision to change software programs. Dr. McCleary said the Department Chairs were included, but not the faculty. Padmaja Bandaru, one of AMSA's veteran Computer Science Teachers, was present at the meeting and asked to speak. The Chair allowed it. Ms. Bandaru said she was involved with testing the system and felt it was an improvement. Dr. McCleary added that it is being used successfully by many districts and the Vice Principal also had experience with it in a different school system. While there are costs to switching a software system, they feel there are enough benefits to warrant the switch. The plan is to purchase PowerSchool and set it up to run in parallel with Rediker during this year to avoid disruption. Next year's schedule will be built with PowerSchool. Teachers and staff will be trained prior to the start of school next year. The software upgrade in the long term is not a significant expenditure increase. \$16K for Rediker as opposed to \$23K for PowerSchool. Board members agreed that system transitions can be difficult but that running both in parallel this year would facilitate the transition.

III. Parent Representative Update

A. New item

Liz Saul began her segment by welcoming Michael Finkel to AMSA. Liz Saul echoed Thomas Azeredo's comments regarding the joyful atmosphere of the Athletic Awards night and commented that it also featured academic achievements of the athletes.

She reported that parents believe that communications continues to be a challenge for AMSA. Parents would like to see the Board meetings streamed live or videotaped and up on the website within 24-48 hours. Liz Saul thanked Stan Macasieb (AMSA parent) for his volunteer videotaping over the years.

Liz Saul mentioned that parents are excited about having an evening coffee and have requested if Dr. McCleary would consider having members of the Administrative Team in attendance periodically. Parents want opportunities to engage with them personally, specifically Principal Erin O'Connor and Vice Principal Ellen Linzey.

IV. Chair Business

A. Complaint updates

Rick Kamal and Liz Saul were assigned to the complaint regarding alleged bullying. Interviews were conducted and documentation was gathered. The investigation portion is

complete and now they are reviewing their data. The next steps are to write up formal findings and discuss at Governance Committee so recommendations could be presented to the full BOard. The intention is to resolve the complaint by the December Board of Trustees meeting.

Pauline Jen Ryan and Ev Reynolds were assigned the complaint regarding an alleged violation of civil rights. They are close to resolution and will endeavor to finish the investigation so it can be discussed at the December Governance Committee as well.

B. Task Force updates

The Special Education Task Force update will be deferred until the next meeting since Allyson Hope Cohen is not present to report.

Ken Estabrook reported that he and Dr. McCleary met on November 3rd to discuss the Regional Issues Task Force (RITF) and this was very productive. They identified where the issues were but finding solutions will be a long-term effort since much of the necessary data is not readily available. The school is now ready to take on the task of making improvements to the orientation of incoming students, specifically non-Marlborough students. An example of a long term issue would be solutions to the regional bus service. Ken Estabrook plans to summarize the issues and coordinate with Dr. McCleary to make recommendations at the January Annual Planning Meeting. The RITF has not been disbanded.

Rick Kamal had no report from the Climate Task Force at this time.

C. Annual Planning Meeting Goals

The Chair asked the Board to discuss plans for the Annual Planning Meeting that will be held on January 28 from 8:00am-1:00pm.

The Board usually focuses on a self assessment and annual board goals. The annual meeting is supposed to be a retreat, where the Board steps back from their day to day business and move into longer range planning. The Chair asked "Does the Board want to take a stab at moving toward long range goals? Where do we want to be 3 or 5 years from now? What do we want the school to look like?"

It was agreed that the Board needs to talk about core values and how to achieve a long term vision. Michael Glass said these were good topics, but the Board needs to do some pre-work to help organize in order to stay on topic. Pauline Jen Ryan suggested that the Board may not have time for a self assessment since there was so much to cover and only 5 hours planned.

Chris O'Keeffe suggested that one hour of every monthly Board meeting be devoted to strategic topics. Ken Estabrook suggested that they focus the discussion on the three areas of Board responsibility; Academic Success, Faithfulness to the Charter, and Organizational Viability.

Thomas Azeredo said the faculty would like to see conversation take place regarding what the school is aiming for, amending and /or correcting flaws that have *consumed the spirit*. Can we resurrect what was good at AMSA?

The Chair asked if having a facilitator for the annual meeting would be of value. BoardOnTrack offers this service at an additional fee. Michael Glass was enthusiastically in favor, saying that this would keep the conversation on track and drive the process. He questioned if the facilitator should be someone outside the charter school world. Ken Estabrook and Dr. McCleary agreed that the facilitator **should** have charter school experience. The Board all agreed that a facilitator would be valuable and that the facilitator should be involved with the pre-work. The facilitator will help the Board to lay out a road map of where the school wants to go. The Board agreed that they should focus on a three-year time horizon not five.

Lucy Ferrante asked if the Board had accomplished last year's goals. Pauline Jen Ryan responded that the Board did not do very well and that they had given themselves too many goals. However, she added that they are pointed in the right direction and have made progress. Factors in slowing down Board progress toward more strategic objectives included the enormous amount of work required on "must-do" tasks such as the ongoing litigation and the collective bargaining process.

V. Governance

A. ED 2016-2017 Bonus Goals - outreach metric

Ev Reynolds reported on the Executive Director's Bonus Goals that were presented at the October Board Meeting. The Board voted to approve the goals with the understanding that the Governance Committee would work on the fourth goal related to *expanding engagement with corporations and universities*. The Governance Committee was specifically tasked with determining metrics against which progress could be measured.

One opportunity that is at hand is the potential for a multi-year partnership with General Electric Healthcare Life Sciences so there is a metric associated with this particularly opportunity. Chris O'Keeffe suggested that the goal should not use the word "disseminate" to describe the sharing of knowledge gleaned through professional development opportunities with other faculty members because, in a charter school context, it connotes the sharing of best practices with other schools.

Dr. McCleary said he was interested in bringing content area experts to AMSA.

Ken Estabrook asked what the vehicle for engagement would look like. How do we see tangible evidence of output? Is there a timetable and what is the scale? Engagement is the first step, the second step is what comes out of the engagement. Currently, the Science department at AMSA is collaborating with ten corporations and institutions but the Board would like to see this expanded to other departments.

Christopher O'Keeffe made a motion to accept the outreach metric for the fourth ED Bonus Goal.

Ev Reynolds seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

Scott Ladner	Absent
Tom Azeredo	Abstain
Pauline Ryan	Aye
Thomas Taverna	Absent
Ev Reynolds	Aye
Ken Estabrook	Aye
Christopher O'Keeffe	Aye
Allyson Cohen	Absent
Michael Glass	Abstain
Liz Saul	Aye
Rick Kamal	Aye

B. Monthly Update

There was no further update for the Governance Committee.

VI. Fundraising & Development

A. Monthly Update

There was no Fundraising and Development Committee Update.

VII. Education Committee

A. Update

The Education Committee will meet on December 8 and January 12.

VIII. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

Christopher O'Keeffe made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Ken Estabrook seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

Liz Saul	Aye
Tom Azeredo	Aye
Michael Glass	Aye
Pauline Ryan	Aye
Thomas Taverna	Absent
Ev Reynolds	Aye
Rick Kamal	Aye
Allyson Cohen	Absent
Christopher O'Keeffe	Aye
Scott Ladner	Absent
Ken Estabrook	Aye

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 8:10 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Sara Snow