

APPROVED



Advanced Math & Science Academy Charter School

Minutes

Board of Trustees Meeting

Date and Time

Thursday February 25, 2021 at 6:00 PM

Meeting will be held via remote participation See AMSA web site for information on accessing meeting

Trustees Present

Benjamin Hammel (remote), Jessica Bowen (remote), Jill Schafer (remote), Kristin Carney (remote), Liz Saul (remote), Maura Webster (remote), Nicholas Poirier (remote), Raul Porras (remote), Roger Jarrett (remote), Sheila Kelly (remote), Sowmini Sampath (remote)

Trustees Absent

None

Guests Present

Ellen Linzey (remote), Liana McLaren (remote), Mike Nawrocki (remote), Padmaja Bandaru (remote), Sara Snow (remote)

I. Opening Items

A. Call the Meeting to Order

Roger Jarrett called a meeting of the board of trustees of Advanced Math & Science Academy Charter School to order on Thursday Feb 25, 2021 at 6:04 PM. Chair Roger Jarrett announced that the meeting was being recorded and is livestreaming on facebook.

Jess Bowen was named timekeeper.

The Chair announced that the Board will go into executive session at the end of open session to discuss the purchase or lease of real property, since open discussion could have a detrimental effect on the process. The Board will not reconvene.

B. Record attendance and guests

C. Public Comment

Public Comment

One parent requested to make public comment. The speaker said she has two sons currently enrolled at AMSA, a senior and a freshman. Her comment was related to AMSA opening in April. She first wanted to thank Maura Webster for her support with addressing parent concerns. The speaker's main point was to emphasize the importance of opening the school because she feels remote learning is too hard on the students. She made it clear that she feels the online curriculum has been wonderful and impressive, and that no one is lacking there. She added, the counselors and Pete Jones have done a great job maintaining community. However, she would like to see the school do more to get the school open. She said she is tired of hearing about the HVAC issues and asked where is the research to back up the concern? She is very concerned for her son, who before this was a school leader and a very active member of the AMSA community, but is now saying that he doesn't know how much longer he can take it.

Roger Jarrett thanked the parent for sharing her concerns with the Board.

D. Check for Board discussion items from Public Speak

The Board agree to hold any discussion regarding the comments until after the Executive Director's Update. Many of the commenter's concerns will be addressed in Ellen Linzey's presentation.

II. Votes

A. Approve BOT meeting minutes January 7, 2021

Raul Porras made a motion to approve the minutes from Board of Trustees Meeting on 01-07-21.

Benjamin Hammel seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

Sheila Kelly	Aye
Kristin Carney	Aye
Sowmini Sampath	Aye
Liz Saul	Aye
Jill Schafer	Aye
Nicholas Poirier	Aye
Jessica Bowen	Aye
Raul Porras	Aye
Roger Jarrett	Aye
Maura Webster	Aye
Benjamin Hammel	Aye

B. Approve Minutes from Special BOT Meeting January 13, 2021

Sheila Kelly made a motion to approve the minutes from Special Board Meeting on 01-13-21.

Liz Saul seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

Nicholas Poirier Aye
Benjamin Hammel Aye
Jessica Bowen Aye
Sowmini Sampath Aye
Raul Porras Aye
Sheila Kelly Aye
Roger Jarrett Aye
Jill Schafer Aye
Liz Saul Aye
Maura Webster Aye
Kristin Carney Aye

C. Approve Minutes from BOT Meeting/Training January 23, 2021

Liz Saul made a motion to approve the minutes from SOA VOTE/ED Goals VOTE/Board Training Session on 01-23-21.

Maura Webster seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

Jill Schafer Aye
Nicholas Poirier Aye
Sowmini Sampath Aye
Maura Webster Aye
Benjamin Hammel Aye
Jessica Bowen Aye
Raul Porras Aye
Liz Saul Aye
Roger Jarrett Aye
Sheila Kelly Aye
Kristin Carney Aye

D. Approve Minutes from Special BOT Meeting February 2, 2021

Sheila Kelly made a motion to approve the minutes from Special BOT Meeting on 02-02-21.

Liz Saul seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

Jill Schafer Aye
Nicholas Poirier Aye
Liz Saul Aye
Sowmini Sampath Aye
Jessica Bowen Aye
Kristin Carney Aye
Maura Webster Aye
Benjamin Hammel Aye
Raul Porras Aye
Roger Jarrett Aye
Sheila Kelly Aye

III. Reports

A. Executive Director Report

ED Report (See presentation)

Ellen Linzey provided an update on her calls with Education Commissioner Riley. The plan he is proposing for the reopening of schools is still in progress. His focus is on the elementary school. He is proposing a phased-in approach. First K-5, then the middle school. Plans for the high school are still to be determined.

The lottery for the 2021-2022 school year was held on Tuesday. The school will enroll 132 sixth graders. There are 168 students on the grade 6 waitlist. There are now 136 students enrolled for grade 7, and we hope to bring in 4 more students in grade 7.

The Executive Director is very happy to share news about AMSA's Assumption College Partnership. This collaboration will supply AMSA with supervisors for our new Term Four In-person Program, as well as teachers and counselors going forward.

The ED provided a mid-year curriculum update(see attached presentation for details). Departments are confident they will be able to reach their projected goals for covering content.

Term 4 Program

It is difficult to manage remote learning and isolation, and for some very difficult. As much as we all want to return to school, there are still some issues with the buildings, and the roll out for getting teachers and staff vaccinated has been slow. Currently, our in-school remote program has less than 30 students, but it is going well and we have learned a lot. Our older students don't like the on-campus program as well as the younger students. In April, AMSA plans to expand the optional program to students for students in grades 6-9. There will be busing and a lunch program in place. Students will be able to opt into the program, where they will continue with their current remote learning, but at school and in supervised small groups. Administrators are working with student government to plan activities at school to provide some social events for students, especially our seniors.

The ED reviewed safety precautions that are in place on campus.

Razzle Dazzle.

City of Marlborough Food Drive

2021 National Merit Scholarship Finalists Nikhita Athipathy and Sasmeta Giriraj

Upcoming Events

- BOT Strategic Planning Meeting on Saturday, February 27
- Staff DEEP Training on March 29
- Graduation Class of 2021: Mike Nawrocki and Brianna Murphy are working on graduation plans. We have two dates; June 6 at the Hanover Theater, and June 4 at ForeKicks to serve as a backup. They are working on senior events, such as the senior breakfast and traditional car ride around campus. The school is doing everything they can to make the end of the year fun and memorable for our seniors.

Ellen Linzey ended her report with a quote from Rosa Parks. "You must never be fearful about what you are doing when it is right."

B. Executive Director report Q&A

Ben Hammel asked if all student in grades 6-9 are eligible for the in-person program.

Ellen Linzey said the current program is set up for up to 40 but will be expanding as the school hires more supervisors with grant funds.

The expanded program will allow students to continue with the consistency of their remote program, covering the same content, physically on campus and supervised. The current academic schedule will not change. She is expecting about 300 students will want to participate in the expanded in-person program, but she won't know for sure until she has the results of the family survey.

Ellen Linzey said she monitors the district COVID map constantly. All of our core towns are no longer in the red. However, people are still nervous and the administration wants to make the right decisions.

The recommendations for HVAC systems and air flow came from the DESE website regarding ventilation. All the offices and classrooms have air purifiers at this time. Bigger units have been ordered for the cafeterias and common spaces. The school is purchasing tents to offer open air spaces.

Liz Saul said a parent asked her, "why are AMSA teachers not going to be back in the classroom for the expanded program?" The administration believes that consistency is key, and keeping the remote program model at this time will avoid disruption. She wanted to point out that some teachers have been teaching from their classrooms already. Experience in other districts has proven that a hybrid model is not the best model.

C. Faculty Representative Report

Jess Bowen reported that the faculty is already of thinking about next year. The Commissioners update was concerning, but the faculty appreciates the Executive Director's response to the state's guidance and consistently keeping everyone updated. The predominant view is that things are going well. The remote is pretty good and to upset the apple cart may not be worth it. We feel bad for the students, and the social aspects that are suffering, but teachers are still concerned.

AMSA Quiz Bowl (online version) is happening on March 7th. She expects the episode may air in April. Watch for it!

D. Parent Representative Report

Maura Webster said it is helpful to see that things are in motion for a return to school. Ellen Linzey was able to answer most of the questions that parents have been asking. Parents are wondering how the school will pick the students for the expanded program. Ellen Linzey said that students who were struggling were the first to be invited, but it will soon be opened to all students in grades 6-9 who are interested in being on campus.

Marua Webster encourages parents to listen in at board meetings, speak up by requesting public comment, and to reach out to her if they have concerns or questions.

E. Check for board discussion items

The Chair clarified that the purpose of time allotted for Check for Discussion Items is to leave room for discussion when an issue, comment, or topic is flagged.

IV. Chair Business

A. Chair Business

Update on the Survey Task Force (see attached slides)

The summary of the Fall Pulse Surveys is later than usual. Raul Porras reported that the survey response rates were high.

Staff Response Rate 68%

Family Response Rate 57%

The survey results summaries will be posted on the website.

Ellen Linzey said the school is focused on how to get AMSA back to in-person learning, and providing additional student support for students struggling with remote learning. The Student Support Team (SST), consisting of administrators, counselors, and teachers, are setting up new plans and supports that are not IEP or 504.

Action vs communication: remote learning is making it easier to see what is going on in the classroom, but it is harder to see what is being addressed. Comments from teachers and families points to a need to better coordinate workload. There is still too much homework.

Hot Topics.

- Diversity and inclusion efforts: everyone agrees there is need, but we have to do better at hearing all perspectives.
- Remote learning
- Academic hours vs the depth of content.
- Homework

Raul Porras wanted to close this segment with a reflection, that you can't make everyone happy, but you can find common ground. Everyone is working toward solving the same thing, which is to give our students an excellent experience. Board members and administrators agreed that the survey results show that although we may disagree about "how", it is clear that we all agree on "what" we want to accomplish.

The Chair thanked all survey responders for great rate of response!

Ellen Linzey clarified that the survey results will be posted in summary format. Personal comments are not included.

Sowmini Sampath reported on the preparation for the Strategic Planning Meeting on February 27.

Outline of the meeting will include:

- Review agenda to define what the Board sees as 1 year goals for 2021-2022 school year and 3-year goals using spreadsheet that uses the vision document as a framework.
- Determine follow up work that is sustainable and trackable.
- Meeting efficiency. Think about next steps and how to better use time. Make meetings more productive by assigning pre-work.

- Recruitment efforts. We want to look toward expanding the board by creating protocols that are attractive to potential candidates and worth their time commitment.

V. Committee Reports

A. Education Committee

Liz Saul reported that the Education Committee focused on reviewing the current District Report Card. They plan to make this an annual review.

Mike Nawrocki and Brianna Murphy are looking into funding for our higher needs populations. She would like the committee to see data that compares subgroups with other towns.

District Report Cards are published by the state annually for all public schools and public charter schools. This information is available on the DESE site, the school website, and was sent via email to the AMSA community.

Action: Post District Report Card link in minutes.

<https://www.amsacs.org/about/school-report-card>

B. Governance Committee report

Sheila Kelly reported that the Governance Committee has been getting ready for Saturday's strategic planning meeting.

Raul Porras is working on how the Board can play a role with diversity and inclusion. What is the best way to structure an ongoing focus on diversity and inclusion? Is it through policies? The Committee agreed this discussion required the involvement of the whole board.

Sowmini Sampath said that many of the Board goals will cross committees. She want to discuss how does the Board assign ownership, as they are collective goals. Every committee should include a diversity goal, and this subject should involve all stakeholders. There is a lot of work being done by the administration, and the Board has the responsibility to continue to support and supplement this work. The Board may be a vehicle to guiding policy, but should not be hands-on management.

Roger Jarrett suggested that the Board look at what other schools are doing to see what is working and further the discussion at the next meeting.

C. Finance Committee report

Kristin Carney provided the December and January Financial Statements (see attached report)

Grants have resulted in 635K in funding.

Fund include the normally occurring grants as well as grants that our team continues to to after related to Guidance and COVID related expenses, which are significant to the school.

Jess Bowen was pleased to see the breakdown of the grants. She didn't realize where the money was coming from. Liana McLaren mentioned some of the

sources; COVID, FEMA, Tech Grants, Federal grants, and CARES ACT. As an example, the air purifiers were purchased with grant money and supervisors for the current in-person program.

D. Development Committee Report

Ben Hammel reported that the Development Committee met in February. They have reached out to the PTO and Golf committee and met to discuss next events, in hopes to advance both agendas. They have created some opportunities for collaboration. Some Development Committee members will join the PTO at their next meeting. Mike Finkle is setting up a website page for Development and they hope to find other ways to leverage the DonorPerfect software.

VI. BOT discussion of items nominated from Public Speak, ED, Faculty Rep, Parent Rep

A. Discuss topics nominated from above

Raul Porras wanted to thank the parent for speaking to the board during public comment. He knows how hard it is to articulate concerns. He said he hopes that many of her concerns were addressed in Ellen Linzey's report and that she will continue to communicate with school.

Jill Schafer added that she heard the concern for the mental health of students. What is the Board's role to help child's mental health? Ellen Linzey said the supervised in-person program was designed to address this issue, but she is happy to create a list of all the supports that the school is currently providing. Jill Schafer asked how is the Board to address this issue? Raul Porras said the Board is not dealing with the day to day management and it would be difficult to help with mental health issues.

Ellen Linzey said she was surprised that parents are not aware of the extra programs and supports for mental health that are being provided, as she and her team have been deeply involved with planning and implementing them. She said she will do her best to communicate better.

There is a lot of concern and frustration. The information out there is conflicted and incomplete. However, Ellen Linzey said the Commissioner expects everyone to be back in school 100% in the fall. AMSA has no intention to continue with remote learning in the fall.

Action: Demonstrate more of what is happening: the support programs, the ongoing planning toward school reopening. Perhaps an interview with the Facilities Director, discussing all the work that has been completed to make the buildings safe.

Jessica Bowen mentioned that teachers do not have the opportunity to establish relationships with students with a remote mode, but teachers know how difficult it is for students. Teachers are feeling the stress as well.

Ellen Linzey emphasised that her training was as a counselor and she does not forget the mental wellbeing of her students, staff, and families. She also knows that AMSA 's job is to educate and we need families to help. AMSA has done an outstanding job, but we are feeling the impact of COVID. Schools are about education, but they have become the center of a community. "The school is counting on parents to help take care of their students. Let's all stick

together a little bit longer and see how this new program works out. Please have patience, we are making progress."

Ellen Linzey asked the general audience, to inform the school of anyone who may be interested in the supervisor job.

VII. Meeting Wrap Up

A. Review action items from past BOT meetings

B. Meeting Effectiveness Assessment

The Board agreed that remote meetings are more efficient than in-person meetings for the most part, but we will have to wait for state guidance on OML when we return to pre-COVID protocols that may require in-person meetings again.

C. Candidate Agenda Items and Action items from Jan 2021 BOT Meeting

From Board Topic calendar and carry forward from previous meetings

- SMART Goals to be discussed at the Strategic Planning Meeting
- SMART Goals connected to Board Goals - in progress
- ED: Report results from Fall Pulse Survey - completed

D. Summary of Action Items

Action: Add District Report Card link to minutes.

Action: Demonstrate more of what is happening at school with programs and work toward opening and planning.

VIII. Closing Items

A. Call for motion to go into executive session

Roger Jarrett called for a motion to go into executive session to discuss the purchase or lease of real property, since open discussion could have a detrimental effect on the process. The Board will not reconvene.

Guests invited to join the executive session include Ellen Linzey, Mike Nawrocki, Liana McLaren, Lisa O'Connor, and Bob Baldwin.

The open session ended at 8:25pm. The Board will take a 10 minute break and meet in executive session at 8:35pm.

Roger Jarrett made a motion to go into executive session.

Nicholas Poirier seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

Maura Webster	Aye
Sowmini Sampath	Aye
Jill Schafer	Aye
Jessica Bowen	Aye
Sheila Kelly	Aye
Roger Jarrett	Aye
Liz Saul	Aye
Nicholas Poirier	Aye

Roll Call

Raul Porras Aye
Kristin Carney Aye
Benjamin Hammel Aye

B. Executive Session

C. Adjourn Meeting

Sowmini Sampath made a motion to adjourn the meeting.
Benjamin Hammel seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

Liz Saul Aye
Kristin Carney Aye
Raul Porras Aye
Sheila Kelly Aye
Jessica Bowen Aye
Jill Schafer Aye
Benjamin Hammel No
Nicholas Poirier Aye
Sowmini Sampath Aye
Roger Jarrett Aye
Maura Webster Aye

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 10:03 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jill Schafer

Documents used during the meeting

- 2-25-21 BOT ED Report February 2021.pdf
- 2-25-21 Fall 2020 Survey Results Summary.pptx
- 2-25-21 Dec thru Jan 2021 Financial Statements.xlsx