

APPROVED



Advanced Math & Science Academy Charter School

Minutes

Board of Trustees Meeting

Date and Time

Thursday August 25, 2022 at 6:00 PM

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

Trustees Present

Dawn Capello (remote), Jill Schafer (remote), Laura Burgess (remote), Maura Webster (remote), Nicholas Poirier (remote), Raul Porras (remote), Roger Jarrett (remote), Sowmini Sampath (remote), Zakery Prescott (remote)

Trustees Absent

Bela Gorman, Benjamin Hammel, Sheila Kelly

Trustees who arrived after the meeting opened

Sowmini Sampath

Guests Present

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

I. Opening Items

A. Call the Meeting to Order

Raul Porras called a meeting of the board of trustees of Advanced Math & Science Academy Charter School to order on Thursday Aug 25, 2022 at 6:01 PM.

B.

Record attendance and guests

Chair Raul Porras announced that the meeting was being recorded and is livestreaming on FaceBook.

Zakery Prescott was appointed as timekeeper.

Board member attendance was called by name.

C. Public Comment

No public comment requested.

II. Votes

A. Approve minutes from July 28, 2022

Motion to approve the minutes from Board of Trustees Meeting on 07-28-22. The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

Roll Call

Dawn Capello	Aye
Jill Schafer	Abstain
Raul Porras	Aye
Sowmini Sampath	Absent
Nicholas Poirier	Aye
Roger Jarrett	Abstain
Sheila Kelly	Absent
Laura Burgess	Aye
Maura Webster	Aye
Bela Gorman	Absent
Zakery Prescott	Aye
Benjamin Hammel	Absent

Sowmini Sampath arrived at 6:05 PM.

B. Authorize creation of Development Director role

AMSA needs to build its development initiatives. The school needs a dedicated person to focus on fundraising. Hiring a Director of Development would require an investment outside of our current budget. When there is need to raise funds, there is usually a development office with multiple people. However, AMSA is looking for one person to assist Ellen with the Capital Campaign.

Staff members have taken bits and pieces of the work involved, but this is not sustainable.

AMSA needs someone who has development experience and can build corporate and donor relationships. This person is important for long term growth and to maintain efforts as the school establishes a solid fundraising process.

How can we afford it? The Finance Committee has discussed and reviewed the need and agreed it would be a smart investment at this time. Ellen added that she has been advised by many of her outside colleagues to hire a dedicated development professional.

Raul mentioned the old adage "You have to spend money to make money."

Jill Schafer asked for clarification regarding the status of the Development Director. Is this a Board hire or a school hire? The Board is required to vote to authorize the expense that was not provided in the approved FY23 budget. However, the position itself is an operational hire and the new hire will be a staff member of the school, reporting to the Executive Director.

Many Board members added words of support.

Maura Webster made a motion to authorize the creation of the Development Director role and the associated expense that is outside the approved FY23 budget.

Raul Porras seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

Dawn Capello	Aye
Maura Webster	Aye
Sheila Kelly	Absent
Bela Gorman	Absent
Zakery Prescott	Aye
Benjamin Hammel	Absent
Roger Jarrett	Aye
Raul Porras	Aye
Jill Schafer	Aye
Nicholas Poirier	Aye
Sowmini Sampath	Aye
Laura Burgess	Aye

III. Consent Agenda

A. Consent Agenda Items for Review (Non-Vote Items)

The Financial statements were accepted with no further discussion required.

IV. Reports

A. Capital Campaign update

Maura Webster provided a brief update on the Capital Campaign. The authorization of the Development Director position was the biggest update.

The Development Committee has added new five members.

Mary Jo Nawrocki
Darren Rose
Eric Asman
Tammy Kim
Erin Torres

The Committee is planning a Capital Campaign kickoff event in early October...stay tuned!

B. Executive Director Report

See attached ED report.

Welcome back to our teachers and staff.
AMSA welcomed three new teachers.

We had seniors on campus today painting the rocks!

Ellen mentioned her thanks to Mike Nawrocki and Amanda Cence for all their hard work. "They work together well, they are super efficient, and driven for results." Also a big thank you to Liana McLaren... for everything! The facilities look great. Eric Lane and his team have been busy this summer. AMSA has a new phone system, an updated security system, and grass..huge improvements!

Razzle Dazzle Summer Time

Summer collaboration with UMASS Lowell. This was a two-week program with UML professors and AMSA Engineering teacher, Jeremy Morris. 1 week taught at AMSA and 1 week in the UML college level science labs.

Lesley University Graduate Intern Program.

Alex Reiter CS intern

Cicely Panara CS intern

Kristen Huetteman Math Intern

Supervisor Madhavi Marathe and Program Course Instructor Padmaja Bandaru.

This is the beginning of a wonderful pipeline!

ED Focus for 2022 2023

Six Areas of Focus:

- Trust and Respect-school culture
- Construction Project
- Fundraising-Capital Campaign
- Professional Development
- The AMSA Way
- Transition process for a new school leader

AMSA received a \$30K refrigerated centrifuge from Beckman Coulter.

The Capital Campaign has its own webpage.

Construction has been moved out about a year, to August 2024.

Plans for the new academic building has approximately 17,000 sq feet and allows for a new traffic pattern.

Upcoming Events

August 22-26: Staff and Faculty Orientation and Professional Development.

August 29: Grade 6 and 9 Orientation

August 30: First day of school for all students

September 14: Back to School Night Grades 6, 7, and 8

September 20: Back to School Nights Grade 9, 10, 11, and 12

Early October: Capital Campaign Event

Ellen mentioned the new Brick Program. Donors can buy a brick, with a customized dedication that will be part of the new campus. Do you know someone who can invest in our school?

It was noted that three seniors did internships at Boston Scientific and others at Quest Diagnostics. Mike Glass was responsible for the 3 years of internships at Thermo Fisher Scientific. Some of our alumni are now college interns.

"Interested, Involved, then Invested"

C.

Executive Director report Q&A

No additional questions.

D. Faculty Representative Report

Zakery Prescott reported that teachers returned to AMSA for orientation and are in the process of returning to their classrooms, setting up and getting ready for students.

E. Parent Representative Report

Laura Burgess reported that she heard from many parents. She first wanted to mention the PTO's new family mentor program that will help support new AMSA parents and hopefully encourage more parent involvement.

She had messages of concerns, the first being about the uniform. Many parents said the uniform vendor (Lands End) was not reliable in meeting deadlines and the cost was high.

Others said they would like to use local businesses, especially for the shirts.

Some parents asked if the logo was a requirement.

Some parents said the financial support for uniforms in the amount of \$150 is not enough to cover all the needs.

Why do we use Lands End?

Ellen responded that there needs to be consistency, which is the purpose of a uniform. The logo is part of the uniform and has been so since 2005.

Laura said that parents reported that the used uniform sales were not quite sufficient for everyone and the timing is not always compatible for some parents.

Is there a contract with Lands End? Is there room for other vendors?

Mike Nawrocki responded that students can wear plain white shirt or blue shirts. Mike Finkle posts the used uniform sales and any available vendor coupons. The uniform policy used to be very strict and is not very relaxed and simple for parents. Consistency is still important.

Mike Nawrocki said he is very happy to discuss other vendor options. Laura Burgess will share the list of concerns with Mike Nawrocki, and he will share them with his team. They will take a closer look at the vendor.

Ellen said she is concerned with some local vendors not being able to deal with the volume required.

Some parents mentioned that the state is providing eligible students with free breakfast and lunch in public schools. They are wondering why AMSA does not provide breakfast or have kitchen facilities.

Parents said the financial assistance is not always in alignment with the timing of their financial needs. For example, not being sure if they qualify for transportation before they have to register for the bus. Liana McLaren (Director of Finance and Operations) added that the financial assistance is provided once all the federal forms for the free and reduced lunch program are collected in mid to late July.

There is a lag due to this mandatory federal process. Gift Cards and financial assistance information were just mailed out to families.

The summer updates to the security system took care of many of the security concerns.

What is AMSA doing about teacher burnout?

Dawn Capello thanked Laura and all the parents who provided feedback. She said it is very important to have awareness of parent concerns. Laura's role provides parents with a "voice" at board meetings.

F. Flag Board discussion items

No items were flagged.

G. Staff and Family Survey Results - Comments

See attached slides: Spring 2022 Survey Comments Summary.

The Survey Task Force had to read 500 comments from parents and 100 comments from staff.

Staff

The Task Force grouped the results into categories. The staff comments were mostly about student behavior trends, consistency of policy enforcement, teacher education, and efforts to improve the balance between expectations of high educational standards and a focus on social and emotional wellbeing.

Staff are actually on the same side. Excellence is desired by everyone. Excellence is not an either/or. AMSA overall wants to maintain high standards without negatively impacting the mental health our students.

AMSA has partnered with Challenge Success*, a program that believes in rigorous academics while making sure there are proper mental health supports in place. Many schools use the Challenge Success curriculum and their professional development programs. (challengesuccess.org)*

Family

Most of the comments were focused on the facilities, balancing expectations of high academic standards and social emotional wellbeing, social access, and bullying.

Empowering students to speak to teachers.

Asking for more opportunities to meet socially.

Bullying is hard to fix, but the school strongly encourages students and parents to follow the process that is in place and these situations will be handled.

Staff members and parents should not wait to communicate until there is a survey. Parents should let the Administration know right away when there is a problem. Procedures are on the website and in the handbook. Parents can also call the Dean of Students. Raul feels the school is focusing on the right things.

Raul thanked the other members of the Survey Task Force for all their hard work; Ellen Linzey, Dawn Capello, Zakery Prescott, and Lynn McCluskey.

H.

Board Self Assessment Results

Jill Schafer provided a brief summary of the Board Self Assessment.

There were only 10 participants, which may have affected the accuracy of the scores.

There are five levels in the assessment, with "1" being the lowest and "5" being the highest

The assessment score has gone down from level 4 to level 3 overall, which may be due in part to the lower participation. The results are similar to last year (2021) and the year before (2020).

There were reoccurring themes. The following areas are in need of improvement:

- Development.
- Finance and board education, indicating that members were not as familiar with the financial processes of the school.
- Board composition with regard to diversity. Ideally, the board wants to look like the community they serve.
- Board recruitment and onboarding. The Governance Committee has created a better orientation process. Putting together a binder or link where all the information for new board members will be centrally located.
- Board Goals and accountability. Determine long term goals and a process to measure them. Encourage committees to get their goals up on BoardOnTrack. Board meetings should be more strategic. Board members should think actively, be proactive, and avoid complacency.

Raul Porras added that BoardOnTrack has a lot of resources about goal setting and how to improve board efficiency and effectiveness. The Board needs to hold itself accountable.

V. Chair Business

A. Vacant Position: Education Committee Chair

The Education Committee Chair position is vacant. Roger Jarrett offered to step down from the Development Committee to serve as the Interim Education Chair.

The Board took a vote to appoint Roger as the Interim Education Committee Chair.

Raul Porras made a motion to to appoint Roger Jarrett as the interim Education Committee Chair.

Sowmini Sampath seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

Maura Webster	Aye
Jill Schafer	Aye
Sowmini Sampath	Aye
Dawn Capello	Aye
Nicholas Poirier	Aye
Bela Gorman	Absent
Benjamin Hammel	Absent
Sheila Kelly	Absent
Zakery Prescott	Aye

Roll Call

Laura Burgess	Aye
Roger Jarrett	Abstain
Raul Porras	Aye

B. ED Evaluation Update

Raul Porras asked board members who have not yet submitted their ED Evaluation Survey to finish this task so Liz Saul can complete the process.

C. ED Search Committee

The Search Committee has met and everyone was there. The next step is to conduct interviews with stakeholders, which will inform the job description and posting process. Once candidates are vetted, the Search Committee will recommend 2 or 3 candidates for interviews.

Raul said he feels that finding the next Executive Director will be the most important responsibility of the board, as this is setting the direction and future of AMSA.

VI. Committee Reports

A. Development Committee Report

Maura Webster said there are Capital Campaign banners that they will keep rotating.

They are hoping that student influenced messaging will encourage involvement and alumni engagement. This is essential to developing philanthropy.

Mark is doing recruitment with seniors who will later serve as alumni representatives.

Action: Sara Snow will mail Capital Campaign Information cards to Board members. They are encouraged to keep several in their wallets.

Golf Tournament was a great success. Kudos to the Golf Committee for an amazing job. They raised over 5K more than last year! It gets better every year.

Check out the AMSA facebook. Each Golf Tournament sponsor has their logo displayed.

B. Education Committee Report

The Education Committee did not meet in August.

C. Governance Committee Report

The Governance Committee did not meet in August.

D. Finance Committee Report

Finance Chair Roger Jarrett reported that they met this week. They had a rich discussion about the year end budget June 2022

Liana McLaren reported the final number for the year was \$1.9 million.

They had a robust discussion about the school's future plans and budgeting for the development position.

VII. BOT discussion of items flagged from Public Speak, ED, Faculty Rep, Parent Rep

A. Discuss topics and determine next step(s) for each topic nominated

No items were flagged.

VIII. Meeting Wrap Up

A. Review action items from past BOT meetings

Agenda items September 22. Online.
October in person.

Quorum in person through March 2023
Hybrid not an option...does not work.

ED Evaluation Report

B. Collect Candidate Agenda Items and Action items for September 22, 2022 BOT Meeting

ED Evaluation Report
The September Board meeting will be remote.
The October Board meeting will be in person.
Everyone agrees that meeting in hybrid of in-person and remote is not a viable option.

Jill Schafer reminded members: The Open Meeting Law's requirement that a quorum of the body and the chair be physically present at the meeting location remains suspended until the end of March 2023.

C. Summary of Action Items

Action: Sara Snow will mail cards to board members.

D. Meeting Effectiveness Assessment

Dawn Capello mentioned that she had technical issues during the meeting and thinks in-person meeting is the better option and makes for a more cohesive unit.

Laura Burgess said she is looking forward to meeting in-person...to see more than just faces.

The Board recruitment focus is on non-parent candidates to balance out the membership.

Try to bring expertise and networks from outside.

The 50:50 ratio of non-parent and parent membership is not specified in the bylaws, but it has been a long term goal for many years.

IX. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

Maura Webster made a motion to adjourn.
Sowmini Sampath seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

Roll Call

Raul Porras	Aye
Maura Webster	Aye
Roger Jarrett	Aye
Laura Burgess	Aye
Sheila Kelly	Absent
Zakery Prescott	Aye
Jill Schafer	Aye
Benjamin Hammel	Absent
Sowmini Sampath	Aye
Dawn Capello	Aye
Nicholas Poirier	Aye
Bela Gorman	Absent

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 7:55 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Sara Snow

Documents used during the meeting

- 8-25-22 BOT June 2022 Financial Statements.xlsx
- 8-25-22 BOT ED Report August 2022 .pdf
- Spring 2022 Survey Comments Summary.pdf