



**Amber Charter School
October Board Minutes
October 16, 2024**

MEETING CHAIR:

Dr. John Gutierrez

MEETING SCRIBE:

Clarisse Alvarado

MEETING LOCATION: ACS East Harlem, 220 E. 106th Street, New York, NY 10029

ATTENDANCE:

Board: Amador Centeno, Li'Esha Garcia, Dr. Miguelina German, Dr. John Gutierrez, Luina Muñoz-BlueSpruce, Khiera Peña, Kim Ramos

Staff: Veronica Almedina, Clarisse Alvarado, Rose Castillo, Kirsys Gomez, Emily Griffin, Samantha Kienemund, Gina Mellusi, Masiel Mendez, Mia Thomas, Meirelys Ruiz, Francina Yaw-Costello

Absent: Tim Day, Robyn Epps, Soledad Hiciano, Lindsay Marino Long, Brad Olsen

Guest: Kate VanBramer (MMB) via Zoom

Call to Order

Dr. John Gutierrez called the meeting to order at 6:17 pm

I. Check-In

II. Finance Committee Audited Financial Report - Reported by Kate VanBramer

- 99% completed
 - Final per pupil DOE reconciliation, not approved yet
- No significant weaknesses
- Two years of disaffiliation from Amber Education Fund
- Total assets decreased by \$3.6 million
- Decrease of liabilities: about \$1.9 million year over year, most being lease-related
- Profit loss- \$2.2 million increase in per pupil, 12% increase
- Decrease in ESSER Sept 2024- grant given during COVID
- Footnotes: adoption of credit losses, wording changes, allowance for credit losses
- \$750,000 in expenditures of federal awards, a single audit needed to be completed.
 - Clean, no material weaknesses

- No significant deficiencies
- No additional audit findings are to be identified

III. Education Committee- Reported by Chair of Education Committee, MDA & Principals, and Co-CEO

- Reported Overall State Test Results Comparison Spring- 2023 to Spring 2024
- ELA- Amber 45% proficiency
 - 21-22 common core state standards aligned test, In 2022-2023, the test shifted to the next generation state standards
- Math- Amber 42 % proficiency
 - math needs improvement across the network
- Science
 - The co-CEO reported that this was the first year taking it as a Network. The state revamped the science test, which is no longer graded internally. The shift affected grades 5th through 8th. The investigations lab created was all computer-based, and the materials were not provided as they were in previous years. Amber had 25% proficiency across the network.
- All three schools: exceeded the ELA measures of Interim (MIP) progress.
- All three schools: met or exceeded the Math 2025 MIP goal
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- Behind the scores:
 - The principal of KBES shared how all the principals and Co-CEO reviewed many factors that could have contributed to the low proficiency scores.
 - The principal of IW reported:
 - 60% of 3rd-8th grade teachers in the network were new to Amber
 - 52% of teachers were new to teaching 3rd-8th grade at Amber
 - Principal of EH Academic interventions (length of sessions, number of days, size of groups, materials, etc)
 - Principal KBMSreported-
 - Tactical Test Prep skills across all campuses
 - KBMS long-term substitutes (5th grade ELA, 6th grade math, 7th grade math and 7th grade ELA) hiring struggles could have contributed to the low scores as well
 - MDA reported that we will incorporate more rigor and effective pacing
- Increasing proficiency goals for 2024-2025- reported by Co-CEO
 - Math Proficiency scores will get back to 2022-2023. 54% proficiency as a network
 - Improve students' computer-based testing skills to enhance performance and proficiency on NYS test
 - ELA proficiency scores will get back to 2022-2023. 52% proficiency as a network
 - The Principals of Amber shared strategies to reach these goals.
- i-Ready network results for Reading, K-8
 - 24% mid or above proficiency

- 50% of one grade level below
- 25% three or more grade levels below
- i-Ready network results for Math, K-8
 - 10% mid or above proficiency
 - 60% one grade level
 - 29% three grade or more levels below

IV. Co-CEO Report - Reported by the Co-CEOs

- Co-CEO reported 403b audit, more than 100 employees, is it being contributed correctly, should be completed in the next three weeks.
- Schools are commencing the second phase of the evacuation.
- Facilities updates
 - Oil tank is finally completed.
 - The front staircase should be completed by the first week of November
 - Inwood project- received **after hours variances** permit to work after 6 pm on weekdays, no weekends. Received DOB complaint for noise. They found it was null & void.. Work will only be until 10 pm to be mindful of the community.
- Enrollment updates
 - Current enrollment- 1214 95% to full enrollment
 - We are currently actively enrolling 44 students
 - By November, we will not enroll any more students
- Both Co-CEOs went to a CSGF 2024 CEO Retreat together in Georgia.
- Last week Co-CEO & MDA hosted PD with all principals of Amber
- Co-CEO spoke to our recent Kingsbridge Middle school graduates-
 - Lily stated the high school is great so far, the staff is friendly, and she is pleased with her high school choice.
 - A'dray is at Fordham Prep and said that high school is great so far, and it making new friends

V. ACS Inwood Principal Report - Reported by Francina Yaw-Costello

- We have our fourth-grade cohort transitioning classes.
- Spanish class- connecting expectations from the general classroom to Spanish instruction writing experience.

VI. ACS Kingsbridge Middle School Principal Report - Reported by Mia Thomas

- Mr. Johnny took students to the Coney Island Maker Faire.r.
- Girls Volleyball has commenced and it's the first year we are competing.
- 8th-grade students went to visit High School of Fashion Institute.

VII. ACS Kingsbridge Elementary Principal Report - Reported by Gina Mellusi

- Back to school night went well.
- The first day of school was a success. It was nice to see our students back to school.

VIII. ACS East Harlem Principal Report - Reported by Meirelys Ruiz

- Back to school night went well, with translations in all rooms.
- The EH principal shared a picture of the first day of middle school walkers being dismissed. They were very excited.

IX. Board Chair Report - Reported by the Board Chair

- **Development Committee Update:**
 - When: October 2025
 - What: 2-hr cocktail; option to grow to “strolling supper”
 - Where: Venue exploration; Above the Heights.
 - Pending venue offerings on integrated coordination will determine the need for ongoing coordinator.
 - Day-of contact for hand-off in the final week (s)
 - Program Topline: option to add a silent auction
 - Students feature “zones”-- art, robotics, etc.
 - Honorees: Vasthi, Soledad, Stolpers, and Miranda Family
 - Sponsor prospects: businesses, vendors, first quarter of next calendar year
 - November Update: Budget; Sponsor opportunities
 - To be built for a minimum 2-3:1 ROI.
 - Popcorn fundraising:
 - New popcorn fundraising called Popping Popcorn. They range from Snack-size- \$14 - large \$23.
 - The individual school can track their purchases. Each school can have separate winners.
 - This new popcorn fundraiser gives us more time to sell from a week or two weeks.
 - The board agreed on a new popcorn fundraiser vendor.

XI. Motion to approve the September 2024 meeting minutes

- Move: Miguelina
- Second: Li-Esha
- Aye: All
- Nay: None
- Abstain: none

XII. Motion to adjourn the meeting

- Move: Khiera
- Second: li-Esha
- Aye: All
- Nay: None
- Abstain: None

Meeting adjourned at 8:00 pm