**Ascend Public Charter Schools**

 **Meeting of the School Board of Trustees**

**February 9, 2022**

**6:00 pm**

**Location: Dial-in**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Trustees in attendance**

Emmanuel Fordjour, Janai Jeter, Kwaku Andoh, Nadine Sylvester (secretary), Oral Walcott, Shelly Cleary (treasurer), Stanley Taylor (all via videoconference)

**Ascend staff in attendance**

Anjya Thomas, Catherine Jessup, Danique Day, Emily Acuna, Jordan Akhurst, Hannah Martinson, Lisa DeRoche, Maryann Li, Recy Dunn, Sophie Kramer (all via tele- or videoconference)

**Public in attendance**

Diana Ramsden (via teleconference)

Nadine called the meeting to order at 6:03 pm.

1. **Public comment**

No public comment was made.

1. **Public comment update**

No public comment was offered at January’s meeting.

1. **Consent agenda**

Nadine presented to the Board the minutes of the January 12, 2022 meeting and executive session. Shelly moved to approve the meeting minutes and executive session minutes, Kwaku seconded, and the motion was carried unanimously.

1. **School and network updates**

Shelly summarized the financial highlights from December 2021, which continue to show strong financial performance. Net income is favorable to the budget and we are tracking favorably against all covenants, SUNY and financial stability metrics. Shelly also shared an update on the status of COVID stimulus fund approvals and expenditures.

Danique provided an update on behalf of the Academic Committee*.* At their last meeting, they discussed Ascend’s academic priorities for the end of the year, namely ensuring we have a supportive culture that develops leaders, clear communication and great outcomes for kids. This includes developing a plan to support students through the difficult transition to fifth grade; continuing to build out leader development through individual and cohort coaching; and managing greater levels of accountability for student outcomes and being responsive to the needs of all students.

Maryann updated the Board on SY21-22 enrollment and SY22-23 student applications. Enrollment continues to track above goal and will likely exceed end-of-year targets. Applications also continue to outperform previous years; by January, total applications were 26% higher than last year at the same time.

Lisa spoke to the Board about hiring and recruitment. Despite a challenging recruitment year, hiring for immediate vacancies continues to outpace previous years and 93% of lead teachers are hired across the network. Lisa shared that while we are still seeking immediate hires, we are beginning to focus on hiring for SY22-23

Jordan shared an update on our efforts to actualize our commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion and anti-racism. We continue to hold monthly DEIA workshops, which garner strong feedback and demonstrated learning from staff. On February 4, we held the first session in our DEIA Speaker Series with Jodi-Ann Burey, a sought-after speaker working at the intersections of race, culture and health equity. This session was attended by staff, students and family. Earlier this year, the IDEALs conducted a DEIA facilities audit, and we continue to implement their recommendations to make our buildings more physically accessible. The IDEALs have also helped plan and amplify events across our schools to celebrate Lunar New Year and Black History Month.

1. **Ascend mid-year progress towards goals**

Recy reminded the Board of Ascend’s strategic imperatives and shared a progress update on org-wide goals, most of which are on-track to achieve their objectives by the end of the year. Some have been delayed or are being reconsidered as we prioritize other initiatives, and our academic goals are performing under target. Recy also shared the leadership team’s priorities for the remainder of SY21-22, including improving student academic outcomes, an org-wide compensation study, building adult culture, planning for SY22-23, and developing our five-year strategic plan.

1. **Executive session: school leader transitions**

At 6:40 pm, Kwaku moved to enter executive session to discuss school leader transitions. Shelly seconded and was unanimously approved.

At 7:24 pm, Kwaku moved to exit executive session, which Oral seconded and was unanimously approved.

1. **Adjournment**

At 7:25 pm, Stanley moved to adjourn the meeting, which Kwaku seconded and was unanimously approved.

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Name Date