Stephanie called the meeting to order at 6:32pm. Stephanie introduced Stanley Taylor, whom the Board voted onto the Board of Trustees at last month’s meeting.

I. Public comment

There was no public comment.

II. Public comment update

No public comments were offered at the prior meeting.

III. Consent agenda

Stephanie presented to the Board the minutes of the October 21, 2020 meeting. Amanda moved to approve the minutes, Nadine seconded, and the motion was carried unanimously.

Stephanie presented Ascend’s 2020-2021 district safety plan to the Board. Shelly motioned to approve the plan, Oral seconded and the motion was carried unanimously.

The Board reviewed the ACS Board goals they had previously drafted. Amanda motioned to adopt the goals, Shelly seconded and the motion was carried unanimously.

IV. Financial report

Shelly reviewed revenue and audit highlights with the Board. Ascend is on track with revenue projections and Shelly shared that Ascend’s investment policy recommendation is underway.

Ascend is partnering with JLL to renegotiate its leases in anticipation of flat or reduced per pupil revenue. The Board affirmed its support of Ascend partnering with JLL to renegotiate Ascend’s leases.
Shelly reviewed the FY20 Ascend Charter Schools audit with the Board. The audit was clean and completed ahead of schedule along with the Ascend Learning and Friends of Ascend audits. Stephanie motioned to approve the FY20 ACS audit, Oral seconded and the motion was carried unanimously.

V. Schools and network updates

Brandon presented school reopening updates to the Board. Ascend has made great progress in closing the gap between remote and in-person instruction, and the majority of families continue to prefer remote learning. Yet we know remote learning does not fully meet the needs of many students, so we are gradually building toward our hybrid model, whereby each school community’s context will inform how we reopen. Two schools are piloting in-person learning after Thanksgiving, and all schools will reopen their hybrid model in mid-January. We have also launched an in-person learning support center for some students, who are continuing with remote learning and will benefit from adult supervision in learning pods. While the DOE announced its closure today, the learning center will remain open as long as the city continues to provide charter schools with food and nurses.

Brandon reviewed school achievement and climate goals for SY20-21. Ascend continues to have high, achievable expectations for student achievement, and aims to meet or exceed June 2019 performance. We know there has been learning loss since school closure, and we believe recapturing our performance at the end of SY19 is an ambitious target. It remains unknown whether New York State testing will take place this year, but Ascend’s assessments will be administered in any case.

Carl reviewed student enrollment data, and Ascend is currently on track with enrollment targets. New students have been routinely oriented, provided with technology and immersed in remote learning since the beginning of the school year. Carl shared student recruitment initiatives that schools and AL’s student recruitment team will launch in November and December. The student recruitment team will roll out a month-by-month plan for school leaders.

Aaron presented to the Board a talent hiring update. Twelve schools are fully staffed at this time, and overall the vacancy numbers are low, while one school continues to be a priority for filling open roles.

Jordan Akhurst provided the Board with an update on the network’s DEIA initiatives. The Equity Advisory Committee has been established, beginning its monthly cadence, and staff are contributing resources to Ascend’s DEIA resource library. The Management Center has been conducting two-day workshops on leading with equity for all school and network managers. This is the first of a series of workshops with The Management Center to strengthen equitable management skills.

VI. Adjournment

Amanda moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:38 pm. Oral seconded and the motion was carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by:

______________________________
Name

______________________________
Date