

Zoom Video Conference Friday, July 17, 2020 9:00 am

- I. Call to Order
- II. Public Comment
- III. Executive Session Discussion of AF Hartford High School principal performance.
- IV. Adjourn



achievementfirst.org

July 17, 2020, 9:00 am Zoom Video Conference

### I. Call to Order and Attendance

The meeting was called to order at 9:03 am by Patsy Mundy. The following board members, constituting a quorum, and Achievement First staff were in attendance:

Patsy Mundy - Yes

Endia DeCordova - Yes

Bildade Augustin - Yes

Amy D'Angelo, AF Network Support

David Dee – Yes

Shannon Garfield, AF Network Support

Christi George, AF Network Support

Melika Forbes, AF Network Support

Melika Forbes, AF Network Support

Ken Paul, AF Network Support

Lisa Tanen-LaFontaine - Yes

### II. Open Session for Public Comment

There were seven members of the public who made a public comment, all of whom are current or past staff members. Several speakers raised concerns about school culture and leadership. Others spoke in support of the principal. There were five individuals who indicated in the Zoom chat that they wanted to make a public comment but due to time constraints the board was not able to hear them. Ms. Patsy Mundy said that those who were unable to make a public comment during this designated time in the meeting are invited to submit their statement in writing, and were given instructions on how to do so. Ms. Mundy also said that there would be a follow up meeting which would also include a public comment portion should they wish to participate in that meeting once it is scheduled.

# III. Executive Session - Discussion of AF Hartford High School principal performance

The board entered executive session at 9:28 am to discuss the performance of the AF Hartford High School Principal. The following individuals were invited to join: Sarah Blanton, Amy D'Angelo, Shannon Garfield, Christi George, Melika Forbes and John Motley.

Motion by Bildade Augustin Seconded by David Dee

The board excited executive session at 10:41 am. Ms. Mundy shared that the board intends to schedule a follow up meeting to speak with the principal. She invited members of the public to attend.

# IV. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 10:43 am.

Motion by Bildade Augustin Seconded by David Dee



# Achievement First Hartford Academy Board Meeting

Monday, August 3, 11:00 am Zoom Video Conference

This board meeting is part of a series of summer presentations held jointly with other AF boards.

# **Agenda**

- I. Call to Order
- II. Discussion of Principal Preparation and Placement
- III. Adjourn



achievementfirst.org

# AF Hartford Academy Board Meeting

Monday, August 3, 2020 Zoom Video Conference

**Board Members in Attendance:** Patsy Mundy, Bildade Augustin, Alice Turner, Lisa Tanen-LaFontaine, Celina Whitmore

**Staff and Guests in Attendance:** Hilary Cymrot, Sarah Blanton, Ken Paul, Katie Rosa Moher, Elise Major, Jasmine Jeffers

Sarah Blanton recorded the minutes. The meeting was called to order at 11:04 pm.

NOTE: This was a joint meeting with all Achievement First school boards.

### 1. <u>Discussion on Principal Preparation and Placement</u>

Hilary Cymrot, Senior Director of Principal Placement, gave an overview of the Principal in Residence (PIR) program. The program's goal is to develop a deep, diverse bench of leaders who are truly ready to be principals, whom we can name early, so they can have a long runway to prepare to lead transformational schools.

She explained how her team undertook a learning agenda to identify what makes some principals successful and others not. The process began with identifying principals who did not sustain in their roles, principals who sustained with breakthrough results, and those who sustained with mid-level results. They then interview regional superintendents to assess strengths and liabilities, reviewed 360 feedback as deans then principals, and revised threshold competencies and interview modules based on that learning. The conclusions reveals that the strongest leaders were especially strong in people leadership, school culture, self-awareness and had a track record of success.

Ms. Cymrot then reviewed the growth and evolution of the program, citing data around efficacy, racial diversity and participation rates across the network and by geography.

### 2. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 12:01 pm.



Zoom Video Conference Thursday, August 6, 2020 5:00 pm

- I. Call to Order
- II. Public Comment
- III. Executive Session Candidate Interview for Interim Acting Principal of AF Hartford High School principal performance.
- IV. Board Business
  - a. Approve Interim Acting Principal of AF Hartford High School
- V. Adjourn



achievementfirst.org

August 6, 2020, 5:00 pm Zoom Video Conference

#### I. Call to Order and Attendance

The meeting was called to order at 5:10 pm by Patsy Mundy. The following board members, constituting a quorum, and Achievement First staff were in attendance:

Patsy Mundy - Yes Ja Hannah - Yes

Endia DeCordova - No Lisa Tanen-LaFontaine - Yes

Bildade Augustin - Yes

David Dee – No Sarah Blanton, AF Network Support
Alice Turner - Yes Laneka Thomas, AFHS School Leadership
Celina Whitmore - Yes Shannon Garfield, AF Network Support

### II. Open Session for Public Comment

There was no public comment.

**III. Executive Session** - Candidate Interview for Interim Acting Principal of AF Hartford High School principal performance.

The board entered executive session at 5:11 pm to conduct an interview for Interim Acting Principal of AF Hartford High School principal. The following individuals were invited to join: Sarah Blanton, Laneka Thomas, and Shannon Garfield.

Motion by Lisa Tanen-LaFontaine Seconded by Bildade Augustin All in favor

The board excited executive session at 6:38 pm to vote. Bildade Augustin made a motion to hold the vote. Lisa Tanen-LaFontaine requested an opportunity for discussion prior to voting and the board decided to enter executive session again. Ms. Patsy Mundy thanked Laneka Thomas for joining.

The board entered executive session at 6:41 pm to have further discussion about the interview for Interim Acting Principal of AF Hartford High School principal. The following individuals were invited to join: Sarah Blanton and Shannon Garfield.

Motion by Lisa Tanen-LaFontaine Seconded by Bildade Augustin All in favor

The board exited executive session at 7:19 pm

### IV. Board Business

RESOLVED, the AF Hartford Academy Board of Directors hereby approves Ms. Laneka Thomas to serve as the Interim Acting Principal of AF Hartford High School for a six month period.

Motion by Ja Hannah Seconded by Alice Turner All in favor

Ms. Patsy Mundy reminded the board that the understanding behind this appointment is that it can be extended or shortened outside the six month period.

# V. Adjourn

It was unanimously decided to adjourn the meeting at 7:20 pm.



Zoom Video Conference Monday, September 14, 2020 5:30 pm

- I. Call to Order
- II. Public Comment
- III. Approve Minutes
- IV. Discussion and Business
  - a. Principal Reports
  - b. Finance Committee Report
    - i. Approve Budget Amendment
  - c. Board Chair Report
    - i. Board Priorities for the 2020-21 Year
    - ii. Elect Leadership Slate
    - iii. Approve Mask Policy
    - iv. Review CMO Evaluation
    - v. Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statements
    - vi. Lead for Racial Equity Commitment
    - vii. Board Committees
- V. Adjourn



achievementfirst.org

Monday, September 14, 2020, 5:30 pm Zoom Video Conference

### I. Call to Order and Attendance

The meeting was called to order at 5:32 pm by Endia DeCordova. The following board members, constituting a quorum, and Achievement First staff were in attendance:

Patsy Mundy - Yes Raven Obas, AFBA School Leadership Endia DeCordova - Yes Emily Wojtusik, AFHA School Leadership Bildade Augustin - Yes Laneka Thomas, AFHA School Leadership Ja Hannah - No Christina Ellington, AF Network Support Alice Turner - Yes Shannon Garfield, AF Network Support David Dee - Yes Victor De La Paz, AF Network Support Lisa Tanen-LaFontaine - No Sarah Blanton, AF Network Support Celina Whitmore - Yes Ken Paul, AF Network Support

Public: n/a

# II. Open Session for Public Comment

There was no public comment.

### III. Approve Minutes

RESOLVED, the AF Hartford Academy Board of Directors hereby approves the meeting minutes from August 3 and August 6, 2020.

Motion by David Dee Seconded by Lisa Tanen-LaFontaine All in favor

### IV. Reports and Discussions

## A. Principal Reports

Ms. Raven Obas shared that student engagement, teacher creativity and building connection over Zoom are going well. Attendance and enrollment are not where the school wants. Kindergarten enrollment is low because many families are opting into daycare for an additional year due to COVID.

Ms. Obas discussed how resilient and thoughtful the scholars have been. They are using a new

platform to connect with families called Class Dojo and it has been successful. Ms. Obas praised the leadership team and their work and support.

63% families indicated they want to stay remote following October 5<sup>th</sup> which is the official day or re-opening. 20% want in-person for four-days, 8% are flexible between in-person and remote and the school is recommending remote for those who are flexible. Staff were also given a survey about whether they want to teach in-person or remote. 42% indicated they prefer to teach remotely, 13% indicated they prefer to work in the building and 45% indicated they are flexible and can work either remotely or in the building. Ms. Obas said that they will need two staff in each grade to teach in-person sections and they will need additional support staff for arrival and dismissal procedures.

In person instruction will have a maximum of 13 scholars per classroom. Each scholar will have their own set of materials/school supplies. They will wear masks and maintain six feet of social distance. Lunch will be in classrooms. For those families who are in dire need of in-person instruction (~20 families), AF Hartford Elementary will open for those families on September 21st.

There have been no midyear departures and five staff members did not return after the end of the last school year. Two of those were non-renewals due to positions that were eliminated, one staff member was terminated and two staff members resigned. Both of the positions held by the teachers who resigned have been filled. Teacher certification is currently at 89%. Of the four teachers who are not certified, three are awaiting a response from the State and one must pass one exam.

Enrollment in kindergarten is low. The total enrollment for the school meets the goal because of over enrollment in other grades. Ms. Obas reviewed student attendance and attrition by grade.

The board inquired about the kindergarten enrollment challenges and discussed the methods used to connect with disengaged families.

Ms. Emily Wojtusik, AF Hartford Summit Middle School principal, shared that scholars are getting the basics down with tech challenges and are all really getting into their work. Teachers have done a great job getting to know the scholars and having the scholars get to know them. They've done units on cyber bullying and social justice.

The leadership team is slightly smaller than last year. They decided not to replace Laneka

Thomas who is currently the interim principal at AF Hartford High. There is a new DSO. All of the new teachers, with the exception of one, have prior teaching experience. There is a teacher in residence (TIR) in each grade level who will co-teach this year with the hope that they will be full teachers next year.

19% of families have opted for in-person instruction once school re-opens while 81% will continue to be remote. All students who will come in person will get four school days. There will be 9-14 students per advisory in each grade level and 1-3 advisories per grade level depending on size.

There will be new entrances for the middle scool, keeping them separate from the elementary and high school entrances. Breakfast and Lunch will be served in classrooms with lunch carts. Offices are limited to one adult and extra classrooms will be used as teacher workspaces. Teachers and staff will not cross grade levels.

Ms. Wojtusik is still working out class coverage and will try to minimize the number of teachers in the building to prioritize safety. Schedules are likely to rotate. Staff retention is 82% with one departure thus far this year and there is someone already filling that position. Teacher certification is at 78% with 75% of the uncertified teachers (six of eight) awaiting response from the State around submitted paperwork. Attendance is 93% and is taken every class period and teachers are following up with families midday. Enrollment is strong - 15 students above the goal.

Ms. Laneka Thomas, AF Hartford High School Interim Principal, gave an overview of the summer training and start to the school year. Staff gave 98% approval (2% were neutral) on the efficacy of summer training. She shared quotes from staff about optimism and hope for the school year, as well as specific lesson feedback and the opportunity to practice using technology. The growth areas that were named from last year are being addressed deliberately by the team to better serve scholars.

The top priorities for the school year are (1) student and staff safety, (2) student experience – classroom environment and (3) adult culture.

Attendance has been above 90% since the first day (when it was 89%). The attendance team has been working hard to get kids into their remote classes and today attendance was 96%. Core classes in the morning and early afternoon are mandatory. There is also live advisory twice per week. The other three days per week there are one on one check ins. Scholars are taking live electives – theater, dance. They are not recorded videos. Late afternoon there is

independent work time, with an adult on Zoom available for extra help (office hours/study hall). Ms. Thomas has already hosted two town halls to hear from students. The seniors have been struggling with their senior year being this way so the school is responding and the energy is turning around. They are demonstrating tremendous fortitude, in Ms. Thomas' opinion.

97% of scholars are using school-issued Chromebooks. The rest are using their own technology and there are two scholars who are still engaging with the school around technology.

The current reopening plan is to reopen on 10/5. 22% of families have communicated that they need in-person instruction. The plan is to have as few staff as needed in the building.

Regarding the safety plan, there will be temperature checks daily, scholars will remain in the same classroom with teachers rotating. Masks, frequent handwashing, and six feet social distancing will be required.

Staff retention has been good. Ms. Thomas noted two departures and the specific new hires the school has made including a new DSO. Once paperwork is confirmed, 90% of staff will be certified which leaves two teachers who still need to be certified. 44% of staff identify as people of color.

Ms. Thomas shared the AP courses that are offered and noted that the school is offering one additional AP course this year (AP Computer Science). AP performance from last year has improved in terms of the number of exams passed per student.

The college office is working hard to connect with every senior and family to talk about their post high school plans. 85% of those meetings have taken place already. The first draft of their college essays are due at the end of this week.

For any scholar who presents symptoms of COVID, there is a designated isolation room where they would go to have their temperature taken and the nurse has a system of retrieving scholars from that room. Ms. Thomas shared that special education continues to be offered and services are being maintained remotely or in person, socially distanced.

The board discussed adult culture –how it is addressed, how it is measured, what are norms (going to the source, students first, honoring different people's truths, among others) and how is the leadership team guiding those conversations and practices.

Shannon Garfield, Regional Superintendent, shared the survey results from staff noting that

100% of staff feel Ms. Thomas is effective in her job. The differences in the school are inspiring under her leadership and Ms. Thomas has been working extremely hard.

Ms. Thomas spoke about the principal transition. The ninth and tenth graders and families know her from here time at the middle school. The eleventh and twelfth graders and families know her from when she was at the high school. She feels her welcome has been warm and strong.

Ms. Garfield shared that reception from the announcement after Ms. Thomas' appointment has been extremely positive.

### **B.** Finance Committee Report

Victor De La Paz joined the meeting to preview the budget amendment that board is asked to approve. There are several categories that, because of COVID and remote learning, have been cut from the budget. There are many other categories that may get cut or reduced but have not yet. The balance sheet is strong. Mr. De La Paz reviewed changes to the PPP loan.

RESOLVED, the AF Hartford Academy Board of Directors hereby approves the amended budget as recommended by the Finance Committee and prepared by Achievement First for the 2020-21 fiscal year.

Motion by Bildade Augustin Seconded by Endia DeCordova All in favor

# C. Board Chair Report

Patsy Mundy shared that discussions of a board pipeline, board engagement and development can be covered in a board retreat which may be held in October before the November meeting.

RESOLVED, the AF Hartford Academy Board of Directors hereby elects the following leadership slate for the 2020-21 fiscal year:

Patsy Mundy, Chair
Endia DeCordova, Vice Chair
Bildade Augustin, Treasurer
Ja Hannah, Secretary
Motion by David Dee
Seconded by Alice Turner
All in favor

Ms. Mundy gave an overview of the CMO evaluation that is done annually. She asked board members to complete it and send to her if they wish to give input. Similarly, the conflict of interest disclosure statement must be completed and sent to Sarah Blanton.

RESOLVED, the AF Hartford Academy Board of Directors hereby approves the facial covering (mask) policy as presented by Achievement First.

Motion by David Dee Seconded by Bildade Augustin All in favor

WHEREAS, AF Hartford Academy was founded to address the legacy of racism in public education and to support the young people in New Haven to realize their full power and potential;

WHEREAS, AF Hartford Academy has entered into an Academic and Business Services Agreement with Achievement First, Inc ("AF"), dated as of July 1, 2020;

WHEREAS, Lead for Racial Equity was defined as the lead core value for AF, but AF has acknowledged that it has not -- and does not currently -- consistently live that value in its schools. While AF has made meaningful progress in some areas, AF has not acted urgently or boldly enough to be consistently anti-racist in its instruction and curriculum, school discipline and student experience, talent practices and policies, family engagement, and decision-making; and

WHEREAS, AF Hartford Academy, in alignment with AF, aspires to lead the education sector not just in what our scholars achieve but also in the values-based way we operate. We believe that when we know better, we must do better. We are committed to becoming the anti-racist school system and community that our scholars, families, and staff deserve. We believe that we must interrogate our current practices, accelerate change, and institutionalize the equity-based mindsets, policies, and practices that are needed to move us collectively toward that vision.

BE IT RESOLVED, the AF Hartford Academy Board of Directors hereby affirms that AF Hartford Academy will uphold the values of Lead for Racial Equity and:

1. Vehemently denounce racism and actively work to dismantle it within and outside AF Hartford Academy;

- 2. Build structures and accountability to ensure all students, families, and staff are treated equitably and feel heard and valued; specifically, work to amplify Black and Latinx voices and perspectives both internally and externally;
- 3. Implement an anti-racist approach to the its beliefs, mindsets, policies, and practices with goals and actions in each of the following areas:
  - Adult culture and inclusive decision-making
  - Student Experience/School Culture (including student discipline policies and practices)
  - Talent (including equitable development, promotion, and compensation)
  - Instructional practices and curriculum
- 4. Instruct the principals of AF Hartford Academy to report at board meetings on the progress against these commitments, what has been accomplished, how different parts of the AF Hartford community have been engaged, and what the next phase of the work will be; and
- 5. Ensure all new AF Hartford Academy priorities and initiatives are developed, launched, and executed with an intentional and embedded focus on Leading for Racial Equity; take any additional steps necessary to ensure AF Hartford Academy becomes the powerful, anti-racist engine for equity that we were founded to be and that our scholars, families and staff deserve.

Motion by Bildade Augustin Seconded by David Dee All in favor

Ms. Mundy indicated that she may be reaching out to individual directors to discuss committee appointments.

# V. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 7:20 pm by Patsy Mundy.

Motion by David Dee Seconded by Alice Turner All in favor



Zoom Video Conference Monday, October 19, 2020 5:30 pm

- I. Call to Order
- II. Public Comment
- III. Approve Minutes
- IV. Discussion and Possible Action
  - a. CMO Evaluation
  - b. 2021 Objectives
  - c. Board Recruitment
    - i. Developing a pipeline for new board members
    - ii. Identifying skillsets with significant value add
  - d. Committee Membership
    - i. AF Hartford High School Committee
    - ii. Finance Committee
    - iii. Governance Committee
    - iv. Personnel Committee
    - v. Other
- V. Additional Discussion
- VI. Adjourn



achievementfirst.org

Monday, October 19, 2020, 5:30 pm Zoom Video Conference

### I. Call to Order and Attendance

The meeting was called to order at 5:32 pm Patsy Mundy. The following board members, constituting a quorum, and Achievement First staff were in attendance:

Patsy Mundy - Yes Alice Turner - Yes Endia DeCordova - No David Dee - Yes

Bildade Augustin - Yes Lisa Tanen-LaFontaine - Yes

Ja Hannah - Yes Celina Whitmore - Yes

Sarah Blanton, AF Network Support

Public: n/a

### II. Open Session for Public Comment

There was no public comment.

### III. Approve Minutes

RESOLVED, the AF Hartford Academy Board of Directors hereby approves the meeting minutes from September 14, 2020.

The board will approve the minutes at the next board meeting.

### IV. Discussion and Possible Action

**CMO Evaluation:** Patsy Mundy reviewed the Charter Management Organization (CMO) evaluation opening up the discussion for input from the board. The form is an opportunity for the board to review the administrative management services that AF is hired to do.

**2021 Objectives:** The board discussed family engagement and possibilities of connecting with the AFHA community, especially parents. The goal would be to better understand what the families need and also to ensure that families know about the board.

Bildade Augustin noted that she uses an app called Remind at another organization. It can be used to easily send information and updates.

**Board Recruitment:** The board currently has eight members and has room for additional directors. Ms. Augustin noted that the skills and expertise that the board should seek in new members should be aligned with the needs of the school community. Ja Hannah flagged some potential areas such as IT, development/fundraising and community connectors.

The board discussed bringing on an additional parent. There is also a seat for a member of the Hartford Board of Education and a teacher representative.

**Committee Membership:** The AF Hartford High School Committee (Patsy Mundy and Alice Turner), Personnel Committee (Patsy Mundy and David Dee) and Finance Committee (Patsy Mundy and Bildade Augustin) need one additional member.

Lisa volunteered to be on the finance committee.

### V. Additional Discussion

There was no additional discussion.

# VI. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 7:02 pm by Patsy Mundy.

Motion by Lisa Tanen-LaFontaine

Seconded by Alice Turner

All in favor



Zoom meeting Monday, November 9, 2020 5:30 pm

- I. Call to Order
- II. Public Comment
- III. Approve Minutes
- IV. Discussion and Business
  - Principal Reports
  - Board Chair Report
  - Treasurer Report
    - i. Approve Financial Report
  - Introduction to AF President, Rich Buery
- V. Adjourn



www.achievementfirst.ord

November 9, 2020, 5:30 pm Zoom Video Conference

### I. Call to Order and Attendance

The meeting was called to order at 5:35 pm by Patsy Mundy. The following board members, constituting a quorum, and Achievement First staff were in attendance:

Patsy Mundy - Yes Raven Obas, AFBA School Leadership Endia DeCordova - No Emily Wojtusik, AFHA School Leadership Bildade Augustin - Yes Laneka Thomas, AFHA School Leadership Ja Hannah - Yes Christina Ellington, AF Network Support Alice Turner - Yes Shannon Garfield, AF Network Support David Dee - Yes Sarah Blanton, AF Network Support Lisa Tanen-LaFontaine - Yes Ken Paul, AF Network Support Celina Whitmore - No. Dacia Toll, AF Network Support Richard Buery, AF Network Support

### II. Open Session for Public Comment

There was no public comment.

### III. Approve Minutes

RESOLVED, the AF Hartford Academy Board of Directors hereby approves the meeting minutes from September 14 and October 19, 2020.

Motion by Lisa Tanen-LaFontaine Seconded by Bildade Augustin All in favor

# IV. Reports and Discussions

### A. Principal Reports

Ms. Laneka Thomas, AF Hartford High School Interim Principal, shared organizational health survey data that showed significant growth year over year. In absolute terms, the data is not where she wants it to be but they saw a 14 point improvement. In particular, staff are indicating that they feel heard by the leadership team and that decisions are being made with multiple perspectives. Ms. Thomas has consistently made space to engage with staff in a meaningful, ongoing way. They team openly will have grown comfortable putting on the table the conversations that had formerly been avoided.

94% of college and career planning meetings have taken place and the first round of early decision applications were submitted to schools including Smith College, Brown University and University of Pennsylvania. More applications will be submitted for the November 15<sup>th</sup> deadline. The seniors are very invested in their college process.

Despite being remote, students are engaging in clubs and additional social emotional learning opportunities. Until recently they had 15% of kids in the building but are now fully remote. They've heard from scholars and parents that the schedule needs restructuring – likely moving to a block schedule with longer class blocks to go deeper and complete assignments.

The priorities continue to be student success, student investment and adult culture.

Ms. Raven Obas, principal of AF Hartford Elementary School, shared that apprehension about coming to school in-person was dissipating and families were getting more comfortable with the idea, but then they went fully remote. She noted that everyone is being resilient in adjusting to changes.

She shared that teachers are using work completion and participation trackers to gauge student progress and growth, but they will be transitioning to a more rigorous data collection and reporting. Report card week is the first week in December. They will share with families the work completion and participation data, and well as the assessment data they have. They've done STEP testing to communicate reading scores as well as math quiz results.

As they look ahead, they are working on stronger family communication, strategic interventions and work completion, eventual in-person instruction (hybrid model) and focusing on the joy of the coming holiday season.

Ms. Obas noted that the AF network has prioritized a more inclusive curriculum and she's finding that students are loving the books they're reading. Science is taught across all grades and they're taking input from families on the schedule which have resulted in some schedule adjustments to better support student learning. Teachers are using Class Dojo to stay connected to families. Ms. Obas shared some feedback from parents showing gratitude and praising the efforts of the school.

The elementary made their enrollment goals.

Ms. Emily Wojtusik, principal of AF Hartford Summit Middle School, updated the board that students, teachers and leaders are all resilient and adjusting to changes well. She shared nuances in the attendance data and highlighted students who have perfect attendance – some of whom didn't have perfect attendance last year before school went remote.

They've adjusted the scope and sequence to slow down, respond to data, and engage more in interventions.

The staff recently took an organizational health survey and students took an investment survey. The data will be available in December and the team will use it to plan for after winter break.

They are working to embed the core value of Lead for Racial Equity (LRE). They made adjustments to the behavior system. They've also created an LRE steering committee

### **B.** Board Chair Report

Patsy Mundy shared with the board that the search for a permanent principal is ongoing and that she's met with Hilary Cymrot to get an update.

### C. Treasurer Report

Bildade Augustin gave the treasurer report which include financials through September. No schools are projecting a deficit. The PPP forgiveness application will be submitted soon.

RESOLVED, the AF Hartford Academy Board of Directors hereby approves the financial report as presented.

Motion by David Dee Seconded by Ja Hannah All in favor

# D. Introduction to Richard Buery

Dacia Toll joined the meeting to discuss her transition news that after 21 years, she believes it is best for AF to have new leadership. She loves the organization deeply and believes that Rich is among the most talented people in the sector. Mr. Buery will undergo a validation process to determine whether he will become the next CEO.

Rich Buery introduced himself and discussed his background and his goals for the organization.

Ms. Toll reviewed the priorities that she sees for the board.

- 1. Ensure the schools are excellent especially the COVID response and recovery (a multiyear effort).
- 2. Strategizing around making the schools financially viable (advocacy, philanthropy, strong budget management).
- 3. Principal talent and making sure that each school has a strong leader who is growing and developing in their roles.
  - 4. Community relations and engagement.

# V. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 7:01 pm by Patsy Mundy.

Motion by Bildade Augustin Seconded by Ja Hannah All in favor



# Joint Meeting of the Achievement First School Boards of Directors

# Amistad Academy, Elm City College Preparatory, AF Bridgeport Academy, AF Hartford Academy, AF Brooklyn and AF Rhode Island

Zoom meeting

Wednesday, January 20, 2021

5:30 - 7:00 pm

- I. Call to Order
- II. Presentation and Discussion of AF Vision Process
  - a. Vision Process Overview
  - b. Deep Dive on Graduate Aims
- III. Adjourn



www.achievementfirst.ord

# Joint Meeting of the Achievement First School Boards of Directors

# Amistad Academy, Elm City College Preparatory, AF Bridgeport Academy, AF Hartford Academy, AF Brooklyn and AF Rhode Island

Zoom meeting Wednesday, January 20, 2021 5:30 – 7:00 pm

#### I. Call to Order and Attendance

The meeting was called to order at 5:32 pm by Dick Ferguson, Elm City College Preparatory Board Chair. The following board members and Achievement First Staff were in attendance:

**Amistad Academy Board Members in Attendance**: Carolyn Greenspan, Lorraine Gibbons, Jane Levin, Ethan Tyminski, Patricia Sweet, Tyra Smallwood, Priyanka Junankar (Yale SOM Board Fellow)

**Elm City College Preparatory Board Members in Attendance**: Dick Ferguson, Laura Saverin, Patric Gregory, Stephanie Ma, Julia Halberstam, LaVonta Bryant, Nicola Fleischer (Yale SOM Board Fellow)

**AF Bridgeport Academy Board Members in Attendance**: Dick Kalt, Rajeev Lakra, Marlene Macauda, Debra Hertz, Ebrima Jobe, Mike Strambler, Kimberly Bruce, Dewey Loselle

**AF Hartford Academy Board Members in Attendance**: Patsy Mundy, Bildade Augustin, Ja Hannah, Alice Turner, Lisa Tanen-LaFontaine

**AF Rhode Island Board Members in Attendance**: Mayor Jorge Elorza, Reshma Singh, Ben Smith, James Wiley, Maryellen Butke

**AF Brooklyn Board Members in Attendance:** Deb Shanley, Romy Coquillette, Jon Atkeson, Kevin Miquelon, Chris Lynch, Warren Young, Will Robalino, Justin Cohen, Theresa Hayes

**Achievement First Staff**: Dacia Toll, Rich Buery, Sarah Blanton, Ken Paul, Katie Rosa Moher, Paul Astuto, Albert Pulido, Elise Major, Connor McGann, Jasmine Jeffers

Public: Genevive Walker, Peter Butler, Shalia Garnett, Tanesha Forman

II. Presentation and Discussion of AF Vision Process

Mr. Rich Buery gave a presentation on AF's Vision Process. AF's goal is to bring a broad cross section of the AF community together to define a vision of excellence and create multi-year plan.

Following the presentation, the boards discussed what their dreams are for the AF graduates and the skills and mindsets they hope AF students develop. This discussion will help define the graduate aims which will inform the goals for the network and the strategic plan for the organization.

# III. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 7:02 pm.

Motion by Dick Kalt.

Second by Dick Ferguson.

All in favor



Zoom meeting Wednesday, February 3, 2021 5:00 pm

- I. Call to Order
- II. Public Comment
- III. Approve Minutes
- IV. Discussion
  - a. Board Chair Report
    - i. Board Recruitment
    - ii. Proposed Executive Session personnel matter involving the hiring of the AF Hartford High School principal
  - b. Treasurer Report
    - i. Financial Report
    - ii. Audited Financial Statements
- V. Board Business
  - a. Set number of directors
  - b. AF Hartford High School Principal
  - c. Financial Report
  - d. Audited Financial Statements
- VI. Adjourn



www.achievementfirst.ord

February 3, 2021, 5:00 pm Zoom Video Conference

### I. Call to Order and Attendance

The meeting was called to order at 5:02 pm by Patsy Mundy. The following board members, constituting a quorum, and Achievement First staff were in attendance:

Patsy Mundy - Yes

Sarah Blanton, AF Network Support

Ken Paul, AF Network Support

Ja Hannah - Yes

Shannon Garfield, AF Network Support

Alice Turner - Yes
David Dee - Yes
Lisa Tanen-LaFontaine - Yes
Celina Whitmore - Yes

Public: AJ Santos, Jada Jenkins, Marrie Ayub, Frank Williams, Myron Stewart, Arnel Hines, Troy Monroe

### II. Open Session for Public Comment

There was no public comment.

# III. Approve Minutes

RESOLVED, the AF Hartford Academy Board of Directors hereby approves the meeting minutes from November 9, 2020 and January 20, 2021.

Motion by Bildade Augustin Seconded by Lisa Tanen-LaFontaine All in favor

#### IV. Discussion

### A. Board Chair Report

Ms. Patsy Mundy shared that the board is looking to bring on additional directors to increase the size and capacity of the board.

Three members of the staff at AF Hartford High School, Jada Jenkins, AJ Santos and Marrie Ayub

spoke in support of Ms. Laneka Thomas as the principal of AF Hartford High School and noted her strengths and the way she is leading the school as the interim principal.

The board entered executive session to discuss a personnel matter involving the hiring of the AF Hartford High School principal at 5:15 pm and invited Sarah Blanton and Shannon Garfield to join. Motion by Bildade Augustin. Seconded by David Dee. All in favor.

The board exited executive session at 5:46 pm Motion by Bildade Augustin. Second by David Dee.

RESOLVED, the AF Hartford Academy Board of Directors hereby accepts Achievement First's nomination of Ms. Laneka Thomas to serve as the principal of AF Hartford High School effective immediately.

Motion by David Dee Seconded by Ja Hannah All in favor

Laneka Thomas joined the Zoom meeting for a brief discussion as the board congratulated her and voiced their support of her.

### **B.** Treasurer Report

Bildade Augustin gave the treasurer report including the year to date financials and the FY20 audited financial statements. AF has not yet heard back about the status of the PPP loan.

### V. Additional Board Business

RESOLVED, pursuant to Article IV, Section 2 of the AF Hartford Academy Bylaws, the AF Hartford Academy Board of Directors hereby does, effective February 3, 2021, set the number of members of the Board of Directors at seven (7).

Motion by Lisa Tanen-LaFontaine Seconded by David Dee All in favor

RESOLVED, the AF Hartford Academy Board of Directors hereby approves the financial report as presented.

Motion by Bildade Augustin Seconded by Ja Hannah All in favor RESOLVED, the AF Hartford Academy Board of Directors hereby accepts the report of the independent auditors, CohnReznick, prepared in relation to the fiscal year ending 6/30/20.

Motion by Bildade Augustin Seconded by Ja Hannah All in favor

# VI. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 6:01 pm by Patsy Mundy.

Motion by Lisa Tanen-LaFontaine
Seconded by Bildade Augustin.
All in favor



Zoom meeting Monday, March 29, 2021 5:30 pm

- I. Call to Order
- II. Public Comment
- III. Approve Minutes
- IV. Discussion and Business
  - a. Principal Reports
  - b. Joint High School Committee Report
  - c. Board Chair Report
    - i. Proposed Executive Session Personnel discussion regarding principal renewal offers for 2021-22 school year
      - 1. Approve principal renewal offers
  - d. Treasurer Report
    - i. Approve financial report
- V. Adjourn



www.achievementfirst.org

Monday, March 29, 2021, 5:30 pm Zoom Video Conference

### I. Call to Order and Attendance

The meeting was called to order at 4:37 pm by Patsy Mundy. The following board members, constituting a quorum, and Achievement First staff were in attendance:

Patsy Mundy - Yes

Bildade Augustin - Yes

Emily Wojtusik, AFHA School Leadership

Ja Hannah - Yes

Laneka Thomas, AFHA School Leadership

Alice Turner - Yes

Christina Ellington, AF Network Support

David Dee - Yes

Michael Hendricks, AF Network Support

Lisa Tanen-LaFontaine - Yes

Sarah Blanton, AF Network Support

Ken Paul, AF Network Support

Faisal Jawaid, AF Network Support

Faisal Jawaid, AF Network Support Neil Shah, AF Network Support

### II. Open Session for Public Comment

There was no public comment.

### III. Approve Minutes

RESOLVED, the AF Hartford Academy Board of Directors hereby approves the meeting minutes from February 3, 2021.

Motion by Lisa Tanen-La Fontaine Seconded by Billie Augustin All in favor

# IV. Reports and Discussions

### A. Principal Reports

Ms. Raven Obas, principal of AF Hartford Elementary School, shared updates about the March reopening and how they have prioritized safety and choosing joy. Students and staff are excited to be back in the building and have reported feeling safe with the safety protocol that is in place.

She shared updates on reading levels and math assessments, the two content areas they've

prioritized. Administering remote assessments is challenging but the participation rates have been improving. Ms. Obas reviewed areas where there are skill gaps and discussed how they are reviewing data with teachers. She noted that they are seeing growth, especially when students are in the building, but it is not at the pace of an ordinary school year.

She reviewed attendance and how it has been trending upwards. Daily attendance ranges from 90-93%. The attendance committee has been working to partner with families around chronic absenteeism.

Ms. Obas shared that 100% of the leadership team is returning and she anticipates 100% staff retention.

No students are being retained.

The board discussed student recruitment and potential community partnerships.

Ms. Laneka Thomas, AF Hartford High School Principal, updated the board on the March reopening. 21% of students are attending in-person learning. There is ongoing synchronous instruction, but not live instruction for those students who attend in person.

She shared attendance rates, GPA data and interim assessment results – both absolute results and year over year comparisons. She shared data around the number of students who are failing classes and discussed the interventions and responses for students who are struggling academically. The leadership team did a student by student audit to best understand how to support their success which included scheduling changing, tutoring, spring break classes, and increased communication with students and families through advisory.

Ms. Thomas shared that teachers and staff report they are most satisfied when they can come to the building and connect with students. There is uncertainty about the 2021-22 school year but there is excitement about the visioning process and the direction the network is heading. Two members of the leadership team are leaving at the end of this school year – one is getting promoted to a network director role and another who is departing AF Hartford High. Teaching staff retention is 85% and she shared that she feeling strong about the team returning for next year.

Graduation will be in person, but exact plans have not yet been set.

Ms. Thomas discussed the hard work that the senior class has put into their work and their

plans for their futures, and the college counseling supports for the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades.

Ms. Emily Wojtusik, AF Summit Middle School principal, updated the board that all staff members are back in the building (except those with accommodations) and have reported feeling good about being together again. Some students are coming for in-person learning 2-days per week and others attend 4-days per week.

She shared whole school and grade level attendance and highlighted scholars who have perfect attendance. Enrollment is 405, above the goal, and attrition is very low.

Ms. Wojtusik shared that the organizational health results were up, year over year, in every question. Last summer, the leadership team decided to focus on team morale and a culture of team and family and were pleased to see strong results in those areas.

She shared pass/fail rates by grade and noted that students will not be retained unless the family requests it. Ms. Wojtusik said there is no mandatory summer school. They will need to take end of year data to determine 2021-22 supports and interventions.

One leadership team member is moving to Texas and that role is being filled by someone who is currently serving in that role to cover a maternity leave. They hired a dean of school culture, the role Ms. Laneka Thomas had had before leading AF Hartford High School. Teacher offer letters recently went out. She shared the low numbers of anticipated departures and the strength of the Teachers in Residence (TIRs) who are able to fill these positions.

# **B.** Joint High School Committee Report

Patsy Mundy briefly noted that Jumoke Academy is facing similar challenges with math instruction.

# C. Board Chair Report

The board entered executive session to have a Personnel discussion regarding principal renewal offers for 2021-22 school year at 6:48 pm and invited Christina Ellington, Michael Hendricks, Shannon Garfield and Sarah Blanton to join. Motion by Billie Augustin. Second by Lisa Tanen-La Fontaine.

The Board exited executive session at 7:14 pm. Motion by Lisa Tanen La Fontaine. Second by David Dee.

RESOLVED, the AF Hartford Academy Board of Directors has discussed the performance of the AF Hartford Academy Principals intending to return for the 2021-22 school year and the compensation package as proposed by Achievement First, and hereby approves the renewal of the following principals, with a final compensation package to be incorporated in the FY22 Budget to be reviewed and approved in May 2021:

- Raven Obas, Principal, AF Hartford Academy Elementary School
- Emily Wojtusik, Principal, AF Hartford Summit Middle School
- Laneka Thomas, Principal, AF Hartford High School Motion by Ja Hannah
   Seconded by David Dee
   All in favor

# **D.** Treasurer Report

Faisal Jawaid, AF's Controller, gave the financial updated including year to date forecasts, opportunities for federal stimulus funds, and the balance sheet.

RESOLVED, the AF Hartford Academy Board of Directors hereby approves the financial report as presented.

Motion by David Dee Seconded by Lisa Tanen-La Fontaine All in favor

# V. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 7:20 pm by Patsy Mundy.

Motion by Lisa Tanen-La Fontaine

Seconded by Ja Hannah

All in favor



Zoom meeting Monday, May 10, 2021 5:30 pm

- I. Call to Order
- II. Public Comment
- III. Approve Minutes
- IV. Elect New Directors
- V. Discussion and Business
  - a. Principal Reports
  - b. Board Chair Report
    - i. Vision Process Update
    - ii. Meet AF's new COO, Xanthe Jory
    - iii. Re-elect Directors
  - c. Treasurer Report
    - i. Re-appoint Auditors
    - ii. Financial report
    - iii. FY22 Budget
- VI. Adjourn



www.achievementfirst.ord

#### - Draft -

# AF Hartford Academy Board of Directors

May 10, 2021, 5:30 pm Zoom Video Conference

### I. Call to Order and Attendance

The meeting was called to order at 5:32 pm by Patsy Mundy. The following board members, constituting a quorum, and Achievement First staff were in attendance:

Patsy Mundy - Yes Raven Obas, AFBA School Leadership
Bildade Augustin - Yes Emily Wojtusik, AFHA School Leadership
Ja Hannah - No Laneka Thomas, AFHA School Leadership

Alice Turner - Yes David Dee - Yes

Deborah Prince - Yes Michael Hendricks, AF Network Support

Lisa Tanen-LaFontaine - Yes

Neil Shah, AF Network Support

Xanthe Jory, AF Network Support

Jessica Glover - Yes

Sarah Blanton, AF Network Support

Kan Baul, AF Network Support

Erwin Hurst - Yes Ken Paul, AF Network Support

### II. Open Session for Public Comment

There was no public comment but Patsy Mundy invited the board candidates, Jessica Glover and Erwin Hurst, to introduce themselves.

### III. Approve Minutes

RESOLVED, the AF Hartford Academy Board of Directors hereby approves the meeting minutes from March 29, 2021.

Motion by Lisa Tanen-LaFontaine Seconded by David Dee All in favor

### IV. Elect New Directors

The board members who had an opportunity to engage with the board candidates prior to this meeting spoke about their impressions and recommendation of both Jessica Glover and Erwin Hurst.

RESOLVED, the AF Hartford Academy Board of Directors elects Ms. Jessica Glover to serve as a serve as a Parent Representative with a three year term ending June 30, 2024, and does, pursuant to the bylaws of AF Hartford Academy, effective May 10, 2021, set the number of members of the Board of Directors at nine (9).

Motion by Alice Turner
Seconded by Bildade Augustin
All in favor

# V. Reports and Discussions

### A. Principal Reports

Raven Obas introduced herself to the new members and began her presentation of AF Hartford Elementary School and the school's academic growth. Students and teachers are enjoying being back in the building.

She shared some of the academic supports for the 2021-22 school year, including a dedicated intervention block, prioritized math and reading, and new reading and math programs. Social distancing measures will be maintained next year. They will minimize transitions with possible lunch in classrooms. Scholars will not share materials.

Teachers have been happy and have appreciated the way the network has prioritized safety and a sense of belonging. There was only one resignation during the year.

Ms. Obas updated the board on student recruitment efforts including a YMCA tabling opportunity which led to additional applications. They are continuing to build partnerships in the community. The staff will be handing out flyers on Friday, May 28<sup>th</sup>. They are also doing billboard and bus advertisements.

For K-2, there will be take home work for the summer. AF is going to have an virtual summer school for 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> graders. Starting in the fall, students will return to in-person learning. There will be a remote learning option but families will need to demonstrate a need for an accommodation. Ms. Obas said the school only has one social worker so they are working on hiring a second social work intern.

Ms. Emily Wojtusik updated the board on AF Hartford Summit Middle School where they are serving 44% of students in person with 56% of students learning remotely. 92% of staff are in person. They've tried to keep things fun with spirit week, tiktok and meme challenges. They planned a battle of the schools on SBAC questions with another AF middle school. For teacher appreciation week, they sent notes, videos and swag.

Attendance is consistently between 90-95%. She reviewed enrollment and they are on track to meet the enrollment goals for the 2021-22 school year.

There were two mid-year departures (none since the last board meeting) and 100% of teachers are certified in their roles. There are two remaining positions left to hire for next year (one special education teacher, one specials/electives). Two members of the leadership team are leaving their roles, one is moving to Texas with her family and the other is taking a leadership role at the High School. Both of those positions have been filled for next year.

Ms. Wojtusik shared math and ELA data and the way the team is thinking about the results, in particular how to best support students for the remainder of this year and next year.

Looking ahead, they are paying close attention to the end of year assessments and students' reading levels. The ELA team has been restructured with a co-teaching model for the 2021-22 school year. They are also considering an Americorp program to provide tutoring. AF is running an online summer school program that students can opt into.

Finally, she reviewed logistical planning for the 2021-22 school year. The board discussed accommodations and what is contributing to students' academic challenges.

Ms. Laneka Thomas began her report sharing student attendance along with the ways the attendance team has worked to maintain attendance at or above 90%. In the past few weeks, attendance has been close to 95%.

They have surveyed the students in another student investment survey which showed increases of 1 percentage point with the strongest growth around student teacher relationships and the valuing of school. Despite the amount of time spend on Zoom classes, students still feel connected to their teachers and their school.

They have surveyed the students in another student investment survey which showed increases of 1 percentage point with the strongest growth around student teacher relationships and the valuing of school. Despite the amount of time spend on Zoom classes, students still feel connected to their teachers and their school.

Of the 53 graduating seniors, 51 are attending a two or four year college or university. There is one Questbridge Scholar who will have a full ride to UPENN and AFHHS had its first acceptances to Duke University and Whitmore College. 20% of the senior class was accepted during early

decision.

She shared leadership team and teacher retention and an overview of how teachers are doing. AP tests begin next week so the school is busy preparing the technology for students to be able to take their tests in school or at home.

She shared GPA data for the school overall and by grade and mock AP results.

This summer there will be remote summer academy and they are anticipating large numbers of students attending.

The school is sending a survey to families to gauge comfort with attending school in person next year as well as their comfort level of vaccinating young people. They are still working on figuring out the academic and SEL program for the next school year to provide additional supports for students.

# **B.** Treasurer Report

Ms. Bildade Augustin gave the treasurer report including the year to date financials for the three schools and Neil Shah, Interim CFO, gave an overview of the proposed budget for FY22.

RESOLVED, the AF Hartford Academy Board of Directors hereby ratifies the re-appointment of CohnReznick to perform the financial audit of the 2020-21 fiscal year.

Motion by Bildade Augustin Seconded by David Dee All in favor

RESOLVED, the AF Hartford Academy Board of Directors hereby approves the financial report as presented.

Motion by David Dee Seconded by Bildade Augustin All in favor

RESOLVED, the AF Hartford Academy Board of Directors hereby approves the financial budget as prepared by Achievement First for the 2021-22 fiscal year.

Motion by Bildade Augustin
Seconded by Lisa Tanen-LaFontaine
All in favor

## C. Board Chair Report

Patsy Mundy updated the board on AF's Vision Process which has included three Summits. The first focused on setting graduate aims. The second Summit discussed North Star goals and the third, most recent, discussed school design. The next Vision Summit is May 27<sup>th</sup>.

Ms. Mundy shared that both she and Ja Hannah are up for re-election for another three-year term.

RESOLVED, the AF Hartford Academy Board of Directors hereby ratifies the re-election of the following directors with a three year term ending June 30, 2024:

Patsy Mundy Ja Hannah

> Motion by Bildade Augustin Seconded by David Dee All in favor

Ms. Xanthe Jory, AF's Chief Operating Officer, joined the meeting by phone to introduce herself. She has been at AF for one week, so far. Her work will focus on enrollment, facilities and school operations as related to COVID safety. She shared her background having started her career as a teacher.

### VI. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 7:11 pm by Patsy Mundy.

Motion by Bildade Augustin Seconded by David Dee All in favor

# AF Hartford Academy Zoom Recordings

July 17, 2020

https://vimeo.com/439399850/0b802299b3

August 3, 2020

https://vimeo.com/444357288/d3e06ab17b

August 6, 2020

https://vimeo.com/446869440/612eac5745

September 14, 2020

https://vimeo.com/458179432/df4d4fc819

October 19, 2020

https://vimeo.com/470207616

November 9, 2020

https://vimeo.com/478518180/731494e6df

January 20, 2021

https://vimeo.com/504164512/189a84fbb8

February 3, 2021

https://vimeo.com/509935074/2e90eeec22

May 10, 2021

https://vimeo.com/551595139/dedf5e956b