



**DRAFT MINUTES  
AF Bridgeport  
Board of Directors Meeting**

Venue: Virtual Meeting

Zoom: <https://achievementfirst.zoom.us/j/89038253064>

Thursday, March 9, 2023, 5:30-7:00 pm

**I. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Raj Lakra at 5:38 pm.

Attendees:

The following board members, constituting a quorum, were in attendance:

Name	Present	Name	Present
Rajeev Lakra	Y	Debra Hertz	N
Michael Strambler	Y	Kimberly Bruce	N
Dewey Loselle	N	Ruben Felipe	N
Marlene Macaуда	Y	Ebrima Jobe	Y
Dick Kalt	Y	RoAnne Thomas	Y

AF Staff: Lisa Margosian, Karolyn Belcher, Beth Cocuzza, Blakely Simoneau, Sulafa Bashir, Michael Rabin, Brooke Williams, Kristin Damo, Xanthe Jory, Christi George, Adrienne Minniefield, Ken Paul, Neil Shah, Shalia Garnett

**II. Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

**III. Approval of Minutes**

Mr. Lakra took the board through a motion to approve the previous meeting’s minutes.

It was:

RESOLVED, the AF Bridgeport Academy Board of Directors hereby approves the meeting minutes from February 6, 2023.

Motion by:

Second by Marlene Macaуда



All in favor.

#### **IV. Board Discussion**

##### **A. Proposed Executive Session on Principal Renewals**

Mr. Lakra took the board through a motion to enter into executive session to discuss the topic of Principal Renewals, inviting the following AF staff to join: Lisa Margosian, Karolyn Belcher, Christi George, Brooke Williams, and Kristen Damo.

Motion by Mike Strambler  
Second by Dick Kalt  
All in favor

The board entered executive session at 5:42 pm and exited at 5:55 pm.

#### **V. Discussion with Achievement First**

##### **A. Academic Update**

Ms. Karolyn Belcher gave an update on the preparations for state assessments as well as the decision to move to new curriculum, which involved input from schools, the network teaching and learning team as well as external reviewers of curricula. She detailed the curricula selected across elementary and middle schools.

Board members asked questions about the extent to which the proposed curriculum differed from the current one and about how staff felt about the curriculum changes and the , and Ms. Belcher discussed the rollout process and expectations and change management approach that will be implemented.

There was also a discussion about character development and SEL in the curriculum as well as student culture aspects.

##### **B. Teacher Recruitment Update**

Ms. Christi George gave an update on teacher recruitment, highlighting a change that shifts away from the central process, responding to principal feedback to bring screened candidates to the schools earlier in the interview process.

Ms. George also presented the latest data from the “Intent to Return” survey for teachers and school staff. She highlighted the efforts school leaders make to increase response rate and convert the “maybe” responses, relying on the data from the org health survey which can provide context on why staff members leave. Board members asked about the percentage of the maybes that typically end up staying and Ms. George answered that roughly two thirds tend to be converted to a “Yes.”

Board members asked about the seemingly high rate of “No” responses and Ms. George explained that it was an error and the AF Bridgeport Academy’s data was actually in line with the rest of the region and that there was not much of a difference in data between the elementary and middle school.

Ms. George also mentioned some changes being made to shore up teacher sourcing amidst the on-going teacher shortage, including new partnerships with local education organizations, and colleges and universities.

Board members asked about the ballpark number of teacher vacancies anticipated and how teacher certification impacts hiring.

#### C. Charter Renewal Update

Mr. Michael Rabin gave an update on the current status of the charter renewal process, sharing the overall timeline as well as some positive feedback and comments received from CSDE during their visits and after. In particular, he highlighted the comments on Multilingual learners and English learners, given that this was an area which had been on a previous corrective action plan. He then discussed the areas where the charter was found to be out of compliance and outlined the steps being taken to address each issue.

Board members asked about the severity of the issues and potential renewal risk. Mr. Rabin mentioned the areas for which the charter previously had a corrective action plan and some of the progress that had been made in the past few years.

Ms. Lisa Margosian also added that the network was setting a different tone with the authorizer with respect to teacher certification compared to prior years and that the team was making strides to cooperate and be in compliance.



Mr. Lakra made a request to ensure that, should there be another short-term renewal with conditions, that those conditions are addressed to avoid a repeat of the same situation.

There was also a question about the 100% teacher certification goal and whether it's possible to reach it and Mr. Rabin described the constant tension resulting from new hires and departures. Mr. Lakra asked if it would be possible to get comparative teacher certification data for public schools and other charters.

Board members also asked questions about the consequences for teachers if they were not certified whether we saw teachers leave once certified. Ms. Christi George described the process by which certification expectations and the consequences of not meeting them are communicated to teachers and indicated that losing teachers in whom the network has invested efforts to get them certified was not typically a problem.

## **VI. Committee Reports**

### **A. Finance Committee Report**

Mr Neil Shah presented a summary of the Q2 financials for the charter.

Mr. Lakra added that there was a discussion during the finance committee meeting with the two school principals about the challenges stemming from teacher absences and the suggestion for the creation of a pool of substitute teachers across the state or the network to support schools with coverage.

Mr. Lakra also noted that the overall financial position of the schools continues to be strong.

## **VII. Adjourn**

Prior to adjourning, Mr. Lakra and Mr. Kalt mentioned some staff appreciation events including a teacher appreciation breakfast at the elementary school on May 8 and a pizza truck for the middle school during that same week.

They asked for board member availability to attend and contribute to the appreciation events, emphasizing the school leadership's desire to see more board members in their buildings.



The meeting was adjourned by Raj Lakra at 7:06 pm.

Motion by Marlene Macaуда  
Second by Dick Kalt  
All in favor.