



AF Rhode Island Board Meeting Minutes

Monday, October 20, 2025 at 5:30 PM to 7:30 PM EDT

AF Providence High School - 206 Elmwood Avenue Providence, RI 02907

Zoom: <https://achievementfirst.zoom.us/j/86445683672>

Attendees:

Board Members: Mayor Brett Smiley, Maryellen Butke, James Wiley, Nicole Pollock, Janelle Clarke-Holley, Victor Capellan

AF Staff: Lisa Margosian, Tom McDermott, Michael Rabin, Jason Russell, Ketki Harale, Omar Mayassi, Yvonne Williams, Sulafa Bashir

I. Call to Order

Mayor Brett Smiley called the meeting to order at 5:29 pm.

II. Public Comment

There were no members of the public present.

III. CEO Agenda Overview

Mayor Smiley turned it over to CEO Lisa Margosian who gave an overview of the agenda and indicated a pivot in meeting approach towards giving quicker highlights followed by discussion to better utilize the members' time. Ms. Margosian acknowledged the extended meeting time and expressed gratitude to the board members for their commitment to the students of Achievement First, emphasizing the importance of their governance perspectives to support AF in providing optimal student outcomes.

Ms. Margosian turned it over to Regional Executive Director for Rhode Island Tom McDermott for a mission moment.

IV. Mission Moment

Mr. McDermott introduced a video capturing the special moment of Providence High School's first senior signing day and the video was played.

V. Executive Session: Facilities and Growth

Mayor Smiley asked for a motion to go into executive session to discuss Facilities and growth updates. A motion was made by Maryellen Butke, seconded by Nicole Pollock and all were in favor. The board moved into executive session.

VI. Board Resolutions and Approvals

The board exited the executive session and prepared to vote on the consent agenda.

Prior to voting, a note was made by Maryellen Butke that Janelle Clarke-Holley would be joining the personnel committee. The update was made and then a motion to pass the amended resolution was made by Victor Capellan, seconded by Maryellen Butke, and all were in favor. The amended consent agenda below passed.

Consent Agenda

1. BE IT RESOLVED, that the Achievement First Rhode Island Board of Directors hereby elects the following leadership slate for School Year 2025-26:
 - Mayor Brett Smiley, Chair
 - Maryellen Butke, Vice Chair
 - James Wiley, Treasurer

2. BE IT RESOLVED, that the Achievement First Rhode Island Board of Directors hereby appoints the following board members to the Personnel Committee for School Year 2025-26:
 - Maryellen Butke, Chair
 - James Wiley
 - Janelle Clarke-Holley

3. BE IT RESOLVED, that the Achievement First Rhode Island Board of Directors hereby appoints the following board members to the Facilities Committee for School Year 2025-26:
 - James Wiley, Chair
 - Nicole Pollock
 - Janelle Clarke-Holley
 - Victor Capellan

4. BE IT RESOLVED, the AF Rhode Island Board of Directors hereby approves the meeting minutes from July 7, 2025.

5. BE IT RESOLVED, that the AF Rhode Island Board of Directors hereby approves the 2025-2026 AF Family Handbook.

6. BE IT RESOLVED, that the AF Rhode Island Board of Directors hereby approves the following individuals to serve as interim principals, as needed, based on the recommendations by Achievement First through October 1, 2026.

School Name	Principal	Interim Principal #1	Interim Principal #2
AF Envision ES	Cynthia Louis	Emily Travers	Tony Alexandre
AF Illuminar ES	Joseph Fink	Steph McSweeney	Maridalia Baez
AF Promesa K-5	Jennifer Andrade	Colleen Flaherty	Megan Dennis
AF Providence ES	Breonna Hudgins	Dana Hurly	Chris Cruz
AF Illuminar MS	Katelyn Mike	Elizabeth Boyar	Libby Short
AF Providence MS	Colleen Preusse	Angela Martinez	Menalisa Mendes
AF Providence HS	Aja Davis	Mycah Hogan	Kimberly Kalenda

Next, Mayor Smiley moved on to the vote on the facilities resolution. There being no questions, the Mayor asked for a motion to approve the resolution.

A motion was made by Nicole Pollock, seconded by Victor Capellan, and all were in favor. The facilities resolution passed.

Facilities Resolution: Blackstone

WHEREAS, Marathon Construction, Inc., a Massachusetts corporation (“Marathon”), is the ground lessor of a certain parcel of land located at 218 Blackstone Street, Providence Rhode Island (the “Land”);

WHEREAS, Marathon is proposing to construct a school building (the “Building”) on a portion of the Land for use by AFRI pursuant to the terms and subject to the conditions set forth in that certain sublease between Marathon and AFRI (the “Sublease”), previously distributed to the Board of Directors of AFRI for review;

WHEREAS, AFRI desires to sublease the Building and a portion of the Land from Marathon pursuant to the Sublease;

NOWHEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that it is in the best interest of AFRI, and AFRI be, and hereby is, authorized and directed, to sublease the Building and a portion of the Land from Marathon pursuant to the terms and subject to the conditions of the Sublease, in substantially the form presented to the Board of Directors of AFRI, with such changes, modifications and amendments to such Sublease as any officer or director of AFRI (each an “Authorized Person”) may, jointly or severally, in such person’s discretion approve, which approval shall be conclusively evidenced by the execution and delivery of the Sublease by AFRI;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that each Authorized Person, be, and hereby are, jointly or severally, authorized and directed, at any time and from time to time, to do all such things and acts and to execute and deliver all such applications, documents and instruments in writing and to expend such fees for and on behalf of AFRI as may be necessary or advisable in order to give effect to and, generally, carry out the intent of these resolutions including, without limitation, to execute and deliver any agreements, instruments and documents required in connection with the foregoing, in the name and on behalf of AFRI, on such terms and conditions and in such form deemed necessary or desirable and approved by such Authorized Person with such changes, modifications and amendments thereto as such Authorized Person may in such person’s discretion approve, which approval shall be conclusively evidenced by the execution and delivery of such applications, documents and instruments in writing; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all actions previously taken by any Authorized Person in furtherance of the foregoing resolutions, are hereby ratified and confirmed.

VII. Regionalization Operating Model

Mayor Smiley turned it over to Michael Rabin who gave a brief overview of the phases of work that have been undertaken from codifying the future operating model of split-control to starting the multi-year implementation plan. He went on to discuss the rationale for the regional ED model, highlighting the need for accountability, decision-making authority and focus on community relationships, and to describe the ED’s roles and responsibilities. He concluded by stressing the balance of keeping AF’s core components, such as curriculum, the same across the regions while allowing for regional variation.

VIII. Dialogue with the Regional Executive Director

Tom McDermott gave an overview of his first 100 days as Executive Director for Rhode Island, sharing the focus on the 3 priorities, delivering on AF's Promise, rooting AF in the community and staffing all classrooms with excellence. He shared academic results based on internal mock data and stated that RIDE state test results will be shared in the December board meeting. He spoke about opportunities to strengthen AF's footing in the community. Finally, he discussed the challenges of staffing in secondary level and particularly in STEM/SPED content areas, and described some of the strategies.

In reference to his interactions with the greater AFRI community, Mr. McDermott spoke of his appreciation of AFRI staff and the community, including members of the board and external stakeholders, who have been welcoming and he stated that he has enjoyed engaging with families and school staff at school events and activities.

IX. Finance Report: Operating with Impact

Interim CFO Omar Mayyasi walked the board through SY 25 year end financials, highlighting the expected surplus. He mentioned the receipt of some pandemic relief funds associated with the Employee Retention Credit (ERC). He then walked through the balance sheet and the P&L, highlighting the receipt of state funding earmarked for capital improvements.

James Wiley added a note about the surplus, emphasizing that this was not a positive outcome but rather the result of being underhired in some staffing positions across all schools.

X. Adjourn

There being no additional business, Mayor Smiley asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. A motion was made by, seconded by and all were in favor.

The meeting was adjourned.