



## **AF Hartford Board Meeting Minutes**

Tuesday, October 28, 2025 at 5:30 PM to 7:00 PM EDT  
Virtual Over Zoom

### **Attendees:**

Board Members: Erwin Hurst, Sr., Victor De La Paz, Charon Smalla, Surbhi Patel, Alice Turner

AF Staff: Amy D'Angelo, Michael Rabin, Omar Mayyasi, Olivia Levey, Sulafa Bashir

### **I. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Erwin Hurst, Sr. at 5:37 PM.

### **II. Public Comment**

There were no members of the public present.

### **III. Board Business**

Mr. Hurst, Sr. moved on to the approval of the consent agenda which was in the board package and included board member re-elections, leadership slate and committees and the approval of the family handbook and previous minutes. He stated that one item, the vote on new board members had been removed from the agenda. He asked if there were any questions, there being none, he called for a motion to approve the agenda. Victor De La Paz motioned, Charon Smalls seconded. All were in favor and the consent agenda passed.

#### Consent Agenda:

1. BE IT RESOLVED, the Achievement First Hartford Academy Board of Directors hereby approves the meeting minutes from May 21, 2025.
2. BE IT RESOLVED, that the Achievement First Hartford Academy Board of Directors reelects Erwin Hurst, Sr. to the Board for a 3-year term, ending June 30, 2028.
3. BE IT RESOLVED, that the Achievement First Hartford Academy Board of Directors reelects Françoise Deristel-Leger to the Board for a 3-year term, ending June 30, 2028.
4. BE IT RESOLVED, that the Achievement First Hartford Academy Board of Directors reelects Surbhi Patel to the Board for a 3-year term, ending June 30, 2028.
5. BE IT RESOLVED, that the Achievement First Hartford Academy Board of Directors reelects Charon Smalls to the Board for a 3-year term, ending June 30, 2028.

6. BE IT RESOLVED, that the Achievement First Hartford Academy Board of Directors hereby elects the following leadership slate for the 2025-2026 fiscal year:
  - a. Erwin Hurst, Sr, Chair
  - b. Francoise Deristel-Leger, Vice Chair
  - c. Victor De La Paz, Treasurer
  - d. Surbhi Patel, Secretary
  
7. BE IT RESOLVED, that the Achievement First Hartford Academy Board of Directors hereby appoints the following committee members:
  - Finance Committee: Victor De LaPaz (Chair), Erwin Hurst, Sr.
  - Personnel Committee: Erwin Hurst, Sr.(Chair), Francoise Deristel-Leger, Charon Smalls
  - AF Joint Hartford Committee: Erwin Hurst, Sr. (Chair), Alice Turner, Surbhi Patel
  
8. BE IT RESOLVED that the Achievement First Hartford Academy Board of Directors hereby approves the following individuals to serve as interim principal, as needed, for a period of time not to exceed sixteen weeks through June 30, 2026, based on the recommendations by Achievement First.

School	Interim Principal 1	Interim Principal 2
Elementary School	Jenn Arce	DJ Vandrilla
Middle School	Ashlie Alleyne	N/A
High School	Jahki Manley	Linda Darkwah

9. BE IT RESOLVED, that the Achievement First Hartford Academy Board of Directors hereby approves the 2025-2026 AF Family Handbook.

Mr. Hurst, Sr. discussed the current leadership slate and board membership and informed the board that Victor De La Paz will be transitioning from the board in December and that a replacement for the Treasurer role is sought. Mr. De La Paz encouraged the other members of the board to consider taking on the Treasurer role and offered to answer questions, as well as to coach the new Treasurer in their first few months.

Mr. Hurst, Sr. also mentioned plans to expand the board including the addition of two new board members who have already met with Amy D’Angelo, the Executive Director for CT.

Mr. Hurst, Sr. turned it over to Mr. Michael Rabin who gave an overview of the meeting’s agenda and then proceeded to the Regionalization discussion.

## **VI. Regionalization Update**

Michael Rabin gave an 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 the same across the regions while allowing for regional variation.

Mr. Rabin introduced Amy D'Angelo who started in her role as the Regional Executive Director for Connecticut in July.

## **VII. Dialogue with Regional Executive Director**

Ms. Amy D'Angelo thanked Mr. Erwin Hurst, Sr. for his time and perspectives in a previous conversation that helped her understand the lay of the land. She then started by introducing Sam Lucky and Liv Levey as the CT regional superintendents who oversee the portfolio of elementary, middle and high schools in the region. Liv Levey briefly described her role and background.

Ms. D'Angelo gave an overview of her first few months in the role, sharing her observations and initial experiences leading regionalization efforts in Connecticut, highlighting the need for systematic improvements and the unique challenges faced at Hartford. She emphasized the importance of partnerships, mentioning meetings with local and state officials to address operational and compliance challenges, signaling a new phase of proactive engagement.

Ms. D'Angelo mentioned that a three-year turnaround plan for Hartford was in progress, highlighting expected significant gains each year, with commitment from leadership to the plan. Board members expressed willingness to support and participate in conversations with strategic partners to advance goals, indicating a desire for more active involvement

Mr. Hurst, Sr. asked board members Charon Smalls and Surbhi Patel to introduce themselves and their backgrounds to Amy and her team.

## **VIII. Academic Review**

Ms. D'Angelo gave an overview of academic results and emphasized the need for significant improvement in academic performance, noting minimal past progress and setting double-digit gains as a target. Objectives include setting school goals focused on student achievement, attendance, and teacher retention with specific growth targets such as reducing chronic absenteeism by 8%.

Ms. D'Angelo also discussed high school results and placed an emphasis on defining high school success metrics and ensuring alignment with external and internal performance assessments.

There was also a discussion about the Hartford Promise which offers potentially \$100,000 towards college for eligible students and an exploration of opportunities to acquire new facilities for the high school.

Ms. D'Angelo gave an update on charter renewal progress at the schools, stating that the process was strong and involved significant effort to ensure that principals and their teams were well-prepared.

Ms. D'Angelo wrapped up by discussing plans for a Connecticut-wide holiday party scheduled for December 12th at the boathouse in New Haven from 6 to 9 p.m. The event is intended to unite staff, board members, and community partners under one roof. She stated that a fundraising campaign was in place to support covering costs for the event, and that board contributions sought from each of the four CT boards

#### **IX. Finance Report: Operating with Impact**

Interim CFO Omar Mayyasi provided the finance committee report with a budget update describing the year-end surplus from FY 25, primarily due to funds received from the Employee Retention Credit, which is a pandemic-era stimulus plan.

These surplus funds will be used for strategic investments in the Hartford region, with Amy coordinating efforts across principals.

Mr. Mayyasi walked the board through the balance sheet and P&L, and discussed enrollment trends and staffing challenges.

Appreciation was expressed to Omar for his role as interim CFO and his contributions to the organization.

#### **X. Adjourn**

There being no further business, Charon Smalls, acting on behalf of Mr. Erwin Hurst, Sr. who had to depart the meeting early, called for a motion to adjourn. Surbhi Patel motioned, Victor De La Paz seconded. All were in favor and the meeting was adjourned.