



Elm City Board Meeting Minutes

Friday, October 31, 2025 from 12:00 PM to 1:00 PM EDT

Virtual over Zoom: <https://achievementfirst.zoom.us/j/81752004422>

Attendees:

Board Members: Dick Ferguson, Stephanie Ma, LaVonta Bryant

New Board Member: Kevin Torres

AF Staff: Lisa Margoisan, Michael Rabin, Amy D'Angelo, Olivia Levey, Serena Johnson

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Board Chair Dick Ferguson.

II. Public Comment

There were no members of the public present.

III. Regionalization Update

Michael Rabin introduced the meeting agenda, emphasizing the start of Regional Executive Director roles to enhance local representation and decision-making ability.

Mr. 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.

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

IV. Dialogue with Regional Executive Director

Ms. Amy D'Angelo 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 discussed the ambitious turnaround goals for Achievement First Connecticut, targeting year-over-year gains over the next 3 to 5 years focused on increasing school competitiveness and addressing obstacles through strategic initiatives. She emphasized the need for consistent internal and external conditions that support school success.

The meeting praised key achievements and collaborations, including successful recruitment, partnerships with Mind Trust, and innovative initiatives like the Mojo AI platform. AF's commitment to education equity and collaboration with institutions was underscored as a milestone. Ms. D'Angelo highlighted AF's collaboration with National Summer School Institute to host summer school programs across all 10 schools as a strategy to enhance future student achievement.

Principal Serena Johnson shared insights on improved communication and responsiveness in Connecticut's regionalization, highlighting principal cohort meetings as crucial for upholding school culture and identity. Direct communication with decision-makers has enhanced addressing school needs effectively.

Ms. D'Angelo gave an overview of the ERC funds that the charter will be receiving, and indicated that there would be strategic criteria set for spending, focusing on impactful initiatives, such as reviving summer school. Plans to involve principal inputs in future decisions ensure equitable resource distribution and team-wide recognition for goals achievement through bonuses.

V. Academic Review

The discussion begins with an overview of current academic performance, highlighting a significant concern over low proficiency levels in English Language Arts (ELA) and middle school math. Ms. D'Angelo highlighted goals set to achieve competitive academic performance within the local district over the next three years, emphasizing state-specific assessment alignment with SBAC standards in Connecticut, and teacher evaluation revisions to meet rigorous standards.

Additionally, there was a discussion on mitigating challenges like teacher turnover and branding, including strategies being implemented to enhance talent acquisition and retention in the education sector. Some specifics included a market reevaluation underway to assess competitiveness, especially in secondary STEM and arts, aiming for a financial model that is both competitive and sustainable.

Ms. D'Angelo gave an update on charter renewal progress at the schools, and encouraged board members to attend the upcoming public hearings especially given how effective these have been in the past in fostering engagement and support for the school through impactful testimonials.

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.

VI. Board Business

Mr. Ferguson noted that the board business included voting on two new board members, Kevin Torres and Latisha Douglas. Mr. Torres was presented and was put in the waiting room while the board members discussed his and Latisha's candidacy, and reviewed the background summaries of each candidate that were presented.

Mr. Ferguson expressed confidence in the two new prospective board members and initiated a formal motion to officially appoint both. Michael Rabin indicates the vote will occur on the consent agenda, which encompasses the approval of the new board members and was included in the board package. This was confirmed by Mr. Ferguson, who made a motion to approve the consent agenda. LaVonta Bryant seconded and the consent agenda passed.

Consent Agenda:

1. BE IT RESOLVED, the Elm City College Prep Board of Directors hereby approves the meeting minutes from May 27, 2025.
2. BE IT RESOLVED, that the Elm City College Prep Board of Directors elects Kevin Torres to the Board for a 3-year term, ending June 30, 2028.
3. BE IT RESOLVED, that the Elm City College Prep Board of Directors elects Latisha Douglas to the Board for a 3-year term, ending June 30, 2028.
4. BE IT RESOLVED, that the Elm City College Prep Board of Directors reelects Dick Ferguson to the Board for a 3-year term, ending June 30, 2028.
5. BE IT RESOLVED, that the Elm City College Prep Board of Directors reelects Stephanie Ma to the Board for a 3-year term, ending June 30, 2028.
6. BE IT RESOLVED, that the Elm City College Prep Board of Directors hereby elects the following leadership slate for the 2025-2026 fiscal year:
 - a. Dick Ferguson, Chair
 - b. Stephanie Ma, Secretary
7. BE IT RESOLVED, that the Elm City College Prep Board of Directors hereby appoints the following committee members:
 - Finance Committee: Dick Ferguson, Kevin Torres
 - Governance Committee: Stephanie Ma (Chair), Dick Ferguson,
 - Personnel Committee: Dick Ferguson (Chair), Stephanie Ma, Sanjana Nayak
 - AF Joint Amistad Committee: Dick Ferguson, Latisha Douglas
8. BE IT RESOLVED that the Elm City College Prep Board of Directors hereby approves the following individuals to serve as interim principal as needed

through October 30, 2026, for a period of time not to exceed sixteen weeks, based on the recommendations by Achievement First.

| School | Interim Principal 1 | Interim Principal 2 |
|-------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Elementary School | Erin Laskey | N/A |
| Middle School | Rachel Siegel | N/A |

9. BE IT RESOLVED, that the Elm City College Prep Board of Directors hereby approves the 2025-2026 AF Family Handbook.

VII. Adjourn

Prior to adjournment a reminder was issued to board members to complete the conflict of interest form, which would be sent out shortly via email along with a donation link and other action items.

There being no other business, Mr. Dick Ferguson motioned to adjourn the meeting. LaVonta Bryant seconded. All were in favor and the meeting was adjourned at 1:02 pm.