

MINUTES
Achievement First Hartford Academy
Board of Directors Meeting
Tuesday May 27, 2014, 5:00 – 7:00 pm
305 Greenfield Street, Hartford

Board attendance meeting quorum:

Bernice Aljoe, AFHA Board - Yes
Barry Jacobson, AFHA Board - Yes
Jean LaVecchia, AFHA Board - Yes
John Motley, AFHA Board - Yes
Colleen Palmer, AFHA Board – Yes (Via Phone)
Marshall Ruben, AFHA Board - Yes
Angela Scott, AFHA Board - Yes
Gretchen Unfried-English, AFHA Board - Yes
Lankford Wade, AFHA Board - Yes
Laura Estes, AFHA Board - No
Denise Gallucci, AFHA Board - No
James Morton, AFHA Board - No

Nyema Pinkney, AFHA Board - No
Nancy Zwiener, AFHA Board - No
Hillary Bridges, AF Network Support - Yes
D. Scot Kerr, AF Network Support – Yes
Chastity Lord, AF Network Support – Yes (Via Phone)
Emily Banks, School Leadership - Yes
Jeff House, School Leadership - Yes
Jeff Sudmyer, School Leadership - Yes
Marc Michaelson, School Leadership – Yes (arrived at 5:45)
Benjamin Cruse, School Staff - Yes
Meg Smith, School Staff - Yes

Public in Attendance:

Elizabeth Smith- Parent
Rose Pennant- Parent

The meeting was called to order at 5:12 by Jean LaVecchia. The first order of business presented was the election of John Motley as the new Board Chairman replacing Jean LaVecchia.

Moved: Ms. Unfried-English
Second: Mr. Lankford Wade
All in Favor

Public Comment

Elizabeth Smith explained that she is a parent of children in both the middle and elementary schools. She is the President of the Hartford Parent University and a major supporter of AFHA schools. Ms. Smith expressed her concern with bullying in the school and hopes to see more proactive practices in place for next year. She also hopes to see increased communication and cooperation with parents.

Mr. House responded with an acknowledgement of the need for an improved school culture.

Ms. Meg Smith added that the school leaders need to make classrooms more respectful places. For next year she has increased the size of leadership team so that the school will have 3 Academic Deans, 2 Behavioral Interventionists and a Dean of Special Services. This increase in leadership will provide teachers with more coaching and feedback.

Ms. Rose Pennant expressed that she is extremely supportive of AFHA. She also raised her concern that students are not learning to write in cursive. In addition, she explained the importance of teachers reaching out to parents with students with 504 plans as early as possible so that they can work to change troublesome academic patterns before the end of the year. She also mentioned the importance of having unique supports for students which special needs.

Ms. Bernice Aljoe suggested that the school start by clarifying for students what constitutes bullying.

School Reports

1. Jeff House

a. Bright Spots

- Learned a lot about special education this year
- Incoming principal, Meg Smith is doing a tremendous job preparing for next year

b. Growth Areas

- Staff turnover is too high
- Number of suspensions is too high
- Need for improvement in terms of community engagement on the Network side

c. Family Engagement, Staff Updates, Upcoming Events

- Ms. Smith explained that in her plan for next year, parent communication will be a consistent practice.

2. Ben Cruse -- AF Summit Middle School preparations

- Currently have 33 families completely enrolled at AF Summit
- Having difficulty with Student Recruitment in Hartford

Mr. Cruse stated that we are not telling our stories well enough in the Hartford community. Mr. Motley continued this conversation by highlighting the importance of AF having a representative on the ground in Hartford who knows Hartford.

3. Report of the Joint High School Committee (John Motley)

Mr. Motley provided the board with a brief update from the Joint High School Committee meeting.

Board Business

1. Approve Minutes of 3/17/14 Meeting (Resolution 1)

Ms. LaVecchia noted non-substantive corrections to the prior meeting minutes (name conventions, typos) and requested that they be reflected in the final approved versions. Ms. LaVecchia provided a copy of changes to staff.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT, the Board of Directors of Achievement First Hartford Academy hereby approves the 3/17/14 Meeting Minutes with corrections as submitted by Jean LaVecchia.

Moved by: Mr. Motley

Seconded by: Mr. Jacobson

All In Favor

2. Approve YTD Financial Reports (Resolution 2)

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT, the Board of Directors of Achievement First Hartford Academy hereby accepts the YTD financial report dated 4/30/14 as presented.

Moved by: Mr. Wade

Seconded by: Mr. Morton

All In Favor

3. Approve 2014--2015 Budget (Resolution 3)

Mr Motley gave an overview of each school's budget. He told the Board that the elementary school is slightly over budget. Although salaries are lower, we are spending more money on technology and furniture. The middle school budget is higher because of Title 1 funding. Although salaries will be slightly lower, the school will be adding 1.5 leadership positions. The high school is also slightly over budget. However he also mentioned that with the \$500 dollar per-pupil increase we will receive from the state, many of the budget shortcomings will be alleviated.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT, the Board of Directors of AF Hartford Academy hereby approves the financial budget as recommended by the Finance Committee and prepared by Achievement First for the 2014-15 fiscal year.

Moved by: Mr. Motley

Seconded by: Mr. Jacobson

All In Favor

4. Approve revised Financial Policy regarding “Payment of Invoices” (Resolution 4)

WHEREAS Achievement First is responsible for accounting services including the timely payment of invoices,

AND WHEREAS Achievement First Hartford Academy is responsible for the approval to pay invoices whether by signed check or approved invoice

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT, The Board of Directors of Achievement First Hartford Academy approves a revised policy for payment of invoices to enable the electronic processing of invoices and their approval for payment as drafted.

Moved by: Mr. Jacobson

Seconded by: Ms. Scott

All In Favor

5. Appoint CohnReznick to audit the fiscal year 2013-14 (Resolution 5)

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT, the Board of Directors of AF Hartford Academy hereby ratifies the re-appointment of CohnReznick of Farmington, CT to perform the financial audit of the 2013-14 fiscal year.

Moved by: Mr. Motley

Seconded by: Mr. Jacobson

All In Favor

6. Re-election of directors (Resolution 6)

The slate of directors, classes and terms recommended for re-election are:

- i. Marshall Ruben, Class III, 7/1/14 - 6/30/17
- ii. Angela Scott, , Class III, 7/1/14 - 6/30/17
- iii. Barry Jacobson, , Class III, 7/1/14 - 6/30/17

Moved by: Mr. Motley

Seconded by: Ms LaVecchia

All In Favor

Board Discussion (6:30)

Board Retreat Planning

Mr. Kerr discussed the upcoming Board Retreat which will take place on July 21st.

Achievement First updates

Ms. Chastity Lord discussed Team External Relations' new geographically focused structure. Someone from Team External Relations that will live in each geography. There will be a Community Engagement Associate living in the Hartford area for the upcoming school year.

Review and establish Committee Assignments

Ms. LaVecchia stated that this discussion will take place in July.

Adjourn 7:18 pm

Minutes taken by: Hillary Bridges, External Relations