

**Draft**  
**MINUTES**  
**Achievement First Hartford Academy**  
**Board of Directors Meeting**  
**Monday, December 2, 2013, 5:00 – 7:00 pm**  
**305 Greenfield Street, Hartford**

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A meeting of the Achievement First Hartford Academy Board of Directors was held on December 2, 2013 at 305 Greenfield Street, Hartford, CT.

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

**John Motley**  
**Marshall Ruben**  
**Gretchen Unfried-English**  
**Colleen Palmer (via teleconference)**  
**Jean LaVecchia**  
**James Morton**  
**Nancy Zwiener**  
**Bernice Aljoe**

Also in attendance:

School staff: **Jeff House, Emily Banks, Liz Ferguson**  
Achievement First staff: **Ken Paul, Scot Kerr, Reshma Singh, Jeff Sudmyer, Kelonda Maull, Marc Michaelson, Dawn Micco, Ben Cruse, and Dominic Basile.**

**Call to Order** (Jean LaVecchia)

Ms. LaVecchia called the meeting to order at 5:05pm.

**Public Comment**

None

**Principal Reports**

Jeff's report:

Bright Spots:

- Mr. House mentioned a scholar who struggled in 6<sup>th</sup> grade with behavioral issues is now doing really well in 10<sup>th</sup> grade and explained the importance of working with struggling scholars so they can succeed in the future. He was very proud to see this scholar soaring.
- The 6 grade shift to Common Core is increasing and all scholars are reading at higher levels and not struggling in math.

Some challenges:

- Mr. House expressed this is the toughest year since they opened in August of 2008. Despite changes in suspension policies and alternative interventions, suspension rates remain higher than targeted. Attrition and attendance numbers are also not where we want them to be.
- Mr. House feels that even with the challenges, Hartford Academy is a great option for students that will get better as challenges are overcome.

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Ms. LaVecchia asked the new parent rep. Bernice Aljoe to speak up and discuss her opinions with the group. Ms.. Aljoe's son is in the 5 grade. He has been with Achievement First since the elementary school opened. She discussed her perspective on the discipline system. She has no problem with Achievement First. She gave a perspective from other parents and discussed some communication gaps amongst parents, scholars and staff.

- Mr. House opened for questions. The Board discussed ways to decrease suspensions and how to leverage the current behavioral system.

Liz Ferguson gave her report:

Bright Spots

- Strong teacher management skills in the classroom.
- The behavioral management team meets every Friday to align on tactics for reducing suspensions.
- Attendance is strong, minus the half day before Thanksgiving break
  - The best classroom with attendance gets a balloon party and teachers get a gift certificate to celebrate their success.
- Ms. Ferguson invited the Board to participate and witness Morning Motivation and see the scholars in action.
- Ms. Ferguson indicated they will be focusing on guided reading with scholars and more engagement to enhance lesson plans and visual anchors.

Some Challenges:

- The Common Core shift.
- Literature class is working on written response to text and teachers will need to give rigorous responses.
- Math scores are low and math teachers are working backwards in working with scholars. Teachers will walk through the abstract process for learning math concepts with scholars.

Emily's report:

Bright Spots:

- Staff Culture
  - School staff is very happy.

Some Challenges:

- Scholar's attitude is that High School is a choice, but that parents have selected the school more than them.

- Comments that curriculum is strong, but they don't like the behavioral policies
- Complaints that Achievement First is not a typical high school experience.
- Marshall Ruben asked if we have similar problems in New Haven;
  - Jeff Sudmyer answered that in a high school's early growth it is challenging to convince kids to go to a small high school that doesn't have all the extra-curriculum programs.
- John Motley asked about how the relationship with Jumoke is going.
  - Ms. Banks explained it has been a bit of a challenge merging school cultures..

### **Executive Session**

The Board moved into executive session to consider a candidate for Principal and to review the School Bonus Plan.

John Motley moved to enter into executive session at 5:45pm, and Marshall Ruben seconded the motion. The motion carried with unanimous approval of the Board.

John Motley moved to exit executive session at 6:35pm, and Marshall Ruben seconded the motion. The motion carried with unanimous approval of the Board.

### **Board Discussion**

1. Hartford Academy #2 – Facilities & Timeline (Reshma Singh)
  - Ms. Singh gave an update on Hartford Academy #2 facilities and timeline.
    - i. She explained there will not be a redesign of the Clark School. Achievement First is working to finalize and co-locate with Global Academy and share the facilities for two years (Global Academy is a growing K-12 school).
    - ii. The amendment for the co-location is being written now. The location is complete and ready for Achievement First to move in starting with grade 5. Ms. Singh will keep the Board posted.
2. Advocacy & Community Relations (Reshma Singh)
  - Ms. Singh will send a follow up email on Advocacy and Community Relations. She mentioned this email will focus on current Student Recruitment Efforts.
3. Discussion of Active Committees (Scot Kerr)
  - Mr. Kerr discussed working group sessions that took place during the Board retreat. He explained the committees formed will meet a couple of times a year to share best practices on governance and principal hiring. They discussed ideas for the 2014 Board Retreat.
4. Board Candidate Discussion (Jean LaVecchia)
  - The Board discussed a variety of candidates to recommend to the Board.
  - Scot will follow up with Board members on candidates by January.

### **Board Business (6:45)**

#### **1. Approve School Bonus Plan**

Ms. Singh gave background to this plan and the Board reviewed the plan.

- a. NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Board hereby approves the bonus policy covering performance from the 2012-13 school year. The Board further approves the AF School Report Card as the method for determining the amount of bonuses, and delegates to Achievement First co-CEO and Superintendent Doug McCurry the exclusive authority to award mitigating points in exceptional circumstances.

James Morton moved to approve the School Bonus Plan, and Marshall Ruben seconded the motion. The motion carried with unanimous approval of the Board.

## **2. Elect new Parent Representative**

Ms. LaVecchia asked the board to review the resolution to elect Bernice Aljoe.

- b. WHEREAS, the By-Laws of Achievement First Hartford Academy allow for a Parent Representative to be elected by the Board to serve as a voting member
- c. AND WHEREAS, the Board wishes for this position to rotate among varying schools each year, the current school year being an Elementary school cycle
- d. NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT, the Board of Directors of Achievement First Hartford Academy hereby elects Bernice Aljoe, having been nominated by the Principal of Achievement First Hartford Academy Middle School to serve a one (1) year term as Parent Representative expiring on June 30, 2014.

Nancy Zweiner moved to Elect the new Parent Representative, and John Motley seconded the motion. The motion carried with unanimous approval of the Board.

## **3. Approve Minutes of September 23, 2013**

Ms. LaVecchia asked the Board to approve the past meeting minutes.

- e. NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT, the Board of Directors of Achievement First Hartford Academy hereby approves the September 23, 2013 Meeting Minutes as drafted.

John Motley moved to approve the past meeting minutes, and Marshall Ruben seconded the motion. James Morton gave an abstention.

## **4. Review and approve YTD financials**

Mr. Motley let the board know the school is on track for financials and the year to date budget is on target with a few variances.

The Balance Sheet is in order and the school is running strong.

Student Enrollment is overenrolled by one or two. Mr. Motley opened for questions.

- a. NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT, the Board of Directors of Achievement First Hartford Academy hereby accepts the YTD Financial report dated 10/31/13 as presented.

Jean LaVecchia moved to approve the YTD Financials, and Marshall Ruben seconded the motion. The motion carried with unanimous approval of the Board.

## **5. Resolution to authorize use of Bank of America credit line**

Jean asked the Board to approve the Bank of America Credit Line.

BE IT RESOLVED, that this corporation Achievement First Hartford Charter School, may:

1. borrow money from Bank of America, NA (together with Bank of America Corporation and its subsidiaries and affiliates, collectively, "Bank");
2. obtain for the account of this corporation commercial and standby letters of credit issued by  
Bank;
3. obtain for the account of this corporation Bank's acceptance of drafts and other instruments;  
and
4. discount with or sell to Bank notes, acceptances, drafts, receivables and other evidences of indebtedness, and assign or otherwise transfer to Bank any security interest or lien for such obligations;

from time to time, in such amount or amounts as in the judgment of the Authorized Officers (as hereinafter defined) this corporation may require (the credit facilities described in the first part of this resolution are collectively referred to herein as the "Credit Facilities").

RESOLVED FURTHER, that this corporation is authorized to enter into one or more agreements with Bank or an affiliate of Bank that provide for an interest rate, credit, commodity or equity swap, cap, floor, collar, forward foreign exchange transaction, currency swap, cross currency rate swap, currency option, securities puts, calls, collars, options or forwards or any combination of, or option with respect to, these or similar transactions, which agreements may be oral or in writing (collectively, "Hedge Agreements") and to execute and deliver any master agreement and the related schedule, confirmation or other agreement or certificate as Bank or its affiliate may require relating to such Hedge Agreements, including without limitation, any security or other collateral documentation as Bank or its affiliate may require in connection therewith.

RESOLVED FURTHER, that the Authorized Officers are hereby authorized and directed, as security for any obligation or obligations of this corporation to Bank, whether arising pursuant to these Resolutions or otherwise, to grant in favor of Bank a security interest in or lien on any real or personal property belonging to or under the control of this corporation.

RESOLVED FURTHER, that

the Board Chair

of this corporation, acting individually or in any combination as may be set forth above (the "Authorized Officers"), are hereby authorized and directed, in the name of this corporation, to execute and deliver to Bank, and Bank is requested to accept:

- a. the notes, credit agreements, advance account agreements, acceptance agreements, letter of credit applications and agreements, purchase agreements, sale agreements or other instruments, agreements and documents which evidence the obligations of this corporation under the Credit Facilities obtained or to be obtained pursuant to these resolutions;
- b. any and all security agreements, deeds of trust, mortgages, financing statements, fixture filings or other instruments, agreements and documents with respect to any security interest or lien authorized to be given pursuant to these resolutions;
- c. any master agreement and the related schedule, confirmation or other agreement or certificate as Bank may require relating to Hedge Agreements;  
and
- d. any other instruments, agreements and documents as Bank may require and the Authorized Officers may approve.

RESOLVED FURTHER, that the Authorized Officers are hereby authorized and directed, in the name of this corporation, to endorse, assign to Bank, and deliver to Bank, any and all notes, acceptances, drafts, receivables and other evidences of indebtedness discounted with or sold to Bank, together with any security interest or lien for such obligations, and to guarantee the payment of the same to Bank.

RESOLVED FURTHER, that any and all of the instruments, agreements and documents referred to above may contain such recitals, covenants, agreements and other provisions as Bank may require and the Authorized Officers may approve, and the execution of such instruments, agreements and documents by the Authorized Officers shall be conclusive evidence of such approval, and that the Authorized Officers are authorized from time to time to execute renewals or extensions of any and all such instruments, agreements and documents.

RESOLVED FURTHER, that Bank is authorized to act upon the foregoing resolutions until written notice of revocation is received by Bank, and that the authority hereby granted shall apply with equal force and effect to the successors in office of the Authorized Officers.

Jean LaVecchia moved to approve the Bank of America Credit Line, and John Motley seconded the motion. The motion carried with unanimous approval of the Board.

Mr. Kerr let the Board know about the College Book Scholarship fundraiser from Team Development. Mr. Kerr read a letter from a current College student thanking AF for the book scholarship. Team Development will launch a campaign through social media as a fundraising platform to support these efforts.

The Board discussed the resources for scholars in college to meet costs outside of tuition.

Ms. Singh let the Board know of the First Generation Initiative (FGI) that Achievement First launched last year and is expanding this year to mentor FGI scholars at Achievement First.

### **Adjourn**

Hearing no other questions this meeting was adjourned at 7:10pm

James Morton moved to adjourn this meeting, and John Motley seconded the motion. The motion carried with unanimous approval of the Board.

Minutes taken by Kelonda Maull

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_