

DRAFT MINUTES

Achievement First Connecticut Board Retreat

Meeting Minutes
Thursday, August 1, 2013 12:00 pm

A meeting of the Achievement First Connecticut Boards of Directors including Amistad Academy, Elm City College Preparatory, Achievement First Hartford Academy, and Achievement First Bridgeport Academy was held on August 1, 2013 at Amistad Academy, 130 Edgewood Avenue, New Haven Connecticut.

The following board members were in attendance:

Amistad Academy

Michael D. Griffin
Melinda Hamilton
Andrew Lachman
Jane Levin
Paul McCraven
Khadijah Muhammad
Alexander Troy
Caroline Williams

Bridgeport Academy

James Bennett
Andy Boas
Melissa Ceriale
Debra Hertz
Dick Kalt
Harold Kamins
Marlene Macaуда
Cornelius Medas
Ed Raice

Hartford Academy

James Morton
John Motley
Nancy Zwiener

Elm City College Preparatory

Magaly Cajigas
Dick Ferguson
Carolyn Greenspan
Marnie Halsey
William F. Heins
Sharon Oster
Patricia Pierce
Lystra M. Richardson
Laura Saverin
Pat Sweet

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Also in attendance:

School Leadership staff: Florisca Carter, Marc Michaelson, Gina Ribeiro

Achievement First staff: Dacia Toll, Sarah Blanton, Bill Bouton, Hillary Bridges, Rhea Byer-Ettinger, Candice Dormon, Harris Ferrell, Sara Keenan, Scot Kerr, Jennifer Lindsay, Chastity Lord, Kelonda Maull, Ken Paul, Max Polaner, Sharon Richards, Reshma Singh, Megan Tokarski

Guests (for Connection to the Mission session only): Aphia Griffiths, Kenneth Moales, Atallia Woods, Leon Woods, Charlie Dowd

I. Call to Order & Attendance

The meeting was called to order at 12:40 p.m. by Associate Director of Governance, Scot Kerr who welcomed the Directors and Staff to the 2013 Retreat and introduced the first speaker, Dacia Toll.

II. Global Update

Dacia Toll, Co-CEO of Achievement First gave a presentation that covered successes and challenges. Ms. Toll explained that state test scores were not yet available, but there are still important insights to share

Ms. Toll was joined by Chastity Lord, Chief External Officer to highlight successes including college acceptance rates, matriculation, and persistence. Talent and leadership development, including a more robust pipeline of Principal candidates in the Principal in Residence program, improvements to the Finance operations, facilities, and fundraising were also discussed.

Challenges discussed by Ms. Toll and Ms. Lord included implementation of the Common Core aligned curriculum and school culture including high suspension rates at some schools.

Ms. Toll proceeded to run a participatory exercise in which Directors shared their areas of pride and concern.

Ms. Toll then discussed the “Theory of Change” which includes Achievement First’s objectives to:

- Become an excellence and equity exemplar
- Open more gap-closing schools
- Concentrate our impact geographically
- Share with and learn from others

III. Interlude

Kelonda Maull led all participants in an exercise of “shout outs” for Team and Family members that had had successes. The session included learning some school cheers.

IV. Moving Toward Strategic Governance

Ms. Maull introduced Reshma Singh, VP/External Relations who discussed the importance of our Directors to have the information and structure to act more strategically in overseeing their schools. Ms. Singh introduced Ken Paul, VP/Development who discussed Achievement First

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fundraising efforts and the continuing need for philanthropy even as schools become self-sufficient on public funding.

V. Working Sessions

Board members split into three working session groups of their choice; Governance, Principal Hiring, Reporting and Data Sharing to discuss these topics.

At the end of each working session all board members collectively shared with the group.

- Principal Hiring
- Governance
- Reporting & data Sharing

VI. Break

At the start of the session break, Ms. Singh made a presentation to departing team member Patricia Sweet. Ms. Sweet was recognized for her years of service and contributions to the success of Achievement First. She was presented with a scrapbook chronicling her years at Achievement First prepared by her co-workers.

VII. Connection to the Mission

During the Connection to the Mission Board members had the opportunity to converse with five Bridgeport community guests who shared their perspectives on Bridgeport. At the end of the table discussion each group shared the insights they learned from the guests.

VIII. Adjourn

Mr. Kerr and Bridgeport Academy Board Chair, Andy Boas closed the meeting expressing thanks to our Connection to the Mission guests and presented them with gifts of Achievement First bookends.

The meeting adjourned at 4:45 p.m