

Approved, 1/21/15

Achievement First Hartford Academy

Board of Directors Meeting

November 24, 2014, 5:00 – 7:00 pm

305 Greenfield Street, Hartford

The following board members, constituting a quorum, and Achievement First Staff were in attendance:

I. Call to Order & Attendance

The meeting was called to order at 5:15 pm by John Motley.

Barry Jacobson, AFHA Board - Yes
James Morton, AFHA Board - No
John Motley, AFHA Board - Yes
Nyema Pinkney, AFHA Board - Yes
Marshall Ruben, AFHA Board - Yes
Angela Scott, AFHA Board - Yes
Nancy Zwiener, AFHA Board - No
Jean LaVecchia, AFHA Board - Yes
Colleen Palmer, AFHA Board - Yes
Lankford Wade, AFHA Board - Yes

Emily Banks, School Leadership - Yes
Benjamin Cruse, School Leadership - Yes
Ernest Peterson, School Leadership - Yes
Meg Smith, School Leadership - Yes
Nick Lebron, AF Network Support - Yes
D. Scot Kerr, AF Network Support - Yes
Sarah Blanton, AF Network Support - Yes
Ken Paul, AF Network Support - Yes

II. Open Session For Public Comment

No public comment

III. Reports

Mr. Ernest Peterson, AF Hartford Elementary School Principal, gave a report on the status of the school. They are working to solidify and develop skills to create a strong foundation. For students who are struggling, they are developing individualized plans for each child. Upcoming events include a potluck dinner for families on November 25th and the December 3rd Rally in New Haven, where the third and fourth graders will attend.

Ms. Meg Smith, AF Hartford Middle School Principal, gave a report on the middle school. Ms. Smith shared that she is transitioning from Principal and, pending the Board's approval, Ms. Sorby Grant will be taking the new principal role of Achievement First Hartford Middle School. The school notified staff first and then informed students and families. Ms. Smith stated that she is loyal to the school and is committed to staying on as Academic Dean with the ultimate goal of transitioning to an Achievement

First Network Support role.

Mr. John Motley praised Ms. Smith's ability to stay on with grace. He also shared that former Principal Claire Shin returned to Hartford to help respond to a gang related incident that involved a student on November 15th. Mr. Motley confirmed that Ms. Shin's involvement helped stabilize school culture. Fortunately, the student has been released from the hospital and is expected to recover.

Mr. Ben Cruse, AF Summit Middle School Principal, provided his report. Mr. Cruse shared that attendance is great with 98% attendance rating schoolwide and overall students enjoy attending classes. In addition, students and family engagement is strong with active participation during events including the "Running of the Books" event, potluck dinners, Thanksgiving celebrations, and community service cleaning events. Mr. Cruse also provided a report on academics highlighting that many students are reading at advanced grade levels. Mr. Cruse led a discussion on common core standards and college readiness at AFSMS. He confirmed that teachers are working hard with students to create a growth mindset to ensure students believe they can achieve academic success.

Ms. Emily Banks provided a report on the Joint High School Committee Meeting. Overall, school culture is positive and general excitement due to growing list of extracurricular activities for students. In addition, the High School is gaining traction with family and community engagement. In regards to academics, High School scholars are taking ownership over their learning, checking their grades, and seeking opportunities to discuss college readiness. The Board discussed grading policies and college readiness at AFHHS in comparison to other schools.

Mr. Ken Paul, Vice President of Development, provided a philanthropy Update. Mr. Paul confirmed the need for 1.3MM in philanthropy due to start up costs associated with opening Hartford Summit Middle School and reduced enrollment in Hartford. Mr. Paul shared his optimism that enrollment will increase and that the Development team will be focused on raising funds for Hartford.

Mr. Nick Lebron, Community Outreach Associate, announced the rally For Every Child on December 3rd in New Haven and explained the background and importance for the rally including Hartford's participation. He shared the challenges facing students in Connecticut for quality education and highlighted the challenges at the State level including deficit spending, student seat approval, and new school approval.

Executive Session (Personnel)

Mr. John Motley asked the Board to enter executive session to discuss personnel issues

Moved: Marshall Ruben

Second: Barry Jacobson

All in favor

IV. Board Business

RESOLVED, the Achievement First Hartford Board of Directors hereby approves the meeting minutes

from September 15, 2014.

Moved: Marshall Ruben

Second: Jean LaVecchia

All in favor

RESOLVED, the Achievement First Hartford Board of Directors hereby approves the financial report as presented.

Moved: Jean LaVecchia

Second: Nyema Pinkney

All in favor

RESOLVED, AF Hartford Academy Board of Directors hereby appoints Sorbrique Grant as Principal of Achievement First Hartford Middle School contingent upon her commitment for a period no less than the remainder of the 2014-15 academic year.

Moved: Marshall Ruben

Second: Nyema Pinkney

All in favor

V. Board Discussion

Ms. Laurie Bussmann led a discussion on Teacher Certification. Laurie introduced herself as the VP of Operations, formerly VP of Technology, and a 10 year veteran of Achievement First. In her new role she is leading the effort to secure certification for 100% of the Achievement First Hartford staff. Ms. Bussmann indicated that there are two initiatives that will be addressed over the course of the year:

1. Working to support existing staff who are uncertified on their path to certification, and
2. Working with Team Recruit to increase the number of candidates that have certification.

Ms. Bussmann reported that there is a significant effort underway including the following steps:

- Inventory of staff complete and tracking processes are in place
- Personal emails to all of the uncertified staff notifying them of the requirements
- Network support is funding any tests, fees, and prep lessons that encourage staff to complete required steps to certification.

Board members who attended the State Board of Education Charter School Governance Training led by CAFE discussed the session and what they learned. Mr. Paul reported that the CAFE leaders attended visitor day in Hartford and were impressed with our program. Remaining board members will attend the training before the next charter renewal.

Ms. Blanton asked board members to review the conflict of interest policy and to complete and return the disclosure form. She also called directors' attention to a college survey in their package asking

them to share information about where they attended or have connections. She explained that this information will help us in serving our college-bound scholars by identifying board members connected to various institutions.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 7:04 by John Motley.