

Achievement First Providence Mayoral Academy
Boards of Directors Retreat
Thursday, July 24, 2014, 12:00 - 5:00p.m.
307 Hartford Avenue, Providence

AFPMA Board of Directors:

Taveras, Angel	No
Bernal, Betty	Yes
Dawson, Adriana	No
Igliozi, John	Yes
McCulloch, Norman	Yes
Gallogly, Brian	Yes
Martinez, Marta	No
McCleary, Macky	Yes
Jeffery Williams	No

AF Staff:

Ken Paul
Scot Ker
Sarah Blanton
Jennifer Lindsay
Laina Vlasnik Yip
Ben Smith

Public

Christine Lopes
Sheila Dormody

I. Call to Order & Welcome

The meeting was called to order by Brian Gallogly, at 12:36 p.m.

No public Comments

- II. Connection to the Mission included a discussion with a panel of parents whose children attend AF Providence Mayoral Academy Elementary School. They talked about how they first came to learn about AF (mailing, word of mouth) and how pleased they are with the school. In reading especially, they feel their children are excited about reading and one parent expressed that very often her child prefers to read a book than play.

They feel like there has been thoughtful parent engagement and that the staff will do whatever it takes to help their children.

III. Year in Review (Ben Smith)

- 96% response rate on parent survey
- 95% of families had a positive (strongly agree/agree) response to all nine questions
 - 96% strongly/agree I would recommend this school to parents of other students in this city
 - 97% strongly/agree the school has very high academic standards and a rigorous curriculum
- 675 applications for 80 spots this year.
- Highest attendance rate in whole AF network: 98.5% average daily attendance
- Positive media attention from parent support at two events: Opening Day Celebration, RIMA Day at State House
- End of Year academic goals for reading were almost met, were met in math.
- Year Two (adding 50% of the student body and 50% more staff)
 - Rigorous questioning and student discourse
 - Joy
 - Character education
 - Strong adult culture
- Sandy asked whether we know much about the 5% of the parents who were not responding positively. One parent was negative, but all others in the 5% were neutral. No qualitative, open ended responses which might have provided clues to the nature of the dissatisfaction
- Brian asked whether families are leaving
 - Three families leaving. Two kids, from one family, are going to Iowa. One kid leaving because of retention (few literacy skills for this scholar when she arrived in 1st grade, almost made it to the goal, but parent pulled her, AFPMA is calling throughout the summer but it seems they're out)
 - This student had almost more growth than any other scholar. She started below kindergarten and made it almost to the proficiency level to be advanced to 2nd grade.
 - AFPMA recommends to her new school that she be retained. She's going to a neighborhood school. Slight chance she'll show up in August.

IV. Governance Deep Dive

Approve Minutes of 5/29/14 Meeting

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT, the Board of Directors of Achievement First Providence Mayoral Academy approves the 5/29/14 Meeting Minutes as drafted.

Moved by: Brian Gallogly
Seconded by: Mack McCleary
All In Favor

Updates:

- Adriana Dawson intends to resign (work, scheduling conflicts),
- Jeffrey Williams intends to resign because he's been appointment to state board of ed.

The group posed guiding questions including: What can we do to continue to the positive momentum, make enhancements, etc? What committees should be formed?

Some active committees have been

- Governance
- Principal Committee
- Finance

Macky inquired appointments to committees and the group discussed the need to establish a committee structure to be able to proactively approach issues as the school grows to scale. The September meeting will be when they create official committees and membership.

Discussion of Public notice:

- Official record is kept with the Secretary of State. AF staff post it.
- School posts it on site so that parents and families are aware.
- AF to follow up with dates of the PLC meetings

Mackey articulated his idea that it makes sense to have three committees: (1) Governance (2) Leadership and Culture or Community (includes Principal) (3) Finance. With support from school based staff.

- Sandy – likes Governance committee, doesn't like Executive committee concept because it relieves others on the board of doing work.
- Brian – supports three committees. Finance and governance are most important to get started sooner.
- Laina – Mayoral seat will be occupied by any one of the four mayors – we have choice.
- Want to hit the ground running in September.
- Governance would start with Sandy and Macky
- Finance committee would start with Betty and Brian

Advocacy Update from Laina Vlasnik Yip, Ken Paul and Christine Lopes

- Strong demand for our school (675 applications for 80 seats)
- Tough year for legislation
 - Housing aid didn't pass this year. Schools get 80% from the State, we get reimbursed at 30% for repairs. We can't expand without additional support. (moratorium on new construction)
 - Christine Lopes: in the house there was no activity on charter equity track. A activity on senate side. Amended bill. First hearing, amended in a way we thought was fair. At last moment, new language added that held mayoral academies at 30% (whereas other charters got more beneficial language for reimbursement rates).
 - Mayoral academies have more pension flexibilities and prevailing wage.
 - Mayoral academies are scalable. Can grow.
 - 6 public hearings were scheduled for new charter schools (2 mayoral academies).
 - Senate finance passed with new language.
 - Held for further study.
 - Do all charter schools have similar political interests and are the lobbyists aligned?

- Mayoral Academies yes
- Public charters – League of Charter Schools testified against the creation of Mayoral Academies. But legislation that is mutually beneficial generates alignment.
- Collaborative work on several bills where there is a convergence of interests.
- We have an expansion committee at AF who meet weekly. Providence is a huge opportunity for us but securing facilities is a major consideration.

Board members has a discussion about Mayoral Academies and traditional charters and the best was to have your voice heard. We will revisit a discussion about advocacy in upcoming meetings.

Board Objectives and the AF Theory of Change (Jennifer Lindsay)

- Four pillars:
 - (1) Excellence and Equity exemplar
 - (2) Concentrating our impact
 - (3) Opening more gap closing schools
 - (4) Open Source Sharing and Partnership

Network Updates (Ken Paul)

- August 2014, 29 schools with 9,553 students
- AF Greenfield in CT
- Big Steps
 - College ready bar
 - Intellectual engagement
 - Strong school culture
 - Cultivate excellence
 - Increased PD – nearly doubling the number of days that teachers and leaders are in training
- Organizational priorities:
 - College ready bar (big steps)
 - Intellectual engagement in planning and instruction (big steps)
 - School cultures (big steps)
 - Supporting all scholars to reach a high bar
 - Diversity and inclusiveness
 - Building for Scale

Meeting was adjourned at 5:02pm by Brian Gallogly.