

Achievement First Bridgeport Academy
Boards of Directors
Thursday, September 18, 2014, 6:00 - 7:30 p.m.
529 Noble Avenue, Bridgeport

I. Call to Order & Attendance

The meeting was called to order by Andy Boas, at 6:11 p.m.

The following directors and staff were in attendance:

Andrew Boas, AFBA Board - Yes	Judy Andrews, AFBA Board - No
Debra Hertz, AFBA Board - Yes	James Bennett, AFBA Board - Yes
Harold Kamins, AFBA Board - Yes	Dick Kalt, AFBA Board - No
Chris Kunhardt, AFBA Board - Yes	D. Scot Kerr, AF Network Support - Yes
Marlene Macauda, AFBA Board - Yes	Ken Paul, AF Network Support - Yes
Cornelius Medas, AFBA Board - Yes	Florisca Carter, School Leadership - Yes
Wiley Mullins, AFBA Board - Yes	Challa Flemming, School Leadership - Yes
Max Perez, AFBA Board - Yes	Soren Gutierrez, School Leadership - Yes
Ed Raice, AFBA Board - Yes	Heather Wachter, School Leadership - Yes

Public: Carol Boas

II. Public Comment

No public comment

III. Reports

A. Principal Reports (Heather Wachter and Challa Flemming)

Challa Flemming

Feels very good about the teacher training this year. It's been the best she's ever seen. With

much more practice based training teachers were much better rehearsed than ever before. Challa is going on maternity leave soon and is very pleased that Christina Pares is available to serve as interim principal.

Her goals and priorities for the year revolve around rigorous Common Core instruction and increasing student and parent investment.

Challa is concerned about teacher departures. There have been five teachers who have resigned. Four of the five left within two days, the fifth left at the end of that week. The immediate impact is that every member of the leadership team has stepped up to to teach classes. No scholars are without quality instruction. In fact, they are receiving excellent instruction from those who have stepped in. But, if Challa is teaching every day and the deans are teaching, it means the leadership team can not do their jobs of supporting teachers. Challa expressed the challenge that the teachers who have decided to leave came to her at the point they'd already decided to leave, as opposed to earlier when she might have been able to work through and address their frustrations.

Andy raises the question of whether this occurrence is an anomaly - are we hiring the wrong people? is it Bridgeport?

Challa feels that we hired the wrong people. In her interviews, four out of the five may have shown some red flags. Challa may have overlooked some flags in favor of the strengths she saw. What needs to be a top priority is that you need to be able to articulate that you want to be a teacher at this school, with these kids, doing the hard work it takes to be successful. When asked, what brought you to AF, if your answer isn't about the achievement gap and AF and the mission, it is not the right fit. The teachers who left didn't have that as a high enough priority. It is not enough to want to be a teacher.

Ed raises the question of a back up plan. Challa said there are a couple former teachers who do come in. A TIR turned out to be very strong and she's taken on more responsibility.

Heather Wachter spoke to losing people to the district for fewer hours and similar pay, but it happened during the summer so it didn't as directly impact children. Similarly, there were several departures mid-year last year.

The board discussed financial incentives for teachers who stay through the full academic year.

Florisca spoke about how AF needs to do a better job recruiting teachers of color. To the point that Challa made that about a teacher who said s/he was afraid of the kids and community, we need to find teachers who can relate better to our kids.

Chris asked whether the teachers who come in have a full understanding of the time

commitment of teaching at AF. Is there more that can be done?

Challa said that that is communicated to teacher candidates. Time commitment is very clearly laid out.

Harold (with Debra and Wiley agreeing) suggested exit interviews with someone outside AF.

Christina Pares introduced herself and gave an overview of her AF background.

Heather informed the board that the elementary school is off to a great start. Entire leadership team is back this year. Attendance has been great (over 98%). The school is overenrolled. Kindergarten number is 90. Construction has begun which has been fantastic. Dismissal, arrival and lunch have gone incredibly well. PE in a classroom is not ideal so we're very excited about getting a gym.

In terms of challenges, we've had a pretty significant uptick in removal and suspensions. It's not our long term solution but we are holding to a high bar of excellence. Looking forward to the numbers going down.

A new hire for operations at both the elementary and middle schools. Florisca shared challenges around children with serious health needs. They don't have a full time nurse and feel this is an area where AF needs to step up.

B. Joint High School Committee Report

Ken Paul gave a report from the Joint High School Committee. The high school building looks great and will be complete in November. Move in in December. Scholars begin in January.

C. Visitor Day Schedule

Ken Paul reports that we will send the info to the board and shared the dates of the first Amistad Visitor Day.

Executive Session - Personnel

Called at 7:41pm by Andy Boas

IV. Board Business

A. Approve Minutes of 6/05/14, 7/21/14 and 7/29/14 Meetings

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT, the Board of Directors of Achievement First Bridgeport Academy approves the 6/05/14, 7/21/14 and 7/29/14 Meeting Minutes as drafted.

Moved by: Jim Bennett
Seconded by: Harold Kamins
All In Favor

B. Approve Financial Report

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT, the Board of Directors of Achievement First Bridgeport Academy accepts the financial report as presented.

Moved by: Harold Kamins
Seconded by: Debra Hertz
All In Favor

C. Approve 2014-15 Family Handbook

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT, The Board of Directors of Achievement First Bridgeport Academy approves a revised Family Handbook as drafted.

Moved by: Chris Kunhardt
Seconded by: Max Perez
All In Favor

D. Approve 2014-15 School Wellness Policy

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT, The Board of Directors of Achievement First Bridgeport Academy approves the 2014-2015 School Wellness Policy as drafted.

Moved by: Chris Kunhardt
Seconded by: Max Perez
All In Favor

E. Approve Interim Principal

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT, The Board of Directors of Achievement First Bridgeport Academy approves Christina Pares as Interim Principal of Achievement First Bridgeport Academy Middle School effective September 29, 2014.

Moved by: Ed Raice
Seconded by: Chris Kunhardt
All In Favor

V. Board Discussion

- A.** Addendum to Agreement for Child Nutrition Programs (ED-009)
- B.** Expansion in Bridgeport

Andy updated the group on the lack of significant progress with regards to expansion in Bridgeport since three months ago.

Wiley spoke about the John Marshall event from this week where about 70 Amistad HS scholars attended. It was a resounding success.

Adjourn at 8:18pm by Andy Boas