

**Achievement First Hartford Academy  
Board of Directors Meeting**

Monday, November 14, 2016, 5:00 – 7:00 pm  
305 Greenfield St, 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 5:16 pm by Barry Jacobson.

Barry Jacobson, AFHA Board - Yes

Jeffrey Digel, AFHA Board - No

Angela Scott, AFHA Board - Yes

Marshall Ruben, AFHA Board - Yes

Carol Birks, AFHA Board - Yes

Jose Rendon, AFHA Board - No

Ja Hanna, AFHA Board - Yes

David Dee, AFHA Board - Yes (phone)

Emily Banks, School Leadership - Yes

Kerri-Ann Thomas, School Leadership - No

Sorby Grant, School Leadership - Yes

Ben Cruse, School Leadership - Yes

Sarah Blanton, AF Network Support - Yes

Ken Paul, AF Network Support - Yes

**II. Open Session For Public Comment**

No public comment.

**III. Approval of Minutes**

**RESOLVED, the AF Hartford Academy Board of Directors hereby approves the meeting minutes from 9/20/16.**

Motion by Angela Scott

Seconded by Jose Rendon

All in favor

**IV. Reports and Discussion**

**Hartford Academy Elementary (Kerri-Ann Thomas)**

Kerri-Ann Thomas was not present at the meeting.

**Hartford Academy Middle (Sorby Grant)**

Sorby Grant identified that they are stronger than in years past but still dissatisfied about the absolute state of where they are as a school. Scholars have been excited about reading - they read on the way to recess, several of their hype activities are around reading. Eight kids are now at Millionaire Status

(reading 1,000,000 words) compared with years past where scholars weren't even reading the books assigned.

Attendance has been much stronger - 97% or higher.

Because of a staffing shortage, Sorby has been the STEM Dean. They just got a second specials teacher and they are still looking to fill some additional key positions.

The Org Health Survey showed a 10 percent increase from last year but it's still lower than where Sorby would like it on measures of whether teachers are reporting that they are satisfied. They have a number of new teachers. And looking across all staff, she she feels they fall into two groups - one group struggles with behavior management and the other group needs to push on rigor.

She feels like they are definitely moving in the right direction.

IA results are up from last year but she noted that they were very low last year. They made strategic decisions on where to focus their time and energy and she feels it's paying off. Overall, Sorby feels the school is making steady progress but she'd like the slope of that line to get much steeper.

### **Summit Middle (Ben Cruse)**

Ben Cruse reported year over year growth in math is projected to be greater than 10 percent. The Network is providing additional ELA support to co-observe with the Humanities Dean. Ben talked about the amount of work needed to get incoming students up to speed as they are drawing from a number of different HPS elementary schools. They are spending a lot of time doing after school tutoring. Every kid has 150 minutes of mat per day in 5th grade.

Compared to last year, they have made huge progress with removals. Last year they were bottom three in the AF network (for most removals) and this year they are top three (among the fewest). Suspensions are down as well. They pushed hard on weeks 1-6 and are excited to focus on the academic goals now.

The org health results were not as strong as Ben would like so they are pushing hard on positivity especially for new teachers. Also struggling with attendance - they are at 96%. Ben has required home visits of all teachers. Every teacher has made at least two home visits.

He's also concerned about space as he has heard that Summit will need to move out of their current space.

### **AF Hartford High School (Emily Banks)**

This year, they've worked hard to strengthen the adult culture and it seems to be paying off. Emily Banks reported that the org health results for AF Hartford High were stronger than the network average.

All 12th grade scholars, with the exception of a few scholars with IEPs who will have some different post secondary plans, have applied to college, many in early decision.

Certain courses have been named as priority courses where additional resources and support for teachers is being invested:

- AP Calculus
- Algebra 1
- AP US History
- AP Biology
- AP English Language

Some of the early data has shown there is a lot of work to do to hit AP pass rate targets. AP Calculus is going well.

Attendance is better than last year at 97.1% (last year was around 95%). While growth is solid, it is still a daily battle with some scholars.

#### **A. Board Chair Report (Barry Jacobson)**

Barry Jacobson, as the new chair, is meeting with each board member outside of the board meeting schedule. He also asked each of the board members to think about additional members who care about Hartford and care about education. The goal is to identify four strong candidates who could serve on the board.

Once the board becomes more robust he wants to have a dialogue about a committee structure where each board member would serve on at least one committee and take a more active role in between meetings.

Barry discussed certification, suspensions and chronic absenteeism as three issues that arose on the renewal and he feels that the board should stay on top of these issues.

#### **B. Community Outreach (Nick Lebron)**

Nick Lebron was not in attendance.

#### **C. Treasurer's Report (Barry Jacobson)**

AFHA is 50 students under-enrolled which creates a significant shortfall. The schools are looking to reduce expenses but it will still require philanthropy. Lorie McGee shared the strategies that AF is using to increase the enrollment at the schools.

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

Moved by Angela Scott

Seconded by Marshall Ruben

All in favor

**V. Additional Business**

**RESOLVED, the AF Hartford Academy Board of Directors hereby enters the signed stipulation into the record as presented.**

Moved by Angela Scott

Seconded by Marshall Ruben

All in favor

**Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:23 pm by Barry Jacobson

Moved by Angela Scott