

- Draft Minutes -

## **Achievement First Hartford Academy**

### **Board of Directors Meeting**

Monday, May 22, 2017, 5:30 pm

AF Hartford High School  
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 5:30 pm by Barry Jacobson.

Barry Jacobson, AFHA Board - Yes

Jeffrey Digel, AFHA Board - Yes

Angela Scott, AFHA Board - No

Marshall Ruben, AFHA Board - No

Carol Birks, AFHA Board - Yes

Jose Rendon, AFHA Board - Yes

Ja Hanna, AFHA Board - Yes

David Dee, AFHA Board - No

Kerri-Ann T. Thomas, AF School Leadership - Yes

Sorby Grant, AF School Leadership - Yes

Ben Cruse, AF School Leadership - Yes

Emily Banks, AF School Leadership - Yes

Sarah Blanton, AF Network Support - Yes

Nick Lebron, AF Network Support - Yes

Ken Paul, AF Network Support - Yes

John Furniss, AF Network Support - Yes

Victor De La Paz, AF Network Support - Yes

Members of the public: Deborah Prince, Hide Inga, Alice Turner

#### **II. Open Session For Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

#### **III. Elect New Members**

Mr. Inga, Ms. Turner and Ms. Prince introduced themselves and gave brief backgrounds to the Board.

RESOLVED, the AF Hartford Academy Board of Directors hereby elects the following individuals with three year terms, ending June 30, 2020 and, pursuant to the bylaws of AF Hartford Academy, the Board of Directors does, effective May 22, 2017, set the number of members of the Board of Directors at eleven (11).

Alice Turner, Director

Hide Inga, Director

Deborah Prince, Director

Motion by Jeffrey Digel

Seconded by Ja Hannah

All in Favor

#### **IV. Approve Minutes**

RESOLVED, the AF Hartford Academy Board of Directors hereby approves the meeting minutes from 3/27/2017.

Motion by Jose Rendon  
Seconded by Carol Birks  
All in favor

#### **V. Reports and Discussion**

Barry Jacobson asked the four principals to speak directly to the progress being made in the areas cited by the State Department of Education in the charter renewal process in addition to their updates around academics.

##### **A. Principal Reports**

AF Hartford Elementary School. Ms. Thomas updated the board on the staff and school leaders who are currently uncertified. Several of them are currently taking AF sponsored prep classes. Suspensions are low and Ms. Thomas anticipates end of year numbers will put the school in excellent standing according to the rigorous AF Report Card metrics.

Grades K-2 academic data is largely the same, 3rd and 4th grade have moved from lowest in network last year projecting to 2nd in network this year. 4th grade math went up almost 50 points. If projected gains pan out, the school will meet its goals for the first time since it was begun.

AF Hartford Middle School. Ms. Grant shared with the board that they are only hiring two new instructional staff for next year - one of whom is already certified and is working on a SPED certification and she is confident that other teacher is certifiable. All uncertified staff have a clear path to certification. AF Hartford Middle School has only had one new suspension since March. Ms. Grant pointed out that most incidents that have resulted in suspensions have been due to activities after school hours and not incidents that occur during the school day.

SBAC testing just finished up last week with math (ELA was two weeks ago). Scholars and teachers worked incredibly hard They had about 60 kids come for Spring Break Academy and are projecting some cohorts to make double digit gains - most likely 7th and 8th grade ELA.

They have started a number of reading interventions and clubs. Over 25% of kids have read over 1 million words, over 10% have read 2+ million. This Friday is the "Read-In" - reading Jurassic Park and a James Patterson book overnight in the school. June 2nd and 3rd at 6:30 will be the Lion King. 8th grade stepping up ceremony will be June 9th.

AF Summit Middle School. AF Summit is anticipating over 90% teacher retention going into the next school year. Of those teachers returning who are not yet certified, most are on track to be certified by June. The others are scheduled to take make-up tests. New hires are likely to be certified by September

1. Mr. Cruse explained to the Board that teacher certification is a top priority in the hiring process.

There are no major updates in suspensions.

AF Summit Middle School is currently projecting double digit gains in most grades and subjects. Mr. Cruse has been teaching a section of 50 5th graders for past month and a half.

They will have three Principals in Residence (PIR) as deans next year. Space will continue to be an issue as they are not getting additional space for next year. they have two hallways for 360 kids, one gym with two hours of access per day.

AF Hartford High School. Ms. Banks gave overview of teacher certification, as she had in the High School Committee Meeting. Suspensions are about the same as they were in March. Senior Signing Day is tomorrow at noon at the Greater Hartford Academy of the Arts in the Learning Corridor. They will be streaming/recording the event for AF Hartford Elementary School's 4th graders. SAT results for Juniors were mixed: both averages broke 500 but were not as strong as last year.

#### **B. Board Chair Report**

RESOLVED, the AF Hartford Academy Board of Directors hereby ratifies the re-election of Directors with a three year term ending June 30, 2020.

Barry Jacobson, Director

Marshall Ruben, Director

Angela Scott, Director

Motion by Jose Rendon

Seconded by Ja Hannah

All in favor

RESOLVED, the AF Hartford Academy Board of Directors hereby affirms the following leadership slate:

Barry Jacobson, Chair

Jeff Digel, Treasurer

Angela Scott, Secretary

Motion by Jose Rendon

Seconded by Ja Hannah

All in favor

RESOLVED, the AF Hartford Academy Board of Directors hereby accepts the Family Handbook as drafted.

Motion by Ja Hannah

Seconded by Carol Birks

Jose Rendon Abstain

RESOLVED, the AF Hartford Academy Board of Directors hereby approves the Dependent Care Assistance Program to go into effect at the beginning of the 2017-18 school year.

Motion by Jose Rendon  
Seconded by Ja Hannah  
All in favor

RESOLVED, the AF Hartford Academy Board of Directors hereby accepts the updated Cooperative Arrangement Agreement by and between Achievement First Hartford Academy, Inc. and Jumoke Academy, Inc. for a term to commence July 1, 2017 and end on June 30, 2022, with the option of five additional one (1) year terms determined by mutual agreement of the parties.

Motion by Jose Rendon  
Seconded by Carol Birks  
All in favor

### **C. Treasurer Report (Jeff Digel)**

Mr. Digel gave a report to the Board of the financial status of the schools. We've got flat funding again this year and support from local BOE has been eliminated due to increasing budget challenges. There will be a 10% increase in projected deficit for next year (\$2.9MM->\$3.2MM). Biggest risk to budget is in student recruitment. Mr. Digel, Mr. Jacobson and Mr. De La Paz, CFO, Achievement First, discussed the budget, student recruitment and enrollment.

Mr. De La Paz anticipates that we will be better prepared to deal with anything that comes up next year. There is a slight possibility that budget at state level could get worse - state could choose not to fund seat growth, which would balloon the philanthropy need in CT. Mr. Jacobson asked Mr. Cruse about recruiting challenges at AF Summit MS. Mr. Cruse explained that 5th grade is an extremely difficult grade to recruit for, as most schools in this region are K-5 and 6-8. They are projecting a much bigger 6th grade with 60 kids on the waiting list but they can't fill 5th grade. Mr. Cruse floated the idea of starting with a smaller 5th grade and expanding 6th grade.

Ms. Thomas explained that in the elementary school they have had to cut extras in order to keep staff. In AF Hartford Middle, most of the teachers have had to teach cross-subject or cross-grade.

RESOLVED, the AF Hartford Academy Board of Directors hereby approves the financial report as presented.

Motion by Jeff Digel  
Seconded by Jose Rendon  
All in favor

RESOLVED, the AF Hartford Academy Board of Directors hereby approves the financial budget as recommended by the Finance Committee and prepared by Achievement First for the 2017-18 fiscal year.

Motion by Jose Rendon  
Seconded by Jeff Digel  
All in favor

RESOLVED, the AF Hartford Academy Board of Directors hereby ratifies the reappointment of CohnReznik to perform the financial audit of the 2016-17 fiscal year.

Motion by Jose Rendon  
Seconded by Deborah Prince  
All in favor

RESOLVED, the Fiscal Policies Manual dated in May 2017 is approved. Be it further resolved, proposed revisions or changes will be brought to the full board on at least an annual basis, more frequently as required, for approval.

Motion by Jose Rendon  
Seconded by Ja Hannah  
All in favor

#### **D. Community Outreach Report (Nick Lebron)**

Mr. Lebron highlighted the student recruitment challenges in Hartford. Families have nearly 70 different school options for their kids. AF participates in the district lottery but not the magnet lottery. Roughly 1k families apply to district lottery, but ~20k apply to magnet school lottery. The perception is that magnet schools are better. The magnet lottery is open to suburban families, but AF has a district MOU with Hartford to *only* take Hartford students. Additionally, there is no feeder school for AF Summit and the shrinking population in North End has made recruitment even more difficult. AF is committed to backfilling open seats. Mr. Jacobson inquired to the risks for overfilling grades and Mr. De La Paz explained that we have classroom caps and that over enrolling could end up costing us significantly more to staff.

Currently, AF is in the post-lottery phase of student recruitment focusing on specific areas (such as Summit 5th grade) and leaving no stone unturned in terms of community events. Mr. Lebron has also been working on helping waitlisted families stay engaged. Mr. Rendon inquired as to whether schools could subsidize uniform purchases, have vendors come to the schools, or look for a new vendor that may be more willing to negotiate prices. He stressed that once families buy the uniform, they are committed.

#### **III. Executive Session**

Motion to enter Executive Session at 7:00pm by Jose Rendon. Second by Ja Hannah.

Motion to leave Executive Session at 7:11pm by Carol Birks. Second by Jose Rendon

#### **IV. Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:12pm pm by Barry Jacobson.

Motion by Jose Rendon  
Seconded by Ja Hannah  
All in favor

