

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

Tuesday, September 20, 2016, 5:00 – 7:00 pm
85 Edwards 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 5:02 pm by John Motley.

John Motley - Yes

Barry Jacobson - Yes

Jeffrey Digel - Yes

Angela Scott - Yes (phone)

Marshall Ruben - No

Carol Birks - Yes (phone)

Jose Rendon - Yes

Ja Hanna - Yes

David Dee - Yes

Emily Banks, School Leadership - no

Kerri-Ann Thomas, School Leadership - Yes (phone)

Sorby Grant, School Leadership - Yes (phone)

Ben Cruse, School Leadership - Yes

Sarah Blanton, AF Network Support - Yes

Nick Lebron, AF Network Support - Yes

Ken Paul, AF Network Support - Yes

Lorie McGee Brown, AF Network Support- Yes

Paige Maclean, AF Network Support - Yes

Public: James Trimble, Lisa Fair

II. Open Session For Public Comment

Lisa Fair a parent whose children attend AF Summit and F Hartford High School raised concerns about school culture and the role of the behavior specialist.

III. Approval of Minutes

RESOLVED, the AF Hartford Academy Board of Directors hereby approves the meeting minutes from 5/23/16 and 7/12/16.

Motion by Barry Jacobsen

Seconded by Angela Scott

All in favor

IV. Election of New Member

Barry Jacobson stated that Jim Trimble has helped in the previous year with tutoring at AF Hartford High and will continue to help for the coming year. Mr. Trimble is interested in joining the board but does not want to be put up for election until he confirms that he has no conflicts of interest policy. He will review the policy and confer with the University of Connecticut, his employer.

V. Reports and Discussion

Hartford Academy Elementary (Kerri-Ann Thomas)

Kerri-Ann Thomas is focusing on trying to create a strong scholar culture. Academically, they are seeing gains in weekly quizzes which all grades have been doing for the past four weeks. They will institute tutoring to try and address some of the academic gaps that they are seeing.

The SBAC results from last year, prior to when Ms. Thomas began, were down in math but up in ELA, year over year.

Enrollment continues to be a concern but this is a consistent issue across Hartford.

Hartford Academy Middle (Sorby Grant)

Sorby Grant reported that the rebranding efforts (new uniform, new mascot) undertaken from last year to this year, as well as the rebuilding of the library, have had a positive effect based on feedback from returning teachers, parents and scholars. They are focusing on creating a strong reading culture at the school and today, the first scholar reached the status of a “Millionaire” reading 1,000,000 words.

Attendance has been strong - often above the goal of 97 percent. Sorby noted that the 7th and 8th grades have shown a lot of improvement over last year and that those students are becoming the real leaders of the school. Several of the new 7th and 8th grade teachers are being mentored by returning teachers.

The 5th and 6th grades have not had the same early success as the 7th and 8th graders so Sorby has been spending a lot of her time there. They are working on consistent behavior management and relationships with families.

At this point, AF Hartford Middle is not yet fully staffed. Some staff have left (music, STEM dean, social worker) and they do not have substitutes for those positions so current staff are pitching in. Sorby is acting as the STEM Dean in addition to being principal. The school only has one Dean of Students and he is new to AF Hartford Middle.

Despite key gaps in staffing, Sorby feels that the staff was able to lay a strong foundation for the start of the year.

Summit Middle (Ben Cruse)

Ben Cruse said that the school year is off to a good start. School culture is strong and he noted a decrease in removals from class compared to last year as are suspensions. ELL scores last year was the highest in all of AF in middle schools. They are focusing on pushing scholars academically in terms of growth and not just absolute scores. Of particular note, Ben noted that AF Summit has the highest ELA weekly quiz scores across the AF middle schools in Connecticut.

Ben named a few concerns, namely enrollment (AF Summit MS is currently 26 or 27 from being fully enrolled), attendance which is down from last year, and math performance.

The school is working to reach out to families who were enrolled last year but not this year and Ben is clearing his schedule to meet with families who may have concerns about school culture.

Joint High School Committee Report (Barry Jacobson)

Barry Jacobson shared the Joint High School Report noting the strength of the school culture, especially in the 9th grade. The school is currently under-enrolled by eight students. The Joint High School Committee discussed ways to increase the number of students coming from Jumokey and strategized on some efforts to address that issue.

Emily Banks expressed some concern about the junior class given that college is two years away. They want to be sure those scholars are ready.

A. Open Source Presentation (Paige Maclean)

Paige Maclean, Vice President, Strategic Partnerships, gave a presentation on AF's work in the Residency Program for School Leadership and the Charter Network Accelerator that works with small Charter Management Organizations that are looking to grow. Achievement First is completely open source and believes firmly that sharing with other educators is critical to the mission.

B. Board Chair Report (John Motley)

In the interest of time, John Motley gave a very brief report which included his resignation to help Hartford Public Schools focus on identifying a strong new Superintendent.

C. Community Outreach (Nick Lebron)

Nick Lebron shared an update on student recruitment and enrollment, beginning with an overview of the complex lottery process. Among the layers of complexity is that there are 74 options for Hartford families of kindergarteners and 43 options for families of middle schoolers.

AF Summit has 12 seats available in the fifth grade, 13 seats in sixth grade, and four in seventh. AF Hartford Elementary has 11 seats available in kindergarten, seven in first and second grade and one seat open in third grade. He discussed strategies for filling those seats including:

- Canvassing
- Reaching out to families who have not yet declined their AF seat and those who have expressed an interest in AF in the past few years by phone and with home visits;
- Tabling at high traffic locations
- Literature drops at bodegas, libraries
- Refer a friend flyers
- Radio and bus ads, mailings, billboards
- AF is currently working on a TV ad.

D. Treasurer's Report (Jeff Digel)

Jeff Digel gave the Treasurer's Report noting that with 50 students short against the projected enrollment creates a shortfall on the revenue side. This will be partly filled with philanthropy. Other than that, there is nothing unusual in the financials.

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

Moved by David Dee
Seconded by Jose Rendon
All in favor

VI. Additional Business

RESOLVED, pursuant to the bylaws of AF Hartford Academy, the Board of Directors does hereby set the number of members of the Board of Directors at eight (8).

Moved by David Dee
Seconded by Ja Hannah
All in favor

RESOLVED, the AF Hartford Academy Board of Directors hereby approves the amendment to the Charter Management Agreement.

Moved by Jose Rendon
Seconded by Barry Jacobson
All in favor

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 6:42 pm by John Motley
Moved by Jose Rendon