

**Achievement First Rhode Island  
Board of Directors Meeting**

January 30, 2019, 5:30 pm  
370 Hartford Avenue, Providence

**I. Call to Order & Attendance**

The meeting was called to order at 5:43 pm by Brian Gallogly. The following board members, constituting a quorum, and Achievement First Staff were in attendance:

Jorge Elorza, AFRI Board - Yes	Kevin Lohela, AFRI School Leadership - No
Brian Gallogly, AFRI Board - Yes	Aja Davis, AFRI School Leadership - Yes
Macky McCleary, AFRI Board - No	Ashia Parks, AFRI School Leadership - Yes
Reshma Singh, AFRI Board - Yes	Jesse Balis-Harris, AF Network Support - Yes
John Igliazzi, AFRI Board - No	
Soraida Morales, AFRI Board - No	Cassidy McKee, AF Network Support - Yes
Ben Smith, AFRI Board - Yes	Sarah Blanton, AF Network Support - Yes
Maryellen Butke, AFRI Board - Yes	Elizabeth Winangun, AF Network Support - Yes
James Wiley, AFRI Board - No	
Robert Luciano, AFRI Board - Yes	
Percy Ballah, AFRI Board - Yes	
Jorge Cardenas, AFRI Board - Yes	

Public: Michelle Davidson, Rich Norris

**II. Public Comment**

Michelle Davidson shared that she plans to attend board meetings to ensure that the board hears the parent perspective and voice. She had previously talked about Gentlemen’s Academy and introduced Rich Norris.

Rich Norris is a guidance counselor at Dr. Jorge Alvarez High School in Providence. He shared his personal experience and techniques for building relationships and leadership among adolescent boys.

**III. Approve Minutes**

RESOLVED, the AF Rhode Island Board of Directors hereby approves the meeting minutes from December 5, 2018.

Motion by Ben Smith  
Seconded by Jorge Cardenas  
All in favor

**IV. Reports and Business**

**A. Principal Reports**

Aja Davis, AF Providence Elementary School principal, started her remarks by sharing that she can't stop smiling. School culture is in a good place. Kids are learning, the overall shift of the school is positive and she welcomed all parents to visit the school.

Family and community engagement.

- The school had a December event celebrating growth and academic achievement with more than 500 attendees. The scholars and staff dressed up to show pride in the work they're doing every day.
- There was a basketball camp over the winter break with 60 participating families.
- They are planning events for the spring break holiday as well. They want to figure out how to support families during the week off.
- Donuts with Ms. Davis is a monthly event for families to come in, talk and ask questions.
- The school is undertaking an ELL initiative to get Rosetta Stone for families. Two teachers are hosting and running that program.
- Every day at dismissal interacting with kids and families.
- Ms. Davis shared that she doesn't think they are hearing from families enough. Started having Hive Talks where they have discussions about relevant social issues as a community.

Ms. Davis is deeply focused on ensuring that the right people are in the right positions at AF Providence Elementary. The org health survey numbers are strong - there is improvement year over year and also from fall to winter.

Ms. Ashia Parks, AF Providence Middle School principal, shared how proud she is of the school's growth. The building is calm, happy and focused. They are prioritizing strong starts - a good start to the day (music, calm, positivity, intentionality and focus) with a particular push around teamwork.

Ms. Parks believed her goal was to create a safe, structured learning environment. It's there now and she's confident about the trajectory to the spring. Student and staff attendance is very high.

She also discussed their student government election, the first dance of the year and Black History Month programming.

AF Providence Middle recently had a family input meeting to talk about the academic paeline in the Greenfield model to hear from families about what is and is not working.

Mr. Jesse Balis-Harris, Regional Superintendent, reported for Kevin Lohela who was unable to attend. There have been no (in or out of school) suspensions since the return from winter break. There has been a bad flu going around and student attendance hasn't been as strong as usual but teacher attendance is excellent. They are gearing up for Black History Month with programming including the Rhode Island Black Storytellers and a quartet who performed for an hour today.

Staff culture remains strong with everyone returning next year, largely in the same roles. Mr. Lohela is

prioritizing trying to make sure that working at AF Illuminar is a sustainable job so that teachers can stay for many years.

Mr. Balis-Harris shared details on particular academic strength and areas where Mr. Lohela is allocating additional resources in order to support grade and subject areas that need it.

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

Mayor Elorza reflected on the value and importance of relationships in our modern era and the role that institutions and organizations can play in filling those gaps.

#### **C. Facilities Update**

Cassidy McKee discussed the resolution before the board. All documents have been signed for the bond transaction. Before the board tonight is a corporate authorization resolution which will allow us to open bank accounts at Washington Trust. She also updated the board on the progress on the Garfield Street site.

RESOLVED, the AF Rhode Island Board of Directors hereby approves the Corporate Authorization Resolution as presented in Exhibit A.

Moved by Maryellen Butke  
Seconded by Reshma Singh  
All in favor

#### **D. Treasurer Report**

Ben Smith presented the financial report to the board. The financial position of the schools is strong.

RESOLVED, the AF Rhode Island Board of Directors hereby approves the financial report as presented in Exhibit B.

Moved by Brian Gallogly  
Seconded by Robert Luciano  
All in favor

Ben Smith and Brian Gallogly also gave an overview of the updates to the fiscal policies including those related to the threshold for bidding and the applicability of state laws.

RESOLVED, the AF Rhode Island Board of Directors hereby approves the revised Achievement First Financial Policies as presented in Exhibit C.

Moved by Brian Gallogly  
Seconded by Maryellen Butke  
All in favor

#### **V. External Relations Update**

Elizabeth Winangun shared a written report that was passed around to board members. The most

important update is that the lottery date has moved to April 1st. Her report also highlighted the many individuals and groups that have visited the school for a tour.

Ben Smith updated the board on the follow up to Michelle Davidson's concerns expressed at the December meeting. Robert Luciano commented that he wants to explore the possibility of implementing something like the Gentlemen's Academy.

**VI. Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:14 pm by Mayor Elorza.

Motion by Ben Smith

Seconded by Brian Gallogly

All in favor