

- Draft Minutes -

## **Achievement First Rhode Island**

### **Board of Directors Retreat**

August 19, 2019, 10:00 - 2:00pm

370 Hartford Avenue, Providence

85 Garfield Avenue, Cranston

#### **I. Call to Order & Attendance**

The meeting was called to order at 10:04 pm by Mayor Jorge Elorza. The following board members, constituting a quorum, and Achievement First Staff were in attendance:

Jorge Elorza, AFRI Board - Yes

Brian Gallogly, AFRI Board - Yes

Macky McCleary, AFRI Board - Yes

Reshma Singh, AFRI Board - Yes

John Igliazzi, AFRI Board - No

Soraida Morales, AFRI Board - No

Ben Smith, AFRI Board - No

Maryellen Butke, AFRI Board - Yes

James Wiley, AFRI Board - Yes

Robert Luciano, AFRI Board - Yes

Percy Ballah, AFRI Board - Yes

Jorge Cardenas, AFRI Board - No

Dacia Toll, AF Network Support - Yes

Cassidy McKee, AF Network Support - Yes

Sarah Blanton, AF Network Support - Yes

Elizabeth Winangun, AF Network Support - Yes

Ken Paul, AF Network Support - Yes

Public: Dan McGowan, Jillian Fain

#### **II. School Tours**

The AF Rhode Island Board toured AF Providence Elementary and Middle at Hartford Avenue. It was the first full day of school for scholars. The board spoke briefly with the two principals and observed classroom instruction. At the completion of the AF Providence tour at 10:45am, the board relocated to AF Illuminar Elementary and Middle for a tour of those schools. Similarly, it was the first full day of school for AF Illuminar and the board had a chance to briefly speak with schools leaders and observe classrooms.

#### **III. Board Discussion on AF Rhode Island Schools, Providence Public Schools and AF Expansion**

The Board debriefed their experiences and observations on the tours at AF Providence Elementary and Middle, and AF Illuminar Elementary and Middle. Directors noted positive teacher morale, focused scholars, beautiful classrooms, and joy.

Maryellen Butke and Reshma Singh initiated a conversation about AF's expansion in light of the Johns Hopkins Report on Providence Public Schools and the challenges in the Providence Public School system. They want to move forward with the expansion plans RIDE approved in 2016. Mayor Elorza responded noting (1) his responsibility to serve all children in the Providence Public School system and (2) his willingness to find a path forward but without a negative fiscal impact on the Providence Public School System.

Dacia Toll shared that the Report was a call to action and the question AF is asking is how we can help? In terms of timing, it is critical for the board to make a decision in September 2019, for a school opening in 2020, because will give AF the runway to get a facility, hire leaders and staff, and do everything else required to successfully open a school.

The board discussed ways to bring AF's professional development, leadership development, and learned best practices with the Providence Public School System. Ms. Toll talked about the strength and positive impact of AF's Partnership work across the country, which involves weekly coaching and curriculum sharing.

Mayor Elorza is aligned with the interest in partnering with the district to share best practices. James Wiley and Maryellen Butke volunteered to be part of a board subcommittee to explore that partnership.

While a majority of board wants to expand by opening an additional school, Mayor Elorza is in the same place he has always been - wanting a fiscal impact study before making any decision. He said expansion depends on where the seats come from. One way forward on the expansion question is to talk to the Commissioner about closing a low performing charter.

At the conclusion of this discussion, Mayor Elorza left the retreat to attend a previously scheduled event.

#### **IV. Executive Session**

The board entered executive session at 1:15 pm to review the Professional Growth Plans (PGPs) of the principals.

Motion by Maryellen Butke

Second by Macky McCleary

The board exited executive session at 1:31 pm.

Motion by Maryellen Butke

Second by James Wiley

Sarah Blanton is going to help schedule calls with the Regional Superintendents to discuss the PGPs. Macky McCleary, Reshma Singh, James Wiley expressed interested in joining the PGP discussions.

#### **V. Board Goals and Priorities**

The board debriefed the discussion about expansion and talked about how Directors can better help serve the schools and families.

#### **VI. Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 1:58 pm by Brian Gallogly.

Motion by Maryellen Butke

Seconded by James Wiley

All in favor