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**AF Hartford Academy  
Board of Directors**

Monday, May 11, 2020, 5:30 pm

Zoom Video Conference

**I. Call to Order and Attendance**

The meeting was called to order at 5:34 pm by Patsy Mundy. The following board members, constituting a quorum, and Achievement First staff were in attendance:

Patsy Mundy - Yes

Endia DeCordova - Yes

Marshall Ruben - No

Ja Hannah - Yes

Alice Turner - Yes

David Dee - Yes

Deborah Prince - Yes

Lisa Tanen-LaFontaine - No

Bildade Augustin - Yes

Alberto Vasquez-Matos - No

Celina Whitmore - Yes

Christina Ellington, AF Network Support

Raven Obas, AFBA School Leadership

Emily Wojtusik, AFHA School Leadership

Victor De La Paz, AF Network Support

Sarah Blanton, AF Network Support

Ken Paul, AF Network Support

Public: Caroline Mclean

**II. Open Session for Public Comment**

Caroline Mclean introduced herself. Her son is a senior at AF Hartford High School.

**III. Approve Minutes**

RESOLVED, the AF Hartford Academy Board of Directors hereby approves the meeting minutes from April 23, 2020.

Motion by Bildade Augustin

Seconded by David Dee

All in favor

**IV. Reports and Discussions**

**A. Principal Reports**

Raven Obas gave a report for AF Hartford Elementary School noting that her return from maternity leave aligned almost exactly with the closure of school, but she was able to be in the building for a day before everyone went to remote learning.

Remote learning is going as well as it possibly could and almost all students have received Chromebooks and mifis.

Attendance has been strong (92% last week) and all scholars are receiving multiple conferences each week. Spirit week was last week, so each day was a themed day with great participation to keep joy and positivity.

The leadership team is in conversation around the summer work plan especially since the scholars have Chromebooks and have online programs that they didn't have in prior years.

Teachers are working hard, and it can be challenging to have back to back conferences while also consistently follow up with all families to ensure work is completed. They are saying that they are loving the connection with the scholars. Often, conferences go into the evening to accommodate schedules of scholars and families.

Each teacher-dean check in begins with a personal check in to see how they're doing.

Teacher retention is 90%. The 10% was made up of teachers we knew weren't returning. A family engagement survey went out a couple weeks ago and the leadership team is going to unpack the data later this week.

Weekly principal cohort meetings allow for collaboration with other AF principals. Ms. Obas feels the network has been amazing at providing technology. The school continues to collect data from families along with wellness checks.

Ms. Obas noted they are doing sensitivity training for teachers around the ways that entering families' homes via Zoom can be complex. She shared that the school is not doing any end-of-year testing at the elementary school. They plan to do diagnostic testing once back to in-person school to assess where scholars are.

Ms. Emily Wojtusik shared that she's incredibly proud of the staff, scholars and families. Immediately after school shut down, the school got Chromebooks out to families. They've been focused on delivering high quality remote learning and knowing how families are doing.

She shared a daily schedule – two classes, two fitness breaks and two tutoring blocks, with an hour lunch break.

Attendance is high for attending one class, somewhat high for two classes, but attendance

drops off at three or four classes. They are working on identifying and understanding the issues. Kids are completing work, which is great, but are not always coming to the Zoom meetings. Ms. Wojtusik affirmed the importance of understanding what's going on with families, above and beyond academics.

Ms. Wojtusik shared a video of a teacher who has one of the highest rates of attendance in her Zoom classes. The video showed a teacher pretending to outrun a dinosaur who was in pursuit in a video behind her as a way to introduce a lesson on why dinosaurs are extinct. The teachers are being creative in engaging the scholars.

The staff did a car parade through Hartford visiting scholars. Staff retention is good. Hiring feels stagnant but Ms. Wojtusik is being patient that all hires are right for the school.

Families are receiving weekly emails from the school leaders and biweekly calls to check in. Ms. Wojtusik referenced the Team and Family Fund at AF which is providing emergency funds to families who most need it.

First day for new staff is July 20<sup>th</sup> which is two weeks later than planned. AF PD will be remote. The first day of school is pushed back a little in hopes of being able to be in person.

Ken Paul shared that a national think tank has researched remote learning plans across the country and has identified AF as among the top in the country. Mr. Hannah applauded the way that the school has created structure and high benchmarks.

The school is going to work on how to best engage students who have struggled with online learning as they plan for next year. It will require an review of test results, attendance results, work submissions and individualized input.

The board discussed work completion rates as compared to attendance rates. Generally, students are completing work at a higher rate than they are attending classes but there is variation between courses. There is still a small percentage of families (2%) who are struggling with connectivity. They are having check-ins with 100% of families and the operations team is doing everything they can to ensure that all families have internet and a devices.

## **B. Joint High School Committee Report**

Ms. Patsy Mundy shared the work going on at AF Hartford High School – remote learning, attendance, teacher retention and the budget. They are planning for senior signing day and graduation. Teachers are making yard signs for seniors and the class of 2020 has very strong

college acceptance results.

The school has gotten a head start on college applications and recommendations for the class of 2021. And in the class of 2020, there is one scholar for whom college is not the right fit and that scholar is attending a life skills program next year.

The board discussed the impact of financial aid on the college admissions process.

### **C. Chief Financial Officer Report**

Victor De La Paz joined the meeting to give an overview of the PPP loan, the financials, and the proposed FY21 budget along with the assumptions underlying the FY21 budget.

Achievement First is anticipating flat funding for next year and although the philanthropy need for next year is lower than this year, there is still a significant amount of fundraising. On the revenue side, we have a seat cap which does not fund all our seats. We need 1235 seats at scale and we only have 1163 in the charter cap. Seats above the cap are not funded.

On the expense side, we set targets according to what is equitable and affordable. AF Hartford Summit MS is continuing to shrink because of the past consolidation. It was the biggest middle school in the network, following the consolidation of AF Hartford Middle and AF Summit Middle and is now returning to a size similar to most AF middle schools.

Endia DeCordova inquired about the fundraising strategy for the Hartford schools. Ken Paul responded appreciatively and wants to follow up with a dialogue about raising Hartford specific funds.

Mr. De La Paz reviewed the forecasts, balance sheet and the request to continue to work with CohnReznick for the FY20 audit.

RESOLVED, the AF Hartford Academy Board of Directors hereby ratifies the re-appointment of CohnReznick to perform the financial audit of the 2019-20 fiscal year.

Motion by Debbie Prince

Seconded by Endia DeCordova

All in favor

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

Motion by Debbie Prince

Seconded by Endia DeCordova  
All in favor

RESOLVED, the AF Hartford Academy Board of Directors hereby approves the financial budget as prepared by Achievement First for the 2020-21 fiscal year.

Motion by Debbie Prince  
Seconded by Endia DeCordova  
All in favor

#### **D. Board Chair Report**

Ms. Mundy shared the desire to have a board retreat and asked the board members to think about topics. There is an urgent need to identify a treasurer for the board and to assess the skill sets needed for the board. In addition, the board should have a strong succession plan for leadership.

RESOLVED, the AF Hartford Academy Board of Directors hereby ratifies the re-election of Alice Turner with a three year term ending June 30, 2023 and, pursuant to the bylaws of AF Hartford Academy, the Board of Directors does, effective July 1, 2020, set the number of members of the Board of Directors at nine (9).

Motion by Lisa Tanen-LaFontaine  
Seconded by David Dee  
All in favor

#### **V. Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:27 pm by Patsy Mundy.

Motion by Bildade Augustin  
Seconded by Ja Hannah  
All in favor