

**Achievement First (AF) Brooklyn Charter Schools
Board of Trustees Meeting**

Thursday, May 28, 2020, 6:00 pm
Zoom Video Conference

- DRAFT MEETING MINUTES -

Board Members in Attendance:

Deb Shanley, Romy Coquillette, Chris Lynch, Andy Hubbard, Amy Arthur Samuels, Judith Jenkins, Judge Priscilla Hall, Warren Young, Kevin Miquelon, Theresa Hayes

Staff and Guests in Attendance: Sarah Blanton, Ken Paul, Fatimah Barker, Dacia Toll, David Sweeny, Victor De La Paz, Andy Boas.

Sarah Blanton recorded the minutes. The meeting was called to order at 6:08 pm.

1. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

2. Update on planning for 2020-21 School Year

Dacia Toll encouraged the board members to attend the virtual senior signing day at AF University Prep High School and then shared what AF is planning for next school year. The major headline is that, at this time, there is no clarity about whether school will be in person next year. As public schools, AF will defer to state directives. We know that there are a number of families who will not be able to return in person, even if it is an option, because they are high risk or live with someone who is high risk. Based on survey results, there is an even larger group of families who are fearful of returning. As such, AF is working on designing a high quality program which includes flexibility.

AF is planning for two scenarios: (1) remote learning with continued or rolling school closures and (2) a flexible model that allows simultaneous remote and in-school instruction with the ability to flex for different numbers of students in remote and in-person. In-person instructions needs to be in small, stable groups with desks six feet apart. In the average sized classroom, this means 12 students per class. There are also many other elements of in-school instruction based on projected state guidelines that will bring additional expenses.

AF has a draft plan for how to respond to the potential of a positive case of COVID and the way the school/grade/class would immediately shift to remote.

The board discussed the challenges of commuting on school buses and public transportation. They also discussed protections for employees.

The board gave positive feedback on how well thought-out the current plans are given the limitations of what we currently know.

3. Committee Reports

Finance Committee

Victor De La Paz reflected on the stable financial foundation AF has at this time. It is almost certain public revenues will be reduced, it is just not clear how the Governors will handle education spending.

The Board discussed insurance and mitigating risk. Andy Boas shared that the Network Support Board will be discussing that in the coming weeks.

The Board was presented with the year to date financials through March as well as the budget proposal for next year. The budgets are likely to change given the COVID context and the direction the economy will go in the coming months. Mr. De La Paz anticipates a strong likelihood of returning to the board in the fall.

Families that applied to AF are accepting seats at double the rate that we have experienced in the past. AF believes that is a function of the strong remote learning program at AF. That said, some of the schools with lower enrollment are at risk for decreasing further and AF is relying on information we're able to collect from current families. We know that several families have relocated during the pandemic.

Dacia Toll provided additional context to the budget process including teacher salaries, budgetary reserves and additional, potential costs.

Warren Young suggested contingencies be placed on the budget approval with an agreement to come back to the table if there is a per pupil or enrollment reduction of 5% or more (noting the increase in personnel spending and the uncertainty in revenue).

Facilities Committee

AF has made a refundable deposit on the Pitkin Ave property for the permanent home for AF Linden Middle. The current question is – given the current market for fundraising and the second layer of execution in building the school – are we going to develop the building ourselves and save on professional fees and have more control or are we going to partner with a developer with higher costs but theoretically lower risk because of the developer's expertise. In one week, the facilities committee is going to have a conversation about what direction they want to go.

Network Support would create the legal structure to hold this property to maximize rental reimbursement.

Jon Atkeson complimented David Sweeny and David Crockett for their work.

Academic Committee

Justin Cohen noted that the meeting with Chi Tschang and Steph Keenoy was excellent. He shared data around attendance, work completion, parent survey results all of which were very strong. The regional subs shared videos that displayed interactive and effective use of technology.

That said, despite all the work being done, it's a difficult environment in which to learn and assessments have shown that there will be gaps in learning.

Alison Richardson noted how impressed they were with the responsive remote learning plans but the concern is that, at the middle school, kids aren't learning with the same degree of vigor that they would with an in-school model. Dacia Toll noted that there are four hours of instruction under the remote learning model compared with eight hours of school during normal, in-school conditions. There are concerns about screen time limiting AF's willingness to extend the remote learning above 4.5 hours. Currently, the model leverages videos from the strongest teachers but obviously lacks the engagement of in person instruction. Next year, remote students will be participating in classes.

Executive Committee

Deb Shanley shared her appreciation that Andy Boas was able to join the meeting.

The board discussed the interview of the principal candidate for AF Crown Heights Elementary. Hilary Cymrot, who oversees the Principal in Residence program, joined the meeting to speak about the principal candidate.

4. Board Business

RESOLVED, the AF Brooklyn Board of Trustees hereby approves the meeting minutes from March 26, May 1, and May 18, 2020.

Motion by Andy Hubbard

Second by Judge Hall

All in favor

RESOLVED, the AF Brooklyn Board of Trustees hereby approves the financial report as presented.

Motion by Will Robalino

Second by Warren Young

All in favor

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

Motion by Jon Atkeson

Second by Judge Hall

All in favor

Warren Young wished to add a suffix: any 5% deterioration in either enrollment or per pupil will result in AF coming back to the board with a revised budget. Jon Atkeson accepted the amendment and Judge Hall Seconded.

RESOLVED, the AF Brooklyn Board of Trustees, pursuant to article IV of its by-laws, hereby elects Chris Lynch to serve an additional three-year term that shall expire on June 30, 2023 and does, effective July 1, 2020, set the number of Trustees at thirteen (13).

Motion by Romy Coquillette

Second by Warren Young

All in favor

RESOLVED, the AF Brooklyn Board of Trustees hereby appoints Sade Johnson as principal of Achievement First Crown Heights Elementary School effective July 1, 2020.

Motion by Judge Hall

Second by Romy Coquillette

All in favor

5. New Business

Deb Shanley reminded everyone to email Sarah Blanton if they wish to join the University Prep Senior Signing Day.

She personally thanked Judge Hall for her service as she is rotating off the board of directors after a very long service.

She also thanked Dacia Toll for her work and the team who have been wonderful in solving some very big challenges. She affirmed the board's support of AF now and in the coming months and years.

6. Adjourn

Meeting was adjourned at 9:13 pm by Deb Shanley.

Motion by Will Robalino

Second by Justin Cohen

All in favor