

Achievement First (AF) Brooklyn Charter Schools
Board of Trustees Meeting
Thursday, August 20, 2020
Zoom Video Conference

Board Members in Attendance: Deb Shanley, Romy Coquillette, Chris Lynch, Andy Hubbard, Amy Arthur Samuels, Kevin Miquelon, Alison Richardson, Justin Cohen, Judith Jenkins, Theresa Hayes, Jon Atkeson

Staff and Guests in Attendance: Amy Christie, Jasmine Daniels, Sarah Blanton, Ken Paul, Fatimah Barker, Dacia Toll, Maura Bonnani, Victor De La Paz

Sarah Blanton recorded the minutes. The meeting was called to order at 5:05 pm by Deb Shanley.

1. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

2. Bridge Scholarship Update

Jasmine Daniels and Amy Christie shared with the board the ways in which the college landscape is shifting and how that's impacting the financial aid packages for our alumni. AF anticipates having final numbers on Bridge Funding in October.

Amy Christie shared that they are seeing admissions offices working hard to maintain strong access and equity programs.

In order to receive the Bridge Funding, students submit revised bills and AF engages in an individualized review process to determine what is within the bounds of what we can support. Those conversations and that calculus are happening right now.

3. National Summer School Institute

The board tabled this discussion until the next meeting (October 1, 2020).

4. Real Estate Committee Update

The board entered executive session at 5:30 pm to discuss sensitive matters related to real estate. Motion by Kevin Miquelon. Seconded by Jon Atkeson. All in favor.

5. Executive Session – discussion of principal candidate for the new AF Brooklyn high school (opening 2021)

The board remained in executive session at 5:43 to discuss the principal candidate for the new AF Brooklyn High School. The board exited executive session at 5:54 pm.

6. Board Business

Deb Shanley reviewed the three resolutions before the board.

RESOLVED, the AF Brooklyn Board of Trustees hereby approves the meeting minutes from July 14, July 28 and August 3, 2020.

Motion by Romy Coquillette

Seconded by Chris Lynch

All in favor

RESOLVED, the AF Brooklyn Board of Trustees hereby elects the following leadership slate for the 2020-21 fiscal year:

Deb Shanley, Chair

Romy Coquillette, Vice Chair

Jon Atkeson, Treasurer

Motion by Justin Cohen

Seconded by Chris Lynch

All in favor

RESOLVED, the AF Brooklyn Board of Trustees hereby appoints Ms. Nana Effah as principal, effective July 1, 2021, of the new Achievement First High School to open in August 2021.

Motion by Deb Shanley

Seconded by Alison Richardson

All in favor

7. Reopening Update

Dacia Toll updated the board on the plans to reopen AF Brooklyn schools. Kindergarten, fifth and 9th grades will start remote on September 1. All other grades will start remote on September 2. All schools will phase-in, in-person instruction for those who need it starting on Monday, October 5.

The board discussed the feedback from families around their decisions to keep their children home for remote learning instead of going in-person. Many families have been directly impacted by COVID, there are concerns about transportation and shared space in DOE buildings, and there is a general sense of fear and concern. AF is working on upgrading safety protocols in our facilities, but it is challenging in DOE buildings.

This work on remote learning/reopening is happening concurrently with our Lead for Racial Equity work. Dacia Toll and Fatimah Barker shared feedback AF has received from our alumni who have gathered in a series of town halls. Much of the feedback was around school culture and discipline, the emphasis on college as the primary marker for how AF defines success, the role of student voice and the diversity of the teaching staff.

8. Additional Updates

Deb Shanley updated the board that the AF Voyager renewal application was submitted and we are awaiting guidance from SUNY on the virtual site visit.

9. Adjourn

It was unanimously decided to adjourn the meeting at 6:46 pm.

Motion by Jon Atkeson