

Achievement First (AF) Brooklyn Charter Schools
Board of Trustees Meeting
Thursday, September 10, 2020
Zoom Video Conference

Board Members in Attendance: Deb Shanley, Romy Coquillet, Amy Arthur Samuels, Warren Young, Chris Lynch, Kevin Miquelon, Theresa Hayes, Jon Atkeson, Judith Joseph Jenkins, Will Robalino, Andy Hubbard

Staff and Guests in Attendance: Sarah Blanton, Dacia Toll, Amelia Hanley, Rich Buery

Sarah Blanton recorded the minutes. The meeting was called to order at 6:04 pm by Deb Shanley.

1. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

2. School reopening

Dacia Toll introduced Amelia Hanley, co-VP of Operations before beginning a presentation including data from surveys to all AF Brooklyn families which show low rates of interest in in-person instruction in October. Of all the NY families, 17% want to be in-person but only 4% indicated that a continued remote delay would be a hardship.

Ms. Hanley shared that the operations team has been working since August to get buildings ready for scholars to return safely. The challenges are ventilation and bathrooms. The facilities and operations teams have plans in place to address these challenges but there is high concern that despite our willingness to plan, pay for, and do the work, the Department of Education (DOE) may not allow it. Fifteen of our seventeen locations are in DOE buildings.

Ms. Toll shared the plans of other charter management organizations and how AF is considering those options. In particular, AF ruled out shared learning centers because only two of our 17 locations would be usable and very few of the families who might need the shared learning centers are not on subway lines where our families live.

The three options AF is considering are

1. Stay the course with reopening on October 5
2. Delay until November 2
3. Delay until at least January 4, 2021

AF sought input from principals and directors of school operations and they were largely in favor of option 3. The DOE is not committing to providing busing and a vast majority of teachers and staff use public transportation to get to school.

AF's recommendation is to go with option 2 and announce now that we are delaying until at least November 2nd but also signal to families that this may get pushed back to January or later.

AF is planning several steps to support families including advocating for the DOE to open the "Learning Bridges" program for charter parents, cataloguing childcare options by neighborhood, and working with community based organizations to provide childcare.

The board discussed the options and recommendations considering the advantages and risks of reopening in November. The board unanimously supported AF's preference for delaying opening in person until at least November. They encouraged AF to consider whether the specific date should be the day before Election Day or November 9th.

3. Adjourn

It was unanimously decided to adjourn at 7:12 pm.

Motion by Justin Cohen

Seconded by Romy Coquillet