

AF Hartford Academy
Board of Directors

November 9, 2020, 5:30 pm
Zoom Video Conference

I. Call to Order and Attendance

The meeting was called to order at 5:35 pm by Patsy Mundy. The following board members, constituting a quorum, and Achievement First staff were in attendance:

Patsy Mundy - Yes	Raven Obas, AFBA School Leadership
Endia DeCordova - No	Emily Wojtusik, AFHA School Leadership
Bildade Augustin - Yes	Laneka Thomas, AFHA School Leadership
Ja Hannah - Yes	Christina Ellington, AF Network Support
Alice Turner - Yes	Shannon Garfield, AF Network Support
David Dee - Yes	Sarah Blanton, AF Network Support
Lisa Tanen-LaFontaine - Yes	Ken Paul, AF Network Support
Celina Whitmore - No	Dacia Toll, AF Network Support
	Richard Buery, AF Network Support

II. Open Session for Public Comment

There was no public comment.

III. Approve Minutes

RESOLVED, the AF Hartford Academy Board of Directors hereby approves the meeting minutes from September 14 and October 19, 2020.

Motion by Lisa Tanen-LaFontaine

Seconded by Bildade Augustin

All in favor

IV. Reports and Discussions

A. Principal Reports

Ms. Laneka Thomas, AF Hartford High School Interim Principal, shared organizational health survey data that showed significant growth year over year. In absolute terms, the data is not where she wants it to be but they saw a 14 point improvement. In particular, staff are indicating that they feel heard by the leadership team and that decisions are being made with multiple perspectives. Ms. Thomas has consistently made space to engage with staff in a meaningful, ongoing way. They team openly will have grown comfortable putting on the table the conversations that had formerly been avoided.

94% of college and career planning meetings have taken place and the first round of early decision applications were submitted to schools including Smith College, Brown University and University of Pennsylvania. More applications will be submitted for the November 15th deadline. The seniors are very invested in their college process.

Despite being remote, students are engaging in clubs and additional social emotional learning opportunities. Until recently they had 15% of kids in the building but are now fully remote. They've heard from scholars and parents that the schedule needs restructuring – likely moving to a block schedule with longer class blocks to go deeper and complete assignments.

The priorities continue to be student success, student investment and adult culture.

Ms. Raven Obas, principal of AF Hartford Elementary School, shared that apprehension about coming to school in-person was dissipating and families were getting more comfortable with the idea, but then they went fully remote. She noted that everyone is being resilient in adjusting to changes.

She shared that teachers are using work completion and participation trackers to gauge student progress and growth, but they will be transitioning to a more rigorous data collection and reporting. Report card week is the first week in December. They will share with families the work completion and participation data, and well as the assessment data they have. They've done STEP testing to communicate reading scores as well as math quiz results.

As they look ahead, they are working on stronger family communication, strategic interventions and work completion, eventual in-person instruction (hybrid model) and focusing on the joy of the coming holiday season.

Ms. Obas noted that the AF network has prioritized a more inclusive curriculum and she's finding that students are loving the books they're reading. Science is taught across all grades and they're taking input from families on the schedule which have resulted in some schedule adjustments to better support student learning. Teachers are using Class Dojo to stay connected to families. Ms. Obas shared some feedback from parents showing gratitude and praising the efforts of the school.

The elementary made their enrollment goals.

Ms. Emily Wojtusik, principal of AF Hartford Summit Middle School, updated the board that students, teachers and leaders are all resilient and adjusting to changes well. She shared nuances in the attendance data and highlighted students who have perfect attendance – some of whom didn't have perfect attendance last year before school went remote.

They've adjusted the scope and sequence to slow down, respond to data, and engage more in interventions.

The staff recently took an organizational health survey and students took an investment survey. The data will be available in December and the team will use it to plan for after winter break.

They are working to embed the core value of Lead for Racial Equity (LRE). They made adjustments to the behavior system. They've also created an LRE steering committee

B. Board Chair Report

Patsy Mundy shared with the board that the search for a permanent principal is ongoing and that she's met with Hilary Cymrot to get an update.

C. Treasurer Report

Bildade Augustin gave the treasurer report which include financials through September. No schools are projecting a deficit. The PPP forgiveness application will be submitted soon.

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

Motion by David Dee

Seconded by Ja Hannah

All in favor

D. Introduction to Richard Buery

Dacia Toll joined the meeting to discuss her transition news that after 21 years, she believes it is best for AF to have new leadership. She loves the organization deeply and believes that Rich is among the most talented people in the sector. Mr. Buery will undergo a validation process to determine whether he will become the next CEO.

Rich Buery introduced himself and discussed his background and his goals for the organization.

Ms. Toll reviewed the priorities that she sees for the board.

1. Ensure the schools are excellent especially the COVID response and recovery (a multi-year effort).
2. Strategizing around making the schools financially viable (advocacy, philanthropy, strong budget management).
3. Principal talent and making sure that each school has a strong leader who is growing and developing in their roles.
4. Community relations and engagement.

V. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 7:01 pm by Patsy Mundy.

Motion by Bildade Augustin

Seconded by Ja Hannah

All in favor