

Achievement First (AF) Brooklyn Charter Schools

Board of Trustees Meeting

Thursday, March 25, 2021, 6:00 pm
Zoom Video Conference

- DRAFT MEETING MINUTES -

Board Members in Attendance: Deb Shanley, Romy Coquillette, Jon Atkeson, Justin Cohen, Amy Arthur Samuels, Judith Jenkins, Alison Richardson, Warren Young, Kevin Miquelon, Will Robalino

Staff and Guests in Attendance: Sarah Blanton, Ken Paul, Dacia Toll, Marc Michaelson, De-Lea Deane Allen, Briana Mitchell, Joshua Phillips, Faisal Jawaid, Neil Shah, Eduardo del Valle, Dacia Toll, Emma White, Jacquelyn Martel, Desiree Dalton, Tamika Bradley, Kelvin Spooner, Rhonda Barros, Jed Sunden

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

1. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

2. Discussion

Leading for Racial Equity: Discussion with De-Lea Deane Allen, Chief Equity Officer

Ms. De-Lea Deane-Allen gave a brief overview of the history of AF's commitment to diversity and inclusion, especially around retention and recruitment of teachers, staff and leaders. She shared the evolution, as AF shifted the values and mindsets, to where the schools are today with the current organizational values and priorities.

Ms. Deane-Allen spoke about AF's work on relationship building, talent practices, and aligning around an intentional strategy for outreach. She also addressed the way in which students are experiencing the changes and how teachers are trying to create, largely in a virtual world, a strong community and classrooms where students feel a sense of belonging.

This work also involves orienting leaders to be listeners with empathy and engaging with families to assess how they are experiencing the changes. AF has included families in the Vision Process and with selection processes for senior leaders such as the CEO, Chief of Staff and Superintendent.

AF Summer Camp: Presentation and discussion with Marc Michaelson, Briana Mitchell and Josh Phillips

Marc Michaelson introduced himself and gave an overview of the history of AF's efforts to offer summer camp. Change Summer is an organization that has partnered with Uncommon Schools and is now partnering with AF to provide a summer camp experience for our students.

Ms. Briana Mitchell is the camp director and shared the priorities for a safe and inclusive culture at summer camp which is intended to be at the University of Rhode Island, where the students would live in dorms, eat in dining halls and use the campus facilities and resources.

There will be two, 2-week sessions serving 500 rising 4th-9th graders this summer and 1000 next summer. Some of the counselors will be AF alumni and rising AF twelfth graders are eligible to be junior counselors.

Ms. Mitchell shared the COVID safety policies and procedures, as well as the financial projections.

3. Committee Reports

Finance Committee: Jon Atkeson gave an overview of the year to date financials which are in good shape, supported by strong enrollment and budget management. The cash position is healthy. The board discussed federal stimulus funds.

Real Estate Committee: Kevin Miquelon shared that there is good progress on AF Linden MS. Queens came in under budget. Dacia Toll and Emma White joined the meeting to update the board on some facilities and enrollment challenges facing our schools and how AF is working to be proactive in addressing the challenges.

AF is not opening HS #5 because that school would have had one feeder middle school which would not have been sustainable.

Ms. Toll reviewed the revised feeder patterns and the proposed changes. There are no changes to the feeder pattern for AF Brooklyn High School. The goal is to find a permanent location for AF Ujima HS that is close to the feeder middle schools with AF Aspire MS going to AF Ujima HS.

Emma White shared the student recruitment efforts the team is making to recruit for AF Legacy ES for both kindergarten and first grade. It was significantly more difficult to recruit for first grade because it requires people to leave their elementary school after kindergarten.

The board discussed concerns about the underlying reasons for the low numbers of families applying. Ms. Toll shared that the charter applications are down significantly across NYC. The board expressed hope that post-COVID, families who left the city will come back and our demographic studies that showed a demand in Queens will still prove to be accurate.

AF wishes to have an additional planning year before opening AF #11 for reasons related to student recruitment and facilities.

Ms. White gave an overview of the challenges facing the student recruitment team. At the conclusion of the discussion, the board reviewed and passed the following resolution:

WHEREAS the Achievement First Brooklyn Board of Trustees has reviewed, considered and vetted the relevant facts and circumstances concerning the subject of these Resolutions;

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Achievement First Brooklyn Board of Trustees approves the plan to:

- 1) seek an additional planning year prior to opening AF 11 in the 2022-23 school year and revise the enrollment plan to serve only Kindergarten in the 2022-23 school year, subject to authorizer approval;
- 2) revise the enrollment plan of Achievement First Legacy ES to serve only Kindergarten in the 2021-22 school year, subject to authorizer approval; and
- 3) revise the feeder pattern of high schools, as presented, subject to authorizer approval.

RESOLVED FURTHER, that the Achievement First Brooklyn Board of Trustees hereby authorizes and directs Achievement First Network Support and the schools to take and carry out such action as required in connection with the foregoing Resolution.

Motion by Jon Atkeson
Second by Will Robalino
All in favor

Academic Committee

The board entered executive session at 8:16 pm to have a personnel discussion regarding principal renewal offers for the 2021-22 school year and invited Sarah Blanton and Ken Paul to join. Motion by Jon Atkeson. Second by Warren Young.

The board exited executive session at 8:33 pm. Motion by Romy. Second by Warren Young.

4. Board Business

RESOLVED, the AF Brooklyn Board of Trustees hereby approves the meeting minutes from January 28, 2021.

Motion by Deb Shanley
Second by Warren Young
All in favor

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

Motion by Jon Atkeson

Second by Romy Coquillette
All in favor

RESOLVED, the AF Brooklyn Board of Trustees hereby appoints Alicia Harper as principal of Achievement First North Brooklyn Prep Elementary School effective July 1, 2021.

Motion by Deb Shanley
Second by Kevin Miquelon
All in favor

RESOLVED, the AF Brooklyn Board of Trustees has discussed the performance of the AF Brooklyn Principals intending to return for the 2021-22 school year and the compensation package as proposed by Achievement First, and hereby approves the renewal of the following principals, with a final compensation package to be incorporated in the FY22 Budget to be reviewed and approved in May 2021:

- Noah Hellman, AF Apollo Elementary School Principal
- Jordan Hardy, AF Aspire Elementary School Principal
- Zonya Hicks, AF Brownsville Elementary School Principal
- Courtney Saretzky, AF Bushwick Elementary School Principal
- Sade Johnson, AF Crown Heights Elementary School
- Meryl Senter, AF East New York Elementary School
- Colleen Young, AF Endeavor Elementary School
- Ashley Baez, AF Linden Elementary School
- Jesse Ugglá, AF Apollo Middle School
- Zach Segall, AF Aspire Middle School
- Allison Laird, AF Brownsville Middle School
- Bob Bridges, AF Bushwick Middle School
- Victoria Pierre, AF Crown Heights Middle School
- Max Milliken, AF East New York Middle School
- Shannon Williams-Paden, AF Endeavor Middle School
- Rochelle Murray, AF Linden Middle School
- Kate Carroll, AF North Brooklyn Prep Middle School
- Tamla Frater, AF Voyager Middle School
- Dumar Paden, AF Brooklyn High School
- Martin Palamore, AF East Brooklyn High School
- Jason Coalter, AF University Prep High School

Motion by Will Robalino
Second by Jon Atkeson
All in favor

5. Additional Updates

Romy Coquillette shared her reflections on the second Vision Summit.

6. Adjourn

It was unanimously decided to adjourn the meeting at 8:37 pm.

Motion by Amy Arthur Samuels

Second by Jon Atkeson

All in favor