

Joint Meeting of the Achievement First School Boards of Directors

Amistad Academy, Elm City College Preparatory, AF Bridgeport Academy, AF Hartford Academy, AF Brooklyn and AF Rhode Island

Zoom meeting
Monday, August 2, 2021
1:00 – 3:00 pm

I. Call to Order and Attendance

The meeting was called to order at 1:05 pm by Dick Ferguson, Elm City College Preparatory Board Chair. The following board members and Achievement First Staff were in attendance:

Amistad Academy Board Members in Attendance: Carolyn Greenspan, Jane Levin, Yashira Agosto, Priyanka Junankar

Elm City College Preparatory Board Members in Attendance: Dick Ferguson, Laura Saverin, Patric Gregory, Tina Wright, Julia Halberstam, Nicola Fleischer, Stephanie Ma, LaVonta Bryant, Prish Pierce

AF Bridgeport Academy Board Members in Attendance: Mike Strambler, Ebrima Jobe, Kimberly Bruce, Ruben Felipe, Debra Hertz

AF Hartford Academy Board Members in Attendance: Patsy Mundy, Billie Augustin, Lisa Tanen-La Fontaine, Erwin Hurst

AF Rhode Island Board Members in Attendance: Maryellen Butke, Ben Smith, Macky McCleary, Reshma Singh

AF Brooklyn Board Members in Attendance: Deb Shanley, Romy Coquillet, Andy Hubbard, Desiree Dalton, Kevin Miquelon, Warren Young, Chris Lynch, Tamika Bradley

Achievement First Staff: Rich Buery, Steph Keenoy, Fatimah Barker, Sarah Blanton, Neil Shah, Scot Kerr, Ken Paul, Elise Major

Public: Akeem Frett

II. Updates

A. Ransomware Attack

Mr. Rich Buery updated the boards on what happened with the REvil ransomware attack and how AF responded.

B. ESSER Funding

Mr. Neil Shah gave an overview of ESSER funding and how Achievement First and the schools are working on aligning ESSER funds with our COVID response strategies.

III. Leadership Transition and Vision Process

Mr. Rich Buery discussed his transition plans, as Ms. Fatimah Barker, AF's current Chief External Officer, will serve as the Interim CEO. Mr. Buery spoke about the organizational structure and the new positions added.

Mr. Buery then led a discussion about the Vision Process. The board gave feedback on the graduate aims and then reviewed the updated vision and mission Statement. Updating these statements was not originally intended to be part of the Vision Process but as the work towards defining our aspirations, updating the mission statement naturally followed. The board gave feedback on the vision and mission statements.

IV. 2020-21 Review of Academy Performance and COVID Response Strategies

Ms. Stephanie Keenoy, AF's Superintendent, led a discussion about the performance of the AF schools during the 2020-21 school year. During that year, AF's New York schools were remote all year, while the Connecticut and Rhode Island schools operated in a hybrid mode, offering in-person learning for interested students during parts of the year.

Ms. Keenoy reviewed her goals for the 2020-21 school year and outcomes in the categories of student safety, student experience, staff experience, family experience and remote and hybrid programming and academic performance.

She then reviewed the academic performance of the elementary, middle and high schools by discussing the tests administered, procedures for assessments and results. Across all academy levels, Ms. Keenoy discussed reading levels as a separate measure from many of the other assessments administered by AF. The board posed question and engaged in discussions around the results.

Ms. Keenoy reviewed AF's guiding principles which helped AF draft the response strategies.

1. Designing for physical safety.
2. Continuing to prioritize student experience.

3. Adapt curriculum materials based on formative data.
4. Strong reading intervention – with prioritized efforts in grades 5-12.
5. External partnerships – with a focus on summer academy and tutoring programs.

The board asked questions on the strategies presented.

V. 2021-22 Goals and School Reopening

Ms. Keenoy shared the goals for the coming year, as aligned with the COVID strategies, and the ways in which AF intends to measure progress towards those goals. She indicated that the goals represent started targets and that the principals are setting school-specific goals aligned to these network goals.

Ms. Keenoy shared her confidence in the goals and COVID response strategies. The boards will have opportunities to assess progress towards goals throughout the year.

VI. Adjourn

The joint meeting was adjourned at 3:04 pm by Dick Ferguson. Motion by Laura Saverin. Second by Prish Pierce.