

Achievement First (AF) Brooklyn Charter Schools

Board of Trustees Meeting

Thursday, November 18, 2021, 6:00 pm

Zoom Video Conference

- DRAFT MEETING MINUTES -

Board Members in Attendance: Romy Coquillette, Alison Richardson, Andy Hubbard, Josh Vidro, Tamika Bradley, Warren Young, Akeem Frett, Amy Arthur Samuels, Chris Lynch, Will Robalino, Kevin Miquelon, Anup Menon, Rhonda Barros, Judith Jenkins, Desiree Dalton

Staff and Guests in Attendance: Sarah Blanton, Talia Shaull, Ken Paul, Neil Shah, Xanthe Jory, Stephanie Keenoy, Fatimah Barker, Christi George, Ketki Harale

Sarah Blanton recorded the minutes. The meeting was called to order at 6:03 pm by Romy Coquillette.

1. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

2. Discussion and possible action

Fatimah Barker gave an overview of the five key areas that the network is working on: (1) staffing, (2) safety, (3) student success, (4) organizational planning and (5) organizational culture.

a. Vaccine mandate

Ms. Christi George, Director of HR Policy, gave an overview of the timeline, process and data from the vaccine mandate and the impact it has had on the schools and network.

b. Staffing update



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Ms. Talia Shaull discussed the school-based vacancies broken out by teachers, leaders and operations with a year-over-year comparison. There are currently 41 vacancies, total. Some schools have no vacancies. AF Linden Middle School has the most vacancies. Ms. Barker gave context to the hiring challenges where AF Linden MS is the only growing middle school and needed to hire an entire grade of teachers, virtually.

AF is considering and implementing strategies to incentivize staff to stay while also rethinking what the role of the teacher will be in the coming years. Ms. Shaull reviewed reasons for staff departures, very few of which were related to compensation. Additional funds are being used to provide stipends for staff.

Ms. Barker spoke about the changes in the education sector where she believes it will continue to be difficult to hire teachers and school-based staff.

Ms. Shaull also reviewed staffing at Network Support where there are approximately 50 vacancies. AF is looking at which roles are the most critical to fill at this time.

c. Student enrollment

Ms. Xanthe Jory spoke about school safety and the three priorities she's focused on: (1) preventing the spread of COVID, (2) is streamlining systems to support the work and (3) investing stakeholders.

AF is currently down approximately 400 students across the schools. That number stems from current families not showing up at the start of the year and families who are withdrawing their children. Enrollment is down nationally with the New York Times reporting that City enrollment is down 4.5% with the heaviest impact being felt in the lower grades.

The recruitment team is undertaking a number of efforts to recruit students for this year as well as next year. She shared the ways in which AF is modifying existing practices and improving data collection and reporting.

The board discussed student recruitment strategies.

d. Board dashboard

Romy Coquillette shared that the board is developing a dashboard to review data on a regular basis at meetings.



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3. Committee Reports

Finance and Facilities committees: Mr. Neil Shah reviewed the financial statements for the first quarter including the balance sheet and P&L as of 9/30/21. The board discussed the impact of staffing and enrollment. Mr. Shah updated the board on ESSER spending. AF is going to present a revised spending plan at the next board meeting.

The Facilities Committee discussed current projects. The Finance and Facilities Committees will have a joint meeting in the near future to discuss the overlapping topics around real estate financing.

Academic Committee: Ms. Alison Richardson gave the academic committee report on the baseline reading data at the elementary, middle and high schools and the extent to which students are behind grade level. Ms. Stephanie Keenoy responded to questions and spoke about where the organization is putting its efforts.

All AF Brooklyn elementary schools are using Foundations of Reading as a new, scientifically-based reading program.

Ms. Keenoy affirmed that the organization is approaching the reading challenges with urgency.

The board talked about how the teachers are doing. Ms. Barker talked about how the network is thinking about supporting teachers who are exhausted.

4. Board Business

RESOLVED, the AF Brooklyn Board of Trustees hereby approves the meeting minutes from September 30, 2021 with the noted corrections regarding the schools to which the principal candidates were assigned.

Motion by Chris Lynch
Seconded by Kevin Miquelon
All in favor

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

Motion by Warren Young
Seconded by Will Robalino
All in favor



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RESOLVED, the AF Brooklyn Board of Trustees hereby accepts the report of the independent auditors CohnReznick prepared in relation to the fiscal year ending 6/30/21.

Motion by Kevin Miquelon
Seconded by Chris Lynch
All in favor

RESOLVED, the AF Brooklyn Board of Trustees hereby approves the following individuals to serve as interim principal, as needed, for a period of time not to exceed sixteen weeks, based on the recommendations by Achievement First, between November 19, 2021 and June 30, 2022:

AF Apollo ES	Lindsey Smith
AF Aspire ES	Nora Watkis
AF Brossville ES	Ana Samper
AF Bushwick ES	Jessie Ziegler
AF Crown Heights ES	Melissa Cantave
AF East New York ES	Katie Donaldson
AF Endeavor ES	Anika Locklear
AF Legacy ES	Ashley Wilson
AF Linden ES	Ashley Wilson
AF North Brooklyn ES	Dali Alvarez
AF Apollo MS	Michael Hendricks
AF Aspire MS	Michael Rosskamm
AF Brossville MS	Michael Rosskamm
AF Bushwick MS	Sam Jones
AF Crown Heights MS	Riley Bauling
AF East New York MS	Chi Tschang
AF Endeavor MS	Michael Rosskamm
AF Linden MS	Kiah Hufane
AF North Brooklyn MS	Katherine De La Cruz



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AF Voyager MS	Melanie Green
AF Brooklyn HS	Jaimee Doucette
AF East Brooklyn HS	Tom Ng
AF Ujima HS	Cristina Lopez del Castillo de la Cruz
AF University Prep HS	Katie McPollom

Motion by Kevin Miquelon
Seconded by Chris Lynch
All in favor

RESOLVED, the AF Brooklyn Board of Trustees hereby approves the School Safety Plan as presented in exhibit A.

Motion by Chris Lynch
Seconded by Kevin Miquelon
All in favor

5. Additional Business

There was no additional business.

6. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 8:54 pm by Romy Coquillette.

Motion by Kevin Miquelon
Seconded by Chris Lynch
All in favor



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Exhibit A

Achievement First Charter Schools

Introduction: Emergencies and violent incidents in school districts are critical issues that must be addressed in an expeditious and effective manner. Districts are required to develop a District-wide School Safety Plan designed to prevent or minimize the effects of serious violent incidents and emergencies and to facilitate the coordination of the district with local and county resources in the event of such incidents or emergencies. The district-wide plan is responsive to the needs of all schools within the district and is consistent with the more detailed emergency response plans required at the school building level. Districts are at risk of a wide variety of acts of violence, natural, and technological disasters. To address these threats, the State of New York has enacted the Safe Schools Against Violence in Education (SAVE) law. This component of Project SAVE is a comprehensive planning effort that addresses risk reduction/prevention, response, and recovery with respect to a variety of emergencies in the school district and its schools. Describe the process used by the district in developing this school safety plan, including any strategies such as community or student involvement and collaboration. The district may describe the data or process used for needs assessment and implementation of the plan to meet the individualized needs of the district in keeping with the intent of Project SAVE.

Achievement First Charter Schools (“District”) School District supports the SAVE Legislation, and intends to engage in a planning process. The Vice President of Operations encourages and advocates on-going district-wide cooperation and support of Project SAVE.

Section I: General Considerations and Planning Guidelines

A. Purpose:

The Achievement First District-wide School Safety Plan was developed pursuant to Commissioner’s Regulation 155.17. At the direction of the Achievement First Brooklyn Charter Schools board, the Vice President of Operations of **Achievement First Charter Schools** appointed a District-wide School Safety Team and charged it with the development and maintenance of the District-wide School Safety Plan.

B. **Identification of School Teams**

Achievement First has appointed a District-wide School Safety Team consisting of, but not limited to students, teachers, administrators, parent organizations; school safety personnel; and, other school personnel.

C. **Concept of Operations**

- The District-wide School Safety Plan is directly linked to the individual Building-level Emergency Response Plans for each school building. Protocols reflected in the District-wide School Safety Plan will be used to guide the development and implementation of individual Building-level Emergency Response Plans.
- The development of the District wide School Safety Plan was a collaborative effort of the District-wide Safety team utilizing guidance provided by the New York State Education Department, in consultation with Homeland Security and the New York State Police.
- In the event of an emergency or violent incident, the initial response to all emergencies at an individual school will be by the School Emergency Response Team. Achievement First consists of the following facilities in New York:
 - Achievement First Apollo Elementary School
 - Achievement First Aspire Elementary School

- Achievement First Brownsville Elementary School
- Achievement First Bushwick Elementary School
- Achievement First Crown Heights Elementary School
- Achievement First East New York Elementary School
- Achievement First Endeavor Elementary School
- Achievement First Legacy Elementary School
- Achievement First Linden Elementary School
- Achievement First North Brooklyn Prep Elementary School
- Achievement First Apollo Middle School
- Achievement First Aspire Middle School
- Achievement First Brownsville Middle School
- Achievement First Bushwick Middle School
- Achievement First Crown Heights Middle School
- Achievement First East New York Middle School
- Achievement First Endeavor Middle School
- Achievement First Linden Middle School
- Achievement First North Brooklyn Prep Middle School
- Achievement First Voyager Middle School
- Achievement First Brooklyn High School
- Achievement First East Brooklyn High School
- Achievement First Ujima High School
- Achievement First University Prep High School
- Upon the activation of the School Emergency Response Team, the Regional Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee will be notified and, where appropriate, local emergency officials will also be notified by calling 911.
- County and state resources through existing established protocols may supplement emergency response actions, including post-incident responses.

D. Plan Review and Public Comment

- This plan will be reviewed and maintained by the District-wide School Safety team on an annual basis before July 1 of each year.
- Pursuant to Commissioner’s Regulation, Section 155.17 (e)(3), this plan will be made available for public comment at least 30 days prior to its adoption. The district-wide plan may be adopted by the AF Brooklyn Board of Trustees only after at least one public hearing that provides for the participation of school personnel, parents, students and any other interested parties. The plan must be formally adopted by the Board of Education.
- Full copies of the District-wide School Safety Plan and any amendments will be submitted to the New York State Education Department within 30 days of adoption. A copy of the plan will be available at the Achievement First New York Office (370 James Street, New Haven, CT 06513).
- While linked to the District-wide School Safety Plan, the Building-level Emergency Response Plans shall be confidential and shall not be subject to disclosure under Article 6 of the Public Officers Law or any other provision of law, in accordance with Education Law Section 2801-a.a.

Section II: Risk Reduction/Prevention and Intervention

This section of the plan is used to identify and describe the district's policies and procedures for reducing the risk of violence; implementing programs and activities for prevention of violence; and establishing clear descriptions of actions that will be taken in the event of a violent incident or other school emergency. Research demonstrates that positive, skills-based approaches can increase the safety of students and teachers in school, as well as improve the community climate.

A. Prevention/Intervention Strategies

Achievement First regularly conducts age appropriate programs for scholars, staff, and parents in each building such as:

- Non-violent conflict resolution training programs
- Creating a forum or designating a mentor for students concerned with bullying or violence
- Peer mediation programs and support
- Other programs established at each school building.

Additionally, school buildings are staffed by School Safety Agents, and equipped with security surveillance systems and occasionally metal detectors.

B. Training, Drills, and Exercises

- Achievement First has established policies and procedures for annual multi-hazard school safety training for staff and students, including the strategies for implementing training related to multi-hazards. The District has established the following procedures for multi-hazard school safety training for staff and students:
 - Annual review of the building emergency response procedures with staff and students.
 - All buildings conduct emergency drills including (8) fire drills and (4) lockdown drills that including practicing Shelter-in-place, Hold-in-place, and Lockout protocols.
 - The district conducts drills and other training exercises to test components of the emergency response in coordination with the NYC School Safety Division.

C. Implementation of School Security

- Achievement First works closely with the NYC School Safety Division within each facility in New York City. All visitors to a school must sign in with both the School Safety desk at the Main Entrance and the school's main office upon arrival. A visitor is considered anyone who is not a regular staff member or student. Visitors must wear a Visitors Badge identifying them, and are not permitted to wander throughout the facilities. If a staff member notices suspicious, threatening, and/or otherwise inappropriate behavior, the behavior is to be immediately reported to the Main Office for a response from the Director of School Operations and/or the Principal.

D. Vital Educational Agency Information

- Achievement First has 24 facilities in New York City:
 - Achievement First Apollo Elementary School
 - Achievement First Aspire Elementary School
 - Achievement First Brownsville Elementary School
 - Achievement First Bushwick Elementary School
 - Achievement First Crown Heights Elementary School
 - Achievement First East New York Elementary School
 - Achievement First Endeavor Elementary School
 - Achievement First Legacy Elementary School
 - Achievement First Linden Elementary School

- Achievement First North Brooklyn Prep Elementary School
- Achievement First Apollo Middle School
- Achievement First Aspire Middle School
- Achievement First Brownsville Middle School
- Achievement First Bushwick Middle School
- Achievement First Crown Heights Middle School
- Achievement First East New York Middle School
- Achievement First Endeavor Middle School
- Achievement First Linden Middle School
- Achievement First North Brooklyn Prep Middle School
- Achievement First Voyager Middle School
- Achievement First Brooklyn High School
- Achievement First East Brooklyn High School
- Achievement First Ujima High School
- Achievement First University Prep High School

Each Building Emergency Response Plan will contain vital information such as school population, number of staff, transportation needs, and the business and home telephone numbers of key officials of each such educational agency. These plans include relocation and reunification locations.

E. Early Detection of Potentially Violent Behaviors

- The early detection of potentially violent students will be facilitated through professional development offerings provided by the School Leadership team of each Achievement First building. Before the end of the first week of each academic year, teachers will familiarize themselves with all available information and records about the regular education and/or special education program placement of every student in their class. Instructional and non-instructional staff who are concerned about the behavior of a student will communicate with the Principal if the situation so warrants. The Principal will then communicate appropriate information to other staff members on a need-to-know basis. The staff member will proceed to work with that student on the basis of these consultations and information.

F. Hazard Identification

- **Every Achievement First building is evaluated annually for potential hazards within the building and on school grounds.** The Building Emergency Response Plan, located in the School Office along includes the identification of hazardous roadways and intersections in proximity to the school building. There are no storage facilities for hazardous chemicals adjacent to School facilities that have been identified by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.

Section III: Response

A. Notification and Activation (Internal and External Communications)

- The policies and procedures for contacting appropriate law enforcement officials in the event of a violent incident are included in the Building-level Emergency Response Plan. Each plan outlines when school staff should contact emergency services using the 911 system.
- In the event of an emergency, staff, scholars, and parents/guardians will be contacted in one or more of the following manners:
 - ✓ Telephone
 - ✓ Intercom
 - ✓ Verbal Message

- ✓ Text Message
- ✓ Email
- ✓ Others as appropriate

B. Situational Responses

- **Multi-Hazard Response:** The District has developed multi-hazard response plans which are included in the Building-level Emergency Response Plan. The emergencies addressed in the plan include, but are not limited to:

- Threats of Violence Intruder
- Hostage/Kidnapping
- Explosive/Bomb Threat
- Natural/Weather Related Hazardous Material
- Missing Scholars

- **Responses to Acts of Violence: Implied or Direct Threats** The Building-level Emergency Response Plan includes policies and procedures for responding to implied or direct threats of violence by students, teachers, other school personnel and visitors to the school. The following types of procedure(s) could be used by the district:

- Use of staff trained in de-escalation or other strategies to diffuse the situation.
- Inform Building Principal of implied or direct threat.
- Determine level of threat with Regional Superintendent/Designee.
- Contact appropriate law enforcement agency, if necessary.
- Monitor situation, adjust response as appropriate, include the possible use of the Emergency Response Team.

The district may also describe the training and professional development that is available to assist personnel, such as training in de-escalation or identification of early warning signs of potentially violent behavior.

- **Acts of Violence** Multi-Hazard response in each Building-level Emergency Response plan include policies and procedures for responding to acts of violence by students, teachers, other school personnel and visitors to the school, including consideration of zero-tolerance policies for school violence. The following types of procedure(s) could be used by the district:

- Determine level of threat with Regional Superintendent/Designee.
- If the situation warrants, isolate the immediate area and evacuate if appropriate.
- Inform Building Principal/Regional Superintendent.
- If necessary, initiate lockdown procedure, and contact appropriate law enforcement agency.
- Monitor situation; adjust response as appropriate; if necessary, initiate early dismissal, sheltering or evacuation procedures.

- **Response Protocols** The Building-level Emergency Response plans include protocols for responding to bomb threats, hostage takings, intrusions and kidnappings. The following protocols are provided as examples:

- Identification of decision makers.
- Plans to safeguard students and staff.
- Procedures to provide transportation, if necessary.
- Procedures to notify parents.
- Procedures to notify media.
- Debriefing procedures.

- **Arrangements for Obtaining Emergency Assistance from Local Government** The Building-level Emergency response plan includes guidance on obtaining assistance during emergencies local emergency services and government agencies. The following examples are the types of arrangements that could be used by the district:
 - Superintendent/Designee in an emergency contacts dispatch point or 911 center for fire or EMS response.
 - Superintendent/Designee contacts highest-ranking local government official for notification and/or assistance.
- **Procedures for Obtaining Advice and Assistance from Local Government Officials** The district will utilize procedures for obtaining advice and assistance from local government officials including the county or city officials responsible for implementation of Article 2-B of the Executive Law. The types of procedures for obtaining advice and assistance from local governments during countywide emergencies could include the following:
 - Regional Superintendent/Designee in an emergency will contact emergency management coordinator and/or the highest-ranking local government official for obtaining advice and assistance.
 - The district has identified resources for an emergency from local agencies closest to each Achievement First building.
- **District Resources Available for Use in an Emergency** Each Building-level Emergency Response Plan identifies district resources, which may be available during an emergency, which could include the identification of resources, such as available facilities, food supply, communications equipment, fire extinguishers, first aid supplies, flashlights, bull horn, etc.
- **Procedures to Coordinate the Use of School District Resources and Manpower during Emergencies** Each Building-level Emergency Response plan includes procedures to coordinate the use of school district resources and manpower during emergencies, including the identification of the officials authorized to make decisions and the staff members assigned to provide assistance during emergencies.
- **Protective Action Options** Each Building-level Emergency Response plan describes plans for taking the following actions in response to an emergency where appropriate: school cancellation, early dismissal, evacuation, and sheltering.

Section IV: Recovery

A. District Support for Buildings

- Building-level Emergency Response Plans provides resources for guiding the Post-Incident Response within each building. The School Response team is required to debrief incidents afterwards in a controlled environment in order to evaluate the strength of response procedures.

B. Disaster Mental Health Services

- School leader teams will be advised by the District Special Services team (School Social Workers, Deans of School Culture, and School Nurses) who will assist in coordinating mental health resources post disaster through the school, community resources, neighboring Achievement First schools.