

- DRAFT MINUTES -

**Achievement First (AF) Elm City College Preparatory
Board of Directors Meeting**

<https://achievementfirst.zoom.us/j/8959180848>

Wednesday, May 11, 2020, 5:30 pm

I. Call to Order and Attendance

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

Board Members: Richard Ferguson, Laura Saverin, Stephanie Ma, Prish Pierce, Patric Gregory, LaVonta Bryant, Julia Halberstam, Erica DeMond, Nicola Fleischer
AF Staff Fatimah Barker, Lisa Margosian, Beth Cocuzza, Xanthe Jory, Blakely Simoneau, De-Lea Deane-Allen, Stephanie Keenoy, Neil Shah, Ken Paul, Rod Bowen, Jesse Balis-Harris, Chi Tschang, Elise Major, Isabel Tañedo, Tanesha Forman, Shanice Adams, Karin Gould

Mr. Ferguson gave the floor to Fatimah Barker, current AF interim CEO, to introduce Lisa Margosian, incoming interim AF CEO.

II. Open session for public comment

There was no public comment.

III. Approve Minutes

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Elm City College Preparatory Board of Directors hereby approves the meeting minutes from March 9, 2022.

Motion by Prish Pierce

Seconded by Patric Gregory

All in favor.

IV. Reports and Discussion

A. Principal reports

1. Middle School

Tanesha Forman, Middle School Principal, began her report noting that 14 of 19 teachers and 100% of the leadership would return next school year. Ms. Forman also highlighted results of the student survey and an update on state testing. Finally, Ms. Forman also noted that staff shortages were a pain point for the school.

Ms. Forman entertained questions from the Board around org health and student experience, her leadership journey, results from mock assessments, priorities, staffing challenges, and teacher recruitment.

2. Elementary School

Shanice Adams, Elementary School principal, reported on org health survey results, attendance and suspensions. Highlights included: 85% teacher retention, 100% leadership team retention, strong results from org health survey, student investment survey and family engagement results all ranking very highly within AF Network. Ms. Adams shared that attendance is close to 90%, but there have been spikes in COVID rates resulting in increased absences. Finally, Ms. Adams noted that there had been 2 suspensions since the last board meeting.

Ms. Adams entertained questions on priorities through the end of the year, including keeping kids in class, creating joyful and safe environments for students, and making sure staff felt invested in and wanted to stay on. For the upcoming year, Ms. Adams is focusing on academic results for kids, catching up with learning losses, particularly in reading.

B. Treasurer report

Laura Saverin gave the floor to Neil Shah, AF CFO, who first presented the interim financial report, and noted balanced budgets across the board. Mr. Shah entertained questions from the Board on the use of the English Language Learners funding.

Mr. Shah then presented the draft FY23 budget, noting that this was not yet representative of the actual staffing across schools. Mr. Shah also covered staffing and enrollment variances and ESSER spending plans, and alerted the board to a centralized interim principal stipend policy effective FY23.

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Elm City College Prep Board of Directors hereby approves the financial report as presented.

Motion by Laura Saverin
Seconded by Julia Halberstam
All in favor.

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Elm City College Prep Board of Directors hereby approves the financial budget as prepared by Achievement First for the 2022-23 fiscal year.

Motion by Prish Pierce
Seconded by Julia Halberstam
All in favor.

C. COO Report

Xanthe Jory, AF COO, updated the Board on enrollment, COVID safety and space issues at the ECCP campus.

Ms. Jory reported that enrollment is in a strong place both at Elementary and Middle schools. On COVID, she noted that COVID rates in schools are on the rise. AF is doubling down on safety measures, in accordance with local and CDC guidelines, encouraging students, families and staff to continue masking. Ms. Jory entertained a question about quarantine periods, explaining that AF's guidance follows that of the CDC, but that families ultimately determine how long their children quarantine.

Ms. Jory next updated the Board on space constraints at the ECCP campus, where this year, for the first time, both Elementary and Middle Schools attended class in person. AF is working with both schools' leadership teams and staff to better understand pain points and hear recommendations to improve conditions. AF has already implemented some changes to make space feel more comfortable (e.g. renovating playground, clearing indoor space).

Ms. Jory also presented another potential temporary solution to help alleviate space issues: to partner with Amistad Middle School and offer rising ECCP 8th graders the option to matriculate at Amistad. Rising 8th grade ECCP students who elect to transfer to Amistad Middle School would then be able to continue on to Amistad High School without further disruption to their matriculation. If both Amistad Academy and ECCP Boards were in support of that proposed solution, AF would continue its due diligence in consultation with CSDE, and present to the board an implementation plan.

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Ms. Jory and Stephanie Keenoy, AF Superintendent, entertained questions from the Board on support from the Amistad Board, which charter scholars who transferred to Amistad would be under, staffing plans, how this solution would alleviate space issues, transfer of funding to Amistad to support transfer students, and other long term solutions. Ms. Jory and Ms. Keenoy explained that this would be a temporary one year solution, with AF continuing to strategize on longer term solutions.

D. Executive Session: Personnel discussion regarding principal renewal offers for SY22-23

The board entered into executive session to discuss principal renewal for school year 2022-2023, and invited Ms. Keenoy, Rod Bowen, Elise Major and Isabel Tañedo to join.

Motion by Julia Halberstam
Seconded by Laura Saverin
All in favor.

The board moved out of Executive Session at 6:34 pm

Motion by Prish Pierce
Seconded by Julia Halberstam
All in favor.

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Elm City College Prep Board of Directors has discussed the performance of Simon Obas, Amistad High School Principal intending to return for the 2022-23 school year, and the compensation package as proposed by Achievement First, and hereby approves his offer renewal, with a final compensation package as incorporated in the FY22-23 budget.

Motion by Laura Saverin
Seconded by Prish Pierce
All in favor.

E. Joint HS Committee Report

Mr. Bowen updated the Board on Amistad High School, which is experiencing staffing shortages. Still, he is confident in school leadership's ability to bring stability to the school. Mr. Bowen also highlighted senior class postsecondary decisions to date, with 70% planning to attend 4-year colleges and universities, 11% planning to attend 2-year

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colleges and universities and 1% who plan to enroll into CTE programs. Mr. Bowen also noted that students are facing motivational challenges, but that the school has credit recovery structures in place for students to catch up. Additionally, Mr. Bowen will work with school leaders to motivate scholars in their academics. Finally, Mr. Bowen noted that Mr. Obas has led a solid year out of the pandemic, and will continue to support him in his work moving forward.

Mr. Bowen entertained follow-up questions from the Board on Team College and Career.

VI. Board Chair Report

A. Formation of a Personnel Committee

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Elm City College Prep Board of Directors form an ad hoc Personnel Committee for the purpose of reviewing evaluation information from the 2021-22 school year and taking possible personnel action with respect to the 2022-23 school year.

Pursuant to Article VII, Section 3.a of the Elm City College Preparatory, Inc. Board Bylaws the following Board members are hereby appointed to serve on the Board's ad hoc Personnel Committee:

- Dick Ferguson
- Laura Saverin
- Patric Gregory
- Prish Pierce
- Stephanie Ma
- Julia Halberstam

Motion by Dick Ferguson

Seconded by Julia Halberstam

All in favor.

B. Re-appoint Auditors

On behalf of the Finance Committee, Ms. Saverin recommended the reappointment of auditors.

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Elm City College Prep Board of Directors hereby ratifies the re-appointment of CohnReznick to perform the financial audit of the 2021-22 fiscal year and prepare the IRS Form 990s.

Motion by Laura Saverin
Seconded by Julia Halberstam
All in favor

C. Renewal of Healthy Food Certification

BE IT RESOLVED, pursuant to C.G.S. Section 10-215f, that the Elm City College Preparatory Board of Directors certifies that all food items offered for sale to students in the schools under its jurisdiction, and not exempted from the Connecticut Nutrition Standards published by the Department of Education, will comply with the Connecticut Nutrition Standards during the period of July 1, 2020, through June 30, 2021. This certification shall include all food offered for sale to students separately from reimbursable meals at all times and from all sources, including but not limited to school stores, vending machines, school cafeterias, culinary programs, and any fundraising activities on school premises sponsored by the school or non-school organizations and groups.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Elm City College Preparatory Board of Directors will allow the sale to students of food items that do not meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards and beverages not listed in Section 10-221q of the Connecticut General Statutes provided that the following conditions are met: 1) the sale is in connection with an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on the weekend; 2) the sale is at the location of the event; and 3) the food and beverage items are not sold from a vending machine or school store. An “event” is an occurrence that involves more than just a regularly scheduled practice, meeting, or extracurricular activity. For example, soccer games, school plays, and interscholastic debates are events but soccer practices, play rehearsals, and debate team meetings are not. The “regular school day” is the period from midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day. “Location” means where the event is being held.

Motion by Prish Pierce
Seconded by Julia Halberstam
All in favor

D. Re-election of Directors

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Elm City College Prep Board of Directors hereby ratifies the re-election of the following directors for 3 years, ending June 30, 2025.

Motion by Prish Pierce
Seconded by LaVonta Byrant
All in favor

Mr. Ferguson shared that Julia Halberstam would be stepping down from the Board at the end of the school year, and thanked her for her service. He also noted Nicola Fleischer would be rotating off as the Yale School of Management (SOM) director, and welcomed Erica DeMond, new Yale SOM director, to the board.

V. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 6:53 pm by Dick Ferguson.

Motion by Laura Saverin
Seconded by Julia Halberstam
All in favor.



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