



**DRAFT Minutes**  
**Achievement First Bridgeport Academy**  
**Board of Directors Meeting**

Zoom: <https://achievementfirst.zoom.us/j/7382361994>  
Monday, November 21, 2022, 5:30-7:00 pm

**I. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Raj Lakra at 5:31 pm

Attendees:  
Board Members

Rajeev Lakra	Y	Debra Hertz	Y
Michael Strambler	Y	Kimberly Bruce	N
Dewey Loselle	Y	Ruben Felipe	N
Marlene Macaуда	Y	Ebrima Jobe	Y
Dick Kalt	Y	RoAnne Thomas	Y

AF Staff: Lisa Margosian, Beth Cocouzza, Karolyn Belcher, Xanthe Jory, Neil Shah, John Sharkey, Jesse Balis-Harris, Brooke Williams, Kristen Damo, Shalia Garnett, Adrienne Minnifield, Stephanie Fox, Nakia Hall, Sulafa Bashir, Sultana Salma

**II. Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

**III. Approval of Minutes**

It was:

RESOLVED, the Achievement First Bridgeport Academy Board of Directors hereby approves the meeting minutes from September 28, 2022.

Motion by Debra Hertz  
Second by Ebrima Jobe  
All in favor.



#### **IV. Discussion with Achievement First**

Ms. Lisa Margosian introduced Karolyn Belcher—AF’s new Acting Superintendent of Schools.

Mr. John Sharkey framed the academic data to be presented saying that there is modest progress compared to last year. There’s been a strategic shift towards proactively resetting instruction.

##### **A. Principals’ Reports**

Ms. Shalia Garnett gave the elementary school Principal’s report. She spoke about overall highlights including progress in Cognitively Guided Instruction (CGI) in the school’s math program and seeing rapid growth in results. She also mentioned some challenges with adult culture and working to reset expectations. Ms. Garnett also shared some Beginning-of-year (BOY) academic data for STEP and Math Interim Assessment 1.

*Board members asked clarifying questions and inquired about comparisons around data regarding the assessments.*

*Board members also discussed what systems are in place for when a teacher leaves.*

Ms. Stephanie Fox shared the middle school Principal’s report, with highlights including the school being fully staffed and seeing student suspension data that is significantly better relative to last year. Ms. Fox spoke of challenges with academic data being low relative to other AF network peers and discussed the impact of teacher absences in the context of a substitute system that was not good enough to bridge gaps.

Ms. Fox elaborated on BOY academic results, sharing STAR Reading and ELA Interim Assessment results. She discussed some interventions being implemented such as dedicated additional PD time to academic deep dives and reteaching planning.

##### **B. Deep Dive on Safety**

Ms. Xanthe Jory gave an update on Safety, stating that during the 21-22 school year, schools across the nation, including AF schools, saw an increase in major safety threats. Bridgeport saw lower than average threats compared to the rest of the network.

Ms. Jory also mentioned that in Spring 2022, AF partnered with a security firm to audit



the Crisis Response Protocols that were in place. Based on their recommendations, AF updated its network wide Crisis Response Protocol in July of 2022. All principals, deans, DSOs, and social workers participated in summer training and subsequently turn-keyed the training to their school staff before the school year.

*Board members asked questions about confidence in the protocol among AF staff and about specific training types that were taken by staff.*

## **V. Committee Reports**

### **A. Finance Committee Report**

Mr. Neil Shah, AF CFO, shared Q1 financials and stated that AF Bridgeport Academy was anticipating a balanced budget for the year.

Mr. Dewey Loselle, Treasurer, added a concern about the positive results being in part due to schools being understaffed.

There was another discussion about substitute teachers. Ms. Margosian made some observations about the AF staffing model compared to peer charter and district schools. Mr. Jesse Balis-Haris added that addressing the substitute teacher issue was top of mind and one potential solution involved contracting to outside substitute teacher providers but they were also facing shortages and would not be able to meet the schools' needs.

### **B. Amistad Joint HS Committee Report**

Mr. Dick Kalt reported on the Amistad Joint HS Committee meeting where Principal Slmon Obas highlighted some progress in raising the academic bar at the high school.

He also discussed key challenges resulting from the school not being fully staffed, especially in STEM, and the impact of this on instruction as well as the resulting spikes in student behavior issues and increase in teacher burnout. He spoke of some solutions the school was implementing to help address this issue including contracting live, virtual teachers to cover classes.

Mr. Obas shared Beginning-Of-the-Year (BOY) STAR reading assessment data, stating that this assessment was administered 3 times over the course of the year.

Finally, Mr. Obas shared post-secondary plans for seniors, including those applying for

[achievementfirst.org](https://achievementfirst.org)



Early Decision admission to college.

## **VI. Board Discussion and Business**

### **A. Discussion and Approval of Interim Principals <Proposed Executive Session>**

The board entered executive session and invited Jesse Balis-Harris, Brooke Williams, Charmayne Joseph, Kristen Damo, Karolyn Belcher, Lisa Margosian, Sulafa Bashir, and Beth Cocuzza to join.

It was:

RESOLVED that the AF Bridgeport Academy Board of Directors hereby approves the following individuals to serve as interim principals, as needed for a period not to exceed sixteen weeks between November 21, 2022 and June 30, 2023. based on the recommendations by Achievement First.

- Elementary School: Adrienne Minniefield
- Middle School: Abraham Akanmu

*Note: This resolution reflects an extension of the duration of validity for the interim principal approvals through the end of the school year. The individuals named here would only be required to take over as interim principal in case of an unanticipated leave by the current principal (e.g. emergency medical leave).*

Motion by Debra Hertz  
Second by Marlene Macaуда  
All in favor.

## **VII. Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned by Raj Lakra at 7:03 pm.

Motion by Dewey Loselle  
Second by Marlene Macaуда  
All in favor.