



**DRAFT MINUTES
Elm City College Prep
Board of Directors Meeting**

Venue: Virtual Meeting

Zoom: <https://achievementfirst.zoom.us/j/82747985651>

Monday, March 13, 2023, 5:30-7:00 pm

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:34 pm by Mr. Dick Ferguson.

Attendees

The following board members, constituting a quorum, were in attendance:

Name	Present	Name	Present
Dick Ferguson	Y	LaVonta Bryant	Y
Laura Saverin	Y	Katie Hagen	N
Stephanie Ma	Y	Patric Gregory	Y
Prish Pierce	N	Shashank Ghiria	N
Erica Demond	N		

AF Staff: Lisa Margosian, Karolyn Belcher, Blakely Simoneau, Christi George, Charmayne Joseph, Brooke Williams, Neil Shah, Michael Rabin, Sulafa Bashir, Xanthe Jory.

II. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

III. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Ferguson took the board members through approval of the previous meeting's minutes.

It was:

RESOLVED, the Elm City College Prep Board of Directors hereby approves the meeting minutes from February 6, 2023.

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Motion by Laura Saverin
Second by Pat Gregory
All in favor

IV. Board Discussion

A. Proposed Executive Session

Mr. Ferguson proposed that the board enter into Executive Session to discuss principal mid-year reviews and the principal hiring pipeline, inviting the following AF staff to join: Lisa Margosian, Karolyn Belcher, Christi George, Charmayne Joseph, and Brooke Williams.

Motion by Laura Saverin
Second by LaVonta Bryant
All in favor

The board entered into executive session at 5:37 pm and exited at 5:58 pm.

V. Discussion with Achievement First

A. Academic Update

Ms. Karolyn Belcher shared that the board members asked for the latest academic data during executive session and that while it was not available yet as the assessment cycle was still on-going, the team would commit to share in more detail at the next board meeting.

Ms. Belcher then gave an update on the preparations for state assessments as well as the decision to move to new high quality curriculum, detailing the curricula selected and the process for change management across elementary and middle school, especially with respect to minimizing the lift for elementary teachers to learn multiple curricula.

Board members asked about specific reading curriculum that was used in the past and also about whether certain AF curricula would still be in use.

B. Teacher Recruitment Update

Ms. Christi George gave an update on teacher recruitment, highlighting a change that shifts away from the central, online process that occurred during COVID, responding to principal feedback to bring screened candidates to the schools earlier in the interview process.

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Ms. George also presented the latest data from the “Intent to Return” survey for teachers and school staff. She highlighted the efforts school leaders make to increase response rate and convert the “maybe” responses.

Ms. George also mentioned some changes being made to shore up teacher sourcing amidst the on-going teacher shortage, including new partnerships with local education organizations, and colleges and universities.

Ms. Lisa Margosian and Ms. George also added some context on the challenges with hiring STEM teachers in the middle school, and highlighted incentives such as signing bonuses as well as efforts to retain current teachers.

Board members asked about whether the state was considering loosening restrictions for teacher certification given the teacher shortage and advocacy efforts. In response, Ms. George mentioned a survey that CSDE sent out asking about the teacher shortage as it relates to teacher certification.

C. Charter Renewal Update

Mr. Michael Rabin gave an update on the current status of the charter renewal process, sharing the overall timeline as well as some positive feedback and comments received from CSDE during their visits and after. In particular, he highlighted the comments on Multilingual learners and English learners, given that this was an area which had been on a previous corrective action plan. He then discussed the areas where the charter was found to be out of compliance and outlined the steps being taken to address each issue.

Board members asked about the current certification rate for the charter.

Ms. Lisa Margosian also added that the network was setting a different tone with the authorizer with respect to teacher certification compared to prior years and that the team was making strides to cooperate and be in compliance.

D. Legislative Update

Ms. Blakely Simoneau reported on a legislative update on behalf of Nakia Hall, highlighting increases in per-pupil funding that were achieved as a result of advocacy efforts. She also discussed a proposed bill to streamline the Educational Cost Sharing formula to funding public schools with the highest need which would include charter schools and give them access to these funds. Ms. Simoneau asked for board members’ help to advocate for the passing of

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this bill by testifying at upcoming hearings and participating letter-writing campaigns. She mentioned that more information on these efforts would be emailed out by Nakia Hall to the board.

There was a discussion about how the charter funding gap in CT and how funding worked differently compared to NY where “the money follows the child”.

VI. Committee Reports

A. Finance Committee Report

Mr. Neil Shah presented a summary of the Q2 financials for the charter.

There was a discussion about the philanthropy amounts being raised by AF to balance the budget and whether they had changed from the budgeted amounts and also whether they were on track to meet targets.

VII. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned by Dick Ferguson at 6:47 pm.

Motion by Pat Gregory
Second by Laura Saverin
All in favor.