



**DRAFT MINUTES
AF Hartford Academy
Board of Directors Meeting**

Venue: Virtual Meeting

Zoom: <https://achievementfirst.zoom.us/j/86933222134>

Thursday, March 16, 2023, 5:30-7:00 pm

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Erwin Hurst, Sr. at 5:33 pm.

Attendees:

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

Name	Present	Name	Present
Erwin Hurst, Sr.	Y	Alice Turner	N
Jessica Alhasnawi	Y	Francoise Deristel-Leger	Y
Lisa Tanen-LaFontaine	Y	Charon Smalls	N
Surbhi Patel	Y		

Achievement First Staff: Lisa Margosian, Karolyn Belcher, Christi George, Caleb Dolan, Kevin Lohela, Dumar Paden, Blakely Simoneau, Beth Cocuzza, Neil Shah, Nakia Hall, Michael Rabin, Sulafa Bashir, Xanthe Jory

II. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

III. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Erwin Hurst, Sr. took the board through approval of the previous meeting’s minutes.

It was:

RESOLVED, the AF Hartford Academy Board of Directors hereby approves the meeting minutes from February 6, 2023.

Motion by Lisa Tanen-LaFontain.

Second by Jessica Alhasnawi.

All in favor.



IV. Board Discussion

- A. Proposed Executive Session
 - 1. Principal Mid-Year Reviews
 - 2. Principal Hiring Pipeline

Mr. Hurst, Sr., took the board through a motion to enter into executive session to discuss the topic of Principal Renewals, inviting the following AF staff to join: Lisa Margosian, Karolyn Belcher, Christi George, Kevin Lohela, Caleb Dolan, and Dumar Paden.

Motion by Lisa Tanen-LaFontain.
Second by Jessica Alhasnawi.
All in favor.

The board entered Executive Session at 5:36 pm and exited at 5:50 pm.

V. Discussion with Achievement First

- A. Academic Update

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.

There was a discussion about the Science of Reading and why that particular approach was selected.

- 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.

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.

Board members asked questions about reasons why teachers leave and whether compensation was a factor. Ms. George discussed exit surveys as well as data from the



org health survey which is conducted twice a year and can provide context on why staff members leave, which is typically related to workload and alignment with school leadership's vision, much more than pay.

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.

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 clarifying questions about the steps that needed to happen to increase the teacher certification percentage and there were also questions about the severity of the issues and potential renewal risk. Ms. George also mentioned a survey that CSDE sent out asking about the teacher shortage as it relates to teacher certification.

D. Legislative Update

Ms. Nakia Hall gave a legislative update 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 for funding public schools with the highest need which would include charter schools for the first time and give them access to these funds. Ms. Hall asked for board members' help to advocate for the passing of this bill by testifying at upcoming hearings and participating letter-writing campaigns. She mentioned that she would be sending more information on these efforts via email.

VI. Committee Reports

A. Finance Committee Report

Mr. Neil Shah presented a summary of the Q2 financials for the charter, discussing the impact of the enrollment decline..



A board member asked about the impact of the revenue loss on after-school activities which can be an important recruitment tool to attract students to the charter. There was discussion on the challenges of the enrollment landscape coupled with funding challenges, as well as efforts to access public funds for after-school programming and continuing the advocacy work for per-pupil funding.

There was also a question about how to ensure sufficient funding to support fully staffing the schools in spite of the enrollment challenges. Mr Shah and Ms. George discussed philanthropy and ongoing work in the staffing model and budgeting process to support the schools.

VII. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned by Erwin Hurst, Sr. at 6:39 pm

Motion by Lisa Tanen-LaFontain.
Second by Francoise Deristel-Leger.
All in favor.