



**Draft Minutes  
AF Rhode Island  
Board of Directors Meeting**

Venue: Sprout Coworking Space (Annex Training Room)  
166 Valley St Building 6M Suite 103, Providence, RI 02909  
Zoom: <https://achievementfirst.zoom.us/j/84915704163>  
Monday, April 10, 2023, 5:30-7:00 pm

**I. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Brett Smiley at 5:35 pm.

**Board Members in Attendance:** Maryellen Butke, James Wiley, Mayor Brett Smiley, Jo-Ann Schofield

**Staff in Attendance:** Karolyn Belcher, Beth Cocuzza, Blakely Simoneau, Christi George, Jillian Fain, Sulafa Bashir, Kevin Lohela, Caleb Dolan, Neil Shah, Cassidy McKee, Ken Paul

**Guests in Attendance:** Courtney Hawkins

**II. Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

**III. Approval of Minutes**

Mayor Smiley took the board through the approval of the meeting minutes from the previous board meeting.

It was:

RESOLVED, the AF Rhode Island Board of Directors hereby approves the meeting minutes from February 15, 2023.

Motion by: James Wiley

Second by: Maryellen Butke

All in favor.

**IV. Board Discussion with Achievement First**

A. Proposed Executive Session

1. Principal Mid-year Reviews and Renewals

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



## 2. Personnel Matter at Providence MS

Mayor Smiley took the board through a motion to enter into executive session to discuss the topics of Principal Reviews, Renewals and a Personnel matter at Providence MS, inviting the following AF staff to join: Karolyn Belcher, Kevin Lohela, Caleb Dolan and Christi George.

Motion by: Mayor Smiley  
Second by: Jo-Ann Schofield  
All in favor.

The board entered executive session at 5:38 pm and exited at 5:56 pm.

Mayor Smiley took the board through a motion to approve principal renewals and appointments as recommended by Achievement First and per the board package as detailed below:

It was

- RESOLVED, the AF Rhode Island Board of Directors hereby approves the renewal of the following principals, with a final compensation package to be incorporated in the FY24 Budget to be reviewed and approved in June 2023:
  - Cynthia Louis-Dale, Envision Elementary School
  - Bre Hudgins, Providence Elementary School
  - Andrew Walker, Illuminar Middle School
  - Donovan Tracy, Providence Middle School
  - Aja Davis, Providence High School
  
- RESOLVED, the AF Rhode Island Board of Directors hereby appoints the individuals listed below as principals of the following Achievement First schools effective July 1, 2023:
  - Jennifer Andrade, Promesa Elementary School
  - Joseph Fink, Illuminar Elementary School

Motion by: Maryellen Butke  
Second by: James Wiley  
All in favor.



## B. Academic Update

Ms. Karolyn Belcher gave an update on academic performance against overall network goals, sharing the RI results by academy for ELA and Math. In Elementary school, she discussed the areas where results were not on track, citing a lack of coherence in the instructional program and describing the new curriculum that will be adopted next year. In Middle school, she stated that results were showing improvement and mentioned the curricular updates taking place there. Finally in High School, she spoke of the challenges with assessment and noted that new external curriculum for 9th and 10th grade would include assessments which will help address the gap.

Board members asked questions about the accuracy, consistency and reliability of assessment data across the academies.

Ms. Belcher also discussed the preparation for state assessments via mock tests and gave an overview of the curricular decisions. She emphasized the importance of and focus on change management for teachers related to curriculum adoption. Mr. Calen Dolan also flagged that the greenfield schools have an additional layer of change to manage.

Board members asked about the alignment of curriculum to actual lesson plans and fidelity of implementation.

## C. 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.

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.

There were questions from board members about existing partnerships with different universities as well as BSW and MSW programs.



**V. Committee Reports**

A. Treasurer's Report

Mr. Neil Shah presented Q2 financials, focused on the balance sheet and P&L. Mr. Shah and Mr. James Wiley stated that the balance sheet was strong but was leveraged to fund building improvements.

**VI. Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned by Mayor Smiley at 6:24 pm.

Motion by James Wiley

Second by Maryellen Butke

All in favor.