

MINUTES
AF Bridgeport Academy
Board of Directors Meeting

Venue: Virtual Meeting

Zoom: <https://achievementfirst.zoom.us/j/87460025108>

Wednesday, May 24, 2023, 5:30-7:00 pm

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Raj Lakra at 5:33 pm.

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

AF Staff: Lisa Margosian, Karolyn Belcher, Xanthe Jory, Michael Rabin, Christi George, Neil Shah, Blakely Simoneau, Sulafa Bashir, Rod Bowen, Shalia Garnett, Stephanie Fox, Brooke Williams, Adrienne Minniefield

Guests: Ms. Jossie Perez

II. Public Comment

Jossie Perez, a parent of a scholar at Bridgeport Middle School, raised a concern regarding her child. Her daughter was suspended for bringing in a medical marijuana pen, according to her daughter she was peer pressured. Ms. Perez offered to come to the school so that the school could search her daughter’s bag. Ms. Perez informed the board that she took her daughter to get tested for marijuana, and both tests were negative. Ms. Perez is requesting a change to the suspension letter.

Mr. Lakra explained that they will provide a communication and decision at the next scheduled board meeting. Ms. Bashir offered to get back in contact with Ms. Perez following the board meeting, but Karolyn Belcher suggested that she be the one to contact Ms. Perez because they’ve emailed before.

III. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Lakra made a motion to approve the prior meeting minutes. Marlene Macaуда moved, Dick Kalt seconded.

It was:

RESOLVED, the AF Bridgeport Academy Board of Directors hereby approves the meeting minutes from March 9, 2023 and April 4, 2023.

Mr. Lakra made a note that Debra Hertz resigned from the board effective March 10, 2023. He requested that they have a discussion at a later time to find her replacement.

IV. Discussion with Achievement First

A. Welcome (5 min)

Lisa Margosian welcomed the board and provided an outline of what would be presented at the meeting.

B. Principal Reports (10 min)

Shalia Garnett, the principal at Achievement First Bridgeport Elementary School, provided updates on the elementary school and invited board members to attend school events. Ms. Garnett reported that 41 of the 45 teachers with offer letters have accepted, and that they are seeing gains in math and reading.

Stephanie Fox, the principal of Achievement First Bridgeport Middle School, provided updates on the middle school and invited board members to attend school events. She mentioned that retention for her school is at 92% which is one of the highest across the network.

Board members reported that their recent visits to both schools were very positive.

C. Amistad HS Committee Report (5 min)

Rod Bowen, the Chief of High Schools, reported on behalf of Dr. Simon Obas, the principal, who was unable to attend the meeting. Mr. Bowen provided updates on the middle school and invited board members to attend school events. Mr. Bowen acknowledged that there were

some highs and lows, but that the community is strong.

Mr. Lakra requested testing results, and Brooke Williams said this would likely be in July but promised to follow up.

D. State of Our Students - student wellness, academic progress, and high school update (20 min)

Ms. Belcher provided updates on the new curriculum rollout. Ms. Williams reported that progress monitoring has gotten better this year but there is more room for improvement.

Mr. Lakra asked whether the work on progress monitoring will be directly related to the charter renewal process, and Ms. Belcher explained that it is related but they also are independently pursuing academic achievement and stronger school culture.

Ms. Belcher offered updates on how the students with special needs are doing, noting that they are on par with other students with special needs in the state but that they are still not at the same level with general education students. Ms. Williams offered insights into the programming that they are offering to target deficits.

Ms. Belcher reported that there will be an investment in 9th and 10th grade because there is more work to be done in high school reading, and that they will be doing more progress monitoring and coaching at the high school level.

Mr. Lakra asked about exclusionary discipline and how it fits in with what she was reporting. Ms. Belcher clarified that it is not a part of the charter renewal process but that it is something that Achievement First is concentrating on, and that the schools have made great strides.

Ms. Belcher and Xanthe Jory provided updates on student wellness. Ms. Belcher noted the negative effects of the pandemic on students. Ms. Jory spoke to the board about the holistic approach to safety, social-emotional health, and student wellness, which will be used going forward.

Ms. Belcher spoke to students' mental health needs, and Ms. Jory offered information about the safety incident monitoring taking place and how they will improve upon it next year. Ms. Belcher reported that student wellness is owned across teams, and Ms. Jory offered a preview

of the changes that will occur next year.

Ms. Jory answered questions about future plans for safety consultants and school safety agents. She noted that safety officers are only available through DOE-owned buildings, and Mr. Lakra suggested the state fund them.

Mr. Strambler asked questions about social-emotional learning and health, and asked about training. Ms. Belcher explained that there will be a need to contract out for training, and Mr. Strambler offered to support because that is an area of research for him.

E. Finance Committee Report

1. Q3 Financials and FY 24 Budgets (15 min)

Mr. Shah provided updates from the finance committee and provided a rundown of assets and liabilities. He noted that the budget from this year is on track and they anticipate having a small surplus. Mr. Kalt asked where to forward information about a potential donation.

Mr. Shah requested that the board approved closing out accounts that are not currently being used.

2. Fiscal & Procurement Policies, and Audit Engagement (5 min)

Mr. Shah explained that the fiscal and procurement policies are being strengthened, cleaned up, and made more efficient. Mr. Lakra explained that the finance committee supports the resolutions.

Mr. Lakra asked for a motion to approve the finance resolutions. Mr. Kalt moved, and Mr. Strambler seconded. All approved, no opposed.

It was:

- RESOLVED, that the AF Bridgeport Academy Board of Directors hereby approves the financial budget for the 2023-2024 fiscal year as presented.
- RESOLVED, the AF Bridgeport Academy Board of Directors hereby ratifies the re-appointment of CohnReznick to perform the financial audit of the 2023-24 fiscal year and prepare the IRS Form 990s.

- RESOLVED that AF Bridgeport Academy Board of Directors hereby ratifies the revisions to the Fiscal Policies and to the Procurement Policies as presented.
- RESOLVED that the AF Bridgeport Academy Board of Directors hereby approves the closure of 3 bank accounts at Key Bank.

F. Charter Renewal Next Steps (10 min)

Mr. Rabin provided updates on the charter renewal, which is for three years. He explained that the three areas for improvement are chronic absenteeism, teacher certification, and student achievement. Mr. Rabin committed to sharing updates on the process and progress next year. Mr. Kalt asked about certification compliance, and Christi George offered to follow up. Mr. Lakra requested that each board meeting they receive an update on the status of these things.

G. SY 2023/2024 Strategic Imperatives (5 min)

Ms. Margosian provided an update on the next year's strategic imperatives.

H. Schools Portfolio Planning (5 min)

Mr. Rabin offered an update on the school portfolio planning, looking at the communities that are being served, the changing communities, and building infrastructure that are based on data-driven systems.

V. Board Business

A. Proposed Executive Session: CEO Search and Talent Update (10 min)

Mr. Lakra proposed moving into executive session, inviting Lisa Margosian to join. Marlene moved, Michael seconded.

VI. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 7:10 pm.