

MINUTES

**Achievement First Brooklyn
Board of Trustees Meeting**

Venue: TFA, 25 Broadway, 12th floor - GC Room
Zoom: <https://achievementfirst.zoom.us/j/82975505726>
Tuesday, October 3, 2023, 6:00-8:00 pm

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:01 pm by Romy Coquillette.

Attendees:

The following Trustees, constituting a quorum, were in attendance:

Name	Present	Name	Present
Romy Coquillette	Y	Anup Menon	Y
Christopher Lynch	Y	Kevin Miquelon	Y
Akeem Frett	Y	Will Robalino	N
Jon Atkeson	Y	Amy Arthur Samuels	Y
Tamika Bradley	Y	Josh Vidro	Y
Paul Cabana	Y	Shawn Warren	Y
Desiree Dalton	Y	Warren Young	N

AF Staff: Shannon Miller, Dumar Paden, Lisa Margosian, Karolyn Belcher, Xanthe Jory, LaNelle Alexander, John Sharkey, Michael Rabin, Neil Shah, Damen Scott, and Blakely Simoneau
Guests: David Pollak

II. Public Comment

No members of the public were present.

III. New Board Member Vote

Romy Coquillette introduced David Pollak, a prospective board member. Romy proposed electing David Pollak as a board member for a three year term ending June 30, 2026. Chris motioned, Anuk seconded. All in favor, no abstentions.

IT WAS RESOLVED, that the Achievement First Brooklyn Board of Trustee elects David Pollak to the Board for a 3-year term, ending June 30, 2026.

IV. Discussion with Achievement First

A. CEO Welcome (2 min)

Lisa Margosian welcomed the board and introduced LaNelle Alexander, Achievement First's new Chief Equity Officer, and Shannon Miller, the new Managing Director of Board Relations and Governance.

The staff present from Achievement First and the Achievement First Brooklyn Board members introduced themselves.

Lisa Margosian noted that the start of the school year was energetic and positive. Ms. Margosian welcomed Damen Scott, and Ms. Coquillet expressed gratitude for Mr. Scott taking the time to come to the meeting.

B. Principal Discussion - AF Brooklyn HS principal Damen Scott

Mr. Scott noted that his school is in the top five schools per the US News and World Report. Mr. Scott noted that his educators are diverse and spoke to the importance of developing leaders. He spoke to the development of his current staff, and his development from a teacher to becoming the principal.

Mr. Scott also spoke to student experience at Brooklyn High School, including after school and extracurricular activities. He spoke to academics, and noted that the AP data from his school is very strong. He also spoke to the fact that Brooklyn High School is both a charter school but also a community school.

Mr. Scott spoke to the Graduate Aims and noted that he felt they are on the right track and concentrating on the right thing. He spoke about the importance of the Design Pillars, and literacy for all students.

Ms. Coquillet asked about the implementation of the new curriculum, and Mr. Scott mentioned that it was giving teachers a runway for what good instruction looks like. Mr. Miquelon asked about the class of rising seniors and learning loss from COVID, and Mr. Scott responded that he views it as a challenge and gaps that students will be able to overcome.

Ms. Jory asked about enrollment. Mr. Scott responded that they are over 100% enrolled, and noted it was because of family and community excitement. Mr. Paden noted that the new open enrollment process helped with enrollment. Mr. Atkeson asked Mr. Scott if there was one thing that he could ask for from the network, what would it be - Mr. Scott responded that he wanted another teacher pathway that recognized, developed, and rewarded good teachers and defined teaching excellence.

C. Portfolio Analysis and Strategic Planning (5 min)

Mr. Rabin spoke to New York strategic planning, introducing the board to a variety of different workstreams to create a 3-5 year plan to chart a plan for AF New York moving forward, including right sizing in Brooklyn, exploring Queens, and making a decision regarding the use of Charter 11. Mr. Rabin noted that the work done on High School Goals and Aims feeds directly into this strategic planning.

D. High School Strategy - Graduate Goals and Aims

Mr. Paden spoke to the board about the Graduate Goals and Aims. He noted that the development of the high school model came out of developing grades kindergarten through 8th, but that high school is different. Mr. Paden spoke about the need to take a step back and reevaluate our high school design. Mr. Paden noted that the goals are graduate goals, meaning they apply through all grades not just high school.

Mr. Paden introduced the Design Pillars which are informed by the Graduate Aims. He highlighted a few areas of the Design Pillars, including the implementation of new curriculum. Mr. Paden noted that Achievement First will be bringing back KPIs to track results. Mr. Paden spoke to the plans for this school year and the following school year. Mr. Paden opened questions to the board.

Mr. Cabana thanked everyone for the board meeting so far. Mr. Cabana asked what the value proposition is for Achievement First, and Mr. Paden noted that AF has a reputation for providing rigorous academics, experiences (i.e. extracurricular activities), culturally relevant experiences, and how to handle student experience (moving away from punitive measures toward community focus). Mr. Cabana asked about students who don't want to follow a college path, and Mr. Paden explained that all students should be college and career ready which means they are ready to pursue their college or career goals when they exit high school.

Mr. Miquelon raised that the facilities committee would like to support this work, and Mr. Paden noted that facilities plays into this work. Ms. Belcher noted that much of this work touches on other work streams, and the importance on getting the program right. Ms. Jory and Ms. Belcher noted that the decisions around high school facilities cannot be put off too far in the future.

Mr. Lynch asked about facilities, and Mr. Paden and Ms. Jory responded with thoughts on future facilities. Ms. Dalton asked about programming, and Mr. Paden noted that it isn't about bringing in new programs necessarily but also how do we bring in what we have strategically.

E. Academic Committee Report (20 min)

Ms. Samuels presented the Academic Committee Report. She noted the goal for this year is to streamline the deck with key takeaways. Mr. Sharkey presented the goals and benchmarks for this coming year. Mr. Atkeson asked about how to measure something like proficiency in math, and Mr. Sharkey explained that they are based on grade level standards. Mr. Sharkey presented on elementary, middle school, and high school metrics.

Board members asked questions about benchmarks and how they related to regents exams, state exams, and college readiness. Mr. Sharkey and Ms. Belcher explained the changes to Achievement First's approach to measuring student success. Mr. Miquelon asked about the fact that the metrics have changed year over year, and noted that he struggles to track progress.

Mr. Sharkey provided updates on Regents exams across New York. Mr. Sharkey promised to come back to the board when the state test results are released and embargoed, at the next board meeting. Mr. Sharkey presented on college acceptance rates, and noted that estimated college completion rates are not where we want to be but are close to prepanemic rates. Mr. Sharkey spoke to the college finance and scholarship, including the Dacia Toll Scholarship, and how this is increasing their college completion rate by 29%.

Mr. Atkeson asked about the reasons for some students leaving college before completion, and Mr. Sharkey and Mr. Paden noted that there are many reasons.

Mr. Sharkey provided details on the roll out of the new curriculum, and noted that the approach and tenor of this year forecasts growth.

Mr. Atkeson asked for the state test results to be sent to the board prior to the next meeting.

F. Investment Proposal (15 min)

Ms. Margosian introduced the investment proposal, which is built out of the strategic imperatives for the coming year. Ms. Warren asked if the after school programs would be at all the schools, and Mr. Sharkey explained that they are looking at strategic partnerships. Ms. Coquillet explained that this is a multi-year plan that may take some revision as things are tested out and rolled out. She noted that this will be part of the budgeting process moving forward. Mr. Miquelon asked about how to measure the effectiveness of the programs and to continue them. Mr. Shah spoke about how ongoing monitoring will work and considerations, including financial considerations.

Ms. Coquillette asked the board to approve the proposed resolution. Mr. Atkeson moved, Mr. Frett seconded. All were in favor, none abstained.

WHEREAS Achievement First, Inc. prepared a List of Ideas (hereinafter the “NY Board Investment Proposal”) pursuant to the resolution of the Board on May 15, 2023 and in compliance with that resolution; WHEREAS the Board believes the NY Board Investment Proposal will address the strategic priorities of the Achievement First schools in Brooklyn and Queens; NOW THEREFORE the Board hereby approves the NY Board Investment Proposal as outlined in the materials shared with the Board in advance of, and presented to the Board at the October 3, 2023 meeting.

G. Finance Committee Report (10 min)

Mr. Shah and Mr. Lynch presented the Finance Committee Report. Mr. Shah noted that as COVID funds stop, they will need to consider how to move forward. Mr. Shah noted that enrollment stabilized last year compared to the year before. He noted strong operation gain and strong assets. Mr. Cabana asked about enrollment stabilization, and Mr. Rabin noted positive trends but that chartered enrollment is down and that not hitting those enrollment goals is not sustainable. Mr. Cabana asked about concentrating on the High School Goals and Aims when enrollment is most concerning in elementary, and Mr. Rabin noted that the goals are meant to inform K-12. Ms. Margoisan noted that this is a trend across New York and is being seen in other charters.

Mr. Menon asked about reinvesting capital and what number that would make sense, and Mr. Shah noted that the assets are largely liquid. Mr. Shah noted that the determination is how much to save for building investments, planning for the future, and reinvesting.

Mr. Shah provided updates on banking and excess liquidity, and noted that interest income is higher than anticipated. Mr. Shah explained that he feels good about the strategy for now, and explained that next board meeting he will have the audit report for the last year.

H. Parent Representative Remarks (5 min)

Ms. Dalton explained how she feels the need to intertwine the voice and needs of the parents into the board meetings. She noted that their voices are not static, and that they come seeking a lot of things, and there is a need to understand the changing of the neighborhoods we are in and parents we have. She noted that when she asks questions she wants to know “how will this affect her kid” and that many other parents feel that way.

V. Board Business

- A. Board Resolutions and Approvals: Previous Meeting Minutes, Leadership Slate, Committees, Interim Principals, Family Handbook (5 min)

Ms. Coquillette asked for a vote on the consent agenda. Mr. Lynch moved, Mr. Mickelson seconded. All in favor, none abstained.

Consent Agenda:

1. BE IT RESOLVED, the Achievement First Brooklyn Board of Trustees hereby approves the meeting minutes from May 15, 2023 and August 31, 2023.
2. BE IT RESOLVED, that the Achievement First Brooklyn Board of Trustees hereby elects the following leadership slate for the 2023-2024 fiscal year:
 - a. Romy Coquillette, Chair
 - b. Chris Lynch, Treasurer
 - c. Akeem Frett, Secretary
3. BE IT RESOLVED, that the Achievement First Brooklyn Board of Trustees hereby appoints the following committee members:
 - Executive Committee: Romy Coquillette (Chair), Chris Lynch, Amy Arthur Samuels, Paul Cabana, Akeem Frett
 - Facilities Committee: Kevin Miquelon (Chair), Jon Atkeson, Tamika Bradely, Romy Coquillette, Chris Lynch
4. WHEREAS, Warren Young, submitted his resignation from the role of Treasurer effective August 31, 2023, BE IT RESOLVED, the Achievement First Brooklyn Board of Trustees hereby accepts his resignation. BE IT RESOLVED, the Achievement First Brooklyn Board of Trustees, hereby elects Chris Lynch to serve as Treasurer and Chair of the Finance Committee.
5. BE IT RESOLVED that the AF Brooklyn Board of Trustees hereby approves the following individuals to serve as interim principal, as needed, for a period of time not to exceed sixteen weeks through June 30, 2024, based on the recommendations by Achievement First.

School	Interim Principal Name
AF Apollo ES	Krystal Chacon
AF Aspire ES	Stephanie Cruz
AF Brownsville ES	Kyle Birstler
AF Bushwick ES	D'Asia Adger

AF Crown Heights ES	Yoowon Park
AF East New York ES	Katie Donaldson
AF Endeavor ES	Kerrian Herry
AF Legacy ES	Ashley Wilson
AF Linden ES	Kahleel Hamilton
AF North Brooklyn ES	Matilde Acevedo
AF Apollo MS	Gentaro Ramadhan
AF Aspire MS	Skyla Jude
AF Brownsville MS	Jose Guerrero
AF Bushwick MS	Em Slezak
AF Crown Heights MS	James Casey
AF East New York MS	Colby France
AF Endeavor MS	Alexa Crawford
AF Linden MS	Don Hardin
AF North Brooklyn MS	Melanie Peralta
AF Voyager MS	Jalen Saunders
AF Brooklyn HS	Justin McNamara
AF East Brooklyn HS	Ethel McGinn
AF Ujima HS	Cristina Lopez del Castillo
AF University Prep HS	Reka Bennett

6. BE IT RESOLVED, that the AF Brooklyn Board of Trustees hereby approves the 2023-2024 AF Family Handbook.

B. Executive Session with CEO (10 min)

VI. Other Business

VII. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn Mr. Lynch, all in favor, none abstained.