



AF Brooklyn Board Meeting Minutes

April 8th, 2025 at 6:00 PM

25 Broadway, 12th FL, New York, NY 10004

Attendance

Members: Amy Arthur Samuels, Tamika Bradley (remote), Paul Cabana, Romy Coquillette, Desiree Dalton, Andrea Kilpatrick, Chris Lynch, Erica Murphy, David Pollak, Brandon Sorlie

AF Staff: Lisa Margosian, Michael Rabin, Omar Mayyasi, Jason Russell, Amy D'Angelo, John Sharkey, Shannon Miller, Jacqui Alessi, Kirsten Wunn

Guests: Cherie Turner (remote)

I. Call to Order

AF Brooklyn Board Chair Romy Coquillette called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

II. Public Comment

Cherie Turner, a parent at AF Linden Elementary, was present for part of the meeting but did not want to make public comment.

III. Board Resolutions and Approvals

Romy Coquillette introduced board candidate Keith Brooks. Mr. Brooks shared that he has come full circle from being an AF staff member to board member. Ms. Coquillette asked Mr. Brooks to leave the room for the board vote. Then, Ms. Coquillette reviewed the consent agenda with the board which contained resolutions approving the previous meeting minutes and Mr. Brooks board membership. Hearing no questions or comments, Ms. Coquillette asked for a motion to approve the consent agenda. Brandon Sorlie motioned. Desiree Dalton seconded. All in favor, none opposed or abstained.

Consent Agenda

1. BE IT RESOLVED, the AF Brooklyn Board of Trustees hereby approves the meeting minutes from February 11, 2025.
2. BE IT RESOLVED, that the Achievement First Brooklyn Board of Trustee elects Keith Brooks to the Board for a 3-year term, ending June 30, 2027.

IV. CEO Agenda Overview & Introductions

AF CEO Lisa Margosian reviewed the agenda and introduced Mirtha Camille Sabio, AF's new General Counsel. Ms. Sabio gave a brief overview of her professional background and personal connection to charter education, expressing enthusiasm about joining Achievement First.

V. AF 25 Summit

Jackie Alessi, Associate Chief of Public Affairs, presented plans for AF's 25th Anniversary Summit, taking place May 29–30 in New Haven. The celebration will bring together staff, students, families, board members, and community partners to reflect on AF's 25-year impact. Highlights will include keynote speakers Misty Copeland and Geoffrey Canada, a Friends of AF reception, and school tours. Jackie also shared plans for regional celebrations, including a Brooklyn rooftop event on June 21.

VI. Mission Moment

Kirsten Wunn, Director of School Operations (DSO) at Apollo Middle and Senior DSO at Brownsville Middle, shared her personal and professional journey. A first-generation American and college graduate, she reflected on how her experiences shaped her commitment to student support. She provided an overview of Apollo's priorities and challenges, including declining enrollment, operational successes, and the need for deeper community engagement and enrichment programming. She emphasized the importance of equitable student experiences across schools and advocated for infrastructure improvements and expanded extracurricular offerings.

VII. Academic Updates: Mock State Test Data

Chief Academic Officer John Sharkey and Transitional Superintendent Amy D'Angelo presented an update on recent mock assessment results, highlighting improvements and areas for continued focus as the schools prepare for state testing. Acknowledgment was given to the team's swift response in turning around instructional data, which significantly informed next steps in instruction.

VIII. AF Strategic Plan Updates

AF CEO Lisa Margosian and Chief Strategy Officer Michael Rabin shared progress on the network's strategic pivot from a centralized model to a more regionally empowered structure. This shift will move the locus of decision-making and support closer to schools through the creation of executive director roles in each region. The change was informed by board feedback, stakeholder engagement data, and best practices from other charter networks. Key focuses include operational readiness, leadership support, and regional advocacy.

Board members raised thoughtful questions about potential duplication of roles and impact on budget. Leadership responded that the restructuring is designed to redistribute, not add, leadership capacity—and will be phased in carefully.

IX. Finance Updates and Budget Preview

Interim CFO Omar Mayyasi led the board through an overview of the FY26 budget assumptions, highlighting a deliberate shift toward greater fiscal discipline and strategic alignment. He acknowledged that in previous years, budgeting often resulted in unexpected surpluses—something the team is working to avoid by adopting a more realistic and transparent approach to forecasting.

He explained that the FY26 budget reflects projected increases in revenue as well as anticipated cost savings stemming from recent school closures. These changes, combined with a more conservative budgeting mindset, are helping the organization move away from a scarcity-based approach and toward a model that uses financial planning as a tool to directly support student outcomes.

Chris walked the board through assumptions around personnel costs and staffing. The budget includes careful estimates around vacancies, and there was discussion about whether intentional over-hiring might help mitigate disruptions caused by mid-year staff departures. Board members engaged in a thoughtful conversation about the relationship between hiring timelines, staff retention, and student experience—acknowledging that consistent, high-quality staffing is a critical factor in academic performance.

Finally, Chris shared that surplus funds will be strategically reinvested in schools and students, with a focus on addressing long-standing needs and improving overall school experience. The finance team is working to ensure that all budget decisions remain aligned with AF's mission and long-term sustainability goals.

The board received an update on the Ujima High School build. Renovation costs have increased from original projections due to required DOE kitchen upgrades, market conditions, and strategic upgrades (e.g., HVAC, community-facing improvements). These investments are aligned with long-term goals to enhance student experience and community presence. Construction was reported to be starting imminently.

X. Adjourn

Ms. Coquillette adjourned the meeting at 8:11 pm.