



AF Bridgeport Board Meeting Minutes

5/22/2025 5:30 PM EDT

Virtual via Zoom: <https://achievementfirst.zoom.us/j/87612633373>

Attendance

Members: Ruben Felipe, Ebrima Jobe, Dick Kalt, Rajeev Lakra, Kelia Lanham, Dewey Loselle, Marlene Macauda

Guests: Jahneel Small

AF Staff: Shannon Miller and Kate Aufiero

I. Call to Order

Board Chair Raj Lakra called the meeting to order at 5:33 pm.

II. Public Comment

There were no members of the public present.

III. Board Resolutions and Approvals

Mr. Lakra welcomed attendees and introduced Jahneel Small, a prospective new board member, noting her extensive background in education and advocacy. Jahneel introduced herself and expressed enthusiasm about joining the board.

Mr. Lakra then reviewed the consent agenda, which included approval of the previous meeting's minutes, the appointment of Jahneel Small as a new board member and approval of two interim principal appointments.

Mr. Lakra asked for a motion to approve the consent agenda. Dick Kalt motioned. Marlene Macauda seconded. All in favor, none opposed or abstained.

1. BE IT RESOLVED, the AF Bridgeport Academy Board of Directors hereby approves the meeting minutes from April 21, 2025.
2. BE IT RESOLVED, the AF Bridgeport Academy Board of Directors hereby elects Jahneel Small, to the Board of Directors with a three year term ending June 30, 2028
3. BE IT RESOLVED that the AF Bridgeport Academy Board of Directors hereby approves the following individuals to serve as interim principal, as needed, for a period of time not to exceed sixteen weeks through September 30, 2025, based on the recommendations by Achievement First.
 - AF Bridgeport ES: Adrienne Minniefield and Lakendra Thompson

- AF Bridgeport MS: Diamond Laing

Board members expressed enthusiastic support for Jahneel's nomination. Ruben Felipe shared high praise based on their time working together at the Connecticut Charter Schools Association, noting her intelligence, dedication, and leadership.

After the vote, Jahneel was welcomed back into the meeting and congratulated on her official appointment to the board.

IV. Finance Committee Report: Q3 Financial Report and FY26 Budget

Kate Aufiero, Associate Chief of Financial Planning and Analysis, presented on behalf of the Finance Committee.

Q3 Financial Report

Ms. Aufiero reported that the region is projecting a year-end surplus, driven by higher-than-anticipated revenue from Title funds, ESSER, student meal reimbursements, and interest income. Savings from personnel vacancies offset increased contractor and facilities-related expenses. The overall financial position remains strong despite a small enrollment shortfall of six students and a reduction of 19 FTEs compared to budget.

Mr. Lakra added that staffing outlooks for next year are promising: the elementary school is fully staffed with all teachers returning, and the middle school is close to fully staffed with only one open position.

FY26 Budget Proposal

Ms. Aufiero then presented the proposed FY26 budget, highlighting a 3% increase in overall revenue. The enrollment is projected to remain flat, in line with the charter cap of just over 1,000 students across the three Bridgeport schools.

There are no anticipated increases in ECS or per-pupil funding, so the philanthropy target has increased from approximately \$400K to \$1.1M to offset the loss of ESSER funding. Kate emphasized that this increase was anticipated and developed in close coordination with the AF development team.

Personnel expenses are projected to rise only slightly, with increased salaries and health premiums offset by a vacancy factor. Bonuses for teacher certifications are included in the budget. Non-personnel costs will increase due to the addition of the KIPP Collaborative college and career program (\$220K), as well as higher costs for certification tuition, student meals, and facilities.

Board members asked several clarifying questions. Dick Kalt confirmed that the budget includes the Amistad students enrolled in Bridgeport. Dewey Loselle raised concerns about philanthropy targets, and Ms. Aufiero reassured the board that there

are confirmed grants and reserves to draw upon if needed. She affirmed the development team's confidence in meeting fundraising goals.

Mr. Lakra emphasized the importance of 100% board participation in giving, regardless of the amount, as a signal of board engagement to major funders. Mr. Kalt and Mr. Loselle noted growing interest from their local network in supporting Achievement First, including plans for a school tour and legacy giving opportunities.

Mr. Loselle requested that future reminders about giving deadlines be shared more clearly and proactively, a request Shannon Miller, AF Managing Director of Board Relations and Governance agreed to pass along to the fundraising team.

V. Board Resolutions and Approvals

Mr. Lakra presented the resolution to approve the FY26 budget to the board and asked for a motion. Dewey Loselle motioned. Dick Kalt seconded. All in favor, none opposed or abstained.

1. BE IT RESOLVED, that the AF Bridgeport Academy Board of Directors hereby approves the financial budget for the 2025-2026 fiscal year as presented.

VI. Adjourn

Prior to adjourning the meeting, Ms. Miller shared with the board that the upcoming AF Bridgeport regional celebration scheduled for the weekend had been postponed and she would let the board know once it is rescheduled.

Having no other business, Mr. Lakra asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Dewey Loselle motioned, Marlene Macaуда seconded. All in favor, none opposed or abstained. The meeting adjourned at 5:55 pm.