AF Bridgeport Academy Board Meeting Minutes - Draft

Achievement First
Thursday, June 18, 2026 at 5:30 PM to 7:00 PM EDT
Zoom: https://achievementfirst.zoom.us/j/82090246789

Attendees:

Board Members: Raj Lakra, Dick Kalt, Dewey Loselle, Marlene Macauda, Ebrima Jobe, Jahneel Small
AF Staff: Amy D'Angelo, Ben Schanback, Stephanie Fox, Samantha Lucky, Olivia Levey, Sulafa Bashir

I. Call to Order

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

II. Public Comment

There were no members of the public present.

III. Welcome and Agenda Overview

The meeting began with Amy D'Angelo acknowledging the tragic loss of a second-grade student at Bridgeport. The team shared details about the situation, the impact on the school community, and the support provided to the family and staff. The board expressed condolences and offered support to the school community.

IV. Mission Moment

The mission moment highlighted the elementary school's moving up event, featuring a speech by DeAndre, a middle school student who previously attended the elementary school. The event underscored the partnership and bridge-building between the elementary and middle school, led by Principals Fox and Garnett.

V. Amistad Academy HS Update

Amy shared that the Amistad High School Committee would meet before the Amistad board meetings next year to ensure consistent reporting and timely updates. She provided a high school report, highlighting significant academic gains, including double-digit increases in AP pass rates and improvements in school culture and stability. She stated that chronic absenteeism remained a challenge, but the school's leadership was preparing strategies for improvement. Student enrollment and staff retention are priorities, with over 90% of desired staff retained. Enrollment targets are set at 680 students for next year and 710 for the following year, with positive momentum attributed to parent engagement Efforts are underway to manage summer attrition and exceed targets, with staff actively working to convert uncertain families. It was also mentioned that the school's leadership planned to reset scholar expectations, including stricter enforcement of cell phone and uniform policies.

VI. **SY 26 Reflections and Looking Ahead to SY 27**

Amy shared that the AF team had conducted an end-of-year review, including a full-day meeting with principals and a celebration lunch. Official end-of-year data will be reviewed at the end of June, with final SBAC, state test, and AP data to be shared in the fall. A key learning is the shift in evaluation focus from teacher actions to student outcomes, guiding professional development priorities. Staff retention and stability have contributed to progress in chronic absenteeism reduction and improved attendance.

Strategic priorities for the next year included fostering a results-driven culture to accelerate student outcomes, focusing on staff mindset, managing expectations, and increasing recognition of staff. Key academic priorities aimed to increase daily attendance, reduce chronic absenteeism, and focus on adult skill-building. There was a commitment to strengthen external partnerships with organizations like Teach for America and MindTrust, and continue regionalization efforts to address obstacles and accelerate outcomes.

VII. **Charter Renewal Update**

Amy reported that the charter was unanimously approved for a three-year term, with no questions raised by the state. She stated that the school was in strong compliance with teacher certification, with rates in the high 90%, but must increase the percentage of traditionally certified teachers above the 50% threshold required by the state. More than a dozen teachers are enrolled in graduate programs to achieve traditional certification, and incentives are in place to support completion. Bridgeport was recognized as an exemplary program for multilingual learners, with strong compliance in special education and MLL services. Raj highlighted board governance needs which included increasing board meetings as well as ensuring teacher representation with the principals being tasked with recommending candidates for this position.

VIII. **Executive Session on EOY Principal Evaluations**

Mr. Lakra stated that the board needed to go into executive session to discuss principal EOY evaluations. He requested a motion for the AF Bridgeport Academy Board to enter an Executive session to discuss this topic. The motion was made by Marlene Macauda and seconded by Dick Kalt. All were in favor and the board entered an executive session at 6:16 pm and exited at 6:41 pm.

IX. **Finance Committee Report**

CFO Ben Schanback shared Q3 results, noting a projected deficit for 2026 driven by Amistad High School's under-enrollment challenges, with Employee Retention Credit funds helping to address the gap.

Ben walked the board through the proposed budget for FY 27, describing new state funding received that would be held in reserve for addressing long-term needs. He also introduced a capital budget, detailing investments in kitchen improvements and technology upgrades. He requested the board's approval on the $19.5 million balanced budget.

Operating Budget	FY 2027 *($ in millions)*
Revenue	
Per Pupil Revenue	$15.4
Employee Retention Credit Reserve	$0.2
Philanthropy	$1.4
All Other	$2.5
Total Revenue	$19.5
Expenses	
Personnel	$11.3
Nonpersonnel	$8.2
Total Expenses	$19.5
Surplus/(Deficit):	**$0.0**

Capital Budget	FY 2027 *($ in millions)*
Planned Cash Expenditures:	$0.0
Planned ERC Expenditures:	$0.2
Planned Operating:	$0.0
Planned Other Sources:	$0.0
Total Capital Expenditures:	**$0.2**

The board noted the recent improvement from under 100 to nearly 145 days cash on hand, and discussed establishing target ranges for cash on hand metrics, with Raj suggesting a minimum of 100 days and the Finance Committee agreeing to propose specific targets at their next meeting.

There was also a discussion about the Finance Committee reviewing all current policies related to financial controls and integrity, and for the full board to be reminded of all approved policies and their last approval dates. The board recognized the need to take greater accountability and be more conversant with charter management, as emphasized by recent state findings.

X. **Board Resolutions**

Mr. Lakra moved on to the approval of the board resolutions. He asked a clarifying question regarding the signatories for school food authority reimbursement claims. It was stated that AF's Legal counsel had been consulted and approved the arrangement, but the board agreed to revisit if needed.

Hearing no other questions from the board members, he asked for a motion to approve the consent agenda. Marlene Macauda so moved, seconded by Dick Kalt and all were in favor. The consent agenda passed.

<u>Consent Agenda</u>

1. BE IT RESOLVED, the AF Bridgeport Academy Board of Directors hereby approves the meeting minutes from April 14, 2026.
2. BE IT RESOLVED, that the AF Bridgeport Academy Board of Directors reelects Ruben Felipe to the Board for a 3-year term, ending June 30, 2029.
3. BE IT RESOLVED, that the AF Bridgeport Academy Board of Directors hereby approves the financial budget for the 2026-2027 fiscal year as presented.
4. BE IT RESOLVED that the AF Bridgeport Academy Board of Directors hereby approves the following individuals to serve as interim principal as needed through October 31, 2026, for a period of time not to exceed sixteen weeks, based on the recommendations by Achievement First.

School	Interim Principal 1	Interim Principal 2
Elementary School	Adrienne Minniefield	Lakendra Thompson
Middle School	Laura Fisher	Shaniel Cuvilie

Authorized Signatories for School Food Authority Reimbursement Claims

5. WHEREAS, Achievement First Bridgeport Academy Charter School participates in the National School Lunch Program and other child nutrition programs administered by the Connecticut State Department of Education ("CSDE"); and

   WHEREAS, CSDE requires the School Food Authority to designate authorized officials to approve and sign reimbursement claims and related program documentation; including the ED-099 Agreement for Child Nutrition Programs between CSDE and the School Food Authority; and

   WHEREAS, the AF Bridgeport Academy Board of Directors desires to update the authorized signatories for the School Food Authority;

   NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Directors hereby designates the following individuals as authorized signatories for the School Food

Authority, effective immediately:

1. Controller, Achievement First, (currently Kimberly Holzmann-Krolick) as Primary Authorized Signatory (Authorized Signer 1 on the ED-099 AGreement for Child Nutrition Programs); and
2. Regional Director of Operations, Achievement First, (currently Melissa Izzo) as Secondary Authorized Signatory (Authorized Signer 2 on the ED-099 Agreement for Child Nutrition Programs).

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the foregoing authorized signatories are empowered to execute and sign the ED-099 Agreement for Child Nutrition Programs and any addenda thereto, and to execute any reimbursement claims, certifications, and other documents required for participation in the National School Lunch Program and related child nutrition programs on behalf of the School Food Authority.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the officers of the School and Achievement First are authorized to complete and submit any forms, certifications, or other documentation necessary to implement this resolution and to notify CSDE of these authorized signatories.

XI. **Adjourn**

Prior to adjourning, Mr. Lakra noted for the board members that the AF Bridgeport Academy board meeting calendar dates for SY 26-27 had been set and had been included in the board package. He stated that the board would be receiving calendar holds for these dates during the month of July. Board members asked that meeting links are always included in all reminder emails for future board meetings.

There being no other business, Mr. Lakra requested a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was made by Dick Kalt, seconded by Marlene Macauda. All were in favor and the meeting adjourned at 7:04 pm.