

**Achievement First Hartford Academy  
Board of Directors Meeting  
Monday September 15, 2014, 5:00 – 7:00 pm  
305 Greenfield Street, Hartford**

**Meeting Minutes**

**A meeting of the Achievement First Hartford Academy Board of Directors was held on September 15 at AF Hartford HS.**

**The following board members, constituting a quorum, and Achievement First Staff were in attendance:**

Barry Jacobson, AFHA Board - Yes	Emily Banks, School Leadership - Yes
James Morton, AFHA Board - Yes	Benjamin Cruse, School Leadership - Yes
John Motley, AFHA Board - Yes	Ernest Peterson, School Leadership - Yes
Nyema Pinkney, AFHA Board - Yes	Meg Smith, School Leadership - Yes
Marshall Ruben, AFHA Board - Yes	Nick Lebron, AF Network Support - Yes
Angela Scott, AFHA Board - Yes	D. Scot Kerr, AF Network Support - Yes
Nancy Zwiener, AFHA Board - Yes	Dacia Toll, AF Network Support - Yes
Jean LaVecchia, AFHA Board - No	Sarah Blanton, AF Network Support - Yes
Colleen Palmer, AFHA Board - Yes	Ken Paul, AF Network Support - Yes
Lankford Wade, AFHA Board - Yes	Chastity Lord, AF Network Support - Yes

**I. Call to Order & Attendance**

The meeting was called to order at 5:14pm by John Motley.

**II. Open Session For Public Comment**

No public comments

**III. School Reports**

Ernest Peterson, AF Hartford Elementary School, discussed the priorities for the year and the challenges

of being a new principal. The school has over 50 staff members and half of them are new and come with little teaching experience. The leadership team is small, as they lost some deans over the summer.

With scholars, they are working on creating the right processes for kids having behavioral issues looking at what kids respond to and how they, as a staff, can be efficient in addressing and implementing the behavioral systems.

Meg Smith, AF Hartford Middle School, reported that the staff culture is strong and the leadership team is very dedicated. However, she feels the school is in a turnaround state and that they are struggling to establish a strong academic culture as habits from last year are taking time to address.

Dacia Toll reinforced that the strength of the teacher culture is good and that they are all working to see more dramatic improvement for scholars as fast as possible. She doesn't think the middle school should increase enrollment. The first priority must be to stabilize the current enrollment which is at 322 students, had been aiming for 346.

Ben Cruse, AF Summit Middle School, was excited about their great first day. They currently have 82 students (started with 17 on the first day of the lottery) and 13 staff.

So far, they have no loss attrition, no major behavioral challenges. As the school is in its first year, he wants to be sure what they do now is sustainable as the school grows to full scale while keeping academic rigor high.

He talked about how their playing field is chained closed and they are facing challenges to getting it open. He would love for board to come to events at the school including one called the "running of the books".

Emily Banks provided a report of the Joint High School Committee. She feels good about student investment and the level of academic discourse. The High School has enrichment activities all taught by teachers. The staff culture is very good including the team of new 11th grade teachers.

One challenge she mentioned was that it is harder to maintain a consistent level of quality with a bigger staff. She hopes the board can help support the school by inviting and hosting visitors. Emily has a good number of visitors and would love board members to get involved in giving tours and connecting with parents and other guests.

5:35pm Move to execute session

Nancy Zweiner moved. Barry Jacobson seconded.

5:44pm closed executive session

#### **IV. Board Business**

### 1. Approve Previous Meeting Minutes

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT, the Board of Directors of Hartford Academy hereby approves the 3/17/14, 5/27/14, and 7/31/14 Meeting Minutes as drafted.

Barry Jacobson moved to approve the minutes as presented, and Nancy Zweiner seconded the motion. The motion carried with unanimous approval of the Board.

### 2. Approve Financial Report

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT, the Board of Directors of AF Hartford Academy hereby accepts the financial report as presented.

Nancy Zweiner moved to approve the financial report as presented, and Angela Scott seconded the motion. The motion carried with unanimous approval of the Board.

### 3. Approve 2014-2015 Family Handbook

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT, The Board of Directors of Achievement First Hartford Academy approves a revised Family Handbook as drafted.

Marshall Ruben moved to approve the family handbook as presented, and Nancy Zweiner seconded the motion. The motion carried with unanimous approval of the Board.

### 4. Approve 2014-2015 School Wellness Policy

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT, The Board of Directors of Achievement First Hartford Academy approves the 2014-2015 School Wellness Policy as drafted.

Marshall Ruben moved to approve the School Wellness Policy as presented, and Nancy Zweiner seconded the motion. The motion carried with unanimous approval of the Board.

### 5. Elect representatives to the Board of Directors of Achievement First Hartford Academy

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT, The Board of Directors of Achievement First Hartford Academy re-elected James Morton and Lankford Wade as Directors and accepted the resignation of Laura Estes.

Angela Scott moved to approve the representatives, and Marshall Ruben seconded the motion. The motion carried with unanimous approval of the Board.

## **V. Board Discussion**

The board discussed the philanthropy needs of AF Hartford and how significantly those needs exceed that of prior years. Ken Paul, VP, Development, spoke about fundraising, broadly. Given that the Middle School is in a turnaround state, this shortfall (by 24 scholars) should not be carried forward.

Scot Ker led a discussion about the Board Retreat raising the question of whether we should schedule a separate call to handle board business since there is none that happens during the retreat.

John Motley shared that he feels the retreats are useful and inspiring but that the timing (which is such because of the CMT results) is not good. Since there were no CMT results this year, Nancy felt the retreat was light in substance.

Ken Paul gave an overview of where Achievement First is, network wide:

- a. Greenfield is going forward with two new schools scheduled to open next year
- b. Network growth - 29 schools with 9,600 students
- c. On track with opening 3-4 new schools each year

Nick Lebron, Community Outreach Associate spoke about his work in the Hartford community trying to build bridges and address misperceptions about AF. Nick has deep roots in Hartford. Looking ahead, there are two events which Nick will share information about: a legislative breakfast and an event with Howard Fuller.

### **Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:15 by John Motley.