

**Achievement First CT Joint Board Retreat  
Amistad Academy  
Elm City College Preparatory  
Achievement First Bridgeport Academy  
Achievement First Hartford Academy  
July 21, 2014, 12 - 5 pm  
Amistad Academy Elementary School  
130 Edgewood Avenue, New Haven**

The following directors and staff were in attendance:

Bill Bouton, Legal Resources - Yes	Barry Jacobson, AFHA Board - No
Susan Shankman, Guest - Yes	Jean LaVecchia, AFHA Board - No
Brianne Gilkes, Guests - Yes	James Morton, AFHA Board - No
Brittney Graham, Guests - Yes	John Motley, AFHA Board - No
Lorraine Gibbons, AA Board - Yes	Colleen Palmer, AFHA Board - No
Michael Griffin, AA Board - Yes	Nyema Pinkney, AFHA Board - No
Jane Levin, AA Board - Yes	Marshall Ruben, AFHA Board - No
Khadijah Muhammad, AA Board - Yes	Angela Scott, AFHA Board - No
Katrin Czingler, AA Board - No	Magaly Cajigas, ECCP Board - Yes
Sheri Gellman, AA Board - No	Erik Clemons, ECCP Board - Yes
Toni Harp, AA Board - No	Richard Ferguson, ECCP Board - Yes
Howard Hill, AA Board - No	Carolyn Greenspan, ECCP Board - Yes
Dorsey Kendrick, AA Board - No	Marnie Halsey, ECCP Board - Yes
Andrew Lachman, AA Board - No	William Heins, ECCP Board - Yes
Paul McCraven, AA Board - No	Patricia Pierce, ECCP Board - Yes
Michael Van Leesten, AA Board - No	Lystra Richardson, ECCP Board - Yes
Caroline Williams, AA Board - No	Laura Saverin, ECCP Board - Yes
James Bennett, AFBA Board - Yes	Kaitlyn Stasik, ECCP Board - Yes
Andrew Boas, AFBA Board - Yes	Pat Sweet, ECCP Board - Yes

Debra Hertz, AFBA Board - Yes	Sharon Oster, ECCP Board - No
Chris Kunhardt, AFBA Board - Yes	Deb Quinsee, ECCP Board - No
Marlene Macauda, AFBA Board - Yes	Sarah Blanton, AF Network Support - Yes
Ed Raice, AFBA Board - Yes	Hillary Bridges, AF Network Support - Yes
Judy Andrews, AFBA Board - No	Candice Dormon, AF Network Support - Yes
Dick Kalt, AFBA Board - No	Elandria Jackson, AF Network Support - Yes
Harold Kamins, AFBA Board - No	D. Scot Kerr, AF Network Support - Yes
Cornelius Medas, AFBA Board - No	Jennifer Lindsay, AF Network Support - Yes
Wiley Mullins, AFBA Board - No	Bridget Mercier, AF Network Support - Yes
Max Perez, AFBA Board - No	Ken Paul, AF Network Support - Yes
Lankford Wade, AFHA Board - Yes	Tony Siddall, AF Network Support - Yes
Nancy Zwiener, AFHA Board - Yes	Robyn Silverman, AF Network Support - Yes
Laura Estes, AFHA Board - No	

A meeting of the joint boards of Achievement First Connecticut schools on July 21, 2014 at Amistad Academy.

## **I. Call to Order & Attendance**

The meeting was called to order by Dick Ferguson at 12:26pm.

## **II. High School Programs**

Chris Bostock, Principal of Amistad Academy High school, provided an overview of the Amistad High School program.

Mr. Bostock presented the three main goals of Amistad Academy High; 85% of students graduate from college in four years, 100% in six years, and 50% from top colleges. He described the three pillars of Amistad's college graduation strategy which includes exceptionally high standards, development in strong teachers and leaders, and support for scholars in the college process. He lauded the program as an example of what schools that serve high needs populations must accomplish and successfully prepare students for "the next economy."

Mr. Bostock detailed the four year college process which begins with the college readiness seminar for 9th graders and reaches its zenith in 12th grade. Students and families are supported

in every aspect of the process including helping them to create their college lists of “best fit” schools that meet their academic, social/emotional, and financial needs. Mr. Bostock described his hope that all AF graduates are able to pass what he calls, “the dorm room test” whereby AF alums “hang out” in their dorm rooms and engage with their peers on topics like literature, art, science, pop culture, and more.

### **III. Board Objectives & Theory of Change**

Tony Siddall, Senior Director of Governance & Authorizer Relations, Team External Relations, gave a presentation that covered the role that boards can play in relation to Achievement First’s “Theory of Change.” Mr. Siddall framed his explanation with two points of reference; 1) Board members as public officials who hold AF accountable and 2) Board members as active participants in building the future strategy of AF schools. Mr. Siddall presented the following as counterparts to the four-part “Theory of Change.”

- Become an excellence and equity exemplar
  - Board members are well positioned to help identify blind spots between network strategy and school reality.
- Concentrate our impact geographically
  - Board members are well positioned to take on community specific roles and serve as ambassadors in our communities.
- Open more gap-closing schools
  - Board members are well positioned to help AF close the structural funding gap in Connecticut by advocating for AF and communicating our philanthropic need to their networks.
- Sharing with and learning from others
  - Board members are well positioned to provide areas of expertise and experience to schools as AF seeks to become an open source organization.

### **IV. Workshop Groups**

Board members split into three working session groups of their choice; Scholar Support and Systems, Board Goals, and Community Engagement to discuss these topics.

At the end of each working session all board members collectively shared with the group.

- Scholar Support and Systems
  - Chris Kundhart, AF Bridgeport Board member, shared that his group spoke primarily about summer internships for students and looking forward to an active strategy to surpass the number of internships from Summer 2014 for the number in Summer 2015.
- Board Goals
  - Marnie Halsey, Elm City College Prep Board member, shared that her group spoke about governance needs for the upcoming school year as well as exciting opportunities for engagement with students and families.

- Community Engagement
  - Magaly Cajigas, Elm City College Preparatory Parent Representative, shared that her group spoke about the continued need to deeply engage and build relationships within our communities. She explained that work can be done to forge new relationships in addition to strengthening our current relationships. In addition, the group discussed how parents are our strongest advocates and how we can continue to empower families.

## **V. Q&A and Greenfield Update**

Dacia Toll, Co-CEO & President, Achievement First, provided updates on student achievement data, suspension data, and AF's two strategies for continuous increases student achievement following by a Q&A. Ms. Toll explained the timeframe and nuances for receiving and analyzing the test scores for the new Common Core-aligned Smarter Balance test that Achievement First's Connecticut scholars completed during the 2013-14 school year. Ms. Toll announced that although AF has more work to do to reduce suspensions, in one year AF schools had a 30% reduction in suspensions. Ms. Toll also described the four pillar approach designed to help AF take "Big Steps" forward as an organization; setting a College Ready Bar, focusing on Intellectual Engagement in Planning & Instruction, solidifying Vibrant School Cultures, and developing "bright spots" to Cultivate Excellence.

Ms. Toll provided an update on Achievement First's second strategy "Greenfield" in order to continuously drive innovation into the education sector more broadly.

Ms. Toll explained that Achievement First has partnered with the top design firm IDEO to create a blueprint for a new school model. Ms. Toll provided an update on Phase I of the AF Greenfield project and described the three anchors for the new model; accelerated expectations of academic achievement, student ownership and personalization of their hard work, and an awesomely powerful community for students, teachers, parents, and families. Ms. Toll explained the model will require a huge investment in technology and a longer school day.

## **VI. Connection to the mission**

During the Connection to the Mission Board members had the opportunity to hear from three Achievement First graduates who shared their personal experiences attending Achievement First and college. At the end of the panel Board Members asked questions and shared the insights they learned from the guests.

## **VII. Adjourn**

Mr. Kerr and Elm City College Preparatory Board Chair, Richard Ferguson closed the meeting expressing thanks to our Connection to the Mission guests. The meeting was adjourned at 4:57 by Richard Ferguson