

MINUTES

**Achievement First Rhode Island
Board of Directors Meeting**

Venue: Achievement First Providence High School
206 Elmwood Avenue, Providence, RI 02907

Zoom: <https://achievementfirst.zoom.us/j/82949107331>

Monday March 18, 2024, 5:30-7:00 pm

I. Call to Order

Name	Present	Name	Present
Mayor Brett Smiley	X	Macky McCleary	
Maryellen Butke	X	John Iglizzi	
James Wiley	X	Mayor Charles Lombardi	
Jo-Ann Schofield	X		

AF staff present: Lisa Margosian, Michael Rabin, Dumar Paden, Amy Christie, Kevin Lohela, Tiffany Bostic, Xanthe Jory, Karolyn Belcher, and LaNelle Alexander

II. Public Comment

No members of the public were present.

III. Discussion with Achievement First

Ms. Margosian welcomed the board. Ms. Margosian introduced Tiffany Bostic, Chief of Special Services, and Amy Christie, Senior Director of College & Career Success to the board.

Kevin Lohela, the Regional Superintendent, introduced the board to the partnership with the Center for Love and Justice. He also informed the board that the school’s cheerleaders won the Division IV State Championship.

A. Strategic Planning for AF’s Future (30 min)

Ms. Margosian presented on the strategic planning process that AF is currently undertaking. This work comes out of summits with staff, students, families, and some board members from several years ago - this work informs the new strategic planning process. This process also involved a new look at the AF Mission and Vision Statements, mission measures, strategic priorities and initiatives, and strategic priorities.

Ms. Margosian introduced the new Mission Statement and Vision Statement to the Board. Mr.

Wiley stated that he liked the inclusion of zip code, and noted that it could include the other elements. Ms. Burke noted that the older mission and vision statement was very broad, and that it's not the schools that empower students versus whether it's the people who empower, and noted that the word "empower" might not be the right word. Ms. Schofield noted that other omissions of other groups - for instance LGBTQ+ - are not referenced in the statements. Mr. Wiley mentioned that students with special needs are often highlighted as not being served by charter schools, and given this legacy should this be named in the statements.

Michael Rabin presented the four Strategic Priorities to the board, which will help guide AF in the realization of the mission. Mr. Wiley noted that the word "talent" reads as if it is teachers, but believes this is actually referencing all talent. Mayor Smiley asked if "sustainability" references the schools or the network. Ms. Margosian explained that it is primarily network, as that supports the schools. Mr. Smiley noted that his concern would be that AF might decide that schools in a certain region, for example Connecticut or Rhode Island, aren't sustainable. Ms. Margosian explained that some of this is about more investment in regions, to ensure the network resources are in place for each school to be successful in each location. Ms. Schofield suggested that "Vibrant Schools" should come first as that's the most important thing for students.

B. Postsecondary Persistence Approach and Results (30 min)

Mr. Paden presented on postsecondary persistence. He noted that there will soon be a first graduating high school class in Providence. Mr. Paden spoke to the fact that AF has strong educational experiences, but that often the postsecondary pathways are not looked at closely enough. He noted that just getting a student through high school is not enough and in order to truly fulfill our promise we must ensure the students are supported in high school and after.

Mr. Paden presented on the National Student Clearinghouse data on graduation and degree earning, and compared it with Achievement First. From 2010 until now, AF is seeing three times the amount of students graduating college compared with similar populations but has still not been able to close the gap with low poverty schools.

Mr. Wiley noted that a lot of parents may push back against the six year measure and that AF should report out with a four year metric. Mr. Paden noted that without AF supports, only 15% of similarly situated students are graduating - and with AF's support, 46% are graduating. Mr. Paden noted that AF is actually enrolling more students than their low- and high-poverty school counterparts. Mr. Paden presented that AF students are more likely to actually attend college on Day One (also called "summer melt").

Ms. Christie presented that the results rely on three levers - academic preparedness, high

touch postsecondary counseling, and strong alumni supports. AF high schools are designed to allow students to identify the right schools, maximize their admissibility, and maximize their aid. Mr. Wiley asked how AF is adding to the college financial aid discussions when colleges do this themselves, Ms. Christie and Mr. Paden explained that AF compares across schools and packages. Mr. Wiley noted that there must be some line between where colleges begin and where AF ends. Ms. Schofield noted that parents feel comfortable with AF, in particular if college is new to them, and that they may not feel comfortable going to the college. Ms. Christie noted that the relationship between college counselors and families is an 18 month relationship.

Ms. Christie presented on the Collaborative with other charter schools which addresses the need we are trying to address and creates something more systemic across colleges. The first two years, which are volatile in terms of persistence, are higher touch. Years 3-6, alumni get exposed to career connected exposure and experience. Ms. Christie presented on future plans, both short and long term, for this work.

Mr. Paden noted that the cost is approximately \$1000 per student, and although that cost will go down per student the cost will continue to increase just based on the number of students. Ms. Margosian noted that AF cannot use public funding for those supports. Ms. Butke asked if there were partnerships for funding.

Ms. Schofield noted that the board would be interested in brainstorming how to support the first graduating class in RI next year.

C. Finance Committee Report (10 mins)

Neil Shah introduced Omar Mayyasi as the Interim CFO, who will be presenting at the next board meeting. Mr. Shah presented on the financials including the balance sheet, cash flow, and state revenue. He shared that the balance sheet is strong but leveraged, and there is sufficient cash for operations. He also highlighted an increase in state revenue and the growth of net assets. The net assets grew by 5 million from the gain from last year. The P&L comparison was discussed, including the year-to-date budget versus actual and the total budget. The budget anticipated earning \$850,000 of net income this year, which is a requirement of the debt-service coverage ratio and covenants. The forecasted net income is expected to be around \$930,000. Mr. Shah also shared the audit RFP process.

IV. Board Business

A. Executive Session: RFP Update (5 mins)

Mayor Smiley asked for a motion to go into executive session for an update on the RFP.

Ms. Butke made the motion, Mr. Wiley seconded. All in favor, none abstained. The board moved into executive session at 6:45 pm. The board exited executive session at 6:55 PM.

B. Board Resolutions and Approvals: Previous Meeting Minutes (5 mins)

Mayor Smiley asked for a motion to approve the previous meeting minutes.

Mr. Wiley made the motion, Ms. Schofield seconded. All in favor, none abstained.

1. BE IT RESOLVED, the AF Rhode Island Board of Directors hereby incorporates the Presentation Deck from the January 26, 2024 board meeting, which shall be attached to and form a part of the Meeting Minutes as Exhibit A;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the AF Rhode Island Board of Directors hereby incorporates the Response to the Request for Proposals for the Carl Lauro building, which shall be attached to and form a part of the Meeting Minutes from January 26, 2024 as Exhibit B; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the AF Rhode Island Board of Directors hereby approves the Meeting Minutes from January 26, 2024.

V. Adjourn

Mayor Smiley asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Ms. Butke made the motion and Ms. Schofield seconded. All in favor, none abstained.

The board adjourned at 6:55 PM.

RECOMMENDED RESOLUTIONS

2. BE IT RESOLVED, the AF Rhode Island Board of Directors hereby incorporates the Presentation Deck from the January 26, 2024 board meeting, which shall be attached to and form a part of the Meeting Minutes as Exhibit A;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the AF Rhode Island Board of Directors hereby incorporates the Response to the Request for Proposals for the Carl Lauro building, which shall be attached to and form a part of the Meeting Minutes from January 26, 2024 as Exhibit B; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the AF Rhode Island Board of Directors hereby approves the Meeting Minutes from January 26, 2024.