

## Minutes

### AF Brooklyn Board of Trustees Meeting

Tuesday, October 8, 2024 at 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM EDT

25 Broadway, 12th Floor: GC Room, New York, NY 10004

Zoom Info: <https://achievementfirst.zoom.us/j/85218078124>

#### Attendance

##### Present:

Members: Jon Atkeson, Paul Cabana, Romy Coquillet, Desiree Dalton, Akeem Frett (remote), Chris Lynch, Kevin Miquelon, David Pollak, Amy Arthur Samuels, Brandon Sorlie (remote)

##### AF Staff:

Lisa Margosian, Michael Rabin, Omar Mayyasi, Amy D'Angelo, Jason Russell, John Sharkey, Dumar Paden, Kristin Damo, Charmayne Joseph, Shannon Miller

#### I. Call to Order (Presenters: Romy Coquillet)

Romy Coquillet called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

#### II. Public Comment (Presenters: Romy Coquillet)

There was no public comment.

#### III. Board Resolutions and Approvals (Presenters: Romy Coquillet)

Romy Coquillet introduced the two new potential board members, Andrea Kilpatrick and Erica Murphy. Following the introductions she asked for a motion to approve the first consent agenda approving the new board members. Jon Atkeson motioned, Chris Lynch seconded. All in favor, none opposed or abstained.

##### Consent Agenda 1:

1. BE IT RESOLVED, that the Achievement First Brooklyn Board of Trustee elects Andrea Kilpatrick to the Board for a 3-year term, ending June 30, 2027.
2. BE IT RESOLVED, that the Achievement First Brooklyn Board of Trustee elects Erica Murphy to the Board for a 3-year term, ending June 30, 2027.

Ms. Coquillet then introduced the second consent agenda for approval of meeting minutes, board leadership and committee assignments, and the 24 - 25 Family Handbook. She asked for a motion to approve. Amy Arthur Samuels motioned. Chris Lynch seconded. All in favor, none opposed or abstained.

##### Consent Agenda 2:

1. BE IT RESOLVED, the Achievement First Brooklyn Board of Trustees hereby approves the meeting minutes from May 30, 2024, July 16, 2024 and August 7, 2024.
2. BE IT RESOLVED, that the Achievement First Brooklyn Board of Trustees hereby elects the following leadership slate for the 2024-2025 fiscal year:
  1. Romy Coquillette, Chair
  2. Chris Lynch, Treasurer
  3. Akeem Frett, Secretary
3. BE IT RESOLVED, that the Achievement First Brooklyn Board of Trustees hereby appoints the following committee members:
  - Executive Committee: Romy Coquillette (Chair), Chris Lynch, Amy Arthur Samuels, Paul Cabana, Akeem Frett
  - Facilities Committee: Kevin Miquelon (Chair), Jon Atkeson, Tamika Bradely, Romy Coquillette, Chris Lynch
  - Finance Committee: Chris Lynch (Chair), Jon Atkeson, Romy Coquillette, David Pollak
  - Academic Committee: Amy Arthur Samuels (Chair), Romy Coquillette, Desiree Dalton, Erica Murphy, Brandon Sorlie, Andrea Kilpatrick
4. BE IT RESOLVED, that the AF Brooklyn Board of Trustees hereby approves the 2024-2025 AF Family Handbook.

Ms. Coquillette introduced an amendment to the bylaws updating the number of committee members on the executive committee from three to five. She asked for a motion to approve the amendment. Desiree Dalton motioned, Amy Arthur Samuels seconded. All in favor, none opposed or abstained.

#### **IV. Board Report Out: Linden MS Ribbon Cutting**

Board members Kevin Miquelon, Desiree Dalton, and Andrea Kilpatrick shared their experience at the Linden MS Ribbon Cutting on September 27.

#### **V. Board Report Out: SUNY Renewal Meeting**

Ms. Coquillette discussed the recent meeting with SUNY representatives for the charter renewal on September 26. The network underwent an expansive nine-charter renewal process, which involved significant preparation and interaction with the network staff, schools, board and SUNY team.

#### **VI. CEO Welcome & Mission Moment (Presenters: Lisa Margosian)**

Lisa Margosian, AF CEO, welcomed the board. She shared that the Achievement First Network is celebrating its 25th anniversary, marking a significant milestone in its history. Ms. Margosian mentioned that there are plans for regional and school celebrations, including block parties and a summit in June, to engage the community and celebrate the anniversary. She also presented a video about AF's 25th Anniversary.

#### **VII. Our Schools Today: Building on Progress and Shaping Our Future (Presenters: Amy D'Angelo,**

**John Sharkey, Kristin Damo, Charmayne Joseph, Dumar Paden)**

Amy D'Angelo and John Sharkey kicked off the academic update. Despite good work in many communities, there is recognition that the organization has not yet achieved the level of excellence promised to students and families. The organization is committed to a multi-year initiative for curriculum adaptation, emphasizing the need for ongoing improvement rather than a one-time change. Chronic absenteeism is identified as a significant issue that needs to be addressed alongside improving core instruction.

The focus will be on improving attendance, enhancing curriculum implementation efficacy, responding to data as a team, and increasing professional development for leaders. The schools continue to outperform the city averages in both math and ELA, with an increased lead in ELA state test performances last year. There was an 8% growth in eighth-grade science data in the first year of using a new curriculum. Declines were observed in middle school math and ELA, which were expected in the first year of adopting a new curriculum, indicating areas that need prioritization. Despite the successes, the results do not yet meet the desired standards, indicating that there is still work to be done.

Kristin Damo, Chief of Elementary Schools, provided insights on elementary results. Research indicates that increased independent reading, both in school and at home, correlates with higher performance on standardized tests. An initiative was launched to revamp classroom libraries based on the science of reading, aiming to create a more inviting environment for children to choose books they enjoy. The math curriculum, which emphasizes number fluency and conceptual thinking, has been implemented for three years, contributing to improved performance. A 7% increase in math performance was noted across all schools, indicating a positive trend in math education. Counting proficiency assessments showed an average of 89% across all schools, marking the highest level in three years. A concern was raised about maintaining the gains made in K-2 literacy while shifting focus to grades 3-4, questioning how to ensure that foundational skills do not decline.

Charmayne Joseph, Chief of Middle Schools, gave an update on middle school results. There were observed declines in some schools after the curriculum changes, prompting the need for root cause analysis to understand the underlying issues. The reading pandemic gap has been closed for 7th and 8th graders, who are now reading on grade level, while 5th and 6th graders are approximately 1.2 years behind. The focus for the year includes strengthening the reading intervention program and enhancing response to data cycles to ensure continuous improvement in teaching and learning.

There is a relative concern regarding the performance in math, as it has shown erratic results and declines, contrasting with the positive trends in science. The program adopted for math intervention indicates that students complete an average of 15 questions per week and master two skills, with last week's average being 32 questions and 2.1 skills mastered. The plan is to ensure a dedicated math intervention block is established to improve foundational numeracy and operations skills among students. The discussion noted that three schools were significant outliers in test results, impacting the overall averages for the other schools. Staffing issues and transitions were raised as contributing factors to the instability in schools, which may affect student performance. There are concerns regarding the operational challenges students face

with the switch to computerized testing, as they struggle to manage their work between the computer and scratch paper. Leaders are expected to monitor teachers to ensure adherence to the structured approach of dedicating sufficient time to both core instruction and IXL practice. It was decided that the 80-minute math block should include 60 minutes of core instruction followed by 20 to 30 minutes of cumulative review, ensuring a clear separation between teaching and practice.

Dumar Paden, Chief of High School, discussed the high school results. All high schools improved on the ELA Regents by 10 percentage points or higher, nearing pre-pandemic performance levels. Currently, 45% of students meet the SAT reading and writing benchmarks, with a goal to increase this to 65% over the next two to three years. There was a 24% increase in Algebra II performance and an 8% increase in Geometry performance, indicating positive trends in these subjects. Despite meeting internal proficiency goals in Algebra, the performance was heavily reliant on Ujima High School, which outperformed other schools, raising concerns about the teaching methods in those schools. Plans are in place for more intense coaching meetings and real-time coaching of teachers to replicate Ujima's success in Algebra I across other schools. A 10% decrease in science performance was noted, with a pilot of the Open Sci Ed curriculum being implemented in high schools to address this issue.

The goal for math readiness benchmarks is to reach 45%, which would represent a 20% increase in performance among students from similar socioeconomic backgrounds. Research indicates that the SAT is a strong predictor of college success, although it is not the only factor to consider. There is a concern about the potential elimination of the Regents exams and the need to ensure that internal measures are in place to assess grade-level standards. There is a significant concern regarding the achievement gaps in STEM subjects and the need to address these gaps from a socio-economic perspective. The plan is to implement the full suite of College Board Assessments, including the PSAT 8-9 and PSAT 10, to better assess students' college readiness levels.

#### **VIII. Finance Committee Report (Presenters: Omar Mayyasi)**

Omar Mayyasi, Interim Chief Financial Officer, gave the finance committee report. He discussed a \$24 million surplus discovered late in the fiscal year. The surplus was primarily due to a 4% increase in the per pupil rate, which was higher than the 2% that was budgeted, along with underspending on personnel and technology. The Finance Committee will meet to outline the sources of the surplus and discuss the processes that have been changed to address the identified issues.

Mr. Mayyasi shared that the team is looking to close out Q1 of fiscal year 25 and will conduct a deep dive into spending patterns to better utilize funds for schools. The discussion highlighted that the ESSER funding has been complicated and that a more accurate per-pupil amount has been established for the current year. The team will focus on improving budget reporting and education for DSOs and principals to ensure they understand their actual spending versus budgeted amounts.

#### **IX. Executive Session: Portfolio Planning (Presenters: Michael Rabin)**

Ms. Coquillette asked for a motion to enter executive session to discuss AF Brooklyn's growth

strategy, inviting all AF staff in attendance to join. Jon Atkeson motioned, Chris Lynch seconded. All in favor, none opposed or abstained.

**X. Adjourn (Presenters: Romy Coquillette)**

After exiting the executive session, Ms. Coquillette asked for a motion to adjourn.  
Desiree