



AF Brooklyn Board Meeting Minutes

Achievement First

12/10/2024 6:00 PM EST

@ 25 Broadway, 12th FL, New York, NY 10004

Attendance

Present:

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

AF Staff: Tiffany Bostic, Amy D'Angelo, Ketki Harale (remote), Mary Heilmann, Charmayne Joseph (remote), Andrew Klein, Lisa Margosian, Shannon Miller, Aaron Obrochta, Dumar Paden, Michael Rabin, Jason Russell

I. Call to Order (Presenters: Romy Coquillette)

Romy Coquillette called the meeting to order at 8:02 pm.

II. Public Comment (Presenters: Romy Coquillette)

There were no members of the public present.

III. Board Report Out: Legacy ES School Visit

Paul Cabana discussed the recent board visit to Legacy Elementary School. The visit underscored the importance of the school's space utilization and the strong parent community, which was noted as a significant factor in the school's success. He expressed concern about the ongoing growth of the school and the need for safety improvements, such as changing the street from a two-way to a one-way to enhance safety for students.

Ms. Coquillette mentioned a future tour scheduled for January 30th at Linden Elementary School, encouraging participation from members. She also stated that the board decided to cancel the previously scheduled January retreat due to scheduling conflicts and will inform members of a new date once determined.

IV. CEO Agenda Overview (Presenters: Lisa Margosian)

AF CEO Lisa Margosian provided highlights and insights into the presentations to be shared throughout the meeting.

V. Mission Moment (Presenters: Andrew Klein)

Andrew Klein, AF Managing Director of Special Services for New York, shared a story of a student in AF's Empower program, highlighting both the program's strengths and the student's hard work and determination over the years.

VI. AF Brooklyn State of Special Education (Presenters: Tiffany Bostic, Mary Heilmann, Andrew Klein)

Tiffany Bostic, Chief of Special Services, discussed how the special services staff fit within the AF Network. She then gave an overview of the opportunities and challenges that Special Education is currently facing.

Mary Heilmann, Associate Chief of Special Services, shared that 16% of students at AF Brooklyn are students with disabilities, all of whom are educated in an inclusive environment. This number is lower than the New York City average. The special education population is assessed through a robust Child Find Process, which includes monitoring student data and interventions before referral for special education services. The goal is to ensure students are making progress in interventions before considering special education services.

Ms. Heilmann shared that the primary disability classifications among students include autism spectrum disorders, speech and language impairments, specific learning disabilities, and other health impairments such as ADHD. This indicates a diverse range of needs within the special education population. The special education supports range from most restrictive to least restrictive, including Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) and Special Education Teacher Support Services (SETS), which provide varying levels of support based on student needs.

Ms. Heilmann discussed a significant proficiency gap of about 20% or higher for students with disabilities compared to their general education peers, indicating a need for improvement in academic performance. There has been a 5% year-over-year growth in reading proficiency among students with disabilities, indicating that intervention programs are beginning to show positive results.

Ms. Heilmann shared that suspension removal numbers for students with disabilities have drastically decreased over time, which is a significant achievement for the organization. This trend is also reflected in family and student satisfaction surveys, indicating that both groups are happy with their schools.

Mr. Klein talked about the Empower program which currently serves 107 students across various grades, with a notable success rate where 97% of students met their end-of-year goals in math. Additionally, the program has a student growth percentile of 61%, compared to 51% for students across the board.

Ms. Heilmann and Mr. Klein discussed challenges they are facing. There are significant challenges in providing related services such as speech therapy and occupational therapy, with only 44% of schools having the necessary therapists available for mandated services. There are threats of funding reductions at the state and city levels, particularly affecting students who require the most services, which could have a significant impact on the organization. There is a significant shortage of qualified teachers with the necessary certifications and specializations for special education,

which is a major challenge for the team. The team is collaborating with the talent team to explore ideas for improving recruitment and addressing the staffing challenges in special education.

VII. Executive Session: Personnel Updates and AF Brooklyn Growth (Presenters: Michael Rabin)

Ms. Coquilletta asked for a motion to enter executive session to discuss personnel updates and AF Brooklyn Growth. She invited all staff of AF in attendance to join the executive session. Kevin Miquelon motioned and Amy Arthur Samuels seconded. All were in favor, none abstained or opposed.

VIII. Board Approvals and Resolutions (Presenters: Romy Coquilletta)

The board exited the executive session. Ms Coquilletta directed the board to the resolutions for approval both in their printed agenda as well as on the screen. The first was a consent agenda approving the previous meeting minutes, setting the number of board members to 14, and approving an interim principal. Ms. Coquilletta asked for a motion to approve the consent agenda. Kevin Miquelon motioned, Desiree Dalton seconded. All in favor, none opposed or abstained.

Consent Agenda

1. BE IT RESOLVED, the AF Brooklyn Board of Trustees hereby approves the meeting minutes from October 8, 2024.
2. BE IT RESOLVED, that the Achievement First Brooklyn Board of Trustees hereby sets the number of Trustees at fourteen (14).
3. BE IT RESOLVED, the AF Brooklyn Board of Trustees hereby approves Trina Russell to serve as interim principal of North Brooklyn Middle School from 12/2/24 through the end of the 24-25 school year, based on the recommendation by Achievement First.

Next Ms. Coquilletta introduced a resolution related to expanding the growth of the Legacy Charter School. Desiree Dalton motioned, Chris Lynch seconded. All in favor, none opposed or abstained.

Legacy Charter School Resolution – Growth Expansion

WHEREAS the AF Brooklyn Board of Trustees recognizes that Achievement First Legacy Charter School is operating a sustainable school model and is well-positioned financially to support school expansion.

WHEREAS the AF Brooklyn Board of Trustees further recognizes that Achievement First Legacy Charter School is interested in expanding the Legacy K-4 charter to become a K-8 charter and extend the academic offerings to students in 5th grade in 2026.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the AF Brooklyn Board of Trustees hereby approves the plan to begin a phased expansion Achievement First Legacy Charter

School starting in school year 2026-2027 by enrolling a new 5th grade class and continuing to add a new class each subsequent year for the next three years pending the State University of New York (SUNY) approval, pending adequate enrollment for each school year, and pending final approval by this Board's Real Estate Subcommittee and the AF Brooklyn Board of Trustees once a site is selected and site-specific financials are provided.

IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the AF Brooklyn Board of Trustees hereby authorizes and directs Achievement First, Inc. officers and/or designees to take and carry out such action as required in connection with the foregoing Resolution.

Ms. Coquillette introduced the next resolution to return Charter 11 to SUNY. Brandon Sorlie motioned, Kevin Miquelon seconded. All in favor, none opposed or abstained.

Charter 11 Resolution

WHEREAS, the Achievement First Brooklyn Board of Trustees applied for and received Charter 11 in 2014,

WHEREAS, the Achievement First Brooklyn Board of Trustees has not yet used Charter 11 to grow the number of schools in New York City,

WHEREAS, the SUNY Charter Schools Institute granted its final extension for use of said charter until the 2025-2026 school year,

WHEREAS, the Achievement First Brooklyn Board of Trustees recognizes the need for a suitable timeline to expand and the availability of other opportunities for expansion through portfolio management,

NOW THEREFORE IT IS RESOLVED that the Achievement First Brooklyn Board of Trustees will return Charter 11 to the SUNY Charter Schools Institute during the 2024-2025 school year.

Ms. Coquillette introduced the final resolution regarding a lease for Ujima HS. Chris Lynch motioned, Andrea Kilpatrick seconded. All in favor, none opposed or abstained.

Ujima Lease Resolution

WHEREAS, Achievement First, Inc. ("AF") is negotiating a certain Lease Agreement (the "Lease") by and between its wholly owned subsidiary, AF Brooklyn HS4, LLC ("AF LLC"), as tenant, and 404 Pine Realty, LLC (the "Landlord"), as landlord, whereby AF LLC will lease from Landlord the land and improvements located at 406 Pine Street, Block: 4214, Lot: 1 and 459/469 Euclid Avenue, Brooklyn, New York 11208, Block:4214, Lot: 6 (the "Property"), upon the terms and subject to the conditions set forth in that certain Letter of Intent (the "LOI") presented to the Real Estate Sub-Committee of the Board of Trustees of the School (the "Committee");

WHEREAS, the School desires that the Committee continue to engage with AF to approve the transaction and sublease the entire Property from AF LLC, upon terms and subject to conditions to be negotiated by AF LLC and the Committee upon execution of the Lease;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that it is in the best interest of the School and the Board of Trustees hereby directs the Committee to review and approve, and enter into, as applicable, the LOI, lease, sublease and such other documents related to the lease and sublease of the Property, with such changes, modifications and amendments as the Committee at its discretion approve, provided that such changes, modifications and amendments do not materially differ from the terms agreed to in the LOI;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Committee, be, and hereby is, authorized and directed, at any time and from time to time, to do all such things and acts and to execute and deliver all such applications, documents and instruments in writing and to expend such fees for and on behalf of the School as may be necessary or advisable in order to give effect to and, generally, carry out the intent of these resolutions including, without limitation, to execute and deliver any instruments and documents required in connection with the Lease, in the name and on behalf of the School; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all actions previously taken by any members of the Committee on behalf of the School in furtherance of the foregoing resolutions, are hereby ratified and confirmed.

IX. Finance Committee Report (Presenters: Omar Mayyasi, Chris Lynch)

Omary Mayyasi, AF Interim CFO, provided a financial overview. The first quarter ended with a surplus of about \$7.5 million, attributed mainly to \$6.5 million in underspending due to open positions at schools. Plans were discussed regarding the allocation of the fiscal year 24 surplus and the incorporation of the 25 surplus projected from Q1. The cash provision has strengthened year after year, with approximately \$100 million in liquidity anticipated to generate about \$4 million in interest income.

There is a concern regarding the conservative budgeting practices for interest income, which may not accurately reflect the current financial environment. It was decided that the budgeting process needs to improve to better account for interest income and surplus projections moving forward.

The group discussed the need to invest the surplus back into schools and students, with a focus on themes such as student enrollment, experience, and staff retention, amounting to approximately \$35 million in planned expenditures over the next three years. There is a concern regarding the historical behavior of underspending budgets despite having available funds, which indicates a need for a change in mindset and accountability among school leaders. It was agreed that regional directors and school principals need to take responsibility for ensuring that budgets are spent effectively and not left unutilized. The next meeting will involve discussions on forecasting for the

upcoming year, ensuring that all participants are prepared and aware of the budgetary expectations.

X. Partnering on Governance (Presenters: Lisa Margosian)

Ms. Margosian shared her focus areas for the year and her expectations for the board related to engagement, attendance, and board giving. She also discussed the board's role in governance and shifting from oversight to strategic engagement.

Ms. Margosian highlighted AF's 25th Anniversary Summit .The celebration is set for May 29th and 30th, with an expected attendance of a thousand people, showcasing students and alumni as part of the event. Participants were encouraged to mark their calendars for the event and make every effort to attend, indicating the significance of their presence at the celebration.

XI. Adjourn (Presenters: Romy Coquillette)

There being no other board business, Ms. Coquillette asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Andrea Kilpatrick motioned, Brandon Sorlie seconded. All in favor, none opposed or abstained. The meeting adjourned at 8 pm.