



AF Hartford Board Meeting

Thursday, March 6, 2025 from 5:30 to 7:00 PM EST

Virtual via Zoom: <https://achievementfirst.zoom.us/j/81272793527>

Attendance

Present:

Members: Lisa Tanen-La Fontaine, Surbhi Patel, Victor De La Paz, Charon Smalls, Erwin Hurst, Sr.

AF Staff: Amy D'Angelo, Kristin Damo, Kiah Hufane, Chamayne Joseph, Samantha Lucky, Lisa Margosian, Omar Mayyasi, Shannon Miller, Aaron Obrochta, Dumar Paden, Michael Rabin, Ru Sharma, Raina Simmons, Laneka Thomas, Sueleidy Cruz

I. **Call to Order (Board Business) (Presenters: Erwin Hurst, Sr.)**

Board Chair Erwin T. Hurst Sr. called the meeting to order at 5:31 pm.

II. **Public Comment (Board Business) (Presenters: Erwin Hurst, Sr.)**

There were no members of the public present.

III. **Board Resolutions and Approvals (Decision) (Presenters: Erwin Hurst, Sr.)**

Mr. Hurst asked for a motion to approve the board meeting minutes from October 10th and December 12th 2024. Lisa Tanen-LaFontaine motioned. Victor De La Paz seconded. All in favor, none opposed or abstained.

BE IT RESOLVED, the AF Hartford Board of Directors hereby approves the meeting minutes from October 10, 2024 and December 12, 2024.

IV. **CEO Agenda Overview (Inform) (Presenters: Lisa Margosian)**

Lisa Margosian welcomed board members, school-based leaders, and network support staff. She outlined the evening's agenda, which included principal presentations, an executive session focused on principal mid-year reviews and ESSER funding, and a deep dive into Achievement First's talent strategy. Lisa emphasized the importance of teacher recruitment and retention, as well as leadership development, in driving student success. She also noted that a brief finance committee update would be provided before adjournment.

V. **Principal Presentations (Inform) (Presenters: Sueleidy Cruz, Raina Simmons, Laneka Thomas)**

Elementary School Report: Principal Sueleidy Cruz provided an overview of key focus areas, particularly chronic absenteeism, reading proficiency, and math achievement. She highlighted a 10% year-over-year reduction in chronic absenteeism, bringing the school below the 20% threshold for the first time. This success was attributed to

consistent communication with families, targeted interventions, and enhanced resource access. Reading proficiency showed strong gains, particularly in kindergarten, third, and fourth grades, while math progress remained an area of focus. The school is doubling down on teacher development and refining instructional strategies to drive greater improvements.

Family engagement remains a priority, and survey data revealed a rise from 81% to 86% in parent satisfaction with academic updates. The school has introduced monthly progress reports alongside events such as academic nights and honor roll ceremonies to strengthen family-school partnerships.

Middle School Report:Principal Oraina Simmons shared encouraging results, noting that chronic absenteeism had improved but remains a challenge due to transportation barriers and family displacement. The school has implemented individualized attendance plans, strengthened its teacher-led intervention teams, and collaborated with Hartford Public Schools to increase bus accessibility for students.

Reading proficiency is trending upward, largely due to targeted interventions and enhanced instructional execution. Principal Simmons highlighted the exceptional work of her fifth-grade reading teacher, who has demonstrated data-driven instructional leadership. Math proficiency remains an area for growth, but the school has taken strategic steps, including introducing the IXL intervention program and refining math instructional practices. Family engagement has also improved, with structured school-wide events, increased communication, and packed attendance at the recent student vs. parent game night and sports competitions.

High School Report:Principal Laneka Thomas provided an overview of significant gains in attendance, with chronic absenteeism decreasing by over 20% since last year. This improvement was credited to daily attendance huddles, proactive family outreach, and student incentive programs. The school has provided bus passes for students facing transportation barriers and has strengthened relationships with Hartford Public Schools to secure additional transportation options.

In terms of academics, ELA proficiency is on track, supported by a fully staffed and experienced teaching team. The school's 90-minute ELA blocks and targeted reading interventions have contributed to student success. Math proficiency is showing positive momentum following key staffing shifts, including moving the AP Calculus teacher to Algebra I to address foundational learning gaps.

Family engagement efforts have been well received, with survey results showing a jump in family favorability from 82% to 90%. The school has relaunched its Parent Leadership Council, which has taken the lead in planning family events and designing a parent-led survey to better tailor engagement efforts.

VI. Executive Session: Principal Mid Year Reviews (Inform) (Presenters: Kristin Damo, Charmayne Joseph, Dumar Paden)

Mr. Hurst asked for a motion to enter executive session to discuss principal mid year reviews. Victor De La Paz motioned. Lisa Tanen-Lafontaine seconded. All in favor, none opposed or abstained.

VII. AF: Building a Talent First Organization (Inform) (Presenters: Ru Sharma, Kiah Hufane)

Ru Sharma and Kiah Hufane presented a deep dive into Achievement First's talent strategy, focusing on teacher recruitment, certification challenges, and leadership development. The network has made strides in increasing the percentage of certified teachers in the applicant pool, though this shift has slightly reduced the overall number of applicants. Recruitment teams have transitioned to a more regionalized approach to better meet hiring needs. The board discussed the challenges of balancing certification mandates with maintaining a strong, diverse teacher pipeline.

VIII. Finance Committee Report (Inform) (Presenters: Omar Mayyasi)

Omar Mayyasi provided a brief finance update, reporting that AF Hartford Academy remains on track to meet its budget goals for the year. He noted that the school is monitoring the phase-out of ESSER funding and exploring additional financial strategies to maintain stability.

IX. AF 25th Anniversary Summit (Inform) (Presenters: Lisa Margosian)

Lisa Margosian reminded board members about Achievement First's 25th Anniversary Summit in May, encouraging participation.

X. Adjourn

Mr. Hurst asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Lisa Tanen-LaFontaine motioned. Charon Smalls seconded. All in favor, none opposed or abstained.