

1. Why is the property selling for so much below the assessed value?

Three independent appraisals of the property were completed; one appraisal was conducted by the city and two appraisals were conducted by Achievement First. Fair market value was determined on the property. The environmental issues threatening the safety of the property allow us to purchase the building at a significantly reduced price.

2. Can you make local hiring a condition of your contracts with cleaning and food service companies?

We are currently in the midst of agreed upon contracts with both our cleaning and food service providers. When our cleaning and food service contracts come up for renewal, we can add language in the bid to give preference to local workers. In the event that local residents do not apply or are not qualified, our cleaning company will be able to hire other employees.

3. What is your timeline for construction?

If our bid to purchase the MLK building is approved, we are following an aggressive timeline to have the school ready by July 2014. This gives us approximately 20 months to go through the city approval process, acquire the building, demolish the current building, clear the land of various environmental hazards, and finally build the new facility for our scholars. This schedule is necessary because in August 2014, we will have too many scholars to house in our location on Prince Street. We are building this new facility so that we can continue to serve our current students and the additional students who will matriculate into our high school.

4. When will demolition begin?

Demolition is slated to begin in the late winter of 2013.

5. How many construction jobs is this project going to create for people who live in Dixwell/Newhallville?

We anticipate that this project will create the equivalent of 60 construction jobs. These are the labor jobs on the construction site – this does not include any professional level jobs, like the construction manager, architect, program manager, environmental consultants, etc. Of the 60 labor jobs on the project, we estimate that 10-15 of them will be held by New Haven residents. If we are able to hire a professional services with New Haven residents on this project, then that will boost the number further.

6. How are you going to play a role in holding the contractors accountable for hiring neighborhood residents?

Our contractors will be required to follow regulations created by the Commission on Equal Opportunities. As the state is funding a substantial portion of this project, they are subject to CT guidelines, including reserving hours for local workers, minority business enterprises, and women-owned business. In our recent project to build Amistad Academy Elementary and Middle Schools, we exceeded the baseline requirements for local access in 3 out of the 4 categories. However, please note that we are not an enforcement agency. The City of New Haven is responsible for monitoring the hiring and reporting of local, women and minority workers. Attached please find the City's Code of Ordinances, which describes their reporting and enforcement processes.

7. Lisa Desfosses said in the New Haven Independent that an agreement has been reached with the community to occasionally use the facility.

We are extremely disappointed that Lisa was misquoted by the New Haven Independent. Lisa is very closely involved in all aspects of this project and she is very aware of the ongoing conversations that Achievement First is having with the community to reach an agreement. Her actual statement highlighted these ongoing conversations and commented that we believe we will reach a mutually beneficial agreement.

8. How is the agreement with the community going to be enforced?

The community benefits agreement will have clearly outlined approved uses and typical scenarios that we agree to. The agreement will note that our first commitment is to our scholars, their families, and our staff. When community spaces are not being used by the school, they will be available to the community. The benefits agreement will dictate that usage. Achievement First will enter into an agreement with a full commitment to fulfill it as written and with good faith.

9. I know you want the school to be open for July 2014. I know construction takes time. But why does this need to be approved in two days?

The proposed schedule is necessary because in August 2014, we will have too many scholars to house in our location on Prince Street. We are building this new facility so that we can continue to serve our current students and the additional students who will matriculate into our high school. The process of purchasing a building and renovating the property into a state of the art facility is a long one with numerous permits, regulations and inspections. In order to meet all of these requirements and timelines, we need to begin the process very soon.

10. What kinds of things are you proposing as a community benefit other than the school itself?

We believe our project will have at least the following five benefits for the Newhallville community.

1. The community will have access to indoor meeting space and an outdoor athletic field.
2. Achievement First Amistad High School is a high performing school that will serve 550 students by 2015. Our New Haven school is already serving 313 students who live in wards 20 & 21. Having their school so close to home is a benefit for those students and their families.
3. The MLK building is currently vacant and deteriorating. This project will revitalize a very large plot of land in the Newhallville community which will beautify the block, reduce criminal activity on the property, and provide a safe space for community use.
4. This project is a \$35 million dollar investment in Newhallville. This project is funded by the state and must follow standards set by the state regarding employing local, minority and female workers. With our previous project, Amistad Academy on Edgewood, our project met and exceeded these standards. This project will bring jobs to Newhallville, and it will attract more investments into the neighborhood.
5. Our high school students are required to complete 20 hours of community service each year. That totals 11,000 hours of service (at 550 students) each year. Our students will contribute thousands of hours of community service in the neighborhood surrounding the school. Our students are committed to giving back to their community and will be a tremendous asset to the neighborhood.

11. What are your plans to recruit more children from the Dixwell/Newhallville neighborhood?

Achievement First Amistad Academy High School is not a part of a lottery process. Per our charter with the State of CT, students must attend an Achievement First middle school to qualify for entry to the high school.

To that end, our extensive New Haven student recruitment efforts focus on K-8 students. Our New Haven elementary and middle schools are a part of the City's portfolio of choice schools. Each year, prior to New Haven's Public Schools of Choice enrollment lottery, our student recruitment outreach efforts include:

- a. Multiple direct mailings to New Haven Public Schools students based on a contact list provided by New Haven Public Schools;
- b. Print and radio advertisements;
- c. Neighborhood canvassing across all New Haven communities, including Newhallville; this focuses on homes with Pre-K or 4th grade students because we have the most seats available in Kindergarten and 5th grade;

- d. Partnerships with community organizations, including churches, community centers, daycare centers and after-school programs, e.g. we plan to work with the Varick and Beulah churches and other groups in Newhallville;
- e. Open houses and information sessions at existing AF schools; and
- f. Participation in New Haven's Public Schools of Choice program fair.
- g. We welcome suggestions for churches, community centers, and other local organizations in the Newhallville neighborhood that would like to work with us to inform families and recruit students.

12. I've heard that black teachers are more likely to quit your schools. How are you going to address that?

At Achievement First, we recognize that the number one factor impacting student achievement is teacher quality. Finding, developing, recognizing and retaining great educators is the key to the success of our students. We aim to recruit the best teachers from around the country, provide them with outstanding professional development, and create opportunities that will inspire and support them in their careers.

We believe that teachers and school leaders who share racial and/or socioeconomic backgrounds with our students are poised to be especially effective role models, and they bring an important perspective to our schools that enhance sensitivity and cultural competence. Achievement First also strives to create an inclusive working environment in order to attract talented people from all backgrounds—regardless of race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age and sex.

Here are some recent statistics regarding racial and socio-economic diversity on our staff:

- In 2011-12, 31%* of Achievement First staff members across our network of schools in NY and CT identified as Black, Latino, bi-racial or multi-racial. In CT, 25%* of CT staff are Black, Latino, or multi-racial. As a comparison, only 17% of all US teachers are teachers of color.
- In Connecticut, 25% of AF staff members were first generation college students.
- In 2011-12, the percentage of Black & Latino new hires was 28% across all of our schools.
- In 2011-12 in New Haven, 16%* (31/191) of staff members identified as Black, Latino, bi-racial or multi-racial.

**This does not include those who checked "other" or who did not specify on the survey.*

We recognize that while we are doing a lot to attract great teachers of color, each year we are losing a number of great teachers. We are currently working on ways to nurture and sustain all of our teachers, and especially our teachers of color. If you have ideas on how we can do this better, we welcome the opportunity to discuss this very important initiative. We want to ensure that all of our great teachers persist because great teachers are the most important factor in supporting our scholars' success.