

Approved

## Meeting Minutes

### **Amistad Academy Board of Directors Meeting**

9/25/2013

Elm City College Prep Elementary – Community Room

A meeting of the Amistad Academy of Directors was held on 9/25/2013 at Elm City College Prep Elementary Community Room.

The following board members, constituting a quorum, were in attendance:

**Alex Troy – Conference Call**

**Melinda Hamilton**

**Lorraine Gibbons**

**Khadijah Muhammad**

**Michael Griffin**

**Caroline Williams**

**Katrin Czingier**

**Michael Van Leesten**

**Michael Thomas**

**Howard Hill**

**Andrew Lachman**

**Bill Powers**

Also in attendance:

School staff: **N/A**

Achievement First staff: **Ken Paul, Reshma Singh, Max Polaner, Laura Fletcher**

Guests: **Bill Bouton, Melissa Bailey of the New Haven Independent**

#### **I. Call to Order & Attendance**

The meeting was called to order at 5:40 p.m. by Melinda Hamilton

#### **II. Open Session For Public Comment**

There was no public comment

#### **Board Business**

##### **III. Review Conflict of Interest Policy**

Melinda encourages board members to turn in their conflict of interest forms.

##### **IV. Review and Approval of Past Meeting Minutes**

The Board of Directors reviewed and approved minutes from the August 1 meeting.

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- a. NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT, the Board of Directors of Amistad Academy hereby approves the August 1, 2013 Meeting Minutes as drafted.

Michael Van Leesten moved to approve the minutes as presented, and Lorraine Gibbons seconded the motion. The motion carried with unanimous approval of the Board.

The Board of Directors reviewed minutes from the August 20 meeting.

- b. NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT, the Board of Directors of Amistad Academy hereby approves the August 20, 2013 Meeting Minutes as drafted.

Katrin Czinger moved to approve the minutes as presented, and Lorraine Gibbons seconded the motion. The motion carried with unanimous approval of the Board.

### **Financial Update (Michael Griffin)**

#### **V. YTD financials (Resolution 5)**

Michael Griffin provided the following update:

Amistad is in good financial position. The number of students enrolled by Oct. 1 determines the funding we get for the year from the state. The elementary and middle schools enrollment rates are currently on target as budgeted. The high school's enrollment is a few students short according to the budgeted numbers. Expenses are also on budget. The elementary school has a slight surplus because fewer staff members than anticipated were hired. At the high school, we are slightly above budget because we hired more people than expected due to illnesses of staff members. After reviewing the financial statements, it has been determined that we are in sound financial position. The Finance Committee has been working with team finance to make sure operations are running as smoothly as possible and to make sure the audit procedure also runs smoothly.

- a. NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT, the Board of Directors of Amistad Academy hereby accepts the YTD Financial report dated 8/31/13 as presented.

Khadjiah Muhammad moved to approve the YTD Financials as presented, and Caroline Williams seconded the motion. The motion carried with unanimous approval of the Board.

### **Board Discussion**

#### **VI. Board Retreat Recap – Working Groups & Active Committees**

Reshma Singh provided the following update:

During our board retreat, working groups that met about the following 3 topics and updates that Reshma gave to the board are listed below:

- Reporting & data practices
  - The working group developed a few concepts of types of metrics they would like to see on a regular basis

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- Unfortunately, we are working with assessments that are not entirely aligned with the standards which make it difficult to finalize the tracker at this time.
- The principal reports will be replaced by the new dashboard and the principals will provide qualitative updates on the dashboard during the meetings
- The tracker/dashboard will be available to the board by November.
- Melinda commented that she was thrilled to see the IA data in the dashboard and asked if there is a data element for teacher retention?
  - Reshma said that the retention data would not be available monthly – it would be a snap shot at the end of the year
  - Melinda is also a big fan of principals not having to write a report, but wonders if we should send them a check list of items in advance for them to choose from during their discussion with the board, like teacher attrition or staff culture, or development issues
  - Reshma said that it was a good idea and asked board members to come prepared to address these issues if they have questions
- Michael Van Leesten said that he was not at the retreat, but asked when people were discussing the report, if there were any discussion around the Common Core and how that may change the data reporting
  - Reshma responded in saying that we are 2 years ahead in NY, but we are still preparing for this
  - Michael asked how laborious is it to change the dashboard?
  - Reshma responded: it shouldn't be too difficult, but it's also not extremely easy. This is probably a smaller lift in the grand scheme of things for our data team. Reshma also explain what the general implications to the curriculum are with the oncoming common core.
- Governance & Principal Hiring
  - We hope to form a governance committee and hope to merge the principal hiring committee and existing PGP committee
  - We are currently at 1.5 PIRs for every future foreseen opening – and we feel like we are better prepared for our new school openings. We want to make principal transitions less bumpy for schools and boards. We also want to make sure that board members have more input in the principal hiring process
  - Katrin, Khadijah volunteered to be a part of the principal hiring committee. However, we need to check the bylaws to make sure we can have a parent rep as a part of the committee.
  - Melinda was excited about the depth of the pipeline for principals

## VII. Committee Rosters

Melinda mentioned that the Finance Committee and the High School Committee meetings today both went well.

Caroline gave a brief update on the high school construction:

- We are currently 100% on budget.
- In general, things are going well, and we are still are on target in relation to the timeline
- Every day that the construction goes over, the construction company will pay a fee to us which is an incentive to stick to the timeline.

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Reshma also mentioned the community event that was held for the high school and described how we are experiencing much higher buy-in from the community. She said that we have strengthened our relationship with the Newhallville community. Candice has been attending the community meetings to hear their thoughts on how things like traffic, etc. will change once the school is opened.

Melinda also discussed the PGP process. She mentioned that it is going to be timelier going forward. She is pleased with the progress of this committee. She referred to Tony Siddall's document detailing this process which was in the board binders.

Visitor day is coming up on 10/4, Reshma encourage members of the board to invite their friends

#### **VIII. Board Composition – Open Seats**

Bill Powers from Amistad Academy Middle will be our new teacher representative.

Mayor DeStefano as the Board of Education Representative will be replaced in a few weeks, following the election.

#### **IX. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:17 by Michael Van Leesten & Lorrain Gibbons.

Minutes taken by Sharon Richards, Development Associate.

### **Joint Session**

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#### **Joint Board Discussion (6:30 pm)**

Board Members in Attendance:

##### **Amistad Academy:**

Melinda Hamilton  
Lorraine Gibbons  
Khadijah Muhammad  
Michael Griffin  
Caroline Williams  
Katrin Czinger  
Michael Van Leesten  
Michael Thomas  
Howard Hill  
Andrew Lachman  
Bill Powers

##### **Elm City College Prep:**

William F. Heins  
Lystra M. Richardson  
Magaly Cajigas  
Dick Ferguson  
Carolyn Greenspan  
Marnie Halsey  
Patricia Pierce  
Deb Quinsee  
Laura Saverin  
Kate Stasik  
Pat Sweet

School staff: **Lashell Rountree**

Achievement First staff: **Ken Paul, Reshma Singh, Max Polaner, Laura Fletcher, Kelonda Maull, Scot Kerr, Sharon Richards, Bill Bouton**

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Guests: **Melissa Bailey of the New Haven Independent**

Ms. Melinda Hamilton called the Joint session to order at 6:35pm.

Ms. Hamilton asked Ms. Laura Fletcher to introduce Days of Practice (Professional Development Days) with the Boards and she invited the Boards to attend an upcoming event.

**Joint High School Committee report (Caroline Williams)**

Ms. Carolyn Williams gave a brief overview of the High School Committee meeting that took place earlier in the evening. She highlighted Chris Bostock's Principal Report concerning his goals for year two and Lisa Desfosses gave an update on the Facilities report concerning Amistad High School.

**Teacher Career Pathways approval (Scot Kerr)**

Mr. Kerr discussed the Teacher Career Pathways program. Mr. Kerr reported the program was approved and the State of Connecticut and the Board was very impressed with the program.

**Update on status of Annual Charter Reports (Scot Kerr)**

Mr. Kerr gave an update on the preparation and submission of the annual reports due mid-October.

**Visitor Day Schedule / Board participation (Ken Paul)**

Mr. Paul discussed Visitor Days with the Boards and asked them to invite and join our events in Brooklyn, New Haven, Bridgeport, Hartford and RI. Mr. Paul introduced the online invitations program Celebrations and gave background to its use. Ms. Sweet suggested to the Boards to bring their local legislators to the November Visitor Day in New Haven.

**Advocacy Update (Reshma Singh)**

Ms. Singh gave the Boards an update on state advocacy efforts. She introduced the CT Coalition work and explained their efforts for the upcoming legislative session. In New Haven the Mayoral Primary has happened and Achievement First is securing meetings with candidates to visit our schools during the campaign. Voter registration is going on in all schools across geographies. Parent Leadership trainings will kick-off soon and she gave background to this. She mentioned they will be looking for more parents to train this year.

Ms. Singh mentioned the Mayoral March in NY and Achievement First participation. She gave background to the march and explained it will have a huge impact. Ms. Singh gave the Boards information on the Achievement First Providence Mayoral Academy Elementary School and let them know things are moving forward and the school is doing great. Mr. Paul gave some background to his visit to RI and he mentioned the upcoming Opening Day Event at the school. Ms. Singh then opened for questions.

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**Principal Reports** (Rebecca Good and Katie Poynter, 7:00 pm)

Ms. Good gave her Principal report to the Boards and discussed her goals and priorities for the year. This year she is focusing on Connecticut Mastery Testing and is preparing for the Common Core shift. She expressed her team is developing tactics to align with the Common Core and investing in scholars by imbedding character development into these tactics. She reported that management is on task and she is really excited about the coming year. She expressed she has more senior staff and is positive this year will be great. She then opened for questions.

Ms. Poynter introduced herself to the Boards and gave background on her work experience at Achievement First. She discussed her priorities for the year and mentioned her staff is working really hard and is in a great place. She will focus on student culture and setting high expectations, academic urgency and pursuing more rigorous instruction. She then opened for questions.

Ms. Hamilton expressed her last visit to the school was joyful and she thanked Ms. Poynter for the work she has done so far in her school. Ms. Poynter mentioned the book the, "Five Dysfunctions of a team" and gave background on using this book as a tool this year with her staff. She mentioned there are places for growth and places the school is doing really well. She explained her staff is excited to see the school transform and everyone is moving forward.

Mr. Powers (Teacher Representative) spoke to the Boards about the powerful energy and engaging conversations and her leadership are keeping the school moving forward. Ms. Poynter spoke to teacher retention and opened for questions.

Hearing no other questions Mr. Hamilton adjourned the meeting at 7:40pm by Pat Sweet and Andrew Lachman.

Minute Taken by Kelonda Maull, External Relations

Approve: \_\_\_\_\_