

Joint Session
Amistad Academy & Elm City College Preparatory
Board of Directors

Wednesday, May 20, 2015, 5:30 – 7:15 pm
Achievement First Network Support, 403 James Street, New Haven

I. Call to Order & Attendance

The meeting was called to order at 5:50 pm by Dick Ferguson.

The following board members, constituting quorum, and Achievement First Staff were in attendance:

Jennifer Connell, AA Board - Yes
Katrín Czinger, AA Board - Yes
Lorraine Gibbons, AA Board - Yes
Carolyn Greenspan, AA Board - Yes
Michael Griffin, AA Board - Yes
Toni Harp, AA Board - No
Howard Hill, AA Board - No
David Katzman, AA Board - Yes
Dorsey Kendrick, AA Board - No
Andrew Lachman, AA Board - Yes
Jane Levin, AA Board - Yes
Tashia Mills, AA Board - No
Reginald Simmons, AA Board - Yes
Pat Sweet, AA Board - Yes
Caroline Williams, AA Board - Yes
Daisy Gonzales, AA Board - No

Magaly Cajigas, ECCP Board - Yes
Richard Ferguson, ECCP Board - Yes
Patric Gregory, ECCP Board - No
Marnie Halsey, ECCP Board - Yes
William Heins, ECCP Board - Yes (Phone)
Stephanie Ma, ECCP Board - Yes
Sharon Oster, ECCP Board - No
Patricia Pierce, ECCP Board - Yes
Lystra Richardson, ECCP Board - No
Laura Saverin, ECCP Board - Yes
Kaitlyn Stasik, ECCP Board - Yes
Carlos Torre, ECCP Board - Yes
Sean Williams, ECCP Board - No

Sarah Blanton, Network Support - Yes
Ken Paul, Network Support - Yes
Lenny Speiller, Network Support - Yes
Max Polaner, Network Support - Yes
Candice Dormon, Network Support - Yes

Guests: Aliyya Swaby, New Haven Independent Staff Writer
Genevive Walker- Elm City College Prep Board Candidate
Cassie Crockett - Amistad Academy Board Candidate

II. Open Session For Public Comment

No public comment.

III. Principal Reports

Amanda Alonzy, Principal of Amistad Academy Elementary, presented her report. She shared that the school hosted a well attended SBAC night for families (approximately eighty percent of parents were present) to learn more about the new state test and help support test preparation. Overall, students are happy and prepared to take the SBAC test. Students attended a camp fair which showcased many summer opportunities for them. Ms. Alonzy was pleased to report that school leadership is remaining the same and are recruiting new teachers. Leadership is working on sustainable careers for teachers. From a budget perspective, leadership is being thoughtful about spending responsibly while still operating the school effectively.

Katie Poynter, Principal of Amistad Academy Middle School, presented her report. Like the elementary school, students are preparing for SBAC testing. Leadership is focusing on positive school culture and putting an emphasis on being happy. Ms. Poynter shared a school video titled “You’re gonna rock this test” which featured students actively engaged in fun test preparation. In order to get ready for next year, the leadership team is gathering input from teachers to identify potential focus areas (Ex. adult culture, kid culture and instruction). Ms. Poynter believes that when adults model investment in education the students likewise engage more directly academically and invest in their education. Ms. Poynter was happy to report low teacher turnover and high retention while noting some leadership changes at the Dean level. She confirmed that new teachers receive extensive training and all teachers receive two weeks of summer professional development.

IV. Joint High School Committee (Caroline Williams)

Ms. Caroline Williams provided a report on Amistad High School. She shared that senior signing day was a great success and rising 9th grade students were in attendance. She confirmed that test preparation is going well and students are excited to take their AP exams. Ms. Williams reiterated that the spring has been difficult with a lean staff noting that a few school leaders have been out due to various reasons. In addition, outgoing Principal Chris Bostock is closing out the school year strong despite transitioning to AF Brooklyn High School. Ms. Williams shared the Joint High School Committee’s recommendation for Principal. Ms. Williams also urged all board members to attend AF Amistad High’s Dedication on June 4th that will feature Dr. David Harris, Provost and Vice-President of Tufts University, as the keynote speaker.

V. Governance Committee (Marnie Halsey)

Ms. Halsey provided a report on the Governance Committee. She shared that the committee is intensely focused on recruitment of new board members. Ms. Halsey welcomed Carlos Torre to the board. Ms. Halsey also welcomed Genevieve Walker and Cassie Crockett as potential new members. Ms. Halsey shared that the Bylaws Subcommittee is actively reviewing the bylaws to ensure all compliance and regulations are up to date. The Governance Committee will present its recommendation at the retreat in August.

VI. Advocacy Update (Lenny Speiller)

Mr. Speiller provided a report on Achievement First's advocacy initiatives. He discussed the proposed moratorium on new charter schools and explained that charter schools are currently facing a financial moratorium on new schools and seat growth (backfilling open seats or growing existing seats). Mr. Speiller discussed Achievement First's strategies and hopes that by June 3, 2015 when legislative session ends there will be a solution. Mr. Speiller clarified that budget conversations are about maintaining base operating expenses in a time when there is flat funding while expenses increase. For example, should the moratorium go into place Amistad High School will be forced to retain a lean staff next year and in many cases teachers will need to increase their already heavy class load by teaching an additional grade. It's also possible that the school may need to inform 33 students that they can no longer attend due to state budget constraints.

VII. June 4th Dedication (Ken Paul)

Mr. Paul invited all board members to attend the June 4th AF Amistad High School Dedication event. He explained that the event is important to celebrate not only the new building but the wonderful high school program and its bright future. Mr. Paul also reminded members to make a financial contribution and the importance of 100 percent participation by the end of the fiscal year, June 30.

VIII. Board Business

RESOLVED, the Boards of Directors of Amistad Academy & Elm City College Preparatory hereby approves the joint meeting minutes from March 25, 2015.

Moved by Pat Sweet

Seconded by Laura Saverin

All in favor

Adjourn to Individual Board Meetings

Amistad Academy

Board of Directors Meeting

Achievement First Network Support, 403 James Street, New Haven
Wednesday, May 20, 2015

I. Call to Order & Attendance

The meeting was called to order at 6:47 pm by Carolyn Greenspan.

The following board members, constituting quorum, and Achievement First Staff were in attendance:

Jennifer Connell, AA Board - yes
Katrin Czingier, AA Board - yes
Lorraine Gibbons, AA Board - yes
Carolyn Greenspan, AA Board - yes
Michael Griffin, AA Board - yes
Toni Harp, AA Board - no
Howard Hill, AA Board - no
Pat Sweet, AA Board - yes

David Katzman, AA Board - yes
Dorsey Kendrick, AA Board - no
Andrew Lachman, AA Board - no
Jane Levin, AA Board - yes
Reginald Simmons, AA Board - yes
Caroline Williams, AA Board - yes
Tashia Mills, AA Board - no

Candice Dormon, Network Support - yes

Max Polaner, Network Support - yes

Cassie Crockett - Amistad Academy Board Candidate - yes

II. Financial Report (Mike Griffin and Max Polaner)

Mike Griffin and Max Polaner provided the financial report. The report highlighted key aspects of the 2015-16 school year budget including state level flat funding and the corresponding increase in philanthropy targets to spend the same amount as district schools per student, not more. In addition, medical expenses are increasing and other expenses include a four percent increase in salaries to match the teacher contract which is increasing at the same rate. We do this to maintain competitiveness with the teachers union. Mr. Paul confirmed the Development Team's strategy to reach philanthropy targets. Mr. Polaner confirmed that budgets are owned by the schools and supported by network support. Schools are responsible for fixing any unexpected expenses. He clarified that schools pay a 10 percent management fee of recurring public funding to Achievement First in order to handle operations. Schools have full control over almost all of their budget. He also clarified that ancillary service fees that are not included in the management agreement but which are covered by the network include bookkeepers and data fellows.

Executive Session

The Board of Directors entered into executive session at 7:27pm.

Moved by Caroline Williams

Seconded by Pat Sweet

The Board of Directors exited executive session at 7:37pm.

Moved by Caroline Williams

Seconded by Pat Sweet

III. Board Business

Resolution 1:

RESOLVED, the Amistad Academy Board of Directors hereby approves the joint meeting minutes from March 25, 2015.

Moved by Lorraine Gibbons

Seconded by Carolyn Greenspan

All in favor

Resolution 2:

RESOLVED, the Amistad Academy Board of Directors hereby approves the meeting minutes from March 25, 2015.

Moved by David Katzman

Seconded by Reginald Simmons

All in favor

Resolution 3:

RESOLVED, the Amistad Academy Board of Directors hereby approves the financial report as presented.

Moved by Pat Sweet

Seconded by Caroline Williams

All in favor

Resolution 4:

RESOLVED, the Amistad Academy Board of Directors hereby approves the financial budget as recommended by the Finance Committee and prepared by Achievement First for the 2015-16 fiscal year.

Moved by Pat Sweet

Seconded by Lorraine Gibbons

All in favor

Resolution 5:

RESOLVED, the Board of Directors of Amistad Academy Board of Directors hereby accepts the recommendation of Claire Polcrack as the Principal of Achievement First Amistad High School effective July 1, 2015.

Moved by Caroline Williams
Seconded by Katrin Czinger
All in favor

Resolution 6:

RESOLVED, the Amistad Academy Board of Directors hereby ratifies the re-appointment of CohnReznik to perform the financial audit of the 2014-15 fiscal year.

Moved by Pat Sweet
Seconded by Caroline Williams
All in favor

Resolution 7:

RESOLVED, the Amistad Academy Board of Directors hereby ratifies the re-election of Directors with the following directors with term limits specified below:

Lorraine Gibbons - ending June 30, 2018
Reginald Simmons - ending June 30, 2018
David Katzman - ending June 30, 2018
Pat Sweet - ending June 30, 2018
Jane Levin - ending June 30, 2017
Katrin Czinger - ending June 30, 2018
Dorsey Kendrick - ending June 30, 2018

Moved by Caroline Williams
Seconded by Mike Griffin
All in favor

Resolution 8:

RESOLVED, the Amistad Academy Board of Directors hereby elects Cassie Crockett to the Board of Directors with a three year term ending June 30, 2018.

Moved by Caroline Williams
Seconded by Katrin Czinger
All in favor

IV. Discussion

A. Summer Retreat Agenda

We will do a deep dive on college retention for Amistad High alumni on August 13.

V. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 7:52pm