

Amistad Academy
Board of Directors Meeting
March 23, 2016
403 James Street, New Haven

I. Call to Order & Attendance

The meeting was called to order by Carolyn Greenspan at 5:47 pm.

The following directors and staff were in attendance:

Carolyn Greenspan, AA Board - Yes
Caroline Williams, AA Board - No
Mike Griffin, AA Board - No
Lorraine Gibbons, AA Board - Yes
Andrew Lachman, AA Board - Yes
Cassie Crockett, AA Board - Yes
Daisy Gonzales, AA Board - No
David Katzman, AA Board - Yes
Dorsey Kendrick, AA Board - No
Jane Levin, AA Board - Yes
Pat Sweet, AA Board - Yes

Reginald Simmons, AA Board - Yes
Jennifer Connell, AA Board - Yes
Katrin Czinger, AA Board - Yes

Sarah Blanton, AF Network Support - Yes
Ken Paul, AF Network Support - Yes
Laurie Bussmann, AF Network Support - Yes
John Furniss, AF Network Support - Yes
Amanda Alonzy, School Leadership - Yes
Katie Poynter, School Leadership - Yes
Gina Musumeci, AF Network Support - Yes

Member of the public: Khadijah Muhammad

II. Open Session For Public Comment

No public comment.

III. Reports and Discussion

A. Principal Reports

1. Amistad Academy ES (Amanda Alonzy)

Ms. Alonzy gave a report on the state of the school. They are focused on increasing parent engagement, such as hosting bingo nights and having the first ever Daddy-Daughter dance. In an effort to be inclusive, uncles, brothers etc. were invited and male teachers offered to take anyone who didn't have someone to take them.

Crescendo is the part of the arc of the year when schools are getting our scholars ready to show what they know for the state tests. This has started, and the school is focusing on getting everyone excited but not stressed. They are holding rallies once a week in the morning to celebrate those who are working incredibly hard. Looking to increase in 3rd and 4th grade Math/ELA by 10 points, however 3rd grade math is struggling. One of the deans has been pushing into classrooms as well.

Promotion in Doubt (PiD). Highest number of PiD kids is in Kindergarten (which is also the best time to retain them), but it is within the AF average. Especially in Kindergarten the school intentionally paints a very positive picture because they do not want retention to feel like a punishment. The vast majority of the time a child is only retained once.

Teacher appreciation week is first week of April.

Amistad Academy MS (Katie Poynter)

Ms. Poynter gave a report on the state of the school. Crescendo has started, under the tagline of "Own your Education." There will be a schoolwide assembly next Friday kicking off "Own Your Education," focusing on more than just the state testing. There are three staff members who are former Amistad alumni, one of whom is at the MS and they will be speaking. There will also be "Own Your Education Portraits", celebrating growth, attendance, and other hard work (will be photos of students that they can put on their locker).

Ms. Poynter discussed those "promotion-in-doubt" students. Students have to meet attendance and report card grade requirements. Anyone failing one or more of their core classes is considered promotion-in-doubt. Compared to this time last year there 40 percent fewer scholars who are PiD. Of those, roughly 50 percent are very close to passing. Teachers will call students on that list. Every report card night parents of PID students are engaged, and either a dean or Ms. Poynter will speak with them. There are also reports given every two weeks for every class including grades (which has also increased parent engagement (parents need to sign report)). There are no special education students on the PID list. There are some instances where the school provides summer work to help student move into the next grade, however, there is little that can be done in the summer to make up for a year.

Ms. Poynter reported that she is very proud of the PID students from last year who are currently thriving.

Teacher appreciation week is first week of May.

The Board entered a motion to enter Executive session at 6:15 pm

Moved by Jennifer Connell

Seconded by Andrew Lachman

The Board entered a motion to exit Executive Session at 7:04pm

Moved by Lorraine Gibbons

Seconded by Jennifer Connell

B. Joint High School Committee Report (Carolyn Greenspan)

Ms. Greenspan gave a report from the Joint High School Committee. Teachers are focusing on individualized feedback for each student, student respect and keeping kids out of the hallway. They are working individually with PID students to make sure that they are making progress. Teachers are meeting together more regularly. The leadership team is also focusing on study skills and academic habits. Quarter 4 is when students start to realize exactly what they need to do to succeed.

The entire school community is energized as college acceptances come in (and they are!).

Next year, the school is projecting to have 570 students (up from 490).

The High School Committee spoke at length during their meeting about the number of students who are failing 1 or more class.

Governance Committee (Pat Sweet)

Ms. Sweet gave a report from the Governance committee. The Committee focused on examining the terms of Board members. The Committee then discussed potential candidates, and they have a good pool of potential candidates. In addition, the Committee discussed creating a checklist that will be a list of actions that need to be taken throughout the year. In addition, they are preparing a self assessment for administering at the end of the year.

Ms. Greenspan explained that the Amistad Board has too many members of the HS Committee. They need to eliminate three members of the AA contingent to the Committee. Ms. Greenspan will follow up individually.

C. AF Workshop Series (Carolyn Greenspan)

There is a Workshop on Teacher Recruitment on April 6th. Ms. Greenspan encouraged everyone who can to attend to come.

D. Professional Growth Plan (PGP) Process (Carolyn Greenspan)

Ms. Greenspan explained to the Board that AF is slightly behind in the PGP process for Ms. Poynter and Ms Polcrack. When the reports are received the Principal committee will meet with the Regional Superintendents.

E. Finance Committee Report (Jane Levin)

Ms. Levin led a discussion regarding the financial report. Amistad ES is running under budget, MS slightly under budget, HS over budget. Only thing of note is that the Teacher Certification could result in a suspension of a portion of Title I funding. The search for a new CFO continues with the help of Spencer Stuart.

IV. Board Business

RESOLVED, the Amistad Academy Board of Directors hereby approves the meeting minutes from January 27, 2016.

Motion by Pat Sweet

Seconded by Reginald Simmons

All in favor

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

Motion by Jennifer Connell

Seconded by Pat Sweet

All in favor

RESOLVED, the Amistad Academy Board of Directors hereby approves Zack Vose as the principal of Amistad Elementary School effective July 1, 2016.

Motion by Jennifer Connell

Seconded by Katrin Czinger

Abstention: Andrew Lachman

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 7:32 by Carolyn Greenspan

Motion by Lorraine Gibbons

Seconded by Katrin Czinger