

Joint Session
Elm City College Preparatory and Amistad Academy
Board of Directors Meeting

March 22, 2017, 5:30 pm
Achievement First Network Support
495 Blake Street, New Haven

I. Call to Order & Attendance

The meeting was called to order by at 5:42 pm by Dick Ferguson. The following directors and staff were in attendance:

Elm City College Prep Board of Directors	Amistad Academy Board of Directors
Richard Ferguson - Yes	Carolyn Greenspan - Yes
William Heins - No	Caroline Williams - No
Laura Saverin - Yes	Mike Griffin - No
Genevive Walker - Yes	Lorraine Gibbons - Yes
Carlos Torre - No	Andrew Lachman - Yes
Patricia Pierce - No	Cassie Crockett - Yes
Samuel Brill - No	Daisy Gonzales - No
Stephanie Ma - Yes	Jane Levin - Yes (phone)
Magaly Cajigas - No	Pat Sweet - Yes (phone)
Patric Gregory - No	Jennifer Connell - Yes
Donovan Tracey - Yes	Paul McCraven - No
	Khadijah Muhammad - Yes (phone)
	Tim Pavlis - Yes
	Reginald Simmons - Yes

AF Network Support: Sarah Blanton, John Furniss, Laurie Bussmann, Peter Cymrot

II. Open Session For Public Comment

There was no public comment.

III. Joint Session with Board of Directors of Amistad Academy

A. Joint High School Committee Report (Carolyn Greenspan)

Due to time constraints, the Joint High School Report will be given in the individual board meetings and not this joint session.

B. Charter Renewals (Peter Cymrot)

Mr. Pete Cymrot and Ms. Laurie Bussmann led a discussion on the charter renewal hearings. The State Board recognized the academic success of the schools, but gave both Amistad and Elm City a three year renewal. In particular, the state board focused on teacher certification and suspensions. AF must come

up with an action plan and update state staff every three months, and then update the state board of education in one year. The expectation is that the school make solid progress satisfactory to the Commissioner of Education. The State has reported that working on teacher certification with Ms. Bussmann has been productive. Elm City and Amistad's suspension numbers are higher than New Haven Public Schools, but commensurate with Bridgeport Public Schools, Stamford Public Schools, and Hartford Public Schools.

The board made a motion to enter executive session at 5:53pm by Jennifer Connell. Seconded by Cassie Crockett. The boards exited executive session at 6:12pm.

The Joint session adjourned to individual board meetings at 6:13pm

Amistad Academy
Board of Directors Meeting

March 22, 2017, 5:30 p.m.

AF Network Support, 495 Blake St., New Haven

I. Call to Order & Attendance

The meeting was called to order by Carolyn Greenspan at 5:42 p.m. The following directors, constituting a quorum, and staff were in attendance:

Carolyn Greenspan - Yes	Khadijah Muhammad - Yes (phone)
Caroline Williams - No	Tim Pavlis - Yes
Mike Griffin - No	Reginald Simmons - Yes
Lorraine Gibbons - Yes	Paul McCraven - No
Andrew Lachman - Yes	
Cassie Crockett - Yes	
Daisy Gonzales - No	Christina Pares, School Leadership - Yes
Jane Levin - Yes (phone)	Katie Poynter, School Leadership - Yes
Pat Sweet - Yes (phone)	Sarah Blanton, AF Network Support - Yes
Jennifer Connell - Yes	Megan Tokarski, AF Network Support - Yes

Members of the public: None

II. Open Session for Public Comment

There was no public comment.

III. Approval of Minutes

RESOLVED, the Amistad Academy Board of Directors hereby approves the meeting minutes from 1/25/2017.

Motion by Jennifer Connell

Seconded by Reginald Simmons

All in favor

IV. Reports

A. Joint High School Committee Report (Carolyn Greenspan)

Carolyn Greenspan reported that two members of AF Amistad High's Student Council attended the Joint High School Committee meeting and spoke about what is going well (school culture improvements and increased staff diversity) and what could be improved (not enough time with their advisories and teacher retention) at the school. Principal Morgan Barth reviewed school and college data with the Committee.

B. Principal Reports

Christina Pares updated the board on the three key areas that she has been focused on improving since taking over the principal role at Amistad Academy Elementary in November 2016: 1) school culture, 2) adult culture, and 3) academics.

1. Christina and her leadership team have made adjustments to the school's system of accountability and rewards aimed at helping teachers to better deescalate student behavior issues. The suspension rate is the most commonly used school culture metric, and Christina reported that Amistad Academy Elementary's suspension rate has decreased dramatically since November 2016. For example, during the first three months of the 2016-17 school year, 9% of Amistad Academy Elementary students (42 students) received 1+ suspension. From December 2016 to March 2017, the suspension rate increased by only 1% point to 10% (+5 students).
2. Christina reported that on the most recent Mini Org Health Survey, Amistad Academy Elementary had a +19%-point increase in teacher satisfaction with school leadership communication and a +13%-point increase in teachers feeling positive about working at the school. Amistad Academy Elementary has only experienced one teacher departure since the principal transition in November 2016. Amistad Academy Elementary does currently have several teachers on specialized improvement plans, who are at risk of being non-renewed for the 2017-18 school year, but the good news is that several of the school's Teachers in Residence (TIRs) will likely be promoted into full-time teaching positions next year.
3. Finally, Christina reviewed Amistad Academy Elementary's academic progress. The school experienced a significant jump in K-2 proficiency rates between testing Cycles 1 and 2, although there is still more work to do. Cycle 3 test data will be available soon. Students in grades 3-4 will take a mock SBAC assessment next month, so the school will know more about projected SBAC growth then. In the meantime, "Crescendo" is underway, including tutoring, small-group instruction, and other supports.

Katie Poynter gave the board a mid-year update on all of the key data points that Amistad Academy Middle is tracking for the 2016-17 school year.

- The school's average daily attendance rate is currently 96.4%, which is slightly below the AF Network goal of 97%.
- Amistad Academy Middle's current loss attrition rate is 2.1%, which is below both the AF Network average of 2.5% and the school's 2015-16 rate of 2.7%.
- The out-of-school suspension rate is down -5% points year-over-year, and the school's combined out-of-school and in-school suspension rate is down -1% point year-over-year. In both cases, Amistad Academy Middle's suspension rate is still above the AF Network average.
- For the first time, Amistad Academy Middle is administering a Student Climate Survey three times per year. Students just completed the second survey. Results show that student investment is a real work area, and this is going to be a school priority for 2017-18.
- 100% of Amistad Academy's leadership team is confirmed to return for the 2017-18 school year, 78% of teachers are currently confirmed, and 89% staff are confirmed.

- The school is working toward 100% teacher certification by December 1, 2017. Currently, 86% of Amistad Academy Middle teachers are certified. Five teachers are not certified, with four being 1-3 tests away from full certification and the fifth teacher not planning to return in 2017-18).
- Only 52% of Amistad Academy Middle students have a GPA above 2.5. While this is on par with the AF Network average, it is a significant growth area. Reginald Simmons asked about engaging parents around the importance of their student's grades/GPA, and Katie acknowledged that the school has not yet done a good enough job of engaging students and parents on this topic (e.g., how to calculate GPA, how to improve grades/GPA, etc.). The school has begun sending home academic progress reports every other Monday, which is a great first step, but there is more to do. Katie shared that now that the school's foundational academic and culture components are well established, the leadership team has the bandwidth to focus on other issues, such as improving GPA and student investment. These will both be school priorities in 2017-18.
- Currently, 61 students (18%) have promotion-in-doubt status for 2017-18. Ultimately, Katie projected that Amistad Academy Middle will probably end up retaining approximately 15 students.
- On Mock 1 (an internal assessment based on SBAC), Amistad Academy Middle had the highest scores in the AF CT Network in six of eight grade/subject combinations. Based on predicted SBAC outcomes, Amistad Academy Middle is currently on track to meet its math goals in grades 5, 6, and 8, but is not currently on track to meet its ELA goals. During Crescendo, the school is focused on teaching some of the very specialized ELA SBAC standards (such as assessing the reliability of research sources) that are not taught as explicitly as a part of the school's regular ELA curriculum.

C. Board Chair Report (Carolyn Greenspan)

Carolyn Greenspan reminded the board of upcoming workshops on April 5, 2017 (Partnerships), May 2, 2017 (Special Education), and May 4, 2017 (Greenfield).

Cassie Crockett provided a Governance Committee update:

- Board members are asked to consider and recommend new board members, with a goal of having 16 total board members.
- All board members need to be fingerprinted, and Sarah Blanton will be reaching out if a board member's fingerprints need to be redone for any reason.
- Cassie reviewed the timeline for principal contract renewals (annually in December) and PGP reviews (annually in March). The board is responsible for renewing principal contracts on an annual basis, so the board will be more involved in both processes going forward.
- The auditors have cited that the board needs to approve the AF Family Handbook, so the board will be involved in that process going forward.
- In order to hold AF accountable for teacher certification, principal selection and renewal, and other key outcomes, the Governance Committee will be putting together a checklist timeline to capture what the board should be doing, when it should be doing it, and what info the board needs to do its job effectively.

RESOLVED, the Amistad Academy Board of Directors hereby approves the amendment to the Charter Management Agreement as presented.

Motion by Cassandra Crockett

Seconded by Tim Pavlis

All in favor

Carolyn Greenspan entered a stipulated agreement from Amistad Academy Middle into the record. Reginald Simmons and Lorraine Gibbons agreed to co-sign the document.

D. Treasurer's Report (Jane Levin)

Jane Levin updated the board on three financial matters: 1) FY17 year-to-date financials, 2) FY18 budget, and 3) FY16 audit.

1. Due to the principal transition and turnaround efforts at Amistad Academy Elementary, the school has had increased leadership and support costs and is currently facing an approximately \$300,000 deficit. This one-time challenge will be met through additional philanthropy.
2. Connecticut State funding will remain flat at \$11,000 per pupil in 2017-18, so the Amistad Academy school budgets are expected to remain relatively flat as well.
3. Under Victor De La Paz, AF's new CFO, the organization has a strong plan to address material weaknesses identified in the FY16 audit.

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

Motion by Tim Pavlis

Seconded by Cassandra Crockett

All in favor

RESOLVED, the Amistad Academy Board of Directors hereby approves the amendment to the FY17 budget as presented.

Motion by Tim Pavlis

Seconded by Cassandra Crockett

All in favor

III. Executive Session

The Board entered Executive Session at 7:44 pm. Motion by Reginald Simmons. Seconded by Lorraine Gibbons

The Board exited Executive Session at 7:57 pm. Motion by Reginald Simmons Seconded by Tim Pavlis

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 7:59 pm by Carolyn Greenspan. Motion by Lorraine Gibbons. Seconded by Cassandra Crockett. All in favor