

Approved: March 20, 2013

Amistad Academy
Board of Directors Meeting
January 23, 2013

Connecticut Boards Joint Session:

Achievement First Bridgeport Academy: Cornelius Medas, Max Perez, Dick Kalt, Ed Raice, Chris Kunhardt, Melissa Ceriale, and Andy Boas.

Achievement First Hartford Academy: Jean LaVecchia, John Motley, Gretchen Unfried-English, Laura Estes, and James Morton.

Elm City College Preparatory: Dick Ferguson, William Heins, Patricia Pierce, Laura Saverin, Carolyn Greenspan, Joe Boskovski, and Deb Quinsee.

Amistad Academy: Jane Levin , Paul McCraven, Alexander Troy, Caroline Williams, Lisa Bonniefield, Sheri Gellman, Lorraine Gibbons , Michael D. Griffin , Melinda Hamilton, and Howard K. Hill.

Others in Attendance:

Kelonda Maull, Lauren Miller, Reshma Singh, Tony Siddall, Ken Paul, Marc Michaelson, Laina Vlasnik Yip, Rhea Byer-Ettinger, Ken Paul, Bill Bouton, Theresa Neff-Webster, Candice Dormon, Sharon Richards, Amy Christie, Chris Bostock, Mary Ann Holland, Genna Weinstein, Amy Helbig, Candice Dormon, Pat Sweet, and Carolina Inciarte.

Melinda Hamilton called the meeting to order at 6:06pm

Ms. Hamilton welcomed everyone and asked for public comment. Hearing none, she asked Ms. Singh to give everyone an update on Advocacy and Facilities.

Ms. Singh gave an update on advocacy in Rhode Island, Connecticut and New York in 2013. She also discussed Student Recruitment and Expansion efforts for the year. Ms. Singh opened for questions and comments. Mr. Paul gave an update on philanthropy efforts for CT and opened for questions. Ms. Vlasnik Yip presented information on the Howard Fuller events in Hartford and Bridgeport, CT in early January.

Ms. Hamilton thanked Ms. Singh for all her work with the Achievement First Amistad High school project and then asked Mr. Bostock to present his Principal Report.

Mr. Bostock welcomed everyone and introduced himself. He spoke to the board regarding Amistad High's approach and key strategies for progress to college focusing on core academics, CAPT and SAT

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performance throughout the year. Mr. Bostock gave an update on student attendance this year. Furthermore, he discussed college readiness and the application process and where scholars are applying for college this year. Mr. Bostock gave the board an update on Alumni enrollment and graduation rates. He discussed his priorities for the year including planning, reading and homework and its importance. Mr. Bostock discussed some challenges this year and there continued focus on special education, increasing student leadership and student culture. He then opened for questions.

Ms. Holland spoke to the board regarding summer internships with Achievement First Amistad High for the year and gave examples of successes and how it helps with college readiness. She asked the board for internship opportunities and for their information. She opened for questions.

Ms. Hamilton then moved to discuss the Achievement First School Report Card and asked Ms. Inciarte to address the boards.

Ms. Inciarte gave background of the Achievement First report card and the performance measurement tool. She explained its importance for the organization and the meaning behind each schools score. Ms. Singh and Mr. Michaelson gave background to Achievement First standards and the high expectations for Achievement First and its internal use. Ms. Singh and Mr. Michaelson opened for questions.

Ms. Hamilton asked each board present to begin their separate board meetings hearing no other questions or comments.

Amistad Individual Board Meeting

Board Members Present: Jane Levin , Paul McCraven, Alexander Troy, Caroline Williams, Lisa Bonniefield, Sheri Gellman, Lorraine Gibbons , Michael D. Griffin , Melinda Hamilton, Howard K. Hill

Others in Attendance: Khadijah Muhammad, Catrin Czinger, Lauren Miller, Amy Helbig, Genna Weinstein

Ms. Hamilton welcomed everyone to the Amistad portion of the meeting and thanked everyone for coming this evening. She asked if the board had a chance to review the meeting minutes from the previous board meeting and if they were prepared to vote to approve them. Mr. Griffin suggested changes to the previous meeting minutes, specifically around the financial discussion that took place during the meeting. Mr. Griffin felt that the section should be expanded and read the board a revised version of that section. The board agreed that the language was appropriate to add and voted to approve the meeting minutes with the changes proposed by Mr. Griffin. Mr. Griffin gave Ms. Miller a written version of the changes so she could make the changes to the minutes.

RESOLVED: To approve the meeting minutes presented to the board with the changes proposed by Mr. Griffin.

Moved: Griffin

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Seconded: Levin

(all in favor)

Ms. Hamilton provided an update to the board from the nominating committee. The nominating committee has two board candidates they would like the board to consider this evening. Ms. Hamilton introduced Ms. Czinger to the board. Ms. Czinger was previously a member of the Amistad Board but had to step down when her family relocated to California. Ms. Czinger has returned to the CT area and is interested in serving on the Amistad Board once again. Ms. Hamilton and others spoke enthusiastically about having Ms. Czinger back and were pleased that she was interested in serving on the board again.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Catrin Czinger is elected to the board of directors of Amistad Academy, to be assigned to Class II directors and serve a term of two years, with a term ending in July 2015.

Moved: Hill

Seconded: Troy

(all in favor)

Ms. Hamilton then introduced Ms. Muhammed to the board. Ms. Muhammed is the president of the Amistad Parent Leadership Committee and is very involved in our schools. She has five children in Achievement First schools in New Haven and is incredibly dedicated to our network. Ms. Muhammed is a parent advocate for Amistad Academy and is invested in our schools. Ms. Muhammed was nominated to be the parent representative on the board by Ms. Sarah White, principal at Amistad Academy Middle.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Khadijah Muhammed is elected to the board of directors of Amistad Academy, to be assigned to Class II directors and serve a term of two years as Parent Representative, with a term ending in July 2015.

Moved: Gibbons

Seconded: McCraven

(all in favor)

Ms. Hamilton next spoke to the board about the Professional Growth Plan (PGP) process that Achievement First uses to evaluate and develop school leaders at its schools. She spoke about how thorough the process is and how much she has enjoyed participating in phone calls about our schools leaders through the PGP process and how impressed she is by the process. The board confirms a committee of at least three board members to participate in a conference call with the superintendent for each of the Amistad school principals and will report back to the board at a future board meeting. She will make sure the entire board knows when the meeting will take place so that anyone who is available and interested in participating can do so. Ms. Czinger, Ms. Gibbons, and Ms. Hamilton said they would be interested in joining the committee. The board also wanted to nominate Ms. Williams to the committee since she is the chair of the high school committee.

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RESOLVED: To appoint Ms. Czinger, Ms. Gibbons, Ms. Hamilton, and Ms. Williams to the PGP review PGP Committee resolution:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the following board members of Amistad Academy ("Amistad"), be and each hereby is, named to serve on the Principal Personal Growth Plan ("PGP") review committee of the board and shall serve a term of one year to review the PGP's for academic year 2012-2013, and shall serve consistent with the by-laws of the entity.

- i. Name: Katrin Czinger
- ii. Name: Melinda Hamilton
- iii. Name: Lorraine Gibbons
- iv. Name: Caroline Williams

Moved: Hill

Seconded: Levin

(all in favor)

Ms. Hamilton asked Mr. Griffin to provide an update to the board on the financials. Mr. Griffin updated the board on the conversations that many members of the Amistad Board have been engaged in with Team Finance at Achievement First. They have been meeting regularly to discuss the progress being made on changes suggested by the board. Mr. Griffin said he was pleased with the progress that has been made and that he is continuing to have conversations with the finance team to make sure all issues are being addressed appropriately.

Mr. Griffin spoke to the board about the reports distributed at the meeting and Mr. Polaner distributed an up to date balance sheet to the board to speak about. He also passed around a reconciliation report to explain questions about balances at the school. Mr. Polaner talked about the Dwight project line of credit and stated that Amistad should be able to pay down the Dwight line of credit and they are prepared to pay off that as it is appropriate. The board had questions about the line of credit and Mr. Polaner said they would make a proposal to the board about how to handle that. Mr. Griffin also addressed the audit, which should be completed in the next two weeks. The board seeks the assurance of the audit and is looking forward to that being completed. Mr. Polaner and Ms. Bourne also spoke to the board about staffing on their team and their plans to set the team up for future success and to avoid these problems and concerns moving forward. Mr. Griffin asked Mr. Polaner and Ms. Bourne if there were any concerns about misappropriation of money. Mr. Polaner and Ms. Bourne are very confident that that is not the case and they have not come across any of those concerns.

The board also discussed the use of credit cards at Amistad and discussed the auditor's suggestions to strengthen credit card policies. Mr. Polaner suggested that this be a point of conversation with the auditors about these procedures and the board agreed. The board was asked to approve a policy around the credit cards and decided to add to it that their approval is subject to the finance team working with independent accountants to enhance the policies and procedures around the credit cards. Next board meeting agenda item to accomplish this and go over it. The audit will be completed at that point.

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NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that Achievement First is hereby authorized and directed to investigate and obtain a credit card in the account of this Corporation for Che Dawson, Lashell Rountree and Michael Lengle, Directors of School Operations, with a credit limit per Academy of \$30,000. Each Academy will have two cards, and each cardholder will have access to the full credit limit of that Academy to make reasonable and necessary purchases which are in the ordinary course of business of this Corporation and consistent with the Budget. The use of the card will be subject to the school's fiscal policies and procedures. They are hereby authorized and directed to serve as the primary contacts with the credit card company for all credit cards in the account of this Corporation. The use of the cards will be subject to the school's fiscal policies and procedures. **This approval shall be contingent upon the Achievement First Finance Team consulting with independent auditors to strengthen policies and procedures for credit card use. The Board will consider these policies and procedures at a future meeting.**

Moved: McCraven

Seconded: Czinger

(all in favor)

RESOLVED: To approve the January financial reports as presented to the board.

Moved: Griffin

Seconded: Gibbons

(all in favor)

Ms. Hamilton spoke to the board about the school report cards and updated the board on conversations that she had with the school superintendents about school progress. She is trying to better understand some of the data points and the way they align with student data and progress. She suggested to the board that it would be a great idea to sit down with school principals to dig into the data with them and learn more. Ms. Gibbons suggested this is particularly important to be involved with now as the schools prepare for the common core. The board expressed interest in setting up meetings with the principals to review the report cards and Ms. Hamilton will report back to the board at the next meeting after those conversations.

Ms. Hamilton asked if there was any additional board business. Hearing none, she asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

RESOLVED: To adjourn the meeting.

Moved: Gibbons

Seconded: Hill

(all in favor)

Respectfully Submitted: _____