

Approved: May 29, 2013

Amistad Academy
Board of Directors Meeting

March 20, 2013

5:30 – 7:30 p.m.

Amistad Academy & Elm City College Prep Joint Session:

Amistad Academy Board Members in Attendance: Melinda Hamilton, Khadijah Muhammad, Michael Thomas, Michael Van Leesten, Katrin Czinger, Alex Troy, Lorraine Gibbons, Lisa Bonnifield.

Elm City College Prep Board Members in Attendance: Will Heins, Laura Saverin, Dick Ferguson, Sharon Oster, Joe Boskovski, Marnie Halsey, Carolyn Greenspan.

Others in Attendance: Kelonda Maull, Lauren Miller, Bill Bouton, Amanda Alonzy, Reshma Singh, Tony Siddall, Andrew Poole, Shirley Harrell, Karin Gould, Teresa Neff Webster, Pat Sweet.

Mr. Ferguson called the meeting to order at 5:50pm and asked if there was any public comment. Hearing none, Mr. Ferguson asked Andrew Poole to give his Principal report.

Mr. Poole spoke to the board regarding current successes and challenges for this year around the Common Core Standards. Mr. Poole is working to enhance school culture and is pushing scholars and teachers toward computer based and collaborative work. Ms. Singh gave background on this topic. Mr. Poole mentioned to the board the recent snow storm has affected Elm City College Prep's attendance goals of 98%, instructional time and overall momentum. Mr. Poole is working toward meeting this challenge and hitting all benchmarks for the year. Mr. Poole then opened for questions.

Ms. Alonzy spoke to the board on current successes and challenges for the year. Ms. Alonzy is optimistic that student achievement will increase for the upcoming Connecticut Mastery Testing and is preparing for the Common Core Standards. Ms. Alonzy is preparing scholars and feels strong about their results. Ms. Alonzy spoke to the board regarding a previous and successful Black History month event that was rescheduled due to Connecticut's past snow storm. Ms. Alonzy gave an update on the Teacher Career Pathway results and mentioned three of her staff has earned the title, "Tier Four Teacher" and she is very proud. Ms. Alonzy spoke on a challenge this year being attendance, mainly because of the past winter storm and scholars being sick. Ms. Alonzy then opened for questions.

Ms. Singh gave the board an update on our upcoming advocacy efforts and asked Ms. Muhammad to share her experience at the Black Alliance for Educational Options Conference in Florida on March 14. Ms. Muhammad discussed her experience and one take away from attending and expressed the

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conference inspired her and intends to share this type of inspiration with our scholars and parents to get them fired up about education. Ms. Singh then opened for questions.

Ms. Singh gave an update on the Amistad High school project and progress for the year and opened for questions.

Hearing no other questions or comments, Mr. Ferguson adjourned the Joint Meeting of the boards present to begin their separate board meetings.

Amistad Academy Individual Board Meeting:

Directors in Attendance: Paul McCraven, Katrin Czinger, Alex Troy, Khadijah Muhammad, Michael Thomas, Michael Van Leesten, Andrew Lachman, Melinda Hamilton, Lorraine Gibbons (by phone), Lisa Bonnifield (by phone)

Others in Attendance: Bill Bouton, Max Polaner, Tony Siddall, Lauren Miller, Marc Michaelson, Gaylord Bourne

Ms. Hamilton chaired the meeting and Ms. Miller recorded the minutes.

Ms. Hamilton called the Amistad Academy portion of the board meeting to order at 6:27pm and established quorum. She started the meeting by welcoming Mr. Van Leesten back to the board and thanked everyone for coming to the board meeting this evening.

Ms. Hamilton asked the board to review the meeting minutes from the last meeting and asked if there were any comments or requested changes. Ms. Czinger noted that her name was included in some of the votes in the minutes but not on the list of directors in attendance. Ms. Hamilton commented that there were some errors in the minutes and asked Ms. Miller to check over them before finalizing the minutes. Hearing no other changes to the meeting minutes, Ms. Hamilton asked for a motion to approve the meeting minutes with the addition of Ms. Czinger's name.

RESOLVED: To approve the meeting minutes in the form presented to the board with the addition of Ms. Czinger's name to the list of directors in attendance

Moved: Czinger

Seconded: Troy

(all in favor)

Max Polaner, Chief Financial and Operating Officer for Achievement First distributed financial materials to the board including up to date reconciliations and information outlining the plans of the finance team. Mr. Polaner recognized that the board has some concerns about the financial management of Amistad Academy, and was present at the meeting to address these concerns. The board reviewed the

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current financials which are on track to budget. Ms. Hamilton suggested that it would be most useful to review the balance sheets for each school. The board reviewed the balance sheets together and Mr. Polaner provided updates as of today. Mr. Polaner described the process for moving money between the charters that make up the high school. The board also discussed the payments from the state and philanthropy and the timelines for those reconciliations. The board engaged in a discussion about the line of credit for the Amistad Academy capital project and the timeline for paying that loan down. The board then reviewed materials that Mr. Polaner provided at the request of the board treasurer, Mike Griffin. Mr. Polaner answered questions from the board about the history of the finance team and about the audit. Ms. Bourne said that the FY12 audit has been completed and the finance committee would meet to go over the audit draft. Ms. Hamilton commended the finance team and the finance committee of the board for their hard work and the enormous amount of time they have dedicated to these items. She said that the next objective would be for the group to review the new materials with the finance team and get to a point where the board feels fully satisfied with the financial management of the school. Ms. Hamilton invited board members to continue to ask questions and asked Ms. Miller to forward the materials from Mr. Polaner in soft copy via email.

Ms. Hamilton then introduced Marc Michaelson to the board – Mr. Michaelson is a former principal of Elm City Middle School and has served as a superintendent for Achievement First for the past three years. Mr. Michaelson spoke to the board about the Amistad Academy school report cards and about the principal transition at Amistad Academy middle school. Mr. Michaelson answered questions from the board about the report card, both about the tool itself and about the results at Amistad. The board then voted to enter into executive session to discuss the principal transition at Amistad middle school.

RESOLVED: To enter into executive session.

Motion: Hamilton

Seconded: McCraven

(all in favor)

RESOLVED: To end executive session.

Moved: Hamilton

Seconded: McCraven

(all in favor)

The board noted that it would like to set up a time to interview Ms. Poynter, candidate for principal at Amistad Academy middle school next week. Ms. Miller will reach out to the board with times and application information for Ms. Poynter. The board will then need to gather with quorum to vote on the nomination of Ms. Poynter as principal

Ms. Hamilton asked the board if there was any additional business to discuss. Hearing no further questions or comments, Ms. Hamilton asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

RESOLVED: To adjourn the meeting.

Moved: McCraven

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Seconded: Lachman