

**Meeting Minutes**  
**Amistad Academy**  
**Board of Directors Meeting**

Venue: Virtual Meeting

Zoom: <https://achievementfirst.zoom.us/j/88542645044>

Tuesday, October 17, 2023, 5:30-7:00 pm

**1. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Lorraine Gibbons at 5:32 pm.

Name	Present	Name	Present
Lorraine Gibbons	Y	Shannelle Whyte	N
Patricia B. Sweet	Y	Yashira Agosto	Y
Jennifer Alexander	N	Linda Darkwah	Y
Zihan Su (Yale Board Fellow)	Y		

**Also in attendance: Lisa Margosian, Blakely Simoneau, Karolyn Belcher, Sulafa Bashir, John Sharkey, Dumar Paden, Neil Shah, Jasmine Watts, Lauren Raimondi, Raven Obas, Simon Obas, Shannon Miller, Brooke Williams, Kiersten Gibson-Cooper**

**2. Public Comment**

No members of the public were present.

**3. Resolutions and Approvals** Previous Meeting’s minutes, Leadership Slate, Committees, Interim Principals, Family Handbook (10 min)

Ms. Gibbons asked for the board to approve the consent agenda. Mr. Su asked to be included on the Finance Committee, and Ms. Gibbons agreed. The addition of Mr. Su to the Finance Committee is reflected in the meeting minutes.

Consent Agenda:

1. BE IT RESOLVED, the Amistad Academy Board of Directors hereby approves the meeting minutes from May 22, 2023.

2. BE IT RESOLVED, that the Amistad Academy Board of Directors hereby elects the following leadership slate for the 2023-2024 fiscal year:
  - a. Lorraine Gibbons, Chair
  
3. BE IT RESOLVED, that the Amistad Academy Board of Directors hereby appoints the following committee members:
  - Finance Committee: Lorraine Gibbons, Yashira Zwisler, Zihan Su
  - Personnel Committee: Lorraine Gibbons (Chair), Jennifer Alexander, Pat Sweet
  - Amistad Joint HS Committee: Jennifer Alexander (Chair), Lorraine Gibbons, Yashira Zwisler
  
4. BE IT RESOLVED that the Amistad Academy Board of Directors hereby approves the following individuals to serve as interim principal, as needed, for a period of time not to exceed sixteen weeks through June 30, 2024, based on the recommendations by Achievement First.
  - a. Elementary School: Emma Tingley
  - b. Middle School: Andrew Poole
  - c. High School: AJ Lowe
  
5. BE IT RESOLVED, that the Amistad Academy Board of Directors hereby approves the 2023-2024 AF Family Handbook.

Ms. Sweet so moved, Ms. Darkwah seconded. All in favor, no one abstained.

#### **4. Discussion with Achievement First**

- a. CEO Welcome (2 min)

Ms. Margosian welcomed the board and introduced the new Chief Equity Officer, LaNelle Alexander. Ms. Belcher introduced Raven Obas and Kiersten Gibson-Cooper as the new Regional Superintendents.

- b. Principal Reports (15 min)

Lauren Raimondi presented information to the board about her school, including building

strong belief and belonging. She referenced the new curriculum and that they are committed to implementation. Ms. Gibbons asked about potential events for the board to visit, and Ms. Raimondi offered details. Ms. Raimondi offered details about the new curriculum, and noted that the students seemed engaged and that they are still getting used to it.

Ms. Jasmine Watts provided details on the Middle School this school year. She expressed a desire to involve the families in the school community more.

Mr. Simon Obas presented on the state of the high school. He noted that this is the first year that they have had a football team since 2018, and that they are doing very well. He highlighted the afterschool programs and that there is a new library.

c. Graduate Goals and Aims (30 min)

Mr. Dumar Paden provided the board with an update on the Graduate Goals and Aims. He noted that AF grew from kindergarten to high school but there was not enough attention paid to what it means to be a high school graduate from Achievement First. Mr. Paden explained to the board how AF developed the Graduate Aims, including stakeholder engagement. Mr. Paden provided details on the Design Pillars, which come from the Graduate Aims. Some of these are aspirational and some are already being implemented.

Mr. Paden noted the social-emotional supports that need to be offered to students, and how that connects to the Graduate Goals and Aims. Mr. Paden referenced post-graduate aims and different pathways they may pursue.

Ms. Gibbons asked about AF's mission and asked Mr. Paden to bring up the mission statement to the board. Ms. Gibbons noted that college might not be the right pathway for all students. Ms. Margosian explained that it is not about AF choosing the path for students, and offered to follow up with the shift in the mission statement.

Ms. Agosto mentioned a strong alumni network really supporting her after graduation from AF. Mr. Paden offered details about what has been considered and areas that AF may pursue. Mr. Su asked about how AF will support students in finding their areas of interest. Mr. Su, who is at the Yale School of Medicine, offered to help students who are interested in pursuing medicine. Ms. Sweet offered to connect with any students who are interested in acting.

d. New curriculum Implementation and Academic Goals (10 min)

Mr. Sharkey presented on the academic goals for this school year, including growth goals. Mr. Sharkey presented on the current state of academics which reflect performance across the board below waterlines. Ms. Gibbons asked about how the new curriculum will address this, and Mr. Sharkey offered details about how the new curriculum will offer additional support and works together across curriculum areas to better support students. Ms. Belcher noted that the results from this year do not reflect the new curriculum, and expressed that the other regions had greater gains than Connecticut which is why the results are very concerning.

Mr. Sharkey offered details on how the new curriculum rollout went with teacher training over the summer.

e. Finance Committee (10 min)

Mr. Shah presented on the Finance Committee updates. He noted that expenses were in line with the prior year.

Ms. Belcher provided a brief update on the Corrective Action Plan, and offered details about what is being done to address the three areas of concern - chronic absenteeism, teacher certification, and academic achievement. She noted that AF will be going to the state to provide details on the CAP and AF's plan.

Ms. Gibbons welcomed Ms. Margosian as the new CEO.

5. Adjourn

Ms. Gibbons asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Sweet so moved, Ms. Agosto seconded. All in favor, no one abstained. The meeting was adjourned at 7:03 pm.