

Joint Session
Amistad Academy & Elm City College Preparatory
Board of Directors

Wednesday, March 25, 2015, 5:30 – 7:15 pm
Achievement First Network Support, 403 James Street, New Haven

I. Call to Order & Attendance

The meeting was called to order at 5:49 pm by Carolyn Greenspan.

The following board members and Achievement First Staff were in attendance:

Jennifer Connell, AA Board - yes
Katrín Czinger, AA Board - Yes
Sheri Gellman, AA Board - No
Lorraine Gibbons, AA Board - Yes
Carolyn Greenspan, AA Board - Yes
Michael Griffin, AA Board - No
Toni Harp, AA Board - No
Howard Hill, AA Board - No
David Katzman, AA Board - Yes
Dorsey Kendrick, AA Board - No
Andrew Lachman, AA Board - No
Jane Levin, AA Board - Yes
Tashia Mills, AA Board - No
Reginald Simmons, AA Board - Yes
Pat Sweet, AA Board - Yes
Caroline Williams, AA Board - No

Magaly Cajigas, ECCP Board - Yes
Erik Clemons, ECCP Board - No
Richard Ferguson, ECCP Board - No
Patric Gregory, ECCP Board - Yes
Marnie Halsey, ECCP Board - No
William Heins, ECCP Board - No
Stephanie Ma, ECCP Board - Yes
Sharon Oster, ECCP Board - No
Patricia Pierce, ECCP Board - No
Lystra Richardson, ECCP Board - No
Laura Saverin, ECCP Board - Yes
Kaitlyn Stasik, ECCP Board - Yes
Sean Williams, ECCP Board - Yes
Candice Dormon, Network Support - Yes
Sarah Blanton, Network Support - Yes
Ken Paul, Network Support - Yes
Lenny Speiller, Network Support - Yes
Laurie Bussmann, Network Support - Yes

Guest: Aliyya Swaby, New Haven Independent Staff Writer

II. Open Session For Public Comment

No Comment.

III. Reports

A. Principal Reports

Ms. Rebecca Good, Principal of Elm City College Preparatory Middle School, provided a report. She shared that there are many great things happening on campus right now. School cultures is strong and suspensions are at an alltime low. Staff responses on the school survey were high. Ms. Good also

confirmed that students and teachers are getting ready for the new Connecticut Assessment, Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC.) Ms. Good explained that the school environment is positive in regards to the test and there is not a lot of high anxiety. Ms. Good also expressed frustration that AF's Connecticut continue to lag behind their New York counterparts. She explained her ECCP MS is increasing small group instruction to improve results for student. In addition, teachers and deans visited our New York schools and shared lessons learned that we are implementing at our school. Ms. Good announced that this is her last board meeting as Principal and she is so grateful for the support of the board for her and for the students at Elm City Middle. To thank her for her commitment to education, Mr. Ferguson presented Ms. Good with two bouquets of flowers.

Ms. Katie Poynter, Principal of Amistad Academy Middle School, provided a report. She described 'Club Amistad,' teacher led clubs on Friday of every week to connect students and teachers in meaningful ways around a shared passion. Ms. Poynter shared that students and teachers are really happy with the program and look forward to it every week. On the academic front, Ms. Poynter shared that her school has really benefitted from the network led weekly quizzes. The shorter data cycles allow her teachers to alter lesson plans in real time. In addition, the weekly quizzes allow students to track their own performance and provide increased opportunities for redoing work until achieving mastery. Like Elm City Middle, Amistad Middle school is addressing the CT-NY achievement gap and trying to figure out what the school needs to do better. One example of this work is that Amistad staff are visiting AF's New York schools to learn best practices and implement at Amistad. Ms. Poynter announced that her daughter will be attending an AF New Haven school this fall.

Mr. Andrew Poole, Principal of Elm City College Preparatory Elementary School, provided a report. He shared that ECCP ES is experiencing the strongest year over year growth in his tenure and that in most grades and subjects, ECCP ES is either on par or surpassing it's New York peers. In addition, staff results are strong and hopefully are having a positive effect on staff retention. Mr. Poole believes the momentum is trickled down to students who are benefitting from a strong staff culture. He confirmed that all staff are working hard to finish this year strongly while simultaneously looking ahead to planning for the next school year.

Ms. Amanda Alonzy, Principal of Amistad Academy Elementary School, provided a report. She shared that the school is in a great state. In addition to their regular academic program, students are learning in small groups during lunch time to prepare for the SBAC tests. She feels confident in the school's ability to perform on the exam. Ms. Alonzy is also focusing on student attendance to ensure students are in school while remaining sensitive to any issues that would keep a child out of school. Ms. Alonzy and the leadership team are also paying attention to staff survey results and working to identify the key features that would make Amistad ES a place where staff and students want to remain. In exciting news, the school launched a student council that has started creating posters for events and already planned a pajama day and other events interesting to students. Building off of student's great work, teachers are adding to the joy factor by creating a scavenger hunt for students. In addition, Amistad ES is piloting a sleep study / initiative. The school is partnering with a pediatrician to inform families on the benefits of sleep and how much sleep children need to develop.

B. Advocacy & Elm City Imagine Update (Lenny Speiller)

Mr. Speiller provided an update on Advocacy. He shared that there is a lot of activity in Hartford. He described the Connecticut landscape as very difficult with a \$1.2B budget deficit. In light of last years events with FUSE, the legislature wants to ensure that there is oversight of charter schools. Budgetary areas we are watching include funding for grade level growth, new schools and general operating funding. Currently, there are two bills that aim to update the state charter law. The governor proposed a bill that we support, the legislature proposed a bill that we oppose because it proposes a 2 year moratorium on new charters and additional FOIA-able requirements for non-profits. We have been working with several other local organizations, clergy and the For Every Child campaign. Many of us, parents, scholars and educators have testified and lobbied the legislature. Mr. Speiller discussed the modernization of the state's charter law. In addition, he discussed increased collaboration with the district including AF's proposal to start a new Greenfield school and a MOU with New Haven Public Schools. Mr. Speiller confirmed that AF is moving forward with the Greenfield model by transitioning Elm City College Preparatory kindergarten and fifth grade classes. AF will reëngage with the Superintendent in the future to discuss the new Greenfield school.

C. Welcome Carlos Torre & Governance Committee Update (Pat Sweet)

Ms. Sweet provided the Governance Committee update. She confirmed that Dr. Carlos Torre, Chair of the New Haven Board of Education is joining our board. Ms. Sweet also shared that the governance committee hosted an orientation for new board members on March 12, 2015 and shared the committee's goal of a mentoring program for new board members. She encouraged all board members to make them feel welcome. Ms. Sweet also discussed potentially starting an advisory board. In addition, the governance committee is reviewing current bylaws with the hope of simplifying them. The committee will conduct a review at the start of each school year to make sure all members understand the bylaws.

D. Teacher Certification (Laurie Bussmann)

Ms. Bussmann provided an update on teacher certification. She confirmed that this is the time of the school year when the school leadership teams are deciding on which teachers to ask to return for next school year. Ms. Bussmann confirmed that part of this process includes reviewing all teachers certification status and the teacher's next steps toward teacher certification.

IV. Board Business

A. Approve Previous Joint Meeting Minutes

RESOLVED, the Boards of Directors of Amistad Academy & Elm City College Preparatory hereby approves the joint meeting minutes from January 21, 2015.

Motion: Laura Saverin

Second: Stephanie Ma

All in favor

Amistad Academy
Board of Directors Meeting

Wednesday, March 25
403 James Street, New Haven, Community Room

I. Call to Order & Attendance

The meeting was called to order by Carolyn Greenspan at 6:53.

The following directors and staff were in attendance:

Jennifer Connell, AA Board - Yes

Katrin Czinger, AA Board - Yes

Sheri Gellman, AA Board - No

Lorraine Gibbons, AA Board - Yes

Carolyn Greenspan, AA Board - Yes

Michael Griffin, AA Board - Yes (phone)

Toni Harp, AA Board - No

Howard Hill, AA Board - No

Pat Sweet, AA Board - Yes

David Katzman, AA Board - Yes

Dorsey Kendrick, AA Board - No

Andrew Lachman, AA Board - No

Jane Levin, AA Board - Yes

Tashia Mills, AA Board - No

Reginald Simmons, AA Board - Yes

Caroline Williams, AA Board - No

Bill Bouton, Legal - Yes

Sarah Blanton, Network Support - Yes

II. Open Session For Public Comment

There was no public comment.

III. Board Report & Business

A. Financial Report

Mr. Griffin provided the financial report. Mr. Simmons asked Mr. Griffin how surpluses are managed. Mr. Griffin said that surpluses are modest. The money is accumulated within Amistad Academy and is converted to cash reserves.

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

Motion: Pat Sweet

Second: Reginald Simmons

All in favor

RESOLVED, the Amistad Academy Board of Directors hereby approves the meeting minutes from January 21, 2015.

Motion: Katrin Czinger

Second: Lorraine Gibbons

All in favor

IV. Board Discussion

A. PGP Review Committee and Process

Ms. Greenspan provided an overview of the review process for evaluating principals. The board discusses the PGP with the school's Regional Superintendent. Ms. Gibbons and Mr. Czinger are already on the committee. Ms. Connell expressed interest in serving on the Principal review committee. Ms. Czinger spoke about how the process is an excellent view into the school. All board members will be invited once the meetings are scheduled.

B. Board Giving Update

Ms. Greenspan announced that 100 percent board giving is an expectation for the board. She confirmed that full board participation is a requirement for some grant opportunities that we seek.

C. Summer Retreat Scheduling

The board identified the Summer retreat will be held in August.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 7:41 by Carolyn Greenspan.