

**Amistad Academy**  
**Joint High School Committee Meeting**  
Wednesday, November 18, 2015, 4:30 - 5:30 pm  
403 James Street, New Haven

**I. Call to Order & Attendance**

The meeting was called to order at 4:39 pm by Carolyn Greenspan.

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

Lorraine Gibbons, AA Board - Yes	William Heins, ECCP Board - Yes
Caroline Williams, AA Board - Yes	Reginald Simmons, AA Board - No
Carolyn Greenspan, AA Board - Yes	
Andrew Lachman, AA Board - Yes	
Max Perez, AFBA Board - No	Sarah Blanton, AF Network Support - Yes
Chris Kunhardt, AFBA Board - Yes	Ken Paul, AF Network Support - Yes
Cornelius Medas, AFBA Board - Yes	John Furniss, AF Network Support -No
Richard Ferguson, ECCP Board - Yes	Claire Polcrack, School Leadership - Yes

**II. Open Session For Public Comment**

No public comment.

**III. Reports**

**A. School Report (Claire Polcrack)**

Ms. Claire Polcrack gave a report highlighting the successes and challenges Amistad High School are facing. They are focusing on providing more opportunities for feedback from scholars and families. Ms. Polcrack is spending time with groups of scholars (10 at a time) talking about how they feel the school year is going and seeking their input on areas they think are going well and areas where they think improvements can be made. Some of the takeaways include:

- Students appreciate more options for their uniform
- Merit system - appreciate prompts rather than going right to a demerit
- Increase assemblies and more school spirit events. Once per month there is an all school assembly. Additional assemblies occur at the grade level.
- Teacher consistency - scholars encouraged grade level teams to thoughtfully balancing work loads so that scholars don't receive multiple large assignments and assessments on the same night.
- Additional assemblies, some scholar led.

Things that students think the staff should focus on

- Consistency across grade levels

- Consistent grade book updates

Academically, AF Amistad High is leading the network in many subjects based on the results of the first Interim Assessment but the overall pass rate is low (although Ms Polcrack said that is it normal for that time of year).

Mr. Dick Ferguson asked about attending an all school assembly and Ms. Polcrack reported that there is an Oscar themed Interim Assessment (IA) celebration on Friday from 3:00 - 3:30pm. Board members are welcome to attend.

Ms. Polcrack guided the Committee through the final pages of her presentation which highlight pass rates, merit ratios, attendance, and detention attendance which is all data that the leadership team reviews on a weekly basis. The eleventh grade is going to be receiving additional support and encouragement to help elevate performance in order to ensure that they have the college choices that they may want.

Ms. Greenspan inquired about the pass rates for scholars to better understand why it seems low. Ms. Polcrack said that the pass rates are typical for this time of year and sometimes reflect their first quarter learning curve of what it takes to maintain good grades. She also discussed the ways in which all teachers are having ongoing conversations with scholars about how the choices they're making each day (for example, not reading a chapter in their English assignment) have larger repercussions in the longer term.

Ms. Greenspan asked about how the school decides where to send scholars on college visits. Ms. Polcrack said that this fall students in grades nine through eleven were grouped by GPA and visited private schools that were focused on schools that were within their reach. In the spring, they will visit public schools. Visits were focused on colleges and universities that were within a 60 to 90 minute bus ride of New Haven. The seniors go on various overnights during the fall based on the specific colleges they're interested in.

Ms. Polcrack shared some anecdotes about scholars who returned from college visits with a new and stronger focus on what it will take to get accepted.

#### **B. Financial Report**

Ms. Carolyn Greenspan gave the financial report for AF Amistad High School.

#### **IV. Board Business & Discussion**

**RESOLVED, the Amistad Academy High School Committee hereby approves the meeting minutes from April 2, 2015, May 20, 2015, and September 16, 2015.**

Moved by Dick Ferguson  
Seconded by Andrew Lachman  
All in favor

**RESOLVED, the Amistad Academy High School Committee hereby approves the financial report as presented.**

Moved by Dick Ferguson  
Seconded by Andrew Lachman  
All in favor

**Adjourn**

Moved by Dick Ferguson  
Seconded by Andrew Lachman  
All in favor

The meeting was adjourned at 5:22 by Carolyn Greenspan.