

**Amistad Academy  
Board of Directors**

Wednesday, November 15, 2017, 6:00 p.m.  
495 Blake St., New Haven

**I. Call to Order & Attendance**

The meeting was called to order at 6:07 p.m. by Carolyn Greenspan. The following board members, constituting a quorum, and Achievement First staff were in attendance:

Carolyn Greenspan - Yes	Sarah Lewis, AF School Leadership - No
Caroline Williams - No	Katie Poynter, AF School Leadership - Yes
Mike Griffin - Yes	Sarah Blanton, AF Network Support - No
Lorraine Gibbons - Yes (Phone)	Megan Tokarski, AF Network Support - Yes
Tim Pavlis - Yes	Ken Paul, AF Network Support - Yes
Jane Levin - Yes	Gina Musumeci, AF Network Support - Yes
Carla Seeger - Yes	Laurie Bussmann, AF Network Support - Yes (Phone)
Pat Sweet - No	
Khadijah Muhammad - Yes	

**Open Session for Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

**II. Business**

RESOLVED, the Amistad Academy Board of Directors hereby approves the meeting minutes from 9/12/17, with a correction to Tim Pavlis's attendance status from present to absent.

Motion by Jane Levin

Seconded by Khadijah Muhammad

All in favor

**III. Reports and Discussion**

Principal Katie Poynter delivered the Principal Report for Amistad Academy Middle. The school continues to focus on its student investment priority, particularly through more intentional and impactful use of Advisory time. Amistad Academy Middle also hosted its second family potluck event of the school year, with very strong turnout from 8th-grade families due to combining the potluck with an AF Amistad High information session. Amistad Academy Middle's basketball season is also getting underway, which always generates a lot of excitement within the school community.

Even so, Ms. Poynter reported that Amistad Academy Middle is having a more challenging year from a school culture perspective, and this is partly due to a higher number of new teachers this year. Each month, the school focuses on one REACH value, and in December, the school community will revisit Respect, as well as reset the staff vision and commitment to consistent expectations.

A few weeks ago, Amistad Academy Middle received its first round of Interim Assessment (IA) results. Results were mixed across grades and subjects and overall, were in the middle of the pack in terms of AF network-wide performance. Ms. Poynter expressed optimism about the school's ability to advance student achievement in ELA in particular, with a consistently strong literature team in place across the board (grades 5-8) for the first time in several years.

Gina Musumeci updated the board about Amistad Elementary School.

#### **A. Joint High School Committee Report (Jane Levin)**

Jane Levin delivered the Joint High School Committee report. She shared that Principal Morgan Barth has committed to remaining in the role through June 2019. Ms. Levin reviewed AF Amistad High's current strengths and challenges. She reported that the school added AP Seminar this year, so that seniors have the option to take four AP courses (AP Language, AP Seminar, AP Biology, and AP Calculus or AP Statistics), with all enrolled in at least two AP courses and the majority enrolled in three to four AP courses. Additionally, this fall, more students applied to college through the Early Decision process than ever before, and 100 students have already qualified to attend pre-college summer programs on college campuses, with GPAs of 3.5+. AF Amistad High had nearly 200 student athletes participate in fall sports, including a couple of teams going to state tournaments for the first time: girls soccer and girls volleyball.

Currently, AF Amistad High's enrollment is 630 students, and given the large size of the school, they are seeing incrementally more disciplinary incidents, including some serious issues that are resulting in expulsions. Mr. Barth is not worried that this is a part of a growing trend, but it does require meaningful staff time and resources to address. Additionally, with student enrollment expected to increase to approximately 730 students next year, long-term planning in terms of budget, staffing, and facilities is a challenge. Ms. Levin reported that the Joint High School Committee is being kept informed of the options under consideration to manage enrollment.

#### **B. Board Chair Report**

Carolyn Greenspan reported that Paul McCraven has resigned from the board due to other

personal commitments that resulted in challenges with meeting attendance and participation. The board is actively looking for new members, and Ms. Greenspan encouraged board members to recommend potential new members.

### **C. Treasurer Report**

Mike Griffin walked the board through Amistad Academy's FY18 year-to-date financials. Overall, the operating budget-to-actuals are in a good shape. Some additional staffing was added at Amistad Academy Elementary after the FY17 budget was approved to assist Principal Sarah Lewis with school turnaround efforts. This is a temporary staffing structure that will be largely offset through cost savings identified throughout the school year.

Mr. Griffin informed the board that an effort by AF is underway to explore lower-cost school models, in the range of \$1,000 - \$2,000 less per student, with a goal of identifying the majority of potential cost savings through non-personnel expenses. Carla Seeger expressed serious concerns about Amistad Academy Middle's ability, in particular, to make additional cost cuts without negatively impacting family, student, and staff success and satisfaction. Mr. Griffin reiterated that the possibility of future budget cuts is still very preliminary.

Mr. Griffin presented Amistad Academy's FY17 audited financial statement, reporting that for the first time in four years, there were no material weaknesses because the charter has made sufficient progress on teacher certification. Mr. Griffin summarized the management letter and findings.

Mr. Griffin reviewed the proposed revised board designated reserve policy, which is intended to make the policy more operable.

Mr. Griffin reported that Victor De La Paz, AF's Chief Financial Officer, has conducted a review of the Conflict of Interest Policy and believes it to be sound.

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

Motion by Khadijah Muhammad

Seconded by Mike Griffin

All in favor

RESOLVED, the Amistad Academy Board of Directors hereby accepts the report of the independent auditors CohnReznik prepared in relation to the fiscal year ended 6/30/17.

Motion by Khadijah Muhammad

Seconded by Mike Griffin  
All in favor

RESOLVED, the Amistad Academy Board of Directors hereby adopts the updated Board Designated Reserve Policy as presented.

Motion by Tim Pavlis  
Seconded by Jane Levin  
All in favor

#### **IV. Executive Session - Personnel**

The board entered executive session at 6:22 p.m. Motion by Khadijah Muhammad. Seconded by Tim Pavlis. The board exited executive session at 6:44 p.m. Motion by Tim Pavlis. Seconded by Khadijah Muhammad.

The board entered executive session a second time at 7:38 p.m. Motion by Tim Pavlis. Seconded by Khadijah Muhammad. The board exited executive session at 7:51 p.m. Motion by Khadijah Muhammad. Seconded by Tim Pavlis.

#### **V. Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:52 p.m. by Carolyn Greenspan.  
Motion by Khadijah Muhammad  
Seconded by Tim Pavlis  
All in favor