

- DRAFT -

Amistad Academy
Joint High School Committee Meeting
Zoom Video Conference
Wednesday, May 13, 2020, 4:00 pm

I. Call to Order & Attendance

The meeting was called to order at 4:06 pm by Jane Levin. The following board members, constituting a quorum, and Achievement First Staff were in attendance:

Carolyn Greenspan, Amistad Board - Yes
Jane Levin, Amistad Board - Yes
Albert Maldonado, Amistad Board - No
Richard Ferguson, ECCP Board - Yes
Laura Saverin, ECCP Board - Yes
Dick Kalt, AFBA Board - Yes
Jim Bennett, AFBA Board - Yes
Michael Strambler - AFBA Board - Yes

Simon Obas, Amistad HS Principal
Shannon Garfield, AF Network Support
Sarah Blanton, AF Network Support
Ken Paul, AF Network Support
Channa Williams, AF Network Support

Public: Julie Hajducky

II. Open Session for Public Comment

There was no public comment.

III. School Report

Mr. Simon Obas led the Committee through a presentation including an overview of remote learning, seniors/college updates, hiring and promotion.

Each student has a staff member who connects weekly. The advisor checks in on their well-being, their grades, and supports in any way they can.

Students have access to all of their courses. Core classes meet Monday through Thursday. Electives and office hours are on Fridays.

Based on a survey of families 75% reported they are satisfied with remote learning (20% are neutral and 5% are dissatisfied). Among those who expressed challenges, the most often cited issues were about the inconvenience, challenges of completing classwork, and juggling priorities at home. For students that don't attend the live Zoom classes, they are watching the videos in the evening. Parents have been understanding of the circumstances. The pushback isn't about the way AF is handling it but the circumstances themselves.

AP mock exams were taken and Mr. Obas said they are still reviewing results. The AF Calculus teacher had the strongest results in the network. There is usually a strong correlation between mock exam results and actual exam results but this year there is a lot of uncertainty based on modifications to the exam (45 minutes, open notes, free response questions only, covers the most important content from the course).

Mr. Obas has checked in with the juniors and seniors many of whom are doing a lot of work caring for siblings. These students are not penalized for not participating in the Zoom classes. He noted that those students are completing work in the evenings (95% of students are completing and submitting work every day). The flexibility is important and we don't want families to have to choose between taking care of themselves and getting work done.

Senior Signing Day will take place on May 22nd on Instagram. Students are making videos which will be posted. Graduation will be on Zoom on June 11th. Scholars have caps and gowns, a speaker, and they are making efforts to make it feel meaningful. They were not able to make a virtual prom. Homecoming happens in December and they are considering dedicating alumni Homecoming next winter to the class of 2020.

Mr. Obas reviewed college application and acceptance statistics. 130 scholars have already committed. 97% have made a final decision. Some are still deciding. Seniors who are failing are able to go to a credit recovery program starting Friday, May 29th. Depending on how many classes they are failing, they will make up the credit hours into June.

Mr. Obas personally emailed every senior whose graduation is in doubt to clearly outline the necessary steps to get full credit for courses to graduate. Conversations about promotion in doubt, and graduation in doubt, have been happening throughout the year.

There are five students who are interested in pursuing non-college programs for next year. There is a plan for four of those scholars and the fifth will be retained.

Mr. Obas reviewed the numbers of students whose promotion is in doubt by grade. The school prioritized communication, with documentation, throughout the year so that no scholars or families will be surprised at the end of the year.

Mr. Obas's leadership team has 12 members. Three are moving on at the end of this school year and their roles will not be filled. Next year's leadership team will be smaller. Hiring for teaching positions is a top priority. There are five teachers Mr. Obas wanted to rehire but could not because they were uncertified. Four teachers that would have been rehired chose to move on to other opportunities. There are 24 open seats.

Mr. Obas's priorities for hiring are: racial equity, beliefs and mindsets, and certification.

Mr. Obas has been satisfied with AF's response to supporting families and schools. He is appreciative of the staff who are bringing issues to his attention to ensure scholars have what they need. Team College has been working hard to make sure that COVID 19 doesn't negatively impact the college plans for the senior class.

Ms. Laura Saverin gave a financial update on the year to date financials and the FY21 budget which each of the three boards will also review in their board meetings. The High School was projecting a deficit but is now forecasting a surplus due to savings of closing the school building.

IV. Board Business

RESOLVED, the Amistad Academy Joint High School Committee hereby approves the meeting minutes from April 10, 2020.

Motion by Dick Ferguson

Seconded by Dick Kalt

All in favor

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

Motion by Carolyn Greenspan

Seconded by Dick Kalt

All in favor

RESOLVED, the Amistad Academy High School Committee hereby approves the financial budget for Amistad High School for the 2020-21 fiscal year as prepared by Achievement First.

Motion by Laura Saverin

Seconded by Carolyn Greenspan

All in favor with Jim Bennett abstaining.

V. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 5:05 pm by Jane Levin.

Motion by Dick Kalt

Seconded by Laura Saverin.

All in favor