

- DRAFT -

**Amistad Academy
Board of Directors**

Zoom Video Conference

Tuesday, September 8, 2020, 5:30 pm

I. Call to Order and Attendance

The meeting was called to order at 5:34 pm by Carolyn Greenspan. The following board members and Achievement First Staff were in attendance:

Carolyn Greenspan - Yes	Brooke Williams, Amistad Elementary School Principal
Lorraine Gibbons - Yes	Roseann Basile, Amistad Middle School Principal
Jane Levin - Yes	Christina Ellington, Regional Superintendent
Pat Sweet - Yes	Jesse Balis-Harris, Regional Superintendent
Jennifer Alexander - Yes	Sarah Blanton, AF Network Support
Albert Maldonado - No	Victor De La Paz, AF Network Support
Ethan Tyminski - No	Ken Paul, AF Network Support
Tyra Smallwood - Yes	

Public: Shannelle Whyte, Julie Hajducky

II. Open Session for Public Comment

There was no public comment.

III. Discussion and Business

A. Principal reports

Ms. Brooke Williams updated the board on the start of the school year which has been going smoothly.

Ms. Williams has hosted two town hall meetings. She reported that parents shared appreciation with the staff but did encourage the school to increase engagement between scholars during Zoom. This feedback was consistent with what the teachers were also focused on.

Ms. Williams discussed student attendance and teacher retention. The school is currently fully staffed. Three teachers are not certified but they have their tests scheduled within the next few weeks. All members of the leadership team returned this year..

Ms. Williams discussed some lessons learned from remote learning last spring including shifting the remote school day to mirror a regular school day, keeping kids in pods, and grading,

Ms. Christina Ellington, regional superintendent, shared her impressions of the start of the year and how the Amistad Elementary teachers are showing patience and pizzazz to help kids enjoy their learning.

Ms. Roseann Basile, Amistad Middle School principal, shared that she's enjoyed meeting the staff and establishing shared commitments to establish a strong vision for school culture. She shared survey feedback which was strong with helpful pushes. That feedback was shared with the staff the next day along with the action steps they were taking in response to the feedback.

Three teachers leftover the summer. Two of the teachers who left were new teachers who left on the first day and the third shared that she was offered another position where she can be 100% remote which was a better choice for her.

Back to school night is approaching and they are hoping to get as many families involved as possible. Ms. Basile plans to implement town halls to engage families.

Finally, Ms. Basile shared that the new teachers are paired with more experienced teacher which helps the transition and provides consistent modeling.

B. Approve Minutes

RESOLVED, the Amistad Academy Board of Directors hereby approves the meeting minutes from May 13 and July 28, 2020.

Motion by Tyra Smallwood

Seconded by Pat Sweet

All in favor

C. Elect Parent Representative

RESOLVED, the Amistad Academy Board of Directors hereby elects Ms. Shannelle Whyte to serve as a director for a three year term ending June 30, 2023.

Motion by Carolyn Greenspan

Seconded by Tyra Smallwood

All in favor

D. Joint High School Committee Report

Jane Levin gave the Amistad High School report noting strong leadership team retention (they

lost one member of the LT who is now a principal at another AF school). Ms. Levin reviewed enrollment, student and staff retention. All students have the technology needed for remote learning.

Seniors are finalizing their college lists. Professional development is continuing for teachers at the same level as it had been prior to COVID and special education services are continuing for scholars.

E. Executive Session – Personnel discussion (interview) regarding the hiring of an interim principal

The board entered executive session at 6:03 pm and invited the following members of the Achievement First staff to join: Sarah Blanton, Brooke Williams, Christina Ellington and Lauren Gemske. Motion by Tyra Smallwood. Second by Lorraine Gibbons.

The board exited executive session at 6:17pm to vote on the resolution for interim principal.

RESOLVED, the Amistad Academy Board of Directors hereby approves Ms. Lauren Gemske to serve as the Interim Principal of Amistad Elementary School for the duration of Ms. Brooke Williams' parental leave (12 weeks).

Motion by Pat Sweet

Seconded by Tyra Smallwood

All in favor

F. Board Chair Report

Carolyn Greenspan reviewed the recommended resolutions before the board.

RESOLVED, the Amistad Academy Board of Directors hereby elects the following leadership slate for the 2020-21 fiscal year:

Carolyn Greenspan, Chair

Lorraine Gibbons, Secretary

Motion by Pat Sweet

Seconded by Jane Levin

All in favor

RESOLVED, the Amistad Academy Board of Directors hereby renews the Cooperative Arrangement Agreement by and between Amistad Academy, Elm City College Preparatory, and AF Bridgeport Academy as presented for five (5) years.

Motion by Lorraine Gibbons

Seconded by Tyra Smallwood
All in favor

Ms. Greenspan noted how impressed she was with the mask policy.

RESOLVED, the Amistad Academy Board of Directors hereby approves the facial covering (mask) policy as presented by Achievement First.

Motion by Pat Sweet
Seconded by Tyra Smallwood
All in favor

G. Finance Committee Report

Victor De La Paz, CFO, joined the meeting to give an overview of the financials. There is a budget amendment before the board which takes into consideration adjustments to expenses for COVID and remote learning as well as shifts in revenue. The balance sheet shows a strong cash balance because of the PPP loan.

Mr. De La Paz reviewed changes to the PPP loan.

RESOLVED, the Amistad Academy Board of Directors hereby approves the amended budget as recommended by the Finance Committee and prepared by Achievement First for the 2020-21 fiscal year.

Motion by Lorraine Gibbons
Seconded by Pat Sweet
All in favor

Ms. Greenspan welcomed Lashell Rountree to share teacher certification data. Ms Rountree projected 100% certification once all paperwork is processed by the state.

Ms. Greenspan reviewed the CMO evaluation which is required annually by the State. The Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statements must be completed and emailed to Sarah Blanton. Finally, Ms. Greenspan reviewed the following resolution in support of Achievement First's Lead for Racial Equity core value and the resolution passed by the Network Support Board.

WHEREAS, Amistad Academy was founded to address the legacy of racism in public education and to support the young people in New Haven to realize their full power and potential;

WHEREAS, Amistad Academy has entered into an Academic and Business Services Agreement with Achievement First, Inc (“AF”), dated as of July 1, 2020;

WHEREAS, Lead for Racial Equity was defined as the lead core value for AF, but AF has acknowledged that it has not -- and does not currently -- consistently live that value in its schools. While AF has made meaningful progress in some areas, AF has not acted urgently or boldly enough to be consistently anti-racist in its instruction and curriculum, school discipline and student experience, talent practices and policies, family engagement, and decision-making; and

WHEREAS, Amistad Academy, in alignment with AF, aspires to lead the education sector not just in what our scholars achieve but also in the values-based way we operate. We believe that when we know better, we must do better. We are committed to becoming the anti-racist school system and community that our scholars, families, and staff deserve. We believe that we must interrogate our current practices, accelerate change, and institutionalize the equity-based mindsets, policies, and practices that are needed to move us collectively toward that vision.

BE IT RESOLVED, the Amistad Academy Board of Directors hereby affirms that Amistad Academy will uphold the values of Lead for Racial Equity and:

1. Vehemently denounce racism and actively work to dismantle it within and outside Amistad Academy;
2. Build structures and accountability to ensure all students, families, and staff are treated equitably and feel heard and valued; specifically, work to amplify Black and Latinx voices and perspectives both internally and externally;
3. Implement an anti-racist approach to the its beliefs, mindsets, policies, and practices with goals and actions in each of the following areas:
 - Adult culture and inclusive decision-making
 - Student Experience/School Culture (including student discipline policies and practices)
 - Talent (including equitable development, promotion, and compensation)
 - Instructional practices and curriculum
4. Instruct the principals of Amistad Academy to report at board meetings on the progress against these commitments, what has been accomplished, how different parts of the Amistad community have been engaged, and what the next phase of the work will be; and
5. Ensure all new Amistad Academy priorities and initiatives are developed, launched, and executed with an intentional and embedded focus on Leading for Racial Equity; take any additional steps necessary to ensure Amistad Academy becomes the powerful, anti-racist engine for equity that we were founded to be - and that our scholars, families and staff deserve.

Motion by Lorraine Gibbons
Seconded by Jen Alexander
All in favor

IV. Adjourn

There being no other business before the board, it was unanimously decided to adjourn at 6:34 pm.

Motion by Lorraine Gibbons
Second by Jane Levin
All in favor