

- DRAFT -

Amistad Academy Joint High School Committee

Zoom Video Conference

Wednesday, January 19, 2022

4:00 p.m.

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 4:03 p.m. by Jane Levin. The following board members, constituting a quorum, and Achievement First staff were in attendance.

Amistad Academy Board:

Jennifer Alexander - Yes

Carolyn Greenspan - Yes

Jane Levin - Yes

AF Bridgeport Academy Board:

Kimberly Bruce - Yes

Dick Kalt - Yes

Michael Strambler - Yes

Elm City College Preparatory Board:

Dick Ferguson - Yes

Julia Halberstam - No

Laura Saverin - Yes

Achievement First Staff:

Rod Bowen, Regional Superintendent

Simon Obas, Principal

Elise Major, AF Network Support

Connor McGann, AF Network Support

Ken Paul, AF Network Support

Megan Tokarski, AF Network Support

Public : Julie Hajducky

II. Open Session for Public Comment

There was no public comment.

III. Approve Meeting Minutes

RESOLVED, the Amistad Academy Joint High School Committee hereby approves the meeting minutes from November 3, 2021.

Motion by Dick Ferguson

Seconded by Laura Saverin

All in favor

IV. Discussion and Business

A. School Report

Simon Obas gave a Principal report about AF Amistad High. It is a challenging year as the pandemic continues. The school is experiencing a daily average of approximately 12 adults out due to illness or childcare issues, but a combination of the leadership team, other teachers, and building subs have been able to successfully provide coverage and keep AF Amistad High from having to switch to remote learning due to insufficient staffing. The school is also considering asking for parent volunteers to provide additional supervision and non-instructional coverage. Mr. Obas is constantly looking for ways to give teachers who are providing extra coverage some time back, including substituting some professional development time with teacher prep time.

- Rod Bowen emphasized that Mr. Obas's strong leadership has led to high engagement and a willingness among the staff to do whatever is needed to keep school in person.

The talent pipeline is another ongoing challenge. AF Amistad High has been unable to hire SPED teachers for all open positions and is also short a college counselor, a music teacher, and a classroom teacher. Mr. Obas was recently able to hire chemistry, computer science, and world languages teachers.

- Jane Levin asked if teachers are providing coverage across subject areas. Mr. Obas reported that teachers who are out are still uploading coursework to Google Classroom, so students can continue working even when the teacher providing coverage does not have experience or expertise in the subject area.

Mr. Obas shared that 152 out of 161 seniors have applied to a four-year college. Twenty-three seniors applied Early Decision, and 12 were accepted, eight deferred, and three not accepted. There are also 25 seniors applying to two-year colleges, in addition to a four-year option, as well as a few to trade schools. AF Amistad High's priority over the next few months is supporting seniors and their families to submit deposits and

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finalize financial aid, respond to requests for supplemental application information, set up profiles with AF's alumni counselors, and of course, make sure students are passing their remaining high school courses.

- Jane Levin asked about the status of SAT testing and student performance on the exam. Mr. Obas said that students have taken and will continue taking the SAT, even if colleges are not requiring it during the pandemic, and student performance on the exam has been variable.

Mr. Obas reported that winter sports at AF Amistad High are underway, including undefeated boys and girls basketball teams, as well as after school clubs. The school is preparing for a student-led Black History Month celebration coming up in February. Mr. Obas is trying to find other ways to increase social time for students while maintaining COVID safety protocols.

Mr. Obas announced that AF Amistad High received recognition earlier today from the College Board for having a comparatively high number of girls enrolled in STEM courses.

Dick Kalt asked about busing, and Mr. Obas said it has gotten drastically better and more timely since the fall.

B. Financial Report

Laura Saverin reviewed AF Amistad High's year-to-date financial statements through November 3, 2021, reporting that some additional revenue - the school is slightly overenrolled and understaffed - is being offset by a decrease in philanthropy and some higher spending in a few areas, so that the overall budget and projections remain largely unchanged.

Ms. Saverin explained a shift in AF Amistad High's ESSER spending plans, namely pushing back some program spending, such as tutoring, to Year 2 (2022-23) due to limited staff/capacity and allocating more Year 1 (2021-22) funds to operations and staff retention efforts.

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

Motion by Dick Kalt

Seconded by Carolyn Greenspan

All in favor

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V. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 4:33 p.m. by Jane Levin.

Motion by Laura Saverin

Seconded by Dick Ferguson

All in favor

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