

- DRAFT -

Amistad Academy Joint High School Committee

Zoom Video Conference

Wednesday, March 2, 2022

4:00 p.m.

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 4:02 p.m. by Jane Levin. The following board members, constituting a quorum, and Achievement First staff were in attendance.

Amistad Academy Board:

Jennifer Alexander - No

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:

Simon Obas, Principal

Elise Major, AF Network Support

Connor McGann, AF Network Support

Ken Paul, AF Network Support

Megan Tokarski, AF Network Support

Public : Peter Butler, 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 January 19, 2022.

Motion by Dick Ferguson

Seconded by Laura Saverin

All in favor

IV. Discussion and Possible Action

A. School Report

Simon Obas gave a Principal report about AF Amistad High. At the January 19, 2022 meeting, Mr. Obas reported the school was experiencing a daily average of approximately 12 adults out, but with a decrease in COVID cases and the loosening of quarantine policies, this number has gone down. AF Amistad High is still not fully hired, but staff have been able to provide coverage as needed. Mr. Obas is currently conducting one-on-one retention meetings with each staff member and anticipates higher-than-normal turnover heading into the 2022-23 school year, with many staff members seeking more money elsewhere, leaving the education profession in general, and/or moving out of state. AF Amistad High's full Leadership Team and most of the veteran staff members are planning to return next year, but there is more uncertainty among younger staff/those newer to the profession. In general, Mr. Obas said staff are eager for more information about the network's and school's vision and plan for the 2022-23 school year.

Readiness planning for the next school year has been delayed across the AF network, but Mr. Obas and the AF Amistad High Leadership Team recently kicked off some planning activities and will remain ready to adjust their plans as needed. Mr. Obas shared that one of the most exciting plans for the 2022-23 school year is a partnership with Southern Connecticut State University (SCSU) to give AF Amistad High juniors and seniors the opportunity to take SCSU courses and earn college credit either by going on campus and/or through AF Amistad High teachers getting certified to teach SCSU courses. The logistics of the partnership, such as scheduling and transportation, are still being worked out.

Mr. Obas reported that the possible ending of the mask mandate in schools has been a "hot topic" among students and staff. The majority of AF Amistad High staff are in favor of keeping the mask mandate, which currently remains in place for all New Haven Public

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Schools (NHPS) through at least the end of March. If NHPS drops the mask mandate at the end of the month, AF Amistad High will have to decide whether or not to follow suit. Mr. Obas said they do not know how many students are vaccinated, and he is not sure if they can request that information, but it would be helpful to inform future decisions about masks.

Jane Levin asked how students are adjusting after 1.5 years of remote/hybrid learning. Mr. Obas said it varies significantly by student, and the staff are still working to assess the full impact on students. In general, upperclassmen have adjusted better than freshmen and sophomores. Sports and extracurricular clubs are happening at AF Amistad High, and the school recently resumed larger, school-wide activities/gatherings.

AF Amistad High's seniors are entering into college decision season, and college counselors are conducting one-on-one meetings with seniors and their families to discuss where they will attend college. After that process is complete, college counselors will launch the college process with the junior class. AF Amistad High is working on some changes for the 2022-23 school year to make the work of the college counselors more sustainable, such as incorporating the writing of students' personal statements for college applications into the school's ELA coursework.

B. Financial Report

Laura Saverin reviewed AF Amistad High's year-to-date financial statement through January 31, 2022, reporting that the financials have not changed significantly since the November 30, 2021 financial statement. The school is projected to break even at fiscal year end. Ms. Saverin called attention to a significant increase in the insurance line item and more onboarding expenses than budgeted for things like fingerprinting and office supplies. She also noted that the contingency line item was increased using surplus with the hope that AF Amistad High might be able to hire for some of the outstanding open positions.

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

Motion by Dick Kalt

Seconded by Dick Ferguson

All in favor



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V. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 4:49 p.m. by Jane Levin.

Motion by Laura Saverin

Seconded by Carolyn Greenspan

All in favor

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