

**Achievement First
Amistad Academy
Board of Directors Meeting**
Zoom Video Conference
Tuesday, May 4, 2022
5:30 pm

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:35 pm by Carolyn Greenspan.

The following board members, constituting a quorum, were in attendance: Jane Levin, Carolyn Greenspan, Pat Sweet, Jen Alexander, Ethan Tyminski, Shannelle Whyte (Parent Rep), Tyra Smallwood (Teacher Rep), Yashira Agosota.

The following Achievement First staff members were in attendance: Fatimah Barker, Lisa Margosia, Beth Cocuzza, Steph Keenoy, De-Lea Deane Allen, Xanthe Jory, Neil Shah, Blakely Simoneau, Ken Paul, Kate Aufiero, Jesse Balis-Harris, Rod Bowen, Isabel Tañedo, Elise Major, Lauren Raimondi, Jasmine Watts, Kristin Damo

II. Executive Session

At 5:39 pm, ahead of schedule and so as to accommodate personal constraints of AF staff, Ms. Carolyn Greenspan asked that the Board enter into Executive Session to discuss personnel matters related to the principal renewal offer for Simon Obas for school year 2022-2023. Ms. Greenspan invited Elise Major, Isabel Tañedo, Rod Bowen and Stephanie Keenoy from Achievement First to join.

Motion by Jane Levin
Second by Pat Sweet
All in favor.

The Board exited Executive Session at 5:42pm

Motion by Jane Levin
Second by Pat Sweet
All in favor.

The Board returned to the planned agenda.

III. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

IV. Approve Minutes

RESOLVED, the Amistad Academy Board of Directors hereby approves the meeting minutes from April 7, 2022, amended to show Jane Levin in attendance.

Motion by Carolyn Greenspan
Seconded by Yashira Swisler
All in favor.

V. Discussion and Business

A. Principal Reports

Lauren Raimondi, Elementary School principal, and Jasmin Watts, interim Middle School principal, each reported on teacher retention, leadership team retention, teacher certification, organization health, student attendance, student attrition, enrollment, suspensions and academic data.

Ms. Raimondi highlighted strong teacher retention and overall staff organization health, and the commitment to pushing for strong academic results and supporting families in meeting attendance goals.

Ms. Watts also shared positive results from the Organization Health Survey, committing to planning for how staff can feel more supported and encouraged to stay with Achievement First. Ms. Watts also highlighted strong results from the Spring Student Experience Survey, including that the Middle School ranked #2 overall highest within the Achievement First Network. Pat Sweet commented that the report on Middle School was very encouraging. Jesse Balis-Harris, Chief of Schools (Elementary Schools), added that we don't often see this kind of improvement in terms of student and adult culture.

B. Joint High School Committee Report

Jane Levin reported back from the Joint High School Committee meeting, where Simon Obas delivered updates to representatives of the Boards of Amistad Academy, Bridgeport Academy, and Elm City College Prep.

Ms. Levin noted Team College updates, including the acceptance of seniors into 2-year colleges and trade schools, and that the Team has started working with the junior class, giving them an overview of the college application process. Ms. Levin also shared that students are also returning to pre-COVID activities, such as lunch in the cafeteria, a school dance, etc.

Ms. Levin also reported on challenges the school is facing, related to staffing shortages and behavioral issues related to the return to in-person school.

C. COO Report on Enrollment and Safety

Ms. Xanthe Jory reported on her positive experience visiting the Elementary and Middle Schools. Echoing principal reports, she also reported on strong enrollment data, with no concerns at the Elementary, Middle and High Schools.

On safety: Ms. Jory confirmed that there have been no major safety incidents at the Elementary School or Middle School, save for one incident at the High School that has since been resolved.

On COVID-19: Ms. Jory noted that AF is seeing increases in positivity rates but is still at levels relatively lower than other points throughout the pandemic. AF is paying close attention to this, sending weekly updates to parents, and also still requiring masks in line with local policies.

Finally, Ms. Jory updated the Board on space challenges faced by AF sister school, Elm City College Prep (ECCP). AF is working with ECCP school leaders to understand specific pain points and craft potential solutions, including the possibility of moving ~20 rising 8th graders from ECCP to Amistad Academy for one year. After visiting the space and consulting with school leaders, AF considers this to be a viable option from a space and resource perspective. With the support of both Amistad Academy and ECCP boards, AF would continue its due diligence and provide a detailed action plan and communications strategy.

Ms. Jory and other AF team members entertained questions from the Board on working with CSDE, which students would be transferred, how students would be integrated into Amistad, reactions from Amistad school leadership, and if moving ~20 students would indeed alleviate space issues.

D. Treasurer Report

Neil Shah, Chief Financial Officer, and Kate Aufiero, VP of Finance, presented the financial report and draft budgets for next school year, including the clarification that salary increases and retention bonuses did not come at the cost of staff reductions in schools.

WHEREAS, the Amistad Academy Board of Directors has heard the both the financial statements and draft budgets for next school year, be it

RESOLVED, the Amistad Academy Board of Directors hereby approves the financial report and the financial budget as prepared by Achievement First for the 2022-23 fiscal year as presented.

Motion by Jen Alexander
Seconded by Carolyn Greenspan
All in favor.

achievementfirst.org

E. Board Business

1. Principal Renewal Offer

RESOLVED, the Amistad Academy Board of Directors has discussed the performance of Simon Obas, Amistad Academy High School Principal intending to return for the 2022-23 school year, and the compensation package as proposed by Achievement First, and hereby approves his offer renewal, with a final compensation package as incorporated in the FY22-23 budget.

Motion Tyra Smallwood
Second Yashira Agosto
All in favor.

2. Re-appointment of auditors

RESOLVED, the Amistad Academy Board of Directors hereby ratifies the re-appointment of CohnReznick to perform the financial audit of FY2022 and prepare the IRS Forms 990s.

Motion by Carolyn Greenspan
Second by Jane Levin
All in favor.

3. Healthy Food Certifications

RESOLVED, Pursuant to C.G.S. Section 10-215f, the board of education or governing authority certifies that all food items offered for sale to students in the schools under its jurisdiction, and not exempted from the Connecticut Nutrition Standards published by the Connecticut State Department of Education, will comply with the Connecticut Nutrition Standards during the period of July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2023. This certification shall include all food offered for sale to students separately from reimbursable meals at all times and from all sources, including but not limited to school stores, vending machines, school cafeterias, culinary programs, and any fundraising activities on school premises sponsored by the school or non-school organizations and groups.

RESOLVED, The board of education or governing authority will allow the sale to students of food items that do not meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards provided that the following conditions are met: 1) the sale is in connection with an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on the weekend; 2) the sale is at the location of the event; and 3) the food items are not sold from a vending machine or school store. An "event" is an occurrence that involves more than just a regularly scheduled practice, meeting, or extracurricular activity. For example, soccer games, school plays, and interscholastic debates are events but soccer practices, play rehearsals, and debate team meetings are not. The "regular school day" is the period from midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day. "Location" means where the event is being held and must be the same place as the food sales.

achievementfirst.org

Motion by Jen Alexander
Second by Tyra Smallwood
All in favor.

4. Re-election of Director

RESOLVED, the Amistad Academy Board of Directors hereby ratifies the re-election of Ethan Tyminski, with a three year term ending June 30, 2025.

5. Other updates

Ms. Greenspan announced that a few people would be stepping off the Board:

- Tyra Smallwood, who has completed her term as Teacher Representative. Ms. Greenspan announced that the Board will look for the next representative to come from the Elementary School.
- Ms. Levin, stepping down after 14 years of service
- Ms. Greenspan, after 13 years of service

Ms. Greenspan then gave the floor to Ms. Fatimah Barker, interim AF CEO. Ms. Barker extended her gratitude to Ms. Levin, Ms. Smallwood and Ms. Greenwood, and spoke about her transition out of her role, and introduced Lisa Margosian, incoming interim CEO.

Before adjourning, Ms. Greenspan also thanked Steph Keenoy, Superintendent, for her service, also noting that she would also be transitioning out of Achievement First.

V. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 7:07 pm by Carolyn Greenspan.

Motion by Carolyn Greenspan
Second by Tyra Smallwood
All in favor.