



**DRAFT Minutes
Amistad Academy
Board of Directors Meeting**

Venue: Zoom

Zoom: <https://achievementfirst.zoom.us/j/7382361994>

Wednesday, October 12, 2022, 5:30-7:00 pm

I. Call to Order

Attendees:

Board Members: Lorraine Gibbons, Yashira Agosto, Gayatri Mehta, Patricia Sweet, Shannelle Whyte, Ethan Tyminski, Linda Darkwah

AF Staff: Sultana Salma, Sulafa Bashir, Beth Cocuzza, Neil Shah, Michael Rabin, John Sharkey, Xanthe Jory, Nakia Hall, Lauren Raimondi, Jasmine Watts, Caleb Dolan, Brooke Williams, Rod Bowen

II. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

III. Approval of Minutes

The approval of the minutes were deferred until later in the meeting, pending there being a quorum present.

IV. Presentation by Achievement First

Before beginning, Ms. Sulafa Bashir apologized for the absence of Ms. Lisa Margosian, Interim Chief Executive Officer, who could not attend the meeting.

A. Principal's Reports

Ms. Lauren Ramanti, the Principal of the Elementary school, provided the 22-23 start of the year updates. She noted that student enrollment is at 101% and 100% staffed. She further noted that the school is 81.5% certified with at least 1 certified teacher in each classroom lead teaching delivering core instruction. There are also 15 uncertified staff, of which 14 are considered on track to certification. This means they are awaiting

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their certification from the state or awaiting their scheduled test dates. Ms. Lauren stated that their priority during the first 8 weeks of school has been to establish a strong classroom environment, school culture, health and reading. This also included developing relationships, not only between staff and students, but also among the families and staff members.

A board member asked about the family engagement program - how receptive were the families to it and how successful was it in terms of involving the families?

Ms Lauren responded by noting that it was their first event, in which they will try to track across the year including a survey to assess whether the events are helpful to foster a relationship with the school. The first event had a good turnout, with family involvement and some watching. Thus, the next event will be an information evening. This will involve a nurse and a social worker doing an information session for families alongside the teachers.

Another board member asked how one would characterize the disposition of the parents after two years of COVID

Ms Lauren responded by stating that with their first survey which included a question the impression of the school, COVID safety and school learning. The results were positive about the school. However, parents are still apprehensive about covid safety. However, the school will continue to support and navigate the students.

B. Middle School Report

Ms. Jasmine Walks, the Interim Principal at the Middle School stated that the student enrollment is at 102% and content staffing is at 100%, which includes the support staff. She further noted that 99% of staff is teacher certified, while 1% of the teachers are 16 points away from full certification. Historically, the school has been overenrolled, however, this has not had any effect on the budget. Moreover, there has been high retention, which has continued to build strong teams and families. She noted that there is a school store for treats which students participate in. The school focused on instruction where students and teachers work together to close the achievement gaps.

Ms Jasmine noted that a popular method used by the schools to measure a student's ability is Lexile level or a Lexile Measure. She provided the STAR reading assessment, which the students partake in at the beginning, middle and end of the year. A priority would be to ensure the school has a higher percentage of proficient readers by the end

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of the year. Ms. Jasmine continued with bar charts to provide the board with a visual presentation of the schools' favorability by the students.

A board member asked whether the school store for treats had been there before or was it a new program. The response was that the program is not new; however, it was a soft launch. This year there is more engagement.

Another board member asked if Amistad Middle school students realize that it is the first school of Achievement First, and that it was a model school.

The importance and foundation of the school is incorporated in the 7th and 8th grade history class lessons. Ms Lauren noted that they are looking at incorporating the same in the 6th grade classes as well.

C. Academic Deep Dive

Mr. John Sharkey, Interim Chief Academic Officer, presented a summary of the deep dive. He began by explaining the multiple data points, including academic improvements. There were improvements from 2020-21 over the past year, with absolute performance below pre-pandemic levels. Math experienced greater declines and slower recovery due to the conceptual nature of the math standards, while the literacy standards tend to spiral. Furthermore, the 2021-2022 school year, Amistad performance was generally on par with CT AF average in MS and slightly below in ES.

In 2021-2022, the school is approaching state average overall, however, AF Black, Hispanic, MLL, FRPL-Enrolled scholars outperformed state average based on the Subject Performance Index. He further stated that 2022-2023, the school will continue to measure performance through internal assessments such as STEP, STAR, MAP, and mock evaluations. Moreover, there were pilots launched in ES curriculum and with MS school support models to evaluate implementation and outcome measures to determine future support.

Mr. Sharkey presented the board with a bar chart to provide the board a visual representation of the Amistad performance which was on par or slightly below the AF CT average. The ES math performance was the furthest below AF CT. He highlighted that the Subject Performance Index is a metric inclusive of all scholar scores, in which the scores give a better comparison metric at the aggregate and subgroup level. In addition, he provided the board with a chart explaining that the ELA results have shown improvements, but remain below pre-pandemic levels for both ES and MS. Mr.



Sharkey also noted that the AP pass rate was slightly below 2020-2021 levels which are below pre-pandemic levels.

Performance in 2021-2022 was consistent with the 2020-2021 performance at AF. He stated that staffing challenges have limited offerings in some cases, while HS had inconsistent and incomplete data to support progress monitoring. He also presented on the STEP/F&P, which shows improvement over 2020-2021, but the growth does not reach pre-pandemic levels, aligned with SBAC results. Mr. Sharkey also analyzed the STAR assessment, which aligns with State test results growth, while Amistad's SGP exceeded AF CT and AF Network. This means that at Amistad, 78% of students were growing at or above the 50 percentile. He also highlighted the use of internal assessments to monitor progress. He noted that there was an under prediction of the performance in ELA, particularly in ES; which had a stronger relationship in math for both ES and MS.

Mr. Sharkey provided the forecast shared assessment data and insight on AF's response and academic initiatives for 2022-2023 school year, which included the following:

- curriculum pilots in ES,
- improvements in data reporting and responses, and
- the shift to school support from network academic teams.

The board members asked a question about the plans to communicate the assessment data to the families. Communication templates were sent to school leaders that can be sent with the data which is embargoed, which explains the scores and what the school is doing.

D. Presenting New Board Dashboard

Mr. Michael Rabin, Deputy Chief of Staff, provided the board with an overview of the purpose of the new board dashboard. He reminded the board members that the dashboard will provide high-level overviews of critical data and ensure the board understands AF's progress before AF leaders provide more context during meetings. He further noted that board members will receive a copy of the dashboard ahead of time and will be asked to review it to actively participate in meeting conversations. Mr. Rabin encouraged board members to provide feedback over the school year, to continue improving the tool. No questions were asked.

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V. **Committee Reports**

Mr. Neil Shah, Chief Financial Officer, presented the FY23 revised budget awaiting board approval. He noted two changes. The first was an increase in revenue, under the general operations, in which the weighted per pupil phase in funding increased to 25.42% from the originally expected 14.76% for a total of \$253k anticipated in the Amistad charter. Under the private section, there was less philanthropy needed due to staffing plan reductions. The second under expenses section, there were lower staff costs due to the reductions made to address the national teacher shortage which were partially offset by the addition of sign-on bonuses offered to new staff.

BE IT RESOLVED, the Amistad Board of Directors hereby approves the revised budget as presented and prepared by Achievement First for the 2022-2023 fiscal year.

Motion by Lorraine G.
Seconded by Patricia S.
All in favor

VI. **Board Discussion and Business**

Ms. Lorriane moved the board to vote on the following matters:

A. **Approval of the minutes as presented in the board packages**

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Amistad Academy Board of Directors hereby approves the meeting minutes from August 4, 2022 and September 16, 2022.

Motion by Patricia S.
Second by Shannelle W.
All in favor

B. **Approval of Leadership Slate**



BE IT RESOLVED, that the Amistad Academy Board of Directors hereby elects the following leadership slate for the 2022-2023 fiscal year:

- Lorraine Gibbons, Chair
- Patricia Sweet, Treasurer

Motion by Yashira A.
Second by Shannelle W.
All in favor

C. Committee Appointments

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Amistad Academy Board of Directors hereby appoints the following committee members:

- Finance Committee: Patricia Sweet, (Chair), Ethan Tyminski, Yashira Agosto
- Personnel Committee: Lorraine Gibbons (Chair), Jennifer Alexander
- Amistad Joint HS Committee: Jennifer Alexander (Chair), Lorraine Gibbons, Yashira Agosto

Motion by Patricia S.
Second by Yashira A.
All in favor

D. Elect New Board Member

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Amistad Academy Board of Directors elects Ms. Linda Darkwah to serve as a Teacher Representative for a 3-year term, ending June 2025.

Motion by Patricia S.
Second by Yashira A.
All in favor



E. Approval of Interim Principals

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Amistad Academy Board of Directors hereby approves the following individuals to serve as interim principals, as needed, based on the recommendations by Achievement First, between October 12 and November 30, 2022.

- Elementary School: Will Griffin
- Middle School: Jasmine Watts
- High School: AJ Lowe

Motion by Patricia S.
Second by Ethan T.
All in favor

F. Approval of SY 2022-2023 Family Handbook

BE IT RESOLVED, the Amistad Academy Board of Directors hereby approves the 2022-2023 AF Family Handbook

Motion by Ethan T.
Second by Pat S.
All in favor

VII. Adjourn

Prior to adjourning, Ms Lorraine reminded the board members of the conflict of interest forms which are required of all board members annually, and it will be due by 17 October 2022.

The meeting was adjourned by Ms. Lorraine Gibbons.

Motion



Achievement **First**

Seconded
All in favor

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