



**DRAFT Minutes  
Amistad Academy  
Joint High School Committee Meeting**

Venue: Zoom

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

Monday, November 14, 2022, 4:30-5:30 pm

**I. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 4:33 pm by Jennifer Alexander

Attendees:

Board Members: Jennifer Alexander, Yashira Agosto, Dick Ferguson, Laura Saverin, Prish Pierce, Dick Kalt, Michael Strambler

AF Staff: Sulafa Bashir, Sultana Salma, Simon Obas, Rod Bowen

**II. Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

**III. Approval of Minutes**

BE IT RESOLVED, the Amistad Academy Joint HS Committee hereby approves the meeting minutes from October 12, 2022.

Motion by Dick Ferguson

Second by Laura Saverin

All in favor.

**IV. Discussion**

A. School Report

- Simon O. discussed some of the highlights with academic progress which has been the focus, especially around work completion rates and raising the academic bar after the pandemic. He noted that there was a school-wide academic celebration planned on Friday for students who are achieving honors for their academic work in Q1. He invited board members to attend the celebration.

- Simon O. moved to discuss the challenges with not being fully hired which means that students are not receiving all the instruction they should be. Gaps are most acute in STEM. He stated that classes without a full-time teacher tend to have spikes in behavior issues.
- Teachers and the leadership team are covering which contributes to burn-out. The school is continuing to work with Team Recruit to fill the positions and recently hired an ELA teacher. They are also contracting with live virtual teachers to help fill the gaps.
- Simon O. also mentioned an attempt to partner with University of Bridgeport's education program to have student teachers work with Amistad HS and ultimately be hired as full-time teachers upon graduation; however it was not possible to establish this partnership at this time.
  
- There was a discussion on STAR reading Beginning of Year (BOY) data for Amistad and the AF CT average. Simon stated that the test is administered 3 times over the course of the year. Committee members asked if there was comparison data available to the district or nation-wide data.
- Given the levels of high-school seniors, Dick F. asked if there was any data on how last year's seniors were doing in their college course. Rod Bowen answered that many colleges were having to change their approach and provide additional remediation given post-pandemic levels of incoming students.
- Rod B. also stated that a new director of literacy has been hired to work with the Deans and Humanities and ELA departments on how to embed literacy instruction in their unit design.
- Rod B. mentioned that, by and large, acceptable reading levels are within 2 years of grade level, so 10th grade level is considered acceptable for seniors but the current BOY year data is not.
- Committee members asked about tutoring and Simon O said that they are contracted with an outside company to do tutoring through grant funding,
- Jen A. asked for more information from the network about AF's plan to tackle this challenge which is not unique to AF.
- Committee members also asked for pre-pandemic comparison data which Simon O. said can be pulled for the future.
  
- Student experience surveys are done every couple of months and the latest data shows 53% favorable results. Rod B. gave the context that these surveys are conducted nationally and for high school, the normed percentage of favorability is 56% (as results tend to go down for middle

and highschool relative to elementary which is around 80%). Being at 56% or higher puts a high school in the top third of favorability responses across the country.

- Dick K, expressed surprise that the trend is lower this year than last year given that students are in school more. Simon O. stated that the reason for that is that expectations are higher this year than last year around getting the work done and many of the comments in the survey had to do with rules like dress code that are more strictly enforced this year.
- Simon O. also stated that surveys don't tell the whole story of the level of joy you can feel walking through the school and seeing how students interact.
- Simon O. shared some data on post-secondary plans of this year's seniors in response to board members' request from the last meeting.
- There was a question about how data compares to previous years and Simon O. stated that it's not possible to draw an apples-to-apples comparison given the shift away from focus on 4-year college for all. Overall, data looks to track with previous year's results.

## **V. Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:30 pm by Jennifer Alexander.