

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

Venue: Zoom

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

Wednesday October 12, 2022, 4:30-5:30 pm

I. Call to Order

Board Members: Jen Alexander, Yashira Agosta, Laura Saverin, Dick Kalt, Dick Ferguson, Prish Pearce, Raj Lakra

AF staff: Sultana Salma, Sulafa Bashir, Rod Bowen, Simon Obas, Ken Paul, Peter Butler

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

II. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

III. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the August 18, 2022 were approved.

Motion by Laura Saverin

Second Dick Ferguson

All in favor

IV. Discussion

Before beginning, the Board members and AF staff introduced themselves.

A. Principal's Report

Mr. Simon provided the board with the 2022-2023 start of the year updates. He stated that student enrollment is at 100% with 710 students and 90% staffed. He further noted that the school has 82% of staff who are teacher certified and 18% of teachers are uncertified. Of the 20 uncertified staff members, only 15

are awaiting confirmation from the state. Furthermore, 3 are off-track, and 2 members are waiting on the test date.

A member of the board asked what the translation of the 90% staffing is in relation to the number of teachers needed, including how many special ed. teachers there are.

Mr. Simon stated that there is a gap of 6 teachers in the school, and there are currently 4 special ed teachers, thus 2 more are needed.

Mr. Simon also highlighted 3 priority areas in relation to return to school:

- Student culture and health
- Athletics program/extracurricular activities
- Instruction

Furthermore, he presented on the college level courses the school offers. A member of the board asked about the result of the SCSU engagement. Mr. Simon responded that this is the first year working with the SCSU, of which the school will be assessing going forward.

Mr. Simon presented an update of the school's college and career services. He noted that in September there was focus on four significant areas. This included a list of meetings with students/family, assessing current pathways interest, collecting financial information, and working on the primary essay for students' applications. In October, there will be a continuation of the work done in September, including focusing on shifting to essay completion for early decision candidates and FAFSA submission.

A member of the board asked whether there is a percentage of students who will be enrolling in 4-year colleges vs community and technical schools.

Mr. Simon mentioned that there is no data yet, but will be able to share the information with relevant stakeholders in November.

Another board member asked what the total number of the senior class is

applying to college.

Mr. Simon stated that the data is not yet complete and that students may decide on a different path than college. Thus, the percentage might not be 100%, but the school will encourage students to apply for college.

A board member noted that some concerns may be emanating from the pandemic, which would affect the percentage of student application.

A board member asked how students are coping with mental health.

Mr. Simon stated that it varies, given that students that are not experiencing mental health issues, however there are some that are. What has aided mental health at the school is how the day begins by offering students time to ease into the day before instruction. For students that are experiencing mental health issues, more time is spent with the seniors, given the students' anxiety about their future. The school also has social worker/student counseling. Moreover, the school has a student government, in which there is a mental health advocate representing the students.

A board member noted that students are still readjusting and transitioning post-pandemic, which has also had an impact on mental health across the school spectrum. It is important to be cognizant of this impact.

Mr. Simon mentioned that as students get older, the rules and consequences vary, thus students are more aware of how the school itself is responding to the changed environment. The students are transitioning with enthusiasm. One of the challenges that were noted was literacy, given that students are taking more advanced courses, however, there are some who are still struggling to comprehend the material. Therefore, the school has attempted to operate at a slower pace.

Another board member asked what the situation with the buses is, including what the security measures have been applied given the current reality.

Mr. Simon stated that the situation has improved this year, although there are

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challenges of lateness. He further said that there have not been many changes to the security i.e., there are no security guards at the school. There has been communication and support from Network Support regarding steps to be taken during a security situation, including the school having evacuation drills. The school does have door alarms but there are no panic buttons.

A board member requested options for visiting the school.

B. Finance report

Laura mentioned that it is still too early in the year to have interim financials. However, two of the boards have already approved the revised budget. She further noted that the board was aware there would be changes to the spring budget to reflect the new reality of how staffing would look like. Moreover, there was additional revenue to the budget.

A board member asked about a new government program being offered on employee retention that the high school can take advantage of as described in a previous Finance Committee meeting.

Laura responded that this initiative will be done by charter, and that AF Finance team will be sharing more details with each charter as they become available.

V. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned by Jen Alexander at 5:09 pm

Motion by Raj Lakra

Seconded by Dick Ferguson

All in favor