



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

Venue: Virtual Meeting

Zoom: <https://achievementfirst.zoom.us/j/81947533897>

Wednesday, March 8, 2023, 5:30-7:00 pm

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Ms. Lorraine Gibbons at 5:32 pm.

Attendees:

Patricia B. Sweet	Y	Shannelle Whyte	Y
Lorraine Gibbons	Y	Yashira Agosto	Y
Jennifer Alexander	Y	Gayatri Mehta	Y
Ethan Tyminski	Y	Linda Darkwah	Y

AF Staff: Lisa Margosian, Karolyn Belcher, Beth Cocuzza, Blakely Simoneau, Xanthe Jory, Michael Rabin, Brooke Williams, Caleb Dolan, Christi George, Neil Shah, Sulafa Bashir, Nakia Hall, Rod Bowen, LaShell Rountree, Rosie Basile, Ken Paul

II. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

III. Approval of Minutes

Ms. Lorraine Gibbons took the board through approval of the previous meeting minutes.

It was:

RESOLVED, the Amistad Academy Board of Directors hereby approves the meeting minutes from February 6, 2023.

Motion by Jen Alexander

Second by Pat Sweet

All in favor.

- WHEREAS, Patricia Sweet submitted her resignation from the role of Treasurer effective Dec 31, 2022, BE IT RESOLVED, the Amistad Academy Board of

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Directors hereby elects Lorraine Gibbons to serve as Treasurer and Chair of the Finance Committee through the end of the current school year.

Motion by Jen Alexander
Second by Yashira Agosto
All in favor.

Finally, Ms. Gibbons took the board through appointing members to the board's Personnel Committee:

It was:

RESOLVED, Amistad Academy Board of Directors hereby appoints the following members to the Personnel Committee:

- Lorraine Gibbons (Chair), Jennifer Alexander, Patricia Sweet

Motion by Yashira Agosto
Second by Lorraine Gibbons
All in favor.

IV. Board Discussion

- A. Proposed Executive Session
 1. Principal Mid-Year Reviews
 2. Principal Hiring Pipeline

Ms. Gibbons took the board through a motion to enter into executive session to discuss the topic of Principal Renewals, inviting the following AF staff to join: Lisa Margosian, Karolyn Belcher Rod Bowen, Caleb Dolan, and Brooke Williams.

Motion by Pat Sweet
Second by Jen Alexander
All in favor.

The board entered Executive Session at 5:38 pm and exited at 6:05 pm.

V. Discussion with Achievement First

- A. Academic Update

Ms. Belcher then gave an update on the preparations for state assessments as well as the decision to move to new high quality curriculum, detailing the curricula selected and the process for change management across elementary



and middle school, especially with respect to minimizing the lift for elementary teachers to learn multiple curricula.

There was a discussion about change management for teachers, and relying on PD and AF's continuous improvement cycle to support the learning process.

B. Teacher Recruitment Update

Ms. Christi George gave an update on teacher recruitment, highlighting a change that shifts away from the central, online process that occurred during COVID, responding to principal feedback to bring screened candidates to the schools earlier in the interview process. She mentioned that the recruitment season had kicked off and that some hires have already been made.

Ms. George also presented the latest data from the "Intent to Return" survey for teachers and school staff. She highlighted the efforts school leaders make to increase response rate and convert the "maybe" responses.

Board members asked questions about reasons why teachers leave and whether compensation was a factor. Ms. George discussed exit surveys as well as data from the org health survey which is conducted twice a year and can provide context on why staff members leave, which is typically related to workload and alignment with school leadership's vision, much more than pay.

Ms. George also mentioned some changes being made to shore up teacher sourcing amidst the on-going teacher shortage, including new partnerships with local education organizations, and colleges and universities.

Ms. Karolyn Belcher gave a quick update about an incident at Amistad High School, which involved a fight on campus in February, and she shared some additional security and communication measures that have been put in place as a result. She also asked for increased board presence in the schools in the form of school visits, which had been paused during COVID, so that school staff have the opportunity to meet the board members.

C. Charter Renewal Update

Mr. Michael Rabin gave an update on the current status of the charter renewal process, sharing the overall timeline as well as some positive feedback and comments received from CSDE during their visits and after. In particular, he highlighted the comments on Multilingual learners and English learners, given that this was an area which had been on a previous corrective action plan. He

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then discussed the areas where the charter was found to be out of compliance and outlined the steps being taken to address each issue.

Board members asked questions about the

D. Legislative Update

Ms. Nakia Hall gave a legislative update highlighting increases in per-pupil funding that were achieved as a result of advocacy efforts. She also discussed a proposed bill to streamline the Educational Cost Sharing formula for funding public schools with the highest need which would include charter schools for the first time and give them access to these funds. Ms. Hall asked for board members' help to advocate for the passing of this bill by testifying at upcoming hearings and participating letter-writing campaigns.

Board members asked about how parents are being engaged in the advocacy efforts. There was also a discussion about getting parent advocates, staff members before elected officials as well as Amistad Academy alumni.

VI. Committee Reports

A. Finance Committee Report

Mr. Neil Shah presented a summary of the Q2 financials for the charter, highlighting cash reserves and strong assets relative to liabilities. There was also a discussion of the under-enrollment at Amistad High School and of philanthropy efforts made by AF on behalf of Amistad Academy to balance the budget.

VII. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned by Ms. Gibbons at 7:02 pm.

Motion by Pat Sweet.
Second by Jen Alexander.
All in favor.