

DRAFT AGENDA
Amistad Academy
Board of Directors Special Meeting

Thursday, August 4, 2022, 12:30PM

Zoom link: <https://achievementfirst.zoom.us/j/8959180848>

- I. Call to Order**
- II. Public Comment**
- III. Board Business: Interview of Amistad Academy Elementary School principal candidate**
 - A. Overview of recruitment process
 - B. Proposed Executive Session: Interview with Lauren Raimondi, Amistad Academy Elementary School principal
- IV. Adjourn**

DRAFT MINUTES
Amistad Academy
Board of Directors Special Meeting

Thursday, August 4, 2022, 12:30PM

Zoom link: <https://achievementfirst.zoom.us/j/8959180848>

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 12:36 pm by Lorraine Gibbons. The following board members, constituting a quorum of the Board, and AF staff were in attendance.

Board members: Lorraine Gibbons, Jennifer Alexander, Yashira Agosto, Shannell Whyte

AF staff: De-Lea Deanne Allen, Shannon Williams-Paden, Isabel Tañedo, Lauren Raimondi

II. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

III. Board Discussion and Business

Prior to discussion, Ms. Gibbons invited board members to introduce themselves. Then, she invited Ms. Deane-Allen, AF Chief Equity Officer to present an overview of the recruitment process and current context at the Amistad Academy Elementary School.

A. Proposed executive session to interview Lauren Raimondi, candidate for the Elementary School position.

The Board entered executive session at 12:48 pm and invited the following AF staff on the Zoom call to join.

Motion by Yashira Agosto

Seconded by Jennifer Alexander

All in favor.

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The Board exited out of executive session at 1:40pm.

Motion by Jennifer Alexander

Seconded by Yashira Agosto

All in favor.

After some technical challenges, it was

RESOLVED, that the Amistad Academy Board of Directors hereby approves Lauren Raimondi to serve as principal of the Amistad Academy Elementary School for the school year 2022-2023.

Motion by Yashira Agosto

Seconded by Jennifer Alexander

All in favor.

IV. Adjourn

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:43 pm.

Motion by Shannelle Whyte

Seconded by Jennifer Alexander

All in favor.

AGENDA

**Joint Amistad High School Committee
Personnel Subcommittee Meeting**

Tuesday, August 9, 5:30PM

Zoom link: <https://achievementfirst.zoom.us/j/8959180848>

Physical address:

- I. Call to Order**
- II. Public Comment**
- III. Board Discussion and Business**
 - A. Proposed executive session to discuss principal personnel matters
- IV. Adjourn**

DRAFT MINUTES
Joint Amistad High School Committee
Personnel Subcommittee Meeting

Tuesday, August 9, 5:30PM

Zoom link: <https://achievementfirst.zoom.us/j/8959180848>

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:37 pm by Jennifer Alexander, Acting Chair of the Joint Amistad High School Committee.

The following members of the personnel subcommittee and AF staff were in attendance:

Personnel subcommittee: Jennifer Alexander, Lorraine Gibbons, Dick Ferguson, Raj Lakra, Dick Kalt

AF Team: Christi George, Rod Bowen, Isabel Tañedo

II. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

III. Board Discussion and Business

- A. Proposed executive session to discuss principal personnel matters

At 5:39 pm, Ms. Alexander asked for a motion to enter into Executive Session to discuss personnel matters related to the investigation into the May 27 incident at Amistad High School, and invited the AF team on the Zoom call to join.

Motion by Dick Ferguson

Seconded by Dick Kalt

All in favor.

The Committee exited out of executive session at 6:33 pm.

Motion by Raj Lakra

Seconded by Lorraine Gibbons

All in favor.

After hearing the results of the investigation of the May 27 incident at the Amistad High School, the Personnel Subcommittee agreed to recommend to the full Committee disciplinary action as advised by Achievement First. The meeting of the Joint Amistad HS Committee will be organized as soon as possible.

IV. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 6:34 pm.

Motion by Dick Ferguson

Seconded by Lorraine Gibbons

All in favor.

AGENDA

Joint Amistad High School Committee

Thursday, August 18, 9:00 AM

Zoom link: <https://achievementfirst.zoom.us/j/8959180848>

- I. Call to Order**
- II. Public Comment**
- III. Board Discussion and Business**
 - A. Proposed executive session to discuss disciplinary matters involving school-based personnel
- IV. Adjourn**

DRAFT MINUTES

**Joint Amistad High School Committee
Personnel Subcommittee Meeting**

Tuesday, August 18, 9:00 AM

Zoom link: <https://achievementfirst.zoom.us/j/8959180848>

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:03 am by Jennifer Alexander, Acting Chair of the Joint Amistad High School Committee.

The following members of the personnel subcommittee and AF staff were in attendance:

Committee: Jennifer Alexander, Lorraine Gibbons, Dick Ferguson, Raj Lakra, Dick Kalt, Laura Saverin

AF Team: Christi George, Rod Bowen, Isabel Tañedo

II. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

III. Board Discussion and Business

A. Proposed executive session to discuss principal personnel matters

At 9:04 am, Ms. Alexander asked for a motion to enter into Executive Session to hear from the Personnel Subcommittee about their discussions related to disciplinary matters related to Amistad HS personnel, inviting members of AF staff on the call to join.

Motion by Dick Kalt

Seconded by Laura Saverin

All in favor.

The Committee exited out of Executive Session at 9:29 am.

Motion by Dick Kalt

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Seconded by Lorraine Gibbons
All in favor.

It was

RESOLVED, that the committee hereby upholds the disciplinary action recommended by its personnel subcommittee.

Motion by Rak Lakra
Seconded by Laura Saverin
All in favor.

IV. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 am.

Motion by Dick Ferguson
Seconded by Dick Kalt
All in favor.

DRAFT AGENDA
Joint Meeting of Achievement First (AF)
Connecticut Boards
Amistad Academy, Bridgeport Academy
Elm City College Preparatory, Hartford Academy
Tuesday, August 23, 2022, 4:00 pm
Venue: Omni Hotel, New Haven
Zoom: <https://achievementfirst.zoom.us/j/8959180848>

The meeting is preceded by a closed board training session at 3:00-4:00 pm.

- I. Call to Order**
- II. Public Comment**
- III. Presentation by Achievement First**
 - A. AF Strategic Initiatives
 - B. SY 2021-2022 report and reflections
 - 1. Scholars
 - 2. Staff
 - 3. School Operations
- IV. Adjourn**

MINUTES

Joint Meeting of Achievement First (AF) Connecticut Boards

Amistad Academy, Bridgeport Academy

Elm City College Preparatory, Hartford Academy

Tuesday, August 23, 2022, 4:00 pm

Venue: Omni Hotel, New Haven

Zoom: <https://achievementfirst.zoom.us/j/8959180848>

Board Members in Attendance: Lorraine Gibbons, Jennifer Alexander, Ethan Tyminski, Gayatri Mehta, Dick Ferguson, Laura Saverin, Stephanie Ma, Patric Gregory, Prish Pierce, LaVonte Bryant, Erica Demond, Dick Kalt, Rajeev Lakra, Marlene Macaуда, Ruben Felipe, Erwin Hurst, Sr., Jessica Glover, Lisa Tanen-LaFontaine, Alice Turner, Fracoise Deristel-Leger,

Staff in Attendance: Lisa Margosian, Beth Cocuzza, Isabel Tañedo, Neil Shah, Xanthe Jory,, Christina Braganza, John Sharkey, Rod Bowen, Jesse Balis-Haris, Charmayne Joseph, Ken Paul, Charisse Terry, Nakia Hall, Patricia Granda-Malaver, Sultana Salma, Linda Darkwah

Guests in Attendance: Charon Smalls, Surbhi Patel

Patricia Granda-Malaver recorded the minutes.

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 4:19 PM by Dick Ferguson, Chair of Elm City College Preparatory Board. Mr. Ferguson encouraged Achievement First staff to introduce themselves to the board members.

II. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

III. Presentation by Achievement First

A. AF Strategic Initiatives

Ms. Lisa Margosian, Interim Chief Executive Officer, kicked off the meeting presenting 4 strategic imperatives - multi-year initiatives that will direct Achievement First's focus and efforts in service of scholars and teachers.

Ms. Margosian then provided a brief overview of each strategic imperative for this coming school year:

1. Ensure that our schools deliver on their promise to our scholars, including summer readiness and a strong start to the school year.
2. Focus on our culture, ensuring a clear sense of direction, transparency in decision making, predictable communication, and a willingness to engage with all stakeholders.
3. Improve our systems and structures that support the quality performance and scaling of the network.
4. Attract and retain quality talent to deliver on our commitment to support the excellence of our schools.

Following this, AF leadership talked through each imperative in more detail.

Mr. John Sharkey, Interim Chief Academic Officer, explained that the first strategic imperative prioritizes the critical work of delivering on our promise to scholars, through our academic and instructional offerings, our social-emotional supports, and ensuring that students feel safe and welcome at school. He reminded the board that this school year AF is focused on reading in particular, as well as on student investment and continued reduction of exclusionary discipline practices. Mr. Sharkey also highlighted the fundamental summer professional development teachers recently completed which provides teachers the preparation to start off the year in a great spot. Before continuing, Ms. Lisa Tanen asked about the bullet point pertaining to physical safety on campuses and the role school-based staff have when threats occur. Ms. Margosian answered that there will be continual reporting on this topic in the dashboards, and Mr. Sharkey suggested a potential deep dive on safety threats during an upcoming fall meeting.

Ms. Beth Cocuzza, Chief of Staff, explained the second strategic imperative which focuses on workplace culture. She noted that this year AF plans to focus on bringing back a strong performance culture for both Network Support employees and principals while leadership strategizes a long-term plan for teachers and other school based staff.

Mr. Neil Shah, Chief Financial Officer, then transitioned to the third strategic imperative and explained that it seeks to improve AF's systems and structures. He listed out some ways that we are already working on this goal such as investing in finance and human resources improvements. For instance, centralizing employee relations by automating

systems like payroll will ultimately lessen the load on school-based DSOs in the long run.

Lastly, Ms. Cocuzza presented the final strategic imperative that focuses on retaining and hiring school-based and Network Support staff members to deliver on our mission. She noted the nationwide teacher shortage crisis that has impacted the teaching profession nationwide which is why talent is a primary focus this coming school year.

Ms. Margosian then opened the floor to questions. Trustees and staff engaged in conversation on topics such as efforts to maintain the quality of teacher talent, the future of signing and retention bonuses, and best practices to elevate the innovative experience of Achievement First teachers during recruitment.

B. SY 2021-2022 report and reflections

1. Scholars

The next meeting topic focused on AF scholar data across academies this past school year. Mr. Sharkey expressed the tremendous progress in school academics and cultures that have brought us closer to pre-pandemic standards while also acknowledging that there is still work to be done to close pre-pandemic gaps, particularly in math.

Mr. Jesse Balis-Harris, Chief of Elementary Schools, continued the conversation with data on Connecticut elementary schools, reporting that the school year ended with strong adult and scholar culture that has created an imperative foundation for continual academic achievement. He shared state assessment results to express that students were not where they needed to be on reading and math proficiency. In order to increase levels to our goals, Mr. Balis-Harris explained that we will be implementing curriculum changes, intentional professional development in the science of reading, and upgraded coaching/training. Mr. Balis-Harris then entertained questions from the Board on AF assessment results in comparison to host district and state levels, class cohorts rebounding differently depending on age, and the need to eventually surpass pre-pandemic levels.

Ms. Charmayne Joseph, Interim Chief of Middle Schools, began by reporting on student experience at Connecticut middle schools which had mixed results for this year. For instance, academies met student experience survey goals yet there are needed improvements in attendance and suspension rates which are largely due to the ramification of the pandemic. As for academics, Ms. Joseph focused on reading, science, ELA and math results, and ultimately confirmed that middle school scholars have improved from 2020-2021 but are generally performing below pre-pandemic levels. She supported these findings by offering a range of data including internal

assessments and state testing results. Ms. Joseph also provided insight on changes that have fueled growth such as science growth due to improvement in our curriculum and instruction.

Mr. Rod Bowen, Chief of High Schools, presented the academic state of Connecticut high schools. Although more scholars passed all of their courses this school year than last, student performance differed. For example, state testing data was not up to par with course passing rates. Mr. Bowen then turned to school culture for high schools which has experienced improvements Student Belonging and Valuing School according to survey data but other aspects like suspension rates are actively being worked on by investing in inclusive practices. Board members voiced interest in more information on where students are going to school post-graduation and discussed social work at schools to provide mental health support.

Ms. Xanthe Jory, Chief Operating Officer, presented updates on scholar enrollment and recruitment efforts in Connecticut. She reported that three of four CT charters are fully enrolled and we expect them to be fully enrolled next school year as well. She explained the effective recruitment methods we are using such as in-person outreach strategies, phone banking, digital marketing, and building data capacity. Ms. Jory then entertained questions from board members about reasons for the current trends in kindergarten enrollment and the specifics of improvements to our digital advertisements.

2. Staff

Ms. Cocuzza transitioned the conversation to staff updates. She explained the bi-annual organizational health survey AF releases and the metrics used to predict retention, and presented results from staff at each academy level. Where there was low employee satisfaction, Ms. Cocuzza noted that the root causes were tied to teacher shortage and staffing challenges. These survey conclusions also helped instructional leadership to build more intentional alignment and more effective principal development with regional superintendents.

Mr. Michael Rabin, Deputy Chief of Staff, continued with the current state of recruitment and retention. He noted that Connecticut's difficult certification requirements have taken a toll on the teaching profession at large. Mr. Rabin highlighted our talent efforts like salary and retention bonuses, prioritization of schools with most openings, increased marketing efforts, and streamlining application process. He concluded with brief updates on hiring goals versus progress made to date. Mr. Sharkey followed up with strategies leadership will implement proactively in the coming school year to mitigate the issues we have identified this past year. The board will hear

more updates on the progress of these efforts in fall meetings. Mr. Sharkey entertained questions from the Board on emphasizing specialized teacher coaching at AF.

Ms. Christina Braganza, Chief Program Officer, reported on the investment of staff summer training series for AF's school-based teams. Ms. Braganza highlighted New Team member taxonomy training which gives new teachers the opportunity to practice building a strong classroom environment by rehearsing lessons and roleplaying. She shared the excitement of summer training being back in-person, with over 95% of participants agreeing/strongly agreeing that summer training is of high quality and high impact. Mr. Sharkey added that the goal of summer professional development is to present a series of connected training and experiences that support our visions across academies. He explained that we employed a logic model to identify specific inputs, activities and outputs needed for each session to lead us to the intended mission. In other words, we no longer look at summer training as individual sessions but rather as a collective story that will accelerate the recovery of students. Board members inquired on how summer training effectiveness is being tracked and whether individual boards can thank teachers and staff through appreciation events or additional support.

3. Operations

Ms. Jory said that with the lessons we learned last year, we have implemented COVID safety guidelines in schools which include:

- Aligning guidelines with district policies and CDC guidance to simplify the decision-making process
- Evolving approaches as policies change and pandemic progresses
- Continuing asymptomatic testing this fall
- Requiring staff to receive booster shots

She continued with insight on school response to both imminent and non-imminent threats to the school community. Ms. Jory explained that we have revised and clarified protocols covering a range of threat responses that align with state guidance as well as adjusted preparedness and prevention protocols. Board members asked questions about potential simulations that can help improve our response.

Lastly, Mr. Rabin covered charter renewals as all 4 charters are up for renewal this year. He explained that we are targeting 5 year renewals, and the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) will be evaluating us on various components. Mr. Rabin provided an outline of the renewal process, and noted that we are currently at the formal renewal application stage. Board members will get this document as signatures will need to be obtained before moving forward with site visits. Overall, Mr. Rabin pointed out that leadership is working hard to fortify the relationship that AF has

with CSDE. During discussion, Mr. Rabin answered a question regarding any stumbling blocks in past renewals.

IV. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 6:04 PM by Dick Ferguson.

Motion by Dick Kalt

Seconded by Raj Lakra

All in favor

AGENDA

Amistad Academy

Board of Directors Special Meeting

Zoom: <https://achievementfirst.zoom.us/j/8424626361>

Friday, September 16, 2022 2:00 pm

- I. Call to Order**
- II. Public Comment**
- III. Board Discussion and Business**
 - A. Proposed Executive Session to extend interim principal arrangements at Amistad Academy Middle School
- IV. Adjourn**

DRAFT MINUTES

Amistad Academy

Board of Directors Special Meeting

Zoom: <https://achievementfirst.zoom.us/j/8424626361>

Friday, September 16, 2022 2:00 pm

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 2:07 pm by Jen Alexander. The following board members constituting a quorum and Achievement First (AF) staff were in attendance.

Board members: Pat Sweet, Yashira Agosto, Ethan Tyminski, Jen Alexander,
Gayatri Mehra
AF staff: Caleb Dolan, Sulafa Bashir

II. Public Comment

There was no public comment

III. Board Discussion and Business

- A. Proposed Executive Session to discuss interim principal arrangements at Amistad Academy Middle School

The Board entered into executive session at 2:08 pm to discuss interim principal arrangements at the Amistad Academy Middle School, inviting the Achievement First staff present: Caleb Dolan, Sulafa Bashir.

Motioned by Pat S.
Seconded by Yashira A.
All in favor.

The Board exited executive session at 2:11 pm.

It was RESOLVED, that the Amistad Academy Board of Directors hereby approves the extension of Jasmine Watt's assignment as interim principal of the Amistad Academy Middle School through October 31, 2022.

Motioned by Yashira A.



Seconded by Ethan T.
All in favor.

IV. Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:14 pm.

Motioned by Pat S.
Seconded by Ethan T.
All in favor.



**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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New Haven, CT 06513
203 773 3223

370 Hartford Avenue
Providence, RI 02909
401 347 1106 ext. 30610

AGENDA
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**
- II. Public Comment**
- III. Discussion**
 - A. School Report
 - B. Financial Report
- IV. Adjourn**

**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

AGENDA
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**
- II. Public Comment**
- III. Approval of Minutes**
- IV. Discussion**
 - A. School Report
- V. Adjourn**

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.



DRAFT AGENDA
Amistad Academy
Board of Directors Meeting

Venue: Zoom

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

Wednesday, December 7, 2022, 5:30-7:00 pm

- I. Call to Order**
- II. Public Comment**
- III. Approval of Minutes**
- IV. Presentation by Achievement First**
 - A. Principals' Reports
- V. Committee Reports**
 - A. Finance Committee
 - B. Amistad Joint HS Committee
- VI. Board Discussion and Business**
 - A. Approval of Interim Principals
 - B. Update on CEO Search
 - C. Other Business
- VII. Adjourn**



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

Venue: Zoom

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

Wednesday, December 7, 2022, 5:30-7:00 pm

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Ms. Lorraine Gibbons.

Attendees:

The following board members, constituting a quorum, were in attendance:

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

The following AF Staff members were also in attendance: Lisa Margosian, Neil Shah, Karolyn Belcher, Xanthe Jory, John Sharkey, Beth Cocuzza, Rod Bowen, Brooke Williams, Lauren Raimondi, Rosie Basile, Sulafa Bashir, Ken Paul, Lashell Rountree, Nakia Hall

Sulafa Bashir recorded the minutes.

II. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

III. Discussion with Achievement First

A. Principals' Reports

Ms. Lauren Raimondi gave the elementary school Principal's report highlighting strong results for student culture surveys and classroom walkthroughs. She shared Beginning-of-Year (BOY) academic results in STEP reading and Math IA and described

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some of the interventions being implemented to address student needs including guided reading and CGI.

Ms. Rosie Basille shared the middle school Principal's report, including similarly positive results as the elementary school for strong student culture and classroom walkthrough data. One outlier was the safety question which the school plans to hold a focus group with families to unpack some of the underlying concerns.

In sharing academic data, Ms. Basille highlighted the strong ELA results in 8th grade which was attributed to the teacher in that grade. She emphasized that the school is looking to capture best practices and share them with the other teachers to strengthen results in the other grades.

There was a discussion on school safety and general concerns around the country about safety as well as what resources could be accessed to strengthen this area.

IV. Committee Reports

A. Amistad Joint HS Committee

Mr. Rod Bowen gave a brief overview of Amistad high school's academic results and shared some of the challenges the school is having related to being understaffed, particularly in the areas of STEM and special education.

B. Finance Committee

Mr. Shah shared the Q1 financials as previously shared with the board in the pre-read materials.

V. Board Discussion and Business

A. Approval of Previous meeting minutes and Interim Principal appointments

Ms. Gibbons took the board members through a consent agenda which included the following resolutions:

It was:

RESOLVED, that the Amistad Academy Board of Directors hereby approves the meeting minutes from October 12, 2022.

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Motion by Pat Sweet
Second by Ethan Tyminski
All in favor

It was:

RESOLVED, 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 December 7, 2022 and June 30, 2023.

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

Motion by Pat Sweet
Second by Linda Darkwah
All in favor

B. Update on CEO Search

Ms. Margosian shared that a CEO Search committee has been established and comprised board members, including parent reps, and AF staff. She stated that the committee has already vetted search firms and drafted the CEO job description. During the December/January break, potential candidates will be identified.

C. Other Business

Ms. Gibbons shared the calendar of upcoming board meetings in 2023.

VI. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned by Lorraine Gibbons at 6:40 pm

Motion by Pat Sweet
Second by Linda Darkwah
All in favor

AGENDA
Amistad Academy
Joint High School Committee Meeting

Venue: Zoom

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

Wednesday, January 18, 2023, 4:30-5:30 pm

- I. Call to Order**
- II. Public Comment**
- III. Approval of Minutes**
- IV. Discussion**
 - A. School Report
- V. Adjourn**



AGENDA
Amistad Academy
Joint High School Committee Meeting

Venue: Zoom

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

Wednesday, January 18, 2023, 4:30-5:30 pm

I. Call to Order

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

Attendees

Committee members:

Name	Present	NAME	Present
Jennifer Alexander	Y	Kimberly Bruce	N
Lorraine Gibbons	Y	Dick Ferguson	Y
Yashira Agosto	Y	Laura Saverin	Y
Dick Kalt	Y	Prish Pierce	Y
Michael Strambler	Y		

AF staff: Sulafa Bashir, Simon Obas, Rod Bowen

Guest AF staff:: Peter Butler, Hellena Rodriguez

II. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

III. Approval of Minutes

It was:

RESOLVED that the Amistad Academy Joint HS Committee hereby approves the meeting minutes from November 14, 2022.

Motion by: Dick Ferguson

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Second by Laura Saverin
All in Favor.

IV. Discussion

A. School Report

Mr. Simon Obas gave the HS principal report starting with an update about the staff holiday party and some highlights about the school's basketball team.

He then discussed the results of the school's recent org health survey which outperformed the AF network averages across all dimensions but one.

He shared some of the key positive aspects and the growth areas and outlined some next steps and action items that the school's leadership team committed to putting in place in response to the survey results.

Finally Mr. Obas shared some STAR reading data from the past few years highlighting the difference in overall performance relative to pre-pandemic figures.

V. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned by Ms. Jen Alexander at 4:33 pm

Motion by Lorraine Gibbons.
Second by Dick Kalt.
All in favor.



DRAFT AGENDA
Amistad Academy
Board of Directors Meeting

Venue: Amistad Academy Middle School, Room 150
130 Edgewood Ave, New Haven, CT 06511

Zoom: <https://achievementfirst.zoom.us/j/83942299731>

Monday, February 6, 2023, 5:30-6:30 pm

- I. Call to Order**
- II. Public Comment**
- III. Approval of Minutes**
- IV. Discussion with Achievement First**
 - A. Principals' Reports
- V. Committee Reports**
 - A. Amistad Joint HS Committee Report
 - B. Treasurer's Report
 - 1. FY22 Audited Financial Statements
- VI. Adjourn**

RECOMMENDED RESOLUTION

BE IT RESOLVED, the Amistad Academy Board of Directors hereby approves the meeting minutes from December 7, 2022.

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

Venue: Amistad Academy Middle School, Room 150
130 Edgewood Ave, New Haven, CT 06511
Zoom: <https://achievementfirst.zoom.us/j/83942299731>
Monday, February 6, 2023, 5:30-6:30 pm

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Jen Alexander.

Attendees:

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

AF Staff: Lauren Raimondi, Beth Cocuzza, Rosie Basile, Kate Aufiero, Gaylord Bourne, Rod Bowen

II. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

III. Approval of Minutes

Approval of minutes was postponed until later in the meeting pending Ms. Lorraine Gibbons's arrival at the meeting. Following the Elementary School Principal Report, Ms. Lorraine Gibbons took the board through the approval of the previous meeting minutes.

It was:

RESOLVED, the Amistad Academy Board of Directors hereby approves the meeting minutes from December 7, 2022 and the Joint CT Board meeting

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minutes from August 23, 2022.

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

IV. Discussion with Achievement First

A. Principals' Reports

Ms. Lauren Raimondi gave the Elementary school report, emphasizing the strong start of the calendar year with a focus on reading. She discussed the results of the org health survey which measures staff satisfaction and noted that the school's results this year were the strongest to date. She attributed the positive results to the school community's improved communication and sense of respect and compassion as well as the commitment to student outcomes. She also described the growth opportunities around staff input on areas such as curriculum decisions and she mentioned some of the action items the school's leadership team has taken to allow opportunities for this type of input.

Ms. Rosie Basile gave the Middle school report. She kicked off with an update on STAR reading, sharing a video where students discussed their reading growth, as well as some data of student average reading growth by grade level and overall progress towards the end-of-year goals.

Ms. Basile then gave an overview of the schools' org health data, sharing that the Amistad Middle School had the strongest results compared to the network. She shared the positive aspects contributing to staff satisfaction as well as the growth area related to staff input and the steps being taken to allow staff voice in the areas that matter to them.

V. Committee Reports

A. Treasurer's Report

1. FY22 Audited Financial Statements

Ms. Gaylord Bourne and Ms. Kate Aufiero gave a high level overview of the annual audit process and stated that the audit received an unmodified opinion which is the cleanest audit that

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can be received. Ms. Bourne answered questions from the board members.

B. Amistad Joint HS Committee Report

The Amistad Academy Board was joined by members of the AF Bridgeport Academy Board and the Elm City College Prep Board to hear the Amistad Joint HS Committee report.

Mr. Rod Bowen gave the High School report on behalf of Principal Simon Obas, starting with an update about the staff holiday party and some highlights about the school's basketball team.

He then discussed the results of the school's recent org health survey which outperformed the AF network averages across all dimensions but one.

He shared some of the key positive aspects and the growth areas and outlined some next steps and action items that the school's leadership team committed to putting in place in response to the survey results.

Board members asked questions about

- the STAR reading data and whether it represented a particular grade or an overall average
- whether humanities teachers were also able to focus on reading instruction and what other resources can be made available to shore up literacy such as tutoring

VI. Adjourn

At 6:35 pm, Ms. Lorraine Gibbons took the board through a motion to join the boards of AF Bridgeport Academy, Elm City College Prep and AF Hartford Academy in the Joint CT board meeting.

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

DRAFT AGENDA
Achievement First Joint Connecticut
Board of Directors Meeting

Venue: Amistad Academy Middle School, Room 150
130 Edgewood Ave, New Haven, CT 06511

Zoom: <https://achievementfirst.zoom.us/j/83942299731>

Monday, February 6, 2023, 6:30 pm-7:30 pm

- I. Call to Order**
- II. Public Comment**
- III. Approval of Minutes**
- IV. Discussion with Achievement First**
 - A. Academic Improvement Plan
 - B. Enrollment Response Plan
 - C. HR & Finance Investments
 - D. Org Health
 - E. Principal Renewal Process
- V. Board Discussion and Business**
 - A. Proposed Executive Session
 - 1. AF Network Reimagining
 - 2. CEO Search Update
- VI. Adjourn**

RECOMMENDED RESOLUTION

BE IT RESOLVED, the Joint CT Board of Directors hereby approves the meeting minutes from August 23, 2022.



DRAFT MINUTES
Achievement First Joint Connecticut
Board of Directors Meeting

Venue: Amistad Academy Middle School, Room 150
130 Edgewood Ave, New Haven, CT 06511
Zoom: <https://achievementfirst.zoom.us/j/83942299731>
Monday, February 6, 2023, 6:30-7:30 pm

I. Call to Order

Each AF CT board chair made a motion to join the joint board meeting at 6:40 PM. The motions were seconded by the board members of each board. All were in favor, no dissenting votes and none obtained from voting.

CT board members present were:

Amistad Academy: Lorraine Gibbons, Jennifer Alexander, Patricia Sweet, Ethan Tyminski, Yashira Agosto

AF Bridgeport Academy: Rajeev Lakra, Michael Strambler, Dewey Loselle, Marlene Macauda, Dick Kalt, Debra Hertz, Ruben Felipe

Elm City College Prep: Dick Ferguson, Laura Saverin, Prish Pierce, Erica Demond, Shashank Ghiria

AF Hartford Academy: Erwin Hurst, Sr., Jessica Alhasnawi, Alice Turner, Charon Smalls

AF Staff members present: Lisa Margosian, Karolyn Belcher, Beth Cocuzza, Blakely Simoneau, Michael Rabin, Christi George, Kate Aufiero, Sulafa Bashir

II. Public Comment

No members of the public were present.

III. Approval of Minutes

IV. Discussion with Achievement First

A. Academic Improvement Plan

Karolyn Belcher, the Interim Superintendent, provided an update on academic improvement and what steps they will be instituting to get students on track

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academically. She detailed the key levers for academic improvement - improving student achievement, clarifying our values proposition for scholars and families, and ensuring students feel valued, included, and engaged.

There were questions about the specific curriculum Achievement First currently uses and how those will be changing. Ms. Belcher explained how the new curriculum will address reading fluency and understanding.

Ms. Belcher provided information about the Principal in Residence Program, which is continuing this school year although the group is smaller than in previous years. She also provided information about the professional development that Achievement First will be using to address concerns about the changes in curriculum in order to support teachers.

B. Enrollment Response Plan

Michael Rabin, the Associate Chief of Staff, provided updates on how Achievement First is confronting enrollment problems. He outlined the four levers that have been identified - improve recruitment, decrease attrition, finding flexibility in the model, and analyzing the portfolio of schools. He described the ways we are using each lever to address the problems, including outreach plans at each school.

C. HR & Finance Investments

Lisa Margosian, the Interim CEO, introduced the problem that Achievement First has underinvested in infrastructure in HR and Finance. Kate Aufiero, the Associate Chief of Financial Planning & Analysis, explained the changes that will be made in the finance systems and the timeline for the changes. Christi George, the Associate Chief of Team Talent Operations, explained the changes that will happen in HR and the timeline for the changes. Ms. George detailed how some things will now be centralized to free up time for school staff and to improve the employee experience.

D. Principal Renewal Process

Ms. George provided details on the principal renewal timeline and process, including that there will be a different approach that provides more visibility to the board throughout the school year. Board members expressed concerns around the principal selection process, requesting multiple candidates. Ms. George acknowledged their request.



Ms. Margosian expressed gratitude for the board members' time and for their understanding about rescheduling the meeting. She asked board members to share their questions as part of Achievement First's ongoing accountability to the boards.

V. Board Discussion and Business

The boards entered executive session at 7:37 PM to discuss the Achievement First Network Reimaging and to receive updates on the CEO candidate search.

VI. Adjourn

DRAFT AGENDA

**Achievement First (AF) Amistad
Finance Committee Meeting**

Thursday, March 2nd, 2023, 11 am EST

Zoom link: <https://achievementfirst.zoom.us/j/4765121702?from=addon>

- I. Call to Order**
- II. Public Comment**
- III. Approval of Minutes**
- IV. Board Discussion and Business**
 - A. FY23 Q2 Financials (Review)
- V. Other Business**
- VI. Adjourn**

MINUTES

Achievement First (AF) Amistad Finance Committee Auditor's Exit Call

Thursday, March 2nd, 2023 11am EST

Zoom link: <https://achievementfirst.zoom.us/j/4765121702?from=addon>

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 11:05 am EST by Lorraine Gibbons. The following board members and AF staff were in attendance.

Board members: Yashir Zwisler, Lorraine Gibbons

AF staff: Neil Shah, Angela Winell, Ashley- Torres-Vidal, Lashell Rountree, Devin Devanney, Kate Aufiero, Amy Basile, and Emma Tingley

I. Public Comment (None)

A. There were no members of the public in attendance.

II. Approval of Minutes (None)

A. There were no approval minutes to review at this time.

III. Board Discussion and Business

A. FY23 Q2 Financial (Review)

1. AF Staff presented the Q2 financial statements for the Amistad schools, including the balance sheet and profit & loss. There was discussion regarding the budget vs. forecast.

IV. Other Business (None)

A. There was no other business discussed.

V. Adjourn

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:26 am EST.

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**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. Carolyn 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.



AGENDA
Amistad Academy
Personnel Committee Meeting

Venue: Virtual Meeting

Zoom: <https://achievementfirst.zoom.us/j/8424626361>

Monday, March 27, 2023, 11:00 am - 12:00 pm

- I. Call to Order**
- II. Public Comment**
- III. Committee Business and Discussion**
 - A. Proposed Executive Session: : Personnel discussion: principal candidate interview(s) and principal appointment recommendations for 2023-24 school year
- IV. Adjourn**

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AGENDA
Amistad Academy
Board of Directors Meeting

Venue: Virtual Meeting

Zoom: <https://achievementfirst.zoom.us/j/8424626361>

Thursday, April 6, 2023, 4:00-5:00 pm

- I. Call to Order**
- II. Public Comment**
- III. Board Discussion**
 - A. Proposed Executive Session: Personnel discussion regarding board approval of principal candidates and principal renewal offers for the 2023-24 school year
 - B. Healthy Food Certification
- IV. Adjourn**

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

Venue: Virtual Meeting

Zoom: <https://achievementfirst.zoom.us/j/8424626361>

Thursday, April 6, 2023, 4:00-5:00 pm

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Ms. Lorraine Gibbons at 4:08 pm.

Attendees:

The following board members, constituting a quorum, were in attendance:

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

AF Staff: Sulafa Bashir, Rod Bowen, Brooke Williams, Shannon Williams-Paden, Caleb Dolan

Guests: Ms. Barnetta Haywood

II. Public Comment

There was public comment by Ms. Barnetta Haywood who is an Amistad Academy parent.

Ms. Haywood stated a concern with bullying involving her daughter at the middle school.

Ms. Gibbons thanked Ms. Haywood for her comment and stated that the board would take the comments under consideration and respond at the following board meeting per the standard public comment protocol.

III. Board Discussion

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- A. Proposed Executive Session: Personnel discussion regarding board approval of principal candidates and principal renewal offers for the 2023-24 school year

Ms. Gibbons took the board through a motion to go into Executive Session to discussed the principal renewals and appointments, inviting the AF staff to join.

Motion by Pat Sweet.
Second by Yashira Zwisler
All in favor.

The board entered into executive session at 4:12 pm and exited at 4:36 pm.

Ms. Gibbons took the board through the following two resolutions for principal renewals and appointments:

It was:

RESOLVED, the Amistad Academy Board of Directors hereby approves the renewal of the following principals, with a final compensation package to be incorporated in the FY24 Budget to be reviewed and approved in May 2023:

- a. Lauren Raimondi, Amistad Academy Elementary School
- b. Simon Obas, Amistad Academy High School

And further, it was:

RESOLVED, the Amistad Academy Board of Directors hereby appoints Jasmine Watts as principal of Amistad Academy Middle School effective July 1, 2023.

Motion by Pat Sweet.
Second by Yashira Zwisler
All in favor.

- B. Healthy Food Certification

Ms. Gibbons took the board through the following two resolutions for healthy food as required by the State.

It was:

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- RESOLVED that, pursuant to C.G.S. Section 10-215f, the Amistad Academy Board of Directors 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, 2023, through June 30, 2024. 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 that, the Amistad Academy Board of Directors 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.

Motion by Pat Sweet.
Second by Yashira Zwisler
All in favor.

IV. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned by Ms. Lorraine Gibbons at 4:40 pm.

Motion by Pat Sweet.
Second by Yashira Zwisler
All in favor.

DRAFT AGENDA
Amistad Academy
Board of Directors Meeting

Venue: Virtual Meeting

Zoom: <https://achievementfirst.zoom.us/j/85331059679>

Monday, May 22, 2023, 5:30-7:00 pm

- I. Call to Order**
- II. Public Comment**
- III. Board Resolutions and Approvals**
- IV. Discussion with Achievement First**
 - A. Welcome (5 min)
 - B. Principal Report (15 min)
 - C. State of Our Students - student wellness, academic progress, and high school update (20 min)
 - D. Charter Renewal Next Steps (10 min)
 - E. SY 2023/2024 Strategic Imperatives (5 min)
- V. Board Business**
 - A. Finance Committee Report
 - 1. Q3 Financials and FY 24 Budgets (15 min)
 - 2. Fiscal & Procurement Policies, and Audit Engagement (5 min)
 - B. Proposed Executive Session: CEO Search and Talent Update (10 min)
- VI. Other Business**
- VII. Adjourn**

DRAFT AGENDA
Amistad Academy
Board of Directors Meeting

Venue: Virtual Meeting

Zoom: <https://achievementfirst.zoom.us/j/85331059679>

Monday, May 22, 2023, 5:30-7:00 pm

- I. Call to Order**
- II. Public Comment**
- III. Board Resolutions and Approvals**
- IV. Discussion with Achievement First**
 - A. Welcome (5 min)
 - B. Principal Report (15 min)
 - C. State of Our Students - student wellness, academic progress, and high school update (20 min)
 - D. Charter Renewal Next Steps (10 min)
 - E. SY 2023/2024 Strategic Imperatives (5 min)
- V. Board Business**
 - A. Finance Committee Report
 - 1. Q3 Financials and FY 24 Budgets (15 min)
 - 2. Fiscal & Procurement Policies, and Audit Engagement (5 min)
 - B. Proposed Executive Session: CEO Search and Talent Update (10 min)
- VI. Other Business**
- VII. Adjourn**

DRAFT MINUTES
Amistad Academy
Board of Directors Meeting

Venue: Virtual Meeting

Zoom: <https://achievementfirst.zoom.us/j/85331059679>

Monday, May 22, 2023, 5:30-7:00 pm

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Ms. Lorraine Gibbons at 5:33 pm.

Attendees:

Name	Present	Name	Present
Lorraine Gibbons	Y	Shannelle Whyte	N
Patricia B. Sweet	Y	Yashira Agosto	Y
Jennifer Alexander	Y	Gayatri Mehta	N
Ethan Tyminski	N	Linda Darkwah	N
Zihan Su	Y		

AF Staff: Lisa Margosian, Karolyn Belcher, Xanthe Jory, Michael Rabin, Christi George, Neil Shah, Beth Cocuzza, Blakely Simoneau, Sulafa Bashir, Rod Bowen, Lauren Raimondi, Rosie Basile, Simon Obas, Caleb Dolan, Brooke Williams

II. Public Comment

No members of the public were present.

III. Board Resolutions and Approvals Previous Meeting Minutes, Membership

Ms. Gibbons took the board through the consent agenda, which included approving the previous meetings' minutes, the introduction of the new Yale School of Management Board Fellow Zihan Su, who introduced himself to the board and the resignation of Ms. Gibbons from the Treasurer role. Ms. Gibbons also acknowledged Ethan Tyminski's resignation effective 6/30/2023 and thanked him for his service of 4 years on the board.

Consent agenda - motion by Ms. Sweet, seconded by Ms. Alexander. Unanimous.

It was:

- RESOLVED, the Amistad Academy Board of Directors hereby approves the meeting minutes from March 9, 2023 and April 6, 2023.
- RESOLVED, the Amistad Academy Board of Directors hereby approves Mr. Zihan Su to serve as a Yale SOM Board Fellow for an 18-month term, ending June 30, 2024.
- WHEREAS, Lorraine Gibbons submitted her resignation from the role of Treasurer effective May 22, 2023, it was RESOLVED, the Amistad Academy Board of Directors hereby accepts her resignation.

IV. Discussion with Achievement First

A. Welcome (5 min)

Ms. Margosian welcomed the board and outlined the content of the board meeting.

B. Principal Reports (15 min)

Ms. Raimondi, the principal of Amistad Elementary School, presented on the elementary school. She provided updates on recent events and invited board members to attend future events. She also provided academic updates, including an increase in academic proficiency.

Roseann Basille, the principal of Amistad Middle School, presented on the middle school. Ms. Basille provided updates on the future events at the school. Ms. Basille also reported on school org health, which is strong, including 95% of staff returning for next school year.

Simon Obas presented on the high school. Dr. Obas invited board members to upcoming celebrations, including high school graduation, and provided details of past celebrations and events. Dr. Obas explained that some staff are leaving because they are moving out of state, and acknowledged that there have been challenges. Dr. Obas expressed gratitude for his hardworking staff.

C. State of Our Students - student wellness, academic progress, and high school update (20 min)

Karolyn Belcher, the Superintendent, presented on student wellness. She explained the connection between disciplinary incidents and mental health, and how Achievement First is approaching this problem proactively. Xanthe Jory, the Chief Operating Officer, detailed the work that is being done this year and the work that will be done next year.

Ms. Belcher provided details of the steps being taken to support student mental health and the partnerships being pursued for next school year. Ms. Jory presented on the safety incident data and explained how the safety response protocols have been improved upon this year. Ms. Belcher mentioned that there are concerns about safety at the high school, and outlined steps that they are taking to address the culture issues there.

Ms. Belcher also provided academic updates, where upper grades are doing better but some of the other grades continue to struggle. She also presented on students with special needs, who are doing worse overall academically than their general education peers, and explained the steps that are being taken to support multi-language learners and students with disabilities next year.

Ms. Belcher presented on the post-graduation plans, where the majority of the students graduating are going to four year colleges. Board members asked about additional academic data, and Ms. Belcher promised to come back with more data in the fall. Ms. Alexander asked what was being done for high school students, and Ms. Belcher explained that not enough was being done and that this is an area that will be concentrated on next school year.

D. Finance Committee Report

1. Q3 Financials and FY 24 Budgets (15 min)

Mr. Shah presented on the Q3 financials and FY 2024 Budgets, and explained that liquidity is still strong and the budget is on track.

2. Banking Consolidation, Fiscal & Procurement Policies, and Audit Engagement (5 min)

Mr. Shah informed the board that the banking institutions that Amistad banks with are strong. Mr. Shah requested a resolution to close Key Bank accounts and to open accounts with Bank of America. Mr. Shah explained how ESSR funds are reducing the need to spend more, but

cautioned that they will run out next year.

Ms. Gibbons asked for a motion to approve the resolutions. Ms. Alexander moved, Ms. Agosto seconded. All in favor, no abstentions.

It was:

- RESOLVED, that the Amistad Academy Board of Directors hereby approves the financial budget for the 2023-2024 fiscal year as presented.
- RESOLVED, the Amistad Academy Board of Directors hereby ratifies the re-appointment of CohnReznick to perform the financial audit of the 2023-24 fiscal year and prepare the IRS Form 990s.
- RESOLVED that the Amistad Academy Board of Directors hereby ratifies the revisions to the Fiscal Policies and to the Procurement Policies as presented.
- RESOLVED that the Amistad Academy Board of Directors hereby approves the opening of 1 checking account and 1 savings account at Bank of America.
- RESOLVED that the Amistad Academy Board of Directors hereby approves the closure of 3 bank accounts at Key Bank.

E. Charter Renewal Next Steps (10 min)

Michael Rabin presented on the next steps for the charter renewal process, where there are three areas for improvement. Mr. Rabin provided the timeline for the renewal process.

F. SY 2023/2024 Strategic Imperatives (5 min)

Ms. Margosian presented the Strategic Imperatives for the next school year. She mentioned that the team is concentrating on four key areas, investing in staff, investing in students, investing in infrastructure, and investing in AF's future. Ms. Margosian provided details of how AF will be concentrating on these imperatives and the work that will be done.

G. Schools Portfolio Planning (5 min)

Mr. Rabin gave an overview of the portfolio planning process and the timeline for making

decisions. Ms. Alexander asked if there were any schools in Connecticut that AF is concerned about, and Mr. Rabin explained that there wasn't a specific school but that declining enrollment at some schools is concerning. Ms. Margosian provided details about the high school consolidation in New York and the way AF is approaching this work. She expressed the need to work with other charter schools and our authorizer given declining enrollment.

Ms. Sweet expressed concerns about teacher recruitment. Christi George explained that it is a concern, and offered the steps that AF is taking to address it. Ms. George also explained that certification standards are extremely difficult in Connecticut, which is causing issues with finding teachers.

V. Other Business - Board Recruitment

Ms. Sweet implored others to expand the board. Ms. Gibbons asked to reinstitute visitor's day, where friends and family could visit the school. Ms. George offered to get a list of the partnerships.

VI. Board Business

A. Proposed Executive Session: CEO Search and Talent Update (10 min)

Ms. Gibbons took the board through a motion to enter into executive discussion to discuss the topics of CEO Search and Talent Update, inviting Lisa Margosian to join.

Ms. Sweet made the motion, Ms. Alexander seconded. All in favor, no abstentions.

VII. Adjourn

DRAFT MINUTES
Amistad Academy
Board of Directors Meeting

Venue: Virtual Meeting

Zoom: <https://achievementfirst.zoom.us/j/85331059679>

Monday, May 22, 2023, 5:30-7:00 pm

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Ms. Lorraine Gibbons at 5:33 pm.

Attendees:

Name	Present	Name	Present
Lorraine Gibbons	Y	Shannelle Whyte	N
Patricia B. Sweet	Y	Yashira Agosto	Y
Jennifer Alexander	Y	Gayatri Mehta	N
Ethan Tyminski	N	Linda Darkwah	N
Zihan Su	Y		

AF Staff: Lisa Margosian, Karolyn Belcher, Xanthe Jory, Michael Rabin, Christi George, Neil Shah, Beth Cocuzza, Blakely Simoneau, Sulafa Bashir, Rod Bowen, Lauren Raimondi, Rosie Basile, Simon Obas, Caleb Dolan, Brooke Williams

II. Public Comment

No members of the public were present.

III. Board Resolutions and Approvals Previous Meeting Minutes, Membership

Ms. Gibbons took the board through the consent agenda, which included approving the previous meetings' minutes, the introduction of the new Yale School of Management Board Fellow Zihan Su, who introduced himself to the board and the resignation of Ms. Gibbons from the Treasurer role. Ms. Gibbons also acknowledged Ethan Tyminski's resignation effective 6/30/2023 and thanked him for his service of 4 years on the board.

Consent agenda - motion by Ms. Sweet, seconded by Ms. Alexander. Unanimous.

It was:

- RESOLVED, the Amistad Academy Board of Directors hereby approves the meeting minutes from March 9, 2023 and April 6, 2023.
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Mr. Shah informed the board that the banking institutions that Amistad banks with are strong. Mr. Shah requested a resolution to close Key Bank accounts and to open accounts with Bank of America. Mr. Shah explained how ESSR funds are reducing the need to spend more, but

cautioned that they will run out next year.

Ms. Gibbons asked for a motion to approve the resolutions. Ms. Alexander moved, Ms. Agosto seconded. All in favor, no abstentions.

It was:

- RESOLVED, that the Amistad Academy Board of Directors hereby approves the financial budget for the 2023-2024 fiscal year as presented.
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Michael Rabin presented on the next steps for the charter renewal process, where there are three areas for improvement. Mr. Rabin provided the timeline for the renewal process.

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Ms. Margosian presented the Strategic Imperatives for the next school year. She mentioned that the team is concentrating on four key areas, investing in staff, investing in students, investing in infrastructure, and investing in AF's future. Ms. Margosian provided details of how AF will be concentrating on these imperatives and the work that will be done.

G. Schools Portfolio Planning (5 min)

Mr. Rabin gave an overview of the portfolio planning process and the timeline for making

decisions. Ms. Alexander asked if there were any schools in Connecticut that AF is concerned about, and Mr. Rabin explained that there wasn't a specific school but that declining enrollment at some schools is concerning. Ms. Margosian provided details about the high school consolidation in New York and the way AF is approaching this work. She expressed the need to work with other charter schools and our authorizer given declining enrollment.

Ms. Sweet expressed concerns about teacher recruitment. Christi George explained that it is a concern, and offered the steps that AF is taking to address it. Ms. George also explained that certification standards are extremely difficult in Connecticut, which is causing issues with finding teachers.

V. Other Business - Board Recruitment

Ms. Sweet implored others to expand the board. Ms. Gibbons asked to reinstitute visitor's day, where friends and family could visit the school. Ms. George offered to get a list of the partnerships.

VI. Board Business

A. Proposed Executive Session: CEO Search and Talent Update (10 min)

Ms. Gibbons took the board through a motion to enter into executive discussion to discuss the topics of CEO Search and Talent Update, inviting Lisa Margosian to join.

Ms. Sweet made the motion, Ms. Alexander seconded. All in favor, no abstentions.

VII. Adjourn



AGENDA
Amistad Academy
Joint High School Committee Meeting

Venue: Zoom

Zoom: <https://achievementfirst.zoom.us/j/85398929613>

Monday, May 22, 2023, 4:30-5:30 pm

- I. Call to Order**
- II. Public Comment**
- III. Approval of Minutes**
- IV. Discussion**
 - A. School Report
 - B. Finance Report
- V. Adjourn**

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AGENDA
Amistad Academy
Joint High School Committee Meeting

Venue: Zoom

Zoom: <https://achievementfirst.zoom.us/j/85398929613>

Monday, May 22, 2023, 4:30-5:30 pm

- I. Call to Order**
- II. Public Comment**
- III. Approval of Minutes**
- IV. Discussion**
 - A. School Report
 - B. Finance Report
- V. Adjourn**

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MINUTES
Amistad Academy
Joint High School Committee Meeting

Venue: Zoom

Zoom: <https://achievementfirst.zoom.us/j/85398929613>

Monday, May 22, 2023, 4:30-5:30 pm

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Ms. Lorraine Gibbons at 4:34 pm.

Attendees

The following Committee members were in attendance, constituting a quorum:

Name	Present	NAME	Present
Jennifer Alexander	N	Kimberly Bruce	N
Lorraine Gibbons	Y	Dick Ferguson	Y
Yashira Agosto	Y	Laura Saverin	Y
Dick Kalt	Y	Prish Pierce	N
Michael Strambler	Y		

AF Staff: Sulafa Bashir, Simon Obas, Rod Bowen

II. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

III. Discussion

A. School Report

Mr. Simon Obas gave the HS principal report sharing some end of year celebrations and inviting the committee members to senior signing day and graduation, the dates of which were included in the board packages.

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Mr. Obas shared that seniors had had their last day of school but were still required to have weekly check-ins with counselors as they prepared for college or started various summer programs and work opportunities.

Mr. Obas also shared some highlights from staff appreciation week and shared that most staff will be returning for the coming school year and that departing staff were generally those who were relocating outside of CT.

Committee members asked questions about staffing levels and Mr. Obas said that he was primarily concerned about STEM vacancies.

Ms. Saverin shared that the finance committee will be meeting later in the week to discuss various topics including fiscal and procurement policies and the budget for SY 24. She shared that the budget was expected to be a breakeven budget.

IV. Approval of Minutes

It was:

RESOLVED that the Amistad Academy Joint HS Committee hereby approves the meeting minutes from January 18, 2023.

Motion by: Dick Ferguson
Second by: Dick Kalt
All in Favor.

V. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned by Ms. Lorraine Gibbons at 4:52 pm.



MINUTES
Amistad Academy
Joint High School Committee Meeting

Venue: Zoom

Zoom: <https://achievementfirst.zoom.us/j/85398929613>

Monday, May 22, 2023, 4:30-5:30 pm

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Ms. Lorraine Gibbons at 4:34 pm.

Attendees

The following Committee members were in attendance, constituting a quorum:

Name	Present	NAME	Present
Jennifer Alexander	N	Kimberly Bruce	N
Lorraine Gibbons	Y	Dick Ferguson	Y
Yashira Agosto	Y	Laura Saverin	Y
Dick Kalt	Y	Prish Pierce	N
Michael Strambler	Y		

AF Staff: Sulafa Bashir, Simon Obas, Rod Bowen

II. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

III. Discussion

A. School Report

Mr. Simon Obas gave the HS principal report sharing some end of year celebrations and inviting the committee members to senior signing day and graduation, the dates of which were included in the board packages.

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Ms. Saverin shared that the finance committee will be meeting later in the week to discuss various topics including fiscal and procurement policies and the budget for SY 24. She shared that the budget was expected to be a breakeven budget.

IV. Approval of Minutes

It was:

RESOLVED that the Amistad Academy Joint HS Committee hereby approves the meeting minutes from January 18, 2023.

Motion by: Dick Ferguson
Second by: Dick Kalt
All in Favor.

V. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned by Ms. Lorraine Gibbons at 4:52 pm.

MINUTES

Joint Meeting of Achievement First (AF) Connecticut Boards

Amistad Academy, Bridgeport Academy

Elm City College Preparatory, Hartford Academy

Tuesday, August 23, 2022, 4:00 pm

Venue: Omni Hotel, New Haven

Zoom: <https://achievementfirst.zoom.us/j/8959180848>

Board Members in Attendance: Lorraine Gibbons, Jennifer Alexander, Ethan Tyminski, Gayatri Mehta, Dick Ferguson, Laura Saverin, Stephanie Ma, Patric Gregory, Prish Pierce, LaVonte Bryant, Erica Demond, Dick Kalt, Rajeev Lakra, Marlene Macaуда, Ruben Felipe, Erwin Hurst, Sr., Jessica Glover, Lisa Tanen-LaFontaine, Alice Turner, Fracoise Deristel-Leger,

Staff in Attendance: Lisa Margosian, Beth Cocuzza, Isabel Tañedo, Neil Shah, Xanthe Jory,, Christina Braganza, John Sharkey, Rod Bowen, Jesse Balis-Haris, Charmayne Joseph, Ken Paul, Charisse Terry, Nakia Hall, Patricia Granda-Malaver, Sultana Salma, Linda Darkwah

Guests in Attendance: Charon Smalls, Surbhi Patel

Patricia Granda-Malaver recorded the minutes.

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 4:19 PM by Dick Ferguson, Chair of Elm City College Preparatory Board. Mr. Ferguson encouraged Achievement First staff to introduce themselves to the board members.

II. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

III. Presentation by Achievement First

A. AF Strategic Initiatives

Ms. Lisa Margosian, Interim Chief Executive Officer, kicked off the meeting presenting 4 strategic imperatives - multi-year initiatives that will direct Achievement First's focus and efforts in service of scholars and teachers.

Ms. Margosian then provided a brief overview of each strategic imperative for this coming school year:

1. Ensure that our schools deliver on their promise to our scholars, including summer readiness and a strong start to the school year.
2. Focus on our culture, ensuring a clear sense of direction, transparency in decision making, predictable communication, and a willingness to engage with all stakeholders.
3. Improve our systems and structures that support the quality performance and scaling of the network.
4. Attract and retain quality talent to deliver on our commitment to support the excellence of our schools.

Following this, AF leadership talked through each imperative in more detail.

Mr. John Sharkey, Interim Chief Academic Officer, explained that the first strategic imperative prioritizes the critical work of delivering on our promise to scholars, through our academic and instructional offerings, our social-emotional supports, and ensuring that students feel safe and welcome at school. He reminded the board that this school year AF is focused on reading in particular, as well as on student investment and continued reduction of exclusionary discipline practices. Mr. Sharkey also highlighted the fundamental summer professional development teachers recently completed which provides teachers the preparation to start off the year in a great spot. Before continuing, Ms. Lisa Tanen asked about the bullet point pertaining to physical safety on campuses and the role school-based staff have when threats occur. Ms. Margosian answered that there will be continual reporting on this topic in the dashboards, and Mr. Sharkey suggested a potential deep dive on safety threats during an upcoming fall meeting.

Ms. Beth Cocuzza, Chief of Staff, explained the second strategic imperative which focuses on workplace culture. She noted that this year AF plans to focus on bringing back a strong performance culture for both Network Support employees and principals while leadership strategizes a long-term plan for teachers and other school based staff.

Mr. Neil Shah, Chief Financial Officer, then transitioned to the third strategic imperative and explained that it seeks to improve AF's systems and structures. He listed out some ways that we are already working on this goal such as investing in finance and human resources improvements. For instance, centralizing employee relations by automating

systems like payroll will ultimately lessen the load on school-based DSOs in the long run.

Lastly, Ms. Cocuzza presented the final strategic imperative that focuses on retaining and hiring school-based and Network Support staff members to deliver on our mission. She noted the nationwide teacher shortage crisis that has impacted the teaching profession nationwide which is why talent is a primary focus this coming school year.

Ms. Margosian then opened the floor to questions. Trustees and staff engaged in conversation on topics such as efforts to maintain the quality of teacher talent, the future of signing and retention bonuses, and best practices to elevate the innovative experience of Achievement First teachers during recruitment.

B. SY 2021-2022 report and reflections

1. Scholars

The next meeting topic focused on AF scholar data across academies this past school year. Mr. Sharkey expressed the tremendous progress in school academics and cultures that have brought us closer to pre-pandemic standards while also acknowledging that there is still work to be done to close pre-pandemic gaps, particularly in math.

Mr. Jesse Balis-Harris, Chief of Elementary Schools, continued the conversation with data on Connecticut elementary schools, reporting that the school year ended with strong adult and scholar culture that has created an imperative foundation for continual academic achievement. He shared state assessment results to express that students were not where they needed to be on reading and math proficiency. In order to increase levels to our goals, Mr. Balis-Harris explained that we will be implementing curriculum changes, intentional professional development in the science of reading, and upgraded coaching/training. Mr. Balis-Harris then entertained questions from the Board on AF assessment results in comparison to host district and state levels, class cohorts rebounding differently depending on age, and the need to eventually surpass pre-pandemic levels.

Ms. Charmayne Joseph, Interim Chief of Middle Schools, began by reporting on student experience at Connecticut middle schools which had mixed results for this year. For instance, academies met student experience survey goals yet there are needed improvements in attendance and suspension rates which are largely due to the ramification of the pandemic. As for academics, Ms. Joseph focused on reading, science, ELA and math results, and ultimately confirmed that middle school scholars have improved from 2020-2021 but are generally performing below pre-pandemic levels. She supported these findings by offering a range of data including internal

assessments and state testing results. Ms. Joseph also provided insight on changes that have fueled growth such as science growth due to improvement in our curriculum and instruction.

Mr. Rod Bowen, Chief of High Schools, presented the academic state of Connecticut high schools. Although more scholars passed all of their courses this school year than last, student performance differed. For example, state testing data was not up to par with course passing rates. Mr. Bowen then turned to school culture for high schools which has experienced improvements Student Belonging and Valuing School according to survey data but other aspects like suspension rates are actively being worked on by investing in inclusive practices. Board members voiced interest in more information on where students are going to school post-graduation and discussed social work at schools to provide mental health support.

Ms. Xanthe Jory, Chief Operating Officer, presented updates on scholar enrollment and recruitment efforts in Connecticut. She reported that three of four CT charters are fully enrolled and we expect them to be fully enrolled next school year as well. She explained the effective recruitment methods we are using such as in-person outreach strategies, phone banking, digital marketing, and building data capacity. Ms. Jory then entertained questions from board members about reasons for the current trends in kindergarten enrollment and the specifics of improvements to our digital advertisements.

2. Staff

Ms. Cocuzza transitioned the conversation to staff updates. She explained the bi-annual organizational health survey AF releases and the metrics used to predict retention, and presented results from staff at each academy level. Where there was low employee satisfaction, Ms. Cocuzza noted that the root causes were tied to teacher shortage and staffing challenges. These survey conclusions also helped instructional leadership to build more intentional alignment and more effective principal development with regional superintendents.

Mr. Michael Rabin, Deputy Chief of Staff, continued with the current state of recruitment and retention. He noted that Connecticut's difficult certification requirements have taken a toll on the teaching profession at large. Mr. Rabin highlighted our talent efforts like salary and retention bonuses, prioritization of schools with most openings, increased marketing efforts, and streamlining application process. He concluded with brief updates on hiring goals versus progress made to date. Mr. Sharkey followed up with strategies leadership will implement proactively in the coming school year to mitigate the issues we have identified this past year. The board will hear

more updates on the progress of these efforts in fall meetings. Mr. Sharkey entertained questions from the Board on emphasizing specialized teacher coaching at AF.

Ms. Christina Braganza, Chief Program Officer, reported on the investment of staff summer training series for AF's school-based teams. Ms. Braganza highlighted New Team member taxonomy training which gives new teachers the opportunity to practice building a strong classroom environment by rehearsing lessons and roleplaying. She shared the excitement of summer training being back in-person, with over 95% of participants agreeing/strongly agreeing that summer training is of high quality and high impact. Mr. Sharkey added that the goal of summer professional development is to present a series of connected training and experiences that support our visions across academies. He explained that we employed a logic model to identify specific inputs, activities and outputs needed for each session to lead us to the intended mission. In other words, we no longer look at summer training as individual sessions but rather as a collective story that will accelerate the recovery of students. Board members inquired on how summer training effectiveness is being tracked and whether individual boards can thank teachers and staff through appreciation events or additional support.

3. Operations

Ms. Jory said that with the lessons we learned last year, we have implemented COVID safety guidelines in schools which include:

- Aligning guidelines with district policies and CDC guidance to simplify the decision-making process
- Evolving approaches as policies change and pandemic progresses
- Continuing asymptomatic testing this fall
- Requiring staff to receive booster shots

She continued with insight on school response to both imminent and non-imminent threats to the school community. Ms. Jory explained that we have revised and clarified protocols covering a range of threat responses that align with state guidance as well as adjusted preparedness and prevention protocols. Board members asked questions about potential simulations that can help improve our response.

Lastly, Mr. Rabin covered charter renewals as all 4 charters are up for renewal this year. He explained that we are targeting 5 year renewals, and the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) will be evaluating us on various components. Mr. Rabin provided an outline of the renewal process, and noted that we are currently at the formal renewal application stage. Board members will get this document as signatures will need to be obtained before moving forward with site visits. Overall, Mr. Rabin pointed out that leadership is working hard to fortify the relationship that AF has

with CSDE. During discussion, Mr. Rabin answered a question regarding any stumbling blocks in past renewals.

IV. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 6:04 PM by Dick Ferguson.

Motion by Dick Kalt

Seconded by Raj Lakra

All in favor



DRAFT AGENDA
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**
- II. Public Comment**
- III. Approval of Minutes**
- IV. Board Discussion**
 - A. Proposed Executive Session
 - 1. Principal Renewals
 - 2. Principal Hiring Pipeline
- V. Discussion with Achievement First**
 - A. Academic Update
 - B. Teacher Recruitment Update
 - C. Charter Renewal Update
 - D. Legislative Update
- VI. Committee Reports**
 - A. Finance Committee Report
- VII. Adjourn**

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**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.