



## Elm City College Prep Board Meeting Minutes

Achievement First

Monday, April 20, 2026 at 5:30 PM to 7:00 PM EDT

Zoom: <https://achievementfirst.zoom.us/j/83655831698>

### Attendees

Board Members: Dick Ferguson, Shannon Garfield, Kevin Torres, Latisha Douglas

Board Fellow: Brian Dan

AF Staff: Amy D'Angelo, Live Levey, Samantha Lucky, Serena Johnson, Leisel Renaud, Ben Schanback, Sulafa Bashir, Ash Rodriguez

#### I. **Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Board Chair Dick Ferguson at 5:33 pm.

#### II. **Public Comment**

There were no members of the public present.

#### III. **Welcome and Agenda Overview**

Amy D'Angelo welcomed the board members and introduced and welcomed the new board member Shannon Garfield, noting her substantial expertise in special education. She then gave an overview of the meeting agenda, highlighting that the focus would be the principal reports and their academic update consisting of the mock assessment results and related action plans.

#### IV. **Mission Moment**

A 'mission moment' themed the start of the meeting, celebrating a successful Black History Month event at Elm City, reflecting the school's mission of fostering unity and showcasing student talent. The event was a collaborative effort between two schools, facilitating student personal growth through opportunities in public speaking, performances, dance, and theater.

#### V. **Academic Update: Mock Assessments**

The Principal Reports kicked off with the Elementary School. Principal Serena Johnson provided a comprehensive report, showcasing preliminary data closely aligning with state assessments, while recognizing challenges like a decline in ELA mock scores due to staffing issues, prompting strategies to enhance dean support. Improvements in math proficiency were noted, with attendance issues addressed by implementing improvement plans for at-risk students. Further discussions highlighted absenteeism's impact and interventions including home assignments to support catch-up. There was a discussion on factors affecting promotion decisions and the school's efforts to inform

parents of attendance impacts. Ms. Johnson elaborated on ELA strategy adjustments, targeting specific standards to prepare for SBAC assessments.

Next, Middle School Principal Leisel Renaud presented assessment results, noting an improvement in middle school ELA proficiency, reflecting strategic focus on standards. Despite growth, unmet goals call for defined planning and small group interventions. Math goals still lag due to staffing gaps, prompting collaborative teacher reviews. Attendance issues tied to COVID are being mediated with family engagement, while community involvement is boosted via attendance-linked events and communications. Innovative funding supports a Saturday school program, enriching student learning through tutoring and activities, with future effectiveness metrics planned.

#### **VI. Finance Committee Report**

CFO Benjamin Schanback's finance update unfolded challenges with static per-pupil funding amidst growing costs, driving careful resource allocation with minimal educational impact. It was stated that staffing reductions were made in non-critical areas, avoiding cuts to core teaching positions, thus protecting key educational programs and outcomes. Additionally, school budgets are augmented by a broader regional budget for strategic flexibility. Ultimately, no core program cuts occurred despite challenges, aided by philanthropic support targeting financial sustainability. Amistad High's enrollment and related budget adjustments were reviewed, underlining the necessity of improved state funding and strategic philanthropy to sustain financial health.

#### **VII. Board Resolutions**

Mr. Ferguson made a motion to approve the consent agenda, seconded by Keivin Torres. All were in favor and the consent agenda passed.

#### Consent Agenda

1. BE IT RESOLVED, the Elm City College Prep Board of Directors hereby approves the meeting minutes from March 3, 2026 and March 19, 2026.
2. BE IT RESOLVED, that the Elm City College Prep Board of Directors hereby appoints the following committee members:
  - a. Joint Amistad HS Committee: Shannon Garfield
  - b. Personnel Committee: Brian Fan
3. BE IT RESOLVED, that the Elm City College Prep Board of Directors hereby approves the renewal of the following principals, with a final compensation package to be incorporated in the FY27 Budget to be reviewed and approved in June 2026:
  - Serena Johnson, Elm City College Prep Elementary School
  - Leisel Renaud, Elm City College Prep Middle School

Healthy Food Certification:

4. Pursuant to C.G.S. Section 10-215f, the Elm City College Preparatory 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, 2026, through June 30, 2027. 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.
5. The Elm City College Preparatory Board of Directors will allow the sale to students of food items that do not meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards and beverages not listed in Section 10-221q of the Connecticut General Statutes 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 and beverage 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 and beverage sales.

**VIII. Adjourn**

Prior to adjourning Mr. Ferguson took a moment to acknowledge the resignation of Stephanie Ma from the board with appreciation for her service and lengthy tenure.

There being no other business, Mr. Ferguson asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Shannon Garfield made a motion, seconded by Dick Ferguson. All were in favor and the meeting was adjourned at 6:36 pm.