

AF Joint Connecticut Board Meeting Minutes Amistad Academy Board of Directors

Thursday, October 10, 2024 at 5:30 PM to 7:30 PM EDT

Amistad High School: 580 Dixwell Avenue, New Haven, CT 06511

Zoom (only for those who cannot attend in person for board business from 5:30 - 6:00 pm):

<https://achievementfirst.zoom.us/j/89292345015>

Attendees: Lorraine Gibbons, Yashira Zwisler, Patricia Sweet, Camilia Novo-Viano

Guests: James Baron, Michael Burke, Peter Butler

AF Staff: Shannon Miller

I. Call to Order

Lorraine Gibbons called the meeting to order at 5:45 pm.

II. Public Comment

Mr. Peter Butler was present but did not make public comment.

III. Board Business: Board Goals & Board Resolutions and Approvals

Ms. Gibbons noted that there were two potential board members, James Baron and Michael Burke, who were present and asked the group to do introductions. Following that, Mr. Baron and Mr. Burke briefly introduced themselves and shared why they were interested in joining the board. Ms. Gibbons then asked for a motion to approve the first consent agenda approving the new board members as well as board leadership and committees. Patricia Sweet motioned, Yashira Zwisler seconded. All in favor, none opposed or abstained.

Consent Agenda 1: New board members, board leadership, and committees

1. BE IT RESOLVED, that the Amistad Academy Board of Directors elects James Baron to the Board for a 3-year term, ending June 30, 2027.
2. BE IT RESOLVED, that the Amistad Academy Board of Directors elects Michael Burke as a teacher representative to the Board for a 3-year term, ending June 30, 2027.
3. BE IT RESOLVED, that the Amistad Academy Board of Directors hereby elects the following leadership slate for the 2024-2025 fiscal year:
 - a. Lorraine Gibbons, Chair
4. BE IT RESOLVED, that the Amistad Academy Board of Directors hereby appoints the following committee members:
 - Finance Committee: Lorraine Gibbons, Yashira Zwisler
 - Personnel Committee: Lorraine Gibbons (Chair), Jennifer Alexander, Pat Sweet
 - Amistad Joint HS Committee: Jennifer Alexander (Chair), Lorraine Gibbons,

Yashira Zwisler

Then Ms. Gibbons introduced the second consent agenda approving the meeting minutes, interim principals and family handbook. There were no questions, so she asked for a motion to approve. Patricia Sweet motioned, Yashira Zwisler seconded. All in favor, none opposed or abstained.

Consent Agenda 2: Meeting Minutes, Interim Principals, Family Handbook

1. BE IT RESOLVED, the Amistad Academy Board of Directors hereby approves the meeting minutes from June 10, 2024 and June 13, 2024.
2. BE IT RESOLVED that the Amistad Academy Board of Directors hereby approves the following individuals to serve as interim principal, as needed, for a period of time not to exceed sixteen weeks through June 30, 2025, based on the recommendations by Achievement First.

School	Interim Principal 1	Interim Principal 1
Elementary School	Emma Miller	Olivia Dardy
Middle School	Roseann Basile	N/A
High School	Shanika Bailey	N/A

3. BE IT RESOLVED, that the Amistad Academy Board of Directors hereby approves the 2024-2025 AF Family Handbook.

IX. Adjourn

There being no other business, Ms. Gibbons asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Patricia Sweet motioned, Yashira Zwisler seconded. All in favor, none opposed or abstained. The meeting adjourned at 5:50 pm.

Additional Meeting Notes

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CEO Welcome

Lisa Margosian, AF CEO, welcomed the four Connecticut boards and thanked everyone for being there.

Our Schools Today: Strengthening our Foundation, Building our Future

A. Academics

Transitional Superintendent Amy D'Angelo and Chief Academic Officer, John Sharkey, discussed school performance, noting that they outperform their school district in ELA across all regions. However, they acknowledged the need for improvement in other areas and committed to focusing on pricing and increasing student enrollment. They emphasized the importance of data in driving change and improving curriculum implementation and expressed confidence in the team's ability to improve moving forward.

Kristin Damo, Chief of Elementary Schools shared about what is being done to support students in improving academic outcomes. She discussed the school's approach to engaging families with summer learning packets. The packets were sent out in advance, and when students return, teachers check the completed work, provide incentives, and engage families in discussion. She mentioned the importance of providing translations and support resources for families. For early intervention, the school conducts assessments in kindergarten through second grade at the start of the year to identify students needing additional support.

Charmayne Joseph, Chief of Middle Schools, discussed the challenges faced by middle school students in terms of proficiency in English and math. She highlighted the need for consistent and responsive data, particularly in math, and the importance of addressing foundational reading skills. Shannon also mentioned the implementation of new programs such as Lexia for reading intervention and I Excel for math intervention.

Dumar Paden, Chief of High Schools, discussed potential new solutions and the importance of identifying root causes and prioritizing actions to improve high school performance.

B. Chronic Absenteeism

Tiffany Bostic, Chief of Support Services shared that the region improved on chronic absenteeism last year. She shared strategies being implemented in order to decrease the number of students who are chronically absent by 8% this year.

C. Teacher Certification

Amy D'Angelo discussed the progress being made on teacher certification. She mentioned the ongoing work with an external consultant to ensure compliance and the need for strategic planning for enterprise certification.

VI. ESSER Spend Down Update

Aaron Obrachta, Associate Chief of Development, discussed ESSER and its third round of funding, which ended on September 30th. He discussed the management of funds for various projects, emphasizing the goal to reduce these funds to zero. He highlighted the significant increase in funds for Esser 3, which went from March 2021 to September 2024, and the injection of almost 30 million dollars into schools for technology, personnel, and safety equipment. Mr. Obrachta also mentioned the challenges of spending down to the last dollar and the need for careful management of funds. He noted that the funds are restricted in how they can be used and that they have gone through an amendment earlier this year to ensure proper use.

VIII. AF CT Boards: Partnering on Governance

Lisa Margosian shared her focus areas for the year and her expectations for the board related to engagement, attendance, and board giving. She also discussed the board's role in governance and shifting from oversight to strategic engagement.

VII. Mission Moment

Ms. Margosian shared that this year is Achievement First's 25th Anniversary and the organization's remains committed to closing the achievement gap and supporting under-resourced communities. She mentioned that there will be regional block parties and celebrations culminating with a summit at the end of the year. Then she shared a video about the 25th anniversary before the meeting end.