

## AF Joint Connecticut Board Meeting Minutes Amistad Academy Board of Directors

Thursday, December 12, 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, Patricia Sweet, Camilia Novo-Viano, James Baron, Michael Burke

**Guests:** Henry Melzer

**AF Staff:** Shannon Miller

### I. Call to Order

Lorraine Gibbons called the meeting to order at 5:35 pm.

### II. Public Comment

There were no members of the public present.

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

Ms. Gibbons noted that there was a new potential Yale SOM Fellow board member present, Henry Melzer, and asked the group to do introductions. Following that, Mr. Melzer briefly introduced himself. Ms. Gibbons then asked for a motion to approve the first consent agenda approving Mr. Melzer and the previous meeting minutes. Patricia Sweet motioned, James Burke seconded. All in favor, none opposed or abstained.

#### Consent Agenda 1: New board member and meeting minutes approval

- BE IT RESOLVED, the Amistad Academy Board of Directors hereby approves the meeting minutes from October 10, 2024.
- BE IT RESOLVED, the Amistad Academy Board of Directors hereby approves Mr. Henry Melzer to serve as a Yale SOM Board Fellow for an 18-month term, ending June 30, 2026. Yashira Zwisler

Then Ms. Gibbons introduced the second resolution approving the medication administration policy. James Burke motioned, Michael Burke seconded. All in favor, none opposed or abstained.

#### Resolution - Administration of Medication in Connecticut Schools

WHEREAS the Amistad Academy Board of Directors recognizes that pursuant to Connecticut General Statute 10-212a(a)(2), the board must develop with the advice and approval of the school medical advisor, if any, or other qualified licensed physician, and the school nurse

supervisor, specific written policies and procedures concerning the administration of medications to the students within the school system by a nurse, or in the absence of a nurse, by qualified personnel for schools.

WHEREAS the Amistad Academy Board of Directors wishes to adopt the Administration of Medication written policies and procedures and make them effective immediately in the Amistad Academy Schools.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Amistad Academy Board of Directors hereby approves and adopts the Administration of Medication written policies and procedures.

IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Amistad Academy Board of Directors hereby authorizes and directs the Amistad Academy Schools and Achievement First, Inc. officers and/or designees to take and carry out such action as required in connection with the foregoing Resolution.

### **IX. Adjourn**

There being no other business, Ms. Gibbons asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. James Burke motioned, Michael Burke seconded. All in favor, none opposed or abstained. The meeting adjourned at 5:45 pm.

## Additional Meeting Notes

### AF Joint Connecticut Board Meeting

Thursday, October 10, 2024 at 5:30 PM to 7:30 PM EDT  
Amistad High School: 580 Dixwell Avenue, New Haven, CT 06511

#### **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.