



## **COMMISSION MEETING**

### **Agenda**

**January 26, 2024  
1:00PM - 3:00PM  
Teams Meeting**

**Chair, Dr. Lillie Edwards**

- I. Public Session: Call to Order – 1:00PM (2 minutes)**
- II. Pledge of Allegiance (1 minute)**
- III. Voting Item: Approval of Draft Minutes from the December 15, 2024, Meeting (.5 minutes) - Attachment III**
- IV. Discussion on the Content of the Strategic Plan for The Commission – Chair Edwards**
- V. RFP for Curriculum Website – Dr. Patrick Lamy**
- VI. Executive Director’s Report (15 Minutes) - Attachment V**
  - A. Staffing Plans and Interviewing Process for FT Employees and Interns**
  - B. Summer Institute 2024**
  - C. Status of State-Wide Survey**
  - D. Next Steps with NJEA**
  - E. 2024 Exemplary Awards Process**
  - F. FY 2025 Budget Process**
- VII. Future Agenda Items for the Next Meeting of Commissioners: Chair Edwards**
- VIII. Open Public Comments and Remarks: General Public (10 minutes)**
- IX. Adjournment**

### **Attachment III**

#### **Meeting Minutes**

#### **Friday December 15, 2023 -Teams Meeting**

Scheduled 1: 00 pm – 3: 000 pm.

Meeting adjourned 2: 50pm

#### **Attending**

#### **Commissioners**

Patricia Atkins, Lavonne Bebler-Johnson, Rosie Grant, Danielle Jones, Fatima Heyward, Tom Puryear, Joyce Ship-Freeman (Vice Chair); Bill Payne, Jason Redd (Designee – Gittens), Nyeema C. Watson, Angelica Allen-McMillan, Ane Roseborough-Eberhard, Troy Singleton (Designee – Stewart), Samuel Thompson (Designee-Maris).

#### **Amistad Staff**

Patrick Lamy, Iman AQuddus, Trevor K. Melton, Glender Terrell

#### **DOE/AG Staff**

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#### **Public**

James Harris, Sandra Cook McNight, Princess Holgram, Diane Colson. P. Forrest

#### **Meeting Called to Order**

Vice Chair Joyce Ship-Freeman began the meeting officially at 1: 08 pm, assured the presence of a quorum, and officially called the meeting to order.

Joyce Ship-Freeman thanked all participants for joining the meeting of the Amistad Commission and read the statement pertaining to the public session of the Commission meeting to ensure compliance with the New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act. The Open Public Meetings Act was enacted to ensure the right of the public to have advance notice of and to attend the meetings of public bodies at which any business affecting their interest is discussed or acted upon in accordance with the provisions of this act. The Amistad Commission has posted notice of this meeting to be published by having the date and time in place thereof posted in the Department of Education, Secretary of State's Office. The notice was also given to the State House Press Corps and the Governor's Office.

#### **Pledge of Allegiance**

Vice Chair Freeman began the meeting with the reading of the Pledge of Allegiance and asked all participants to join.

#### **Approval of Draft Minutes from the September 22, 2023, Commission Meeting**

There was a vote to approve the minutes from the September 22 meeting of the Commission. There were ten eleven in favor and one abstention.

#### **Guest Speaker: I-Heart Media (George Liles, Richard Kennedy))**

**George Liles and Richard Kennedy were introduced as consultants for the new communication strategy for the Amistad Commission. They provided a comprehensive overview of the new direction that I-Hearts is undertaking to raise awareness about the NJ Amistad Commission.**

#### **Proposed Meeting Dates for Calendar Year 2024**

**The meeting dates were re-introduced and called for a vote by the commission. The meeting dates were unanimously approved by the Commission. The new meeting dates for 2024 are January 26, March 22, June 14, September 27, December 13.**

#### **Acceptance and Endorsement of the MOA between DOE and Amistad Commission**

**There was a discussion on the MOA between the Amistad Commission and the DOE. The MOA was approved by the AG Office with respect to the language regarding donations to the Commission. Tom Puryear expressed concern about the language in the MOA with respect to the authority of the Board. There was a motion to approve the adoption of the MOA between the**

**DOE and the Amistad Commission to authorize signature by the Executive Director on the document. There were nine in favor and two abstentions.**

### **Update on the Strategic Plan for The Commission**

Dr. Lamy provided an overview of the vision, mission, and state of core values. He provided a background on how these documents were developed. The mission, vision and core values were endorsed by the Commission. He also re-introduced the importance of the six strategic priorities and conducted a comprehensive review of each component of the Strategic Plan draft.

### **Summary of Board of Commissioner Retreat on October 19<sup>th</sup>**

Commissioner Lavonne Bebler-Johnson reported that the retreat was announced with tentative dates on June 9<sup>th</sup> which were finalized on September 22<sup>nd</sup>. The retreat was held on October 19<sup>th</sup> at Fairleigh Dickenson University from 9: 30am to 4: 30pm. The lead Consultant for the 2023 retreat was Mr. Tony Bland. **The goals for the 2023 Retreat were to:** build and enhance personal and professional connections; understand the roles and purpose of membership on the Board; reflect on commitment and passion for educating and developing students of New Jersey; reconnect with our mission; and create a broader discussion on the new Strategic Plan. Only nine of the twenty-one members of the Board of Commissioners attended the retreat. Board participation in events of this nature is vital to the success of the work of the Commission. There was considerable discussion on participation of Board members with comments from public attendees. For those who attended, the event was extremely helpful. A google forms evaluation was distributed to all participants of the retreat to evaluate reactions to every session including the retreat setting/location and other services. **5 People Volunteered to help plan the next retreat.**

### **Budget Update for Fiscal year 2025**

Commissioner Rosie Grant provided an update on the budget. Based on the last meeting of the Executive Committee, there is a need to establish at least a two-year budget plan that will be aligned with strategic plan, with projected increases for a third year. There is a new state government budget process which requires a budget meeting between stakeholders, the Governor's office, and the Treasury department. These meetings are anticipated between now and late February on a Thursday or Friday. The meeting will be attended by me, Patrick, and Chair Edwards. The dates are being finalized by the Commission Office Staff. A budget for the next two years will be prepared in advance of the meeting. A budget for fiscal year 2025 will be presented by the finance committee for approval at the March 2024 meeting. The budget should account for growth in staffing, major new initiatives, and an annual CPI increase of 4-6%. As of today, The Amistad Commission Budget has expended or incumbered \$290,618. There remains the concern regarding the delayed staffing plan which would have accounted for 227,000 in FY 2024. There is an expected expense ranging from 90,000 to 125,000 for a new curriculum website. We also have upcoming expenses for the 2024 Summer Institute, online professional development series expenses, and National History Day NJ Expenses of approximately 100,000. There are still payroll expenses for the next six months for the current staff. The major concern is the delay in the Commission's staffing plan.

### **Executive Director's Report**

Dr. Lamy provided a comprehensive overview of the Executive Director's Report with attention to developing and launching a new strategic plan; introducing a new online professional development program for NJ teachers as a continuation of the Summer Institute; continuing conversations with a new collaboration with NJEA; developing a new state-wide assessment; and engagement of districts, students, and teacher in new Amistad initiatives. Building on the success of the 2023 Summer institute, the 2024 event will follow a similar structure that identifies the needs of the teachers from grades K-5; 6-8; and 9-12. The Commission is collaborating closely with teachers throughout the state (Lesson Planning Committee) to develop the content for the 2024 Summer Institute. The 2024 Summer institute will again follow the theme for National History Day. The 2024 Summer Institute is scheduled from July 29<sup>th</sup> to August 2<sup>nd</sup> at the College of New Jersey with both in-person and remote options. The 2025 Summer Institute is tentatively scheduled from August 4<sup>th</sup> -7<sup>th</sup> at Rowan University.

The Amistad Office has already developed the content for the RFP for revisions to the Curriculum Website in 2025. The Executive Committee of the Board will have final approval on the selected agency for the redesign of the new site.

### **Future Agenda Items for the Next Meeting of Commissioners**

**There was a brief discussion about the Bylaws and the timing to return the document to the full board for review.**

#### Open Public Comments and Remarks: General Public

James Harris – Commended all commissioners for their work. However, he noted that some people need to be removed from the Commission. Active participation is a requirement for those who accepted appointment to the Board. He expressed concern about the Bylaws and the curriculum website, and getting districts to meet the mandate of the law. Sandra Cook McNight: Reported that she attended several summer institute and need access to the website. Princess Holgram: Commented on need for partnership and collaboration with ASALLAH. Diane Colson – Access to the website and need to have access.

**Adjournment** – Adjourned at 2: 58PM