



COMMISSION MEETING

Agenda

**September 22, 2023
1:00PM - 3:00PM
Teams Meeting**

Chair, Commissioner Lillie Johnson Edwards

- I. Public Session: Call to Order – 1:00PM (2 minutes)**
- II. Pledge of Allegiance (1 minute)**
- III. Approval of Draft Minutes from the June 9, 2023, Meeting (Attachment III – Pages 2-4) (5 minutes)**
- IV. Guest Speaker: Plan for Professional Development Sessions for NJ Teachers: Dr. Amber Smith (20 minutes)**
- V. Proposed Meeting Dates for Calendar Year 2024 - Chair Edwards (5 minutes)**
 - A. Virtual and In-Person Dates: January 19, March 22, June 21, September 27, December 13
- VI. Strategic Plan for The Commission – Chair Edwards (10 minutes)**
 - A. Vision Statement
 - B. Mission Statement
 - C. 6 Strategic Priorities
 - D. Strategic Plan Advisory Group
- VII. Board of Commissioner Retreat: Lavonne Bebler-Johnson (15 minutes)**
- VIII. Executive Director's Report (30 minutes)**
 - A. Summer Institute 2023 Update
 - B. Status of Approved Staffing Plan
 - C. Communication Plans for Amistad Commission
 - D. Update on Webpage and New Curriculum Site
 - E. Update on MOA with NJEA Partnership and Donation
 - F. Plans for State-Wide Assessment Survey
 - G. Executive Director Top Priorities for Academic Year 2023-2024
- IX. Future Agenda Items for the Next Meeting of Commissioners: Dr. Edwards (2 minutes)**
- X. Open Public Comments and Remarks: General Public (10 minutes)**
- XI. Adjournment**

Attachment III
Meeting Minutes

Friday June 9, 2023 -Teams Meeting

Scheduled 1: 00 pm – 3: 000 pm

Meeting adjourned 2: 35 pm

Attending

Commissioners

Lavonne Bebler-Johnson, Lillie Johnson Edwards (Chair), Rosie Andrea Grant, Fatima Heyward, Danielle M. Jones, Tom Puryear, Joyce Ship-Freeman (Vice Chair); Bill Payne, Khyati Y. Joshi, Patricia Atkins, Nyeema C. Watson.

Amistad Staff

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

DOE/AG Staff

Ryan Silver, Kerlyn Espinal (Designee)

Public

Barbara Bernard, Joyce Mollineaux, Debra Price

Meeting Called to Order

Dr. Edwards began the meeting officially at 1: 08 pm, assured the presence of a quorum, and officially called the meeting to order.

Dr. Edwards thanked all participants for joining the meeting of the Amistad Commission. Dr. Edwards read a 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

Dr. Edwards began the meeting with the reading of the Pledge of Allegiance and asked all participants to join. "I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

Approval of Draft Minutes from the March 24, 2023.

The minutes of the meeting from March 24th were voted on and approved by the Commission. There were 10 in favor and one abstention. The motion was moved by Commissioner Bebler-Johnson and seconded by Commissioner Watson.

Approval of Draft Minutes from the Special Meeting of the Commission on May 17th

The minutes of the Special Meeting of the Commission on May 17th were voted on and approved by the Commission. There were 10 in favor and one abstention. The motion was moved by Commissioner Puryear and seconded by Commissioner Atkins designee.

Budget Discussion and Priorities for Fiscal Year 25, 26 and 27

Commissioner Rosie Grant reported that based on the last meeting of the Finance Committee, there is a need to establish a three-year budget plan that will be aligned with strategic priorities identified in the anticipated Strategic Plan. In February 2024, the Finance Committee will present a budget for fiscal years 25, 26 and 27 for preliminary review and approval by the Board. The budget should account for growth in staffing, major new initiatives, and an annual CPI increase of 4-6%.

Ideas for Board of Commissioner Retreat/Training

Commissioner Bebler-Johnson noted that the Bylaws and Governance Committee should consider a half

day in-person retreat on September 22nd that would precede the scheduled Commission Meeting on that day. The agenda for the first part could cover some basic items such as:

- Roles and Responsibilities of Board Members
- Engagement and Participation in Meetings and Events
- Adhering to Terms of Membership and Engagement
- Board Surveys on Needs for Success as Members
- Legal/Compliance Issues for Board Members
- Fund/Friend Raising Roles of Board Members
- Ethics Training for all Board Members

Day two (half or full day) of the training could be held prior to the January 2024 meeting and focus primarily on the development and approval of the new five-year Strategic Plan. This training will focus on the role of the Board Members on finalizing the goals and objectives of the Strategic Plan, and the Board's role in overseeing the implementation of the Strategic Plan.

Commissioner Bebler-Johnson also reported that there was not any movement on the status of the Bylaws which remain under review at the Attorney General Office.

Executive Director's Report

- **Summer Institute Update:** We are in the process of finalizing the details for the 2023 Summer Institute. We are processing payments for services, presenters, supplies and other materials. Since the last update, our Office decided to add a Plenary Session to each of the major sections of the institute. The idea is for the plenary speaker to set the tone for the ensuing breakout sessions by providing an overarching view of each topical area. We are 5 weeks out and working daily on finalizing the program content. As of today, we have 34 registered to attend the institute.
- **Status of Approved Staffing Plan:** The Staffing Plan that was approved by the Board remains under review by the DOE Chief of Staff for final approval. We are unable to proceed with posting the positions or selection of potential candidates to interview. Our hope was to begin the hiring process in May 2023 and finalize the selection in July or August.
- **Strategic Planning Council Meeting:** The Strategic Planning Council held its first meeting on Wednesday, June 7th. The members of the SPC include Chair, Vice Chair of the Board, and the Chairs of the Standing Committees; all Amistad Office Staff, DOE representation and a designee from the Governor's Office. The primary purpose of the first meeting was to discuss the responsibilities of the SPC, and to begin creating a timeline for the new Strategic Plan. There was also a discussion on the role and function of the Strategic Plan Advisory Group. We also discussed some early observations and themes that should be part of the process. Updates from the Strategic Planning Council will be included on future agendas of Commission Meeting. It was also recommended that higher education partners are included the strategic planning process.
- **Communication Plans for Amistad Commission Launched on May 1st.** We drafted a generic letter draft that could be altered to go out to a variety of groups and organizations including NJ teachers, public school employees, NJ registered voters by municipality, school boards statewide, targeted parent groups, NJ religious/educational/community organization, and higher education partners, etc. We are also planning several podcasts for similar information sharing strategies. This is a first of many strategic Initiatives to follow. We will move the needle on increased awareness about the Commission and we will have the data to support it.
- **Update on Webpage and New Curriculum Site:** The curriculum website is under construction with a target launch date of July 1st. The soft launch for the internal site was done today. We are still waiting for bios and headshot from a few Board members that I personally emailed last week. Thank you for those of you who have responded. For those who have not, please follow up with Iman as soon as possible.
- **Update on MOA with NJEA Partnership and Donation**
By request of DAG Ryan Silver, this topic was moved to Executive Session after covering all other agenda items.

Executive Director Top Priorities for Academic Year 2023-2024:

1. Launch and begin implementation of a successful strategic plan
2. Introduce the Academic Year Continuing Institute
3. Coordinate the eastern corridor tour
4. Begin planning the trip to Western Africa
5. Create an assessment plan for the Commission

6. Increase district and teacher participation in Amistad activities

Future Agenda Items for the Next Meeting of Commissioners

Dr. Edwards reported that the agenda items for the September Meeting will include: NJEA MOA; assessment of Summer 2023 institute and considerations for 2024. Status of goals for 2023; discussion on Office Operations; NJ Council on Social Justice and plans for NJEA Conference; and update on strategic planning.

The December Meeting of the Commission could also include update on the draft of the Strategic Plan; updates social studies and NJEA Conference; initial plans for 2024 Summer Institute, update on Amistad Budget; and goals for 2024.

Open Public Comments and Remarks: General Public

There were three comments from the public. Joyce Mollineaux representing the NAACP of Atlantic City commented on the importance of including students in the sessions for professional development for teachers. It was reported by the Executive Director that the Summer Institute will include a round table session for students. She applauded the work of the Commission.

Barbara Bernard commented on the need for better connections between HBCU and the Commission through the NJ Scholars Program. She also commented on the great new direction of the Commission,

Debra Price representing Underground Railroad Museum would like to explore new avenues of partnership with the Commission in her new role as Executive Director of the Museum.

Executive Session

There was a motion to move to Executive Session and all guests were asked to leave the meeting. Dr. Edwards reviewed the regulatory guidelines for executive session called during a Commission Meeting. Executive session began at 2: 20pm The motion was move by Commissioner Watson and Seconded by Joshi. The vote was unanimous. The Commission discussed the process and status of the MOA with NJEA. After the discussion, there was a motion to close executive session. The motion was move by Commissioner Jones and seconded by Commissioner Gittens.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 2: 35pm.