

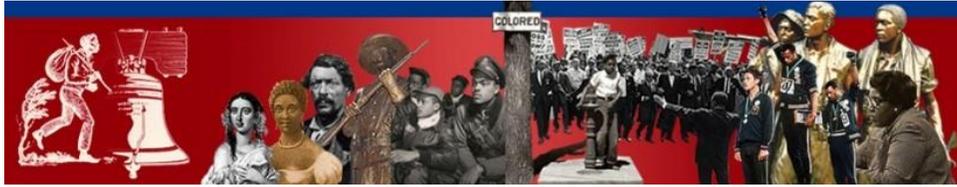


AMISTAD COMMISSION MEETING

**March 22, 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 January 26, 2024, Meeting (5 Minutes) - **Attachment III****
- IV. Status of the Strategic Plan for The Commission – Chair Edwards (5 Minutes)**
- V. Follow on Special Meeting of the Board in April or May – Chair Edwards (5 Minutes)**
- VI. Preliminary Budget Proposal to State Office - Rosie Grant (10 Minutes)**
- VII. Executive Director Report (25 Minutes)**
 - A. Summer Institute 2024 Overview**
 - B. MOA with NJEA Update – Concerns with Ghana Trip**
 - C. New Curriculum Website Bidding Process**
 - D. Exemplary Award Process**
 - E. Delay in New Employee Search Process**
- VIII. Open Public Comments and Remarks: General Public (10 minutes)**
- IX. Adjournment**



Amistad Commission Quarterly Meeting Minutes
January 26, 2024

Commissioners

Patricia Atkins, Lavonne Bebler-Johnson, Lillie Johnson (Chair), Rosie Grant, Fatima Heyward, Danielle Jones, Khyati Joshi; Antwan McClellan; Bill Payne; Tom Puryear, Jason Redd; Ane Roseborough-Eberhard; Joyce Ship-Freeman (Vice Chair); Kamani Scott (Singleton).

Amistad Staff

Patrick Lamy, Trevor K. Melton

DOE/AG Staff

Amna Toor, Kerlyn Espinal

Public

Members of the general Public (6 Guests)

Meeting Called to Order

Chair Edwards began the meeting officially at 1: 11 pm, assured the presence of a quorum, and officially called the meeting to order.

Chair Edwards 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

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

Approval of Draft Minutes from the December 15, 2023, Commission Meeting

There was a vote to approve the minutes from the December 15th meeting of the Commission. There were thirteen in favor and 1 abstention. Motioned by Bebler Johnson, seconded by Jason Redd.

Discussion on the Content of the Strategic Plan for The Commission

Dr. Edwards provided an overview of the strategic plan and the need for feedback from all Commissioners by February 15, 2024. She reiterated the importance of keeping the document confidential at this time. She referenced the concern with the timeline based on the delay of the State-wide survey which will be another major component of the Strategic Plan

RFP for Curriculum Website – Dr. Patrick Lamy

The Amistad Office completed the first draft of the request for proposal (RFP) for a new interactive curriculum website. We have several preliminary organizations that have expressed interest in the RFP. The expectations for organizations submitting a bid will include internet technology and digital humanities exploring historical data and pedagogy of Africans and African Americans in American History; an interactive timeline with curriculum that features historical events in American History with

primary focus on African American history; graphics, interactive videos, and pictures with high digital quality. The intention is to provide resources, so that teachers can access a framework for lesson plans that meet the mandate of the Amistad Law. The website will provide examples of activities and coursework for K-12 grades.

Staffing Plans and Interviewing Process for FT Employees and Interns

The Amistad Office is completing the position announcements for two new full-time employees and three Interns/Commission Consultants. A search committee has been established and the interview process and questions have been completed. There will be a first round of interviews by the Search Committee. The Committee will move four finalists forward for final interviews with the Executive Director and the Executive Committee of the Board. We are aggressively moving this process forward. A separate process for selecting Interns/Consultants will be managed by the Amistad Office staff.

Summer Institute 2024 (Theme: Rights & Responsibilities in History)

Building on the success of the 2023 Summer institute, the 2024 event will follow the same structure that identifies the needs of the teachers from grades K-5; 6-8; and 9-12. We are processing payment to the College of New Jersey for the reserved dates of July 29th to August 1st. This year will also focus on a variety of subject areas that expand beyond social studies and history. A basic outline is provided below.

Outline

Day 1: Check-In for Teachers Residing on Campus/Group Activities

Day 2: Focus on General Sessions in Relation to Teaching from the Lens of Inclusivity/Diversity.

Day 3: Developing Curriculum on Special Topics (Civil Rights, Emitt Till, Slavery, NJ Based History, etc.)

Day 4: Student Focus Groups, Administrators/District Leader Round Tables, Closing Awards Diner

Status of State-Wide Assessment Survey

The state-wide survey is under review by the Standards Office within the Department of Education (DOE). We are delayed with the anticipated launch date based on internal review and approval processes. Therefore, the Amistad Office had to adjust the timeline for the launch of the strategic plan which is heavily dependent on data collected from the state-wide survey. The office anticipates launching the survey prior to March 2024.

Next Steps with NJEA

The Amistad Office is collaborating with the Attorney General Office to review the MOA with NJEA. There are several items that may require some adjustment. We hope to complete the review process as soon as possible.

2024 Exemplary Awards Process

The goal of the Amistad Commission's Exemplary Lessons is to acknowledge those individual teachers who create a classroom lesson that highlights the contributions of Africans or African Americans in America and World History. The commission will use those lessons selected as "Exemplary" as model lessons to be posted on the Amistad Commission's Web-based Curriculum Website. These "Exemplary Lessons" will be used as a resource for all educators in New Jersey.

Educator's lessons that are selected as an "Exemplary Lesson" will be invited to apply for the "Amistad Commission's Exemplary Award." The Amistad Commission's Exemplary Award Program was codified by the New Jersey Legislature and signed into law by Governor Phil Murphy on August 31, 2021. The Award is designed to promote teaching the Amistad curriculum in New Jersey classrooms. The Award committee selects two teachers to receive the Amistad Commission's Exemplary Award: One teacher representing Grades K-8 and one teacher representing Grades 9-12. Each award recipient receives \$2,500 in recognition of his or her extraordinary contributions. Additionally, the recipient's school district will receive \$2,500.

Next Steps with National History Day (The Amistad Commission's New Jersey's Black History Day)

The Amistad Commission is moving forward with the social studies contest on African American History in New Jersey. The goal of this committee is to create a one-day contest, specifically, for grades (fourth and fifth) that will highlight the accomplishments of African Americans in New Jersey's local History. The Office has also initiated the first series of dates in collaboration with NJ National History for the 2024 state-wide competition.

FY 2025 Budget Process

The Amistad Office will submit a preliminary budget for FY 25 which will be a part of the discussion with the Treasury Department and the Governor's Office. Meetings were anticipated from mid-November through late February. The Governor's Budget address is expected in late February.

Future Agenda Items for the Next Meeting of Commissioners

March Meeting: Strategic Plan (summary of survey if available); Bylaws for the Commission; Projected Budget for FY 25 and FY 26; Update on RFP with Website; 2024 Summer Institute Update on Schedule/Outline; NJEA Collaboration; State-Wide Competition for 4 and 5 graders

Open Public Comments and Remarks: General Public

James Harris raised major concerns about Commissioner attending meetings and the importance of achieving a quorum at Quarterly Meetings. He commented on a need for greater focus on hiring minority staff /educators throughout NJ, and the need to establish greater collaborations with colleges and universities with teacher certification programs.

Adjournment – Meeting adjourned at 2: 50pm