



## **AMISTAD COMMISSION MEETING**

**December 19, 2025**

**1:00PM - 3:00PM**

**Teams Meeting**

**Chair, Dr. Lillie Johnson Edwards**

- I. **Public Session: Call to Order – 1:00PM (2 Minutes)**
- II. **Pledge of Allegiance (1 Minute)**
- III. **Voting/Action Items (5 Minutes)**
  - A. Minutes from September 26<sup>th</sup> Commission Meeting –Voting Item **Attachment IIIA**
- IV. Board Discussion on 2027 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gala (10 Minutes)
- V. Update on Fiscal Year 2026 Budget (5 Minutes) – **Attachment V**
- VI. **Executive Director’s Report (10 Minutes)**
  - A. NJEA and NCSS Conferences Update
  - B. Strategic Plan Implementation
  - C. NJ National History Day
  - D. Update on Collaborations with K-12 Teacher Certification Programs
  - E. Continuing Professional Development Series
  - F. **County Visits with Districts**
- VII. **Open Public Comments and Remarks: General Public (10 minutes)**
- VIII. Adjournment

## Attachment IIIA



### Amistad Commission Quarterly Meeting Minutes September 26, 2025

#### Commissioners

Lillie Johnson Edwards (Chair); Joyce Ship-Freeman (Vice Chair); Lavonne Bebler-Johnson; Rosie Grant; Danielle Jones; Antwan McClellan; Jason Redd; Senator Singleton; Kemani Scott; Tom Puryear; Andrea Roseborough-Eberhard; Adorian Murray Thomas

#### Amistad Staff

Patrick Lamy, Trevor K. Melton, Iman AQuddus, Glender Terrell, A'ndrea Bair, Britt Jordan

#### DOE/AG Staff

Amna Toor, Kerlyn Espinal

#### Public

Members of the general public (4 guests)

#### Meeting Called to Order

Chair Lillie Edwards officially began the meeting at approximately 1:00 pm with confirmation of a quorum and roll call. Chair Edwards thanked all participants for joining the meeting of the Amistad Commission and referenced the public session statement to ensure compliance with the New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act.

#### Pledge of Allegiance

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

#### Voting/Action Items

- **Minutes from June Meeting:** There was a motion to approve the meeting minutes. There was a discussion for clarity on this point. The motion was moved by Commissioner Bebler-Johnson and seconded by Commissioner Puryear. The roll call resulted in 12 votes in favor and 2 no votes.

- **Future Board Retreat Collaboration with All Summer Institutes:** There was a motion to align all Amistad Commission Board Retreats with the Summer Institute. The motion was moved by Commissioner Bebler-Johnson and seconded by Commissioner Grant. The roll call resulted in 13 votes in favor and 1 no vote.

- **Future Meeting Structure for 2026 and 2027:** There was a motion to adopt the future meeting structure for 2026 and 2027. The motion was moved by Commissioner Grant and seconded by Commissioner Puryear. The roll call resulted in 13 votes in favor and 1 no vote.

## Executive Director Report

The Amistad Office team is energized and ready to begin the 2025–2026 academic year. For the third consecutive year, the Commission successfully achieved all of its annual goals. We look forward to continuing this momentum and delivering another impactful year. With enhanced staffing levels and a renewed vision, we aim to deepen engagement with educators and students across New Jersey.

**A. Summer Institute 2025 Outcomes:** Evaluation data is still being collected, but preliminary feedback indicates that this year's Summer Institute was the most well-received in the Commission's history. This sentiment was echoed by returning participants. The event drew 239 registered educators, both in-person and virtually. Daily in-person attendance ranged from 70 to 100 participants, with an additional 100 attending online. Key highlights included the featured speakers, breakout sessions, and the venue.

**B. Summer Institute 2026 Planning:** Preparations are underway for the 2026 Summer Institute, to be held at Kean University. The Amistad Office has begun research on potential keynote speakers, including Dr. Hasan Kwame Jeffries and Maryland Governor Wes Moore. We are considering featuring one keynote speaker daily. The theme for the 2026 Institute will be announced in early spring.

**C. Strategic Plan Implementation:** The Strategic Plan was a central focus during the 2025 Board of Commissioners Retreat in Atlantic City. We are currently prioritizing 103 actionable goals and objectives aligned with the plan. The Strategic Planning Council convened on September 24 to review the implementation framework. A meeting of the Strategic Plan Advisory Group will be scheduled within the next four weeks.

**D. Launch of Diversity School House:** The Amistad Office is preparing for the **January 1, 2026**, launch of Diversity School House, a new resource hub for New Jersey educators. It will provide access to over 1,600 videos and lesson plans in multiple languages. Visit the site for more details on this exciting new initiative.

**E. Website Relaunch via DOE Broadcast:** The Commission is planning to relaunch its Curriculum Support Website on November 1, 2025. We are seeking approval for inclusion in the Department of Education's Weekly Broadcast to support the launch.

**F. 2025–2026 Professional Development Series:** The Commission will continue its monthly professional development sessions as an extension of the Summer Institute. Our priority remains empowering educators to effectively integrate African American history into their curricula. The series will include eight modules, running from October 14, 2025, through May 9, 2026. All Summer Institute registrants will receive session announcements, and participation will be open to all New Jersey educators.

**G. 2026 Budget Update:** The State of New Jersey has approved the Commission's budget at the same funding level as FY 2025. In response to our original request for increased funding, the Amistad Office is adjusting the 2026 budget by approximately \$140,000.

**H. County Outreach and Communication Plan:** To support our strategic goal of expanding district participation statewide, the Commission will engage with every county in New Jersey over the next year. Currently, our staff is planning to attend each of the 21 county curriculum consortium meetings. This will give the Amistad Office an opportunity to share the resources the Amistad Commission has to offer. To date, the Amistad Office has visited Camden County, Cape May County, Hunterdon County, Atlantic County, Essex County, Bergen County, Passaic County, Union County, and Cumberland County.

**I. Fall 2025 Events and Conferences:** The Amistad Office will continue its outreach efforts by participating in several key events and conferences this fall, including: New Jersey State Bar Foundation; NAACP Conference; NJ Council for the Social Studies; NJ School Boards Association Conference; NJEA Convention; League of Municipalities; and the National Conference on Social Studies. Our office also recently visited the Lawnside Historical Society's 35th Anniversary at the Peter Mott House and the Burlington County Underground Railroad Museum African Diaspora Festival.

### **Upcoming Events and Collaborations**

- **National History Day Stipend (Grades 6–12):** Applications due September 30, 2025. Stipend supports teachers' participation in the New Jersey National History Day Contest.
- **Afro Latino History Day Competition – October 18, 2025:** A history contest for students to promote research and presentation skills.
- **NJEA Conference – November 6–7, 2025 (Atlantic City):** The Amistad Commission will attend and present.
- **African American History Day (Grades 4–5) – February 2026:** A student history contest promoting research and presentation skills.

### **Open Public Comments and Remarks**

There was a suggestion that the Amistad Commission partner with the Amistad Research Center, which houses archives of African American history that would be beneficial for educators and students. There was a comment that the Amistad Summer Institute was historic, very positive, and highly usable for classroom teachers. Another comment highlighted the work Kean University is doing to support teacher training regarding the Amistad mandate.

### **Adjournment**

There was a motion to adjourn the meeting at 2:21 pm. The motion was made by Commissioner Bebler-Johnson and seconded by Commissioner Puryear.