



## **AMISTAD COMMISSION QUARTERLY MEETING**

### **Agenda**

**Friday**

**June 26, 2026**

**1:00 PM**

**Teams Meeting**

**Chair, Dr. Lillie Johnson Edwards**

- I. Public Session: Call to Order – (1 Minutes)**
- II. Pledge of Allegiance (1 Minute)**
- III. Voting/Action Items (5 Minutes)**
  - A. Minutes from March 27<sup>th</sup> Commission Meeting –Voting Item **Attachment IIIA****
- IV. Report from the Executive Committee – Chair Edwards (5 Minutes)**
- V. Board Retreat Update – Lavonne Bebler Jonhson (5 Minutes)**
- VI. 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gala (2027) – Rosie Grant (5 Minutes)**
- VII. Report from the Executive Director (15 Minutes)**
  - A. Mission Moment: The National History Day Finals at William Paterson University (Video)**
  - B. Strategic Planning Update**
  - C. Summer Institute 2026 and Closing Awards Dinner**
  - D. Exemplary Award Process**
  - E. Amistad Comic Book Launch**
  - F. Fall 2026 Events**
  - G. Commission Goals for Academic Year 2026-2027**
    - 1. *Launch Implementation of Year Two of Strategic Plan with all Six Priorities***
    - 2. *Introduce Amistad Comic Book Story in K-5 Classrooms***
    - 3. *Continue Expansion of Partnerships and Collaboration with National Organizations***
    - 4. *Finalize Commission Staffing Plan***
    - 5. *Introduce 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Events***
- VIII. Open Public Comments and Remarks: General Public (10 minutes)**
- IX. Adjournment**

## **Attachment IIIA**

### Amistad Commission Quarterly Meeting Minutes March 27, 2026

#### **Commissioner's Present**

Lillie Edwards – Chair, Joyce Ship-Freeman (Vice Chair), Lavonne Bebler-Johnson, Rosie Grant; Fatima Heyward, Khyati Y. Joshi, A'Dorian Murray-Thomas, Tom Puryear, Jennifer Mondestint- designee for Senator Singleton. (13/18)

#### **Amistad Staff Present**

Patrick Lamy, Trevor K. Melton, Iman AQuddus, Glender Terrell, A'ndrea Bair, Dr. John T. Mills

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

Kerlyn Espinal

#### **Public Present**

Joyce Mollineaux

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

Chair Lillie Edwards officially began the meeting at 1:07 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: Approval of Draft Minutes from the March 27, 2028 Commission Meeting**

The minutes were reviewed and there was a vote to approve the minutes from the December meeting of the Commission. There was a motion to approve the minutes, it was seconded, and all were in favor of approving the minutes. (Motion-Grant/2<sup>nd</sup> Joshi, opposed 0-abstentions).

#### **Acceptance of Budget Briefer Submission to Governor's Office**

Rosie Grant provided an overview of the budget that was submitted to the Governor's Office after the January Meeting of the Board. There was a discussion to move the Commission's budgeting process to the September or December meeting of the Board. There was a motion to approve the budget as submitted to the Governor's Office by Commissioner Bebler-Johnson, seconded by Commissioner Puryear.

#### **Board Discussion for 2027 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gala**

Rosie Grant reported that there was not a whole lot to report on since the recent January meeting. The committee is proceeding, secured a location, received a quote. We have developed a list of potential sponsors to support the event as well as a sponsorship levels. The Committee welcomes others to join the conversation and planning efforts. We are beginning exploration of the critical parameters that are involved with fundraising needs.

## **2026 Board Retreat on July 29-30 – Lavonne Bebler-Johnson**

The commissioner retreat will be held as part of the Summer Institute at Kean University. We need to ensure a presence and participation at both events, the institute and the retreat.

## **Executive Director’s Report Dr. Patrick Lamy**

The Amistad Commission continues to promote several major initiatives aligned with its strategic priorities for the 2025–2026 academic year. Implementation of the Strategic Plan remains on schedule, with strong momentum across educator training, curriculum development, statewide partnerships, and resource expansion. The upcoming 2026 Summer Institute has already drawn significant interest, reaching approximately 200 registered participants—including, for the first time, pre-service teachers. Major instructional resource initiatives, such as the Amistad Comic Book project and the Diversity School House platform, are progressing toward key milestones that will greatly enhance educator access to high-quality, standards-aligned materials.

The Commission continues to strengthen statewide engagement through research efforts such as the Survey of the Commissions and through long-standing partnerships such as New Jersey National History Day. Additionally, new student-centered programs—including the Visual Arts Virtual Tour Contest—are expanding opportunities for youth to explore and interpret New Jersey’s African American history. County visits remain a critical component of outreach, with sessions conducted in more than half of the state’s counties to date. Collectively, these efforts reinforce the Commission’s mission to support inclusive instruction, elevate historical literacy, and ensure equitable educational practices statewide.

## **Strategic Planning Update**

The first year of the Strategic Plan for Academic Year 2025–2026 is progressing on schedule. Most goals and objectives are expected to be achieved within the planned timeframe. Ongoing coordination with stakeholders is ensuring that implementation remains aligned with statewide educator needs.

## **Summer Institute 2026**

Approximately **200 educators** have registered for the 2026 Summer Institute. The inclusion of pre-service teachers marks a major expansion, strengthening early-stage educator preparation and expanding the Institute’s impact. Planning for keynote speakers, workshops, and curriculum sessions is underway.

## **Amistad Comic Book Project**

The Request for Proposals (RFP) for the Amistad Comic Book has been approved and officially posted.

This project aims to produce a student-friendly historical resource for classroom use for K-5 educators. The expected delivery date for the completed comic book is July 1, 2026.

## **Diversity School House – Soft Launch**

A soft launch of the Diversity School House platform is intended for the remainder of the academic year. We are currently revising some details to confirm this partnership. The platform will provide New Jersey educators with access to more than 1,600 lesson plans and external

resources. Feedback gathered during this period will support final adjustments before the full statewide rollout in fall of 2026.

### **Survey of the Commissions**

The statewide Survey of the Commissions is scheduled to launch next week. Conducted in partnership with several higher education institutions, this initiative aims to enhance data collection, improve analysis, and strengthen pre-service teacher preparation related to all the Commission mandates including Amistad.

### **NJ National History Day Partnership**

The Commission continues its third year of direct partnership with New Jersey National History Day. Students in grades **6–12** engage in extensive research and present original historical projects in categories including Exhibit, Performance, Documentary, Website, and Paper. The Commission reviews submissions focused on African American history and participates in evaluation at the local and state levels.

### **Visual Arts Contest – Virtual Tour Project**

The Commission is organizing a visual arts contest for middle and high school students. Participants will develop a 20–30-minute virtual tour showcasing African American landmarks and lesser-known historical treasures across New Jersey. This initiative encourages creative expression and deeper historical exploration while assuring the Commission commitment to broaden student engagement state-wide.

### **County Visits and Other Outreach Activities**

To date, the Commission has delivered mandate training and educator resource presentations at more than half of New **Jersey's 21 counties**. These sessions continue to expand awareness, increase access to instructional materials, and strengthen district engagement with Amistad-aligned education.

We have started the application process for the Amistad Commission's Governor's Exemplary Teachers Award and the Amistad Commission's William Payne Exemplary Administrator Award.

The Commission is excited to announce the launch of the Amistad Commission Podcast, a new digital platform designed to deepen public engagement with African American history, education, and the Commission's ongoing initiatives. The podcast will feature conversations with historians, educators, cultural leaders, and community voices who are shaping the understanding and teaching of African American contributions in New Jersey and beyond. Each episode will highlight key historical topics, showcase instructional resources, and provide educators with practical insights for classroom integration. The podcast will also serve as a vehicle for sharing updates on Commission programs, student initiatives, and statewide efforts to promote equitable, inclusive historical literacy.

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

#### **Adjournment**

Edwards: And again, I thank you all very much and ask again for a motion for adjournment. It's been moved and there's a second. All those in favor, please indicate by saying Aye. The meeting adjourned at 2: 30PM.

