



AMISTAD COMMISSION QUARTERLY MEETING

Agenda

**Friday
March 27, 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 January 30th Commission Meeting –Voting Item **Attachment IIIA****
 - B. Acceptance of Budget Briefer Submission to Governor’s Office – **Attachment III-B****
- IV. Board Update on 2027 25th Anniversary Gala (10 Minutes)– Rosie Grant**
- V. 2026 Board Retreat on July 29-30 (5 Minutes)- Lavonne Bebler-Johnson**
- VI. Executive Director (15 Minutes)**
 - A. Video of 4th and 5th Grade Competition**
 - B. Strategic Planning Update**
 - C. Summer Institute 2026 Update – Template**
 - D. Amistad Comic Book RFP**
 - E. Final Launch for Diversity School House**
 - F. Survey of the Commission with Higher Education Partners**
 - G. NJ National History Day**
 - H. Visual Arts Contest – Virtual Tour Project**
 - I. Updates on County Visits and Other Events**
- VII. Open Public Comments and Remarks: General Public (10 minutes)**
- VIII. Adjournment**

Attachment IIIA
Amistad Commission Quarterly Meeting Minutes
January 30, 2026

Commissioners Present

Lillie Edwards – Chair, Joyce Ship-Freeman (Vice Chair), Patricia Atkins, Lavonne Bebler-Johnson, Rosie Grant; Fatima Heyward, Danielle Jones, Khyati Y. Joshi, Antwan McClellan, A’Dorian Murray-Thomas, Tom Puryear, Andrea Roseborough-Eberhard, Kemani Scott- 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, Aryama Vijayasari

Public Present

Anthony Carter, James Harris, 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 December 19, 2025, Commission

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/2nd Ship-Freeman 0-opposed 0-abstentions).

Board Discussion for 2027 25th Anniversary Gala

Rosie Grant reported that there was not a whole lot to report on since the recent December meeting. The committee is proceeding, reaching out to the venue, making sure that the date is secured. Grant reported that several commissioners have expressed interest in being on the committee and encouraged others to do so if they have the time.

2026 Board Retreat on July 29-30 – Dr. Lillie Edwards

The commissioner retreat will be held as part of the Summer Institute Kean University. There is a working draft of the program for the retreat. The Commissioners will spend time working on Commissioner expectations and requirements to ensure that we are fulfilling our duty to the State of New Jersey; participate in annual ethics training required by the State of New Jersey; discuss the progress of the strategic plan to determine the highest priorities for year 2 of implementation; and discuss the gala in greater detail.

Executive Director’s Report Dr. Patrick Lamy

Dr. Lamy expressed that everything the commission does from this point on reflects the strategic plan. There are 3 proposals for the Amistad Comic Book to be considered. This project will be costly; however, it is within the budget for this year. The launch date is projected during the Summer Institute at Kean University on July 30th. Trevor Melton reported about the New Jersey National History Day as well as the 4th and 5th grade competition. There are currently 130 students participating tomorrow at Pleasantville High School. Last year we had about 68 kids from Davis School. So, we expanded. I've been

running around getting judges and volunteers the last two days, so we're pretty much covered now. On the 14th of February, we'll be at William Patterson University. Currently we have about 60 to 70 students that have signed up for that event, our target was 50 in total. So, we've surpassed the target.

National History Day competition will be at Monmouth University, Rutgers Camden, and Saint Elizabeth College. That's the last week of February and the first two weeks in March.

Dr. Mills will be launching our podcast initiative on February 9th. (Dr. Lamy will be interviewed next week). Dr. Lamy expressed enthusiasm for this initiative as the commission has not gone in this direction to have a YouTube channel and an ongoing podcast. Dr. Lamy noted that the New Jersey Hall of Fame event will take place next month after announcement by Commissioner Eberhard.

Dr. Lamy iterated that the commission is a 12-month active Commission. Dr. Lamy confirmed that two speakers have been secured for the upcoming institute. Mr. Melton reported that for the 4th and 5th grade competition, we already have over 200 kids involved in the New Jersey Amistad Commission African American History Day Contest, which is a partner of NJ National History that engages thousands of students from across the state. The commission is currently working with Debbie Price of Burlington on a statewide 250th anniversary. The commission is also building a curriculum around the Revolutionary War that will launch this spring.

Open Public Comments and Remarks: General

Mollineaux, Joyce reported that Atlantic City Schools are doing a Newsletter in regard to Amistad curriculum.

James Harris inquired about this fiscal year's budget request and which boards of education were compliant with the mandate...

Chair Edwards: indicated that it would be inappropriate to speak on the budget that has not yet been presented to the Commission itself. Dr. Lamy: we've touched 200 districts over the past 20 years to now touching 400, so we're making some significant progress in terms of our outreach. We've moved that needle by 100% in just the past three years.

Mr. Harris inquired about the Commission's response to districts that are non-compliant with the law.

Dr. Lamy responded that we are working with county superintendents and our target is really going to be counties that are less involved with the Commission's work. So, we are intentionally visiting those counties to deal with all the superintendents within those counties.

Mr. Melton also noted that if there is a complaint, it goes back to the elected officials, which is the local school board. That's who the public elects to set policy within that district. If they put pressure on the local elected officials, that's where they'll get the most drive to get this moved.

Commissioner Atkins raised a discussion about district implementation of the legislation and potential approach to show evidence. There was further discussion on participation in local PTA or some type of parent teacher organization with the school districts as well as School Board of Education which are responsible for approving district curriculum. Attendance at local Board of Education meetings also suggested as a good practice to promote the Amistad Commission. There was additional discussion on the role of QSAC points which was deemed to require further investigation in terms of accuracy in reporting and actual content covered within districts.

Kemani Scott commented on the context regarding the first budget question. The governor's budget address is not until March 10th.

Danielle Jones commented on the importance of Town Council involvement and serving as liaison to local Boards of Education; and the value of communicating with elected officials.

There was additional discussion regarding where district level curriculum is posted and whether or not all district curriculum is available online. Posting varied by district.

There was additional discussion on the Commission's current and ongoing partnerships with educational and community-based agencies.

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 2:10PM.