



COMMISSION MEETING

Agenda

December 15, 2023

1:00PM - 3:00PM

Teams Meeting

Co-Chair, Joyce Ship-Freeman

- 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 September 22, 2023, Meeting .(5 minutes) -Attachment III**
- IV. **Guest Speakers: I-Hearts Media. Mr. George Liles and Richard Kennedy (20 minutes)**
- V. **Voting Item: Revised Meeting Dates for Calendar Year 2024 – Co-Chair Ship-Freeman (5 minutes)**
 - A. Virtual and/or In-Person Dates: **January 26**, March 22, **June 14**, September 27, December 13
- VI. **Voting Item: Acceptance and Endorsement of the MOA between DOE and Amistad Commission**
- VII. **Update on the Strategic Plan for The Commission – Dr. Patrick Lamy (10 minutes) – Attachment VII A-C**
 - A. Vision Statement
 - B. Mission Statement
 - C. 6 Strategic Priorities
 - D. Outline and Content of the Strategic Plan to Date – **Attachment VII-D**
- VIII. **Summary of Board of Commissioner Retreat on October 19th: Lavonne Bebler-Johnson (15 minutes)**
- IX. **Budget Update for Fiscal year 2025 – Rosie Grant (10 Minutes)**
- X. Executive Director’s Report (15 Minutes) – Attachment X**
- XI. **Future Agenda Items for the Next Meeting of Commissioners: Dr. Edwards (2 minutes)**
- XII. **Open Public Comments and Remarks: General Public (10 minutes)**
- XIII. **Adjournment**

Attachment III

Meeting Minutes

Friday September 22, 2023 -Teams Meeting

Scheduled 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm.

Meeting adjourned 2:50pm

Attending

Commissioners

Patricia Atkins, Lavonne Bebler-Johnson, Lillie Johnson Edwards (Chair), Rosie Grant, Daniele Jones, Tom Puryear, Joyce Ship-Freeman (Vice Chair); Bill Payne, Khyati Y. Joshi, Jason Redd (Designee – Gittens), Verlina Reynolds-Jackson, Nyeema C. Watson, Angelica Allen-McMillan, Ane Roseborough-Eberhard, Troy Singleton (Designee – Stewart), Samuel Thompson (Designee-Maris), Nyeema Watson.

Amistad Staff

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

DOE/AG Staff

Kerlyn Espinal

Public

No Attendees

Meeting Called to Order

Dr. Edwards began the meeting officially at 1:06 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 June 9, 2023, Commission Meeting

There was a vote to approve the minutes from the June 9th meeting of the Commission. There were eleven in favor and one abstention.

Guest Speaker: Plan for Professional Development Sessions for NJ Teachers

Dr. Amber Smith was introduced as the lead consultant for the new online professional development sessions for NJ teachers that served as the continuation of the 2023 Summer Institute. Dr. Smith presented an overview of the trainings for teachers which will cover eight sessions during the academic year.

Proposed Meeting Dates for Calendar Year 2024

The meeting dates were introduced and called for a vote by the commission. The meeting dates were unanimously approved by the Commission.

Strategic Plan for The Commission

Dr. Edwards reported on the significant efforts of the Strategic Planning Council to create the Commission's official draft of a Mission and Vision Statement, and a Statement of Core Values. The Strategic Planning Council also identified six strategic priorities for the Commission. The group of external supporters called the Strategic Plan Advisory Group was also officially formed and invited to a meeting next year.

Discussions on Ideas for the Commission Retreat

Commissioner Bebler-Johnson reported on the scheduled Retreat of the Commission that was scheduled for October 19th. She provided a complete overview of the program and general background on the Consultant who will lead the activities for the day. A special recognition was extended to Commissioner Joshi for

hosting the event at Fairleigh Dickerson University.

Executive Director's Report

The Executive provided an overview of his report which focused on the outcomes of the summer institute which was well received by teachers from across New Jersey. The Executive Director also provided updates on the Webpage and Curriculum Website which have not officially launched as result of administrative concerns that were recently addressed. The Curriculum Website was in its final stage of review and approval for launch. The office is continuing to work on the regional staffing expansion plan. These efforts will facilitate and create a strategic approach to greater outreach to New Jersey school districts.

There was a report on a plan for the Commission's first State-wide survey. The three-part survey will assess state-wide level of awareness of the Amistad Law; professional development exposure/participation in relation to the Amistad Law; and individual/school/district- based experiences with implementation of the Amistad curriculum. This intentional assessment effort is the most strategic action of the Commission to understand its impact on New Jersey over the recent years. The Commission will follow all appropriate guidelines for state-wide surveys within the Department of Education.

The Amistad Office collaboration with NJEA remains ongoing with the intention to organize a trip to Africa in August 2024. The MOA remains under review with general counsel for NJEA.

The Executive Director of the Amistad Commission also reported on the top priorities for the commission during academic year 2023-2024 which heavily focused on the launch of a new Strategic Plan for the Commission.

Open Public Comments and Remarks: General Public

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 2: 50pm.

Attachment VII A-C

WORKING DRAFT – NOVEMBER 17, 2023

Mission Statement

The mission of the Amistad Commission is to provide New Jersey’s K-12 educators with professional training and resources to accurately teach content that is inclusive of the contributions of Africans, African Americans, and the African diaspora in all subject areas.

Vision Statement

Our vision is to position New Jersey as the national leader in developing and implementing K-12 curriculum that reflects the diversity of our nation.

Core Values Statement

Established by legislation passed unanimously by the New Jersey Senate and Assembly in 2002 and revised in 2022, the Amistad Commission is the first commission in the nation established for the purpose of assuring that the American story includes the contributions of Africans, African Americans, and the African diaspora in building and defining our country. The Commission prepares NJ’s teachers, district leaders, and students with high level, customized educational opportunities, and an innovative array of support services to meet the mandate of the Amistad legislation.

The Commission’s core values affirm:

- A commitment to excellence in teaching and student learning.
- The diversity embedded in the nation’s history, culture, and institutions.
- The connections between U.S. history and global history.
- A commitment to engage community stakeholders in our work.

Attachment VII-D

Strategic Plan – Table of Contents/Outline

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Attachment X

Quarterly Commission Meeting – December 15, 2023

Executive Director's Report

The Amistad Office team continues to move forward with the implementation of its annual goals for the 2023-2024 academic year. The Commission remains focused on developing and launching a new strategic plan; introducing a new online professional development program for NJ teachers as a continuation of the Summer Institute; continuing conversations with a new collaboration with NJEA; developing a new state-wide assessment; and engagement of districts, students, and teacher in new Amistad initiatives.

Summer Institute 2024 Overview and Plans for 2025

Building on the success of the 2023 Summer institute, the 2024 event will follow a similar structure that identifies the needs of the teachers from grades K-5; 6-8; and 9-12. The Commission is collaborating closely with teachers throughout the state (Lesson Planning Committee) to develop the content for the 2024 Summer Institute. The 2024 Summer institute will again follow the theme for National History Day. The 2024 Summer Institute is scheduled from July 29th to August 2nd at the College of New Jersey with both in-person and remote options. The 2025 Summer Institute is tentatively scheduled from August 4th -7th at Rowan University. Two of the online professional development sessions have been held to date. The feedback has been positive from attendees. There were over 50 participants in the first two sessions.

New Curriculum Website Launch and Plans for an RFP

The Amistad Office finalized the plans to activate the Amistad Curriculum Website. The Commission also revised the main webpage under the DOE website. The main webpage will house the link for the curriculum website. Although the content on the curriculum website remains useful for teachers as a primary resource to implement the Amistad Legislation, we find it necessary to engage in an RFP for a complete redesign of the website. Our office has already developed the content for the RFP, and we hope to begin reviewing bids in early spring 2024. The Executive Committee of the Board will have final approval on the selected agency for the redesign of the new site.

Status of Approved Staffing Plan

The Board originally approved the new staffing plan for the Commission in March 2024. The office continues to work within the parameters of the DOE and the Governor's Office to determine the best strategy to move forward with posting for the new hires. The budgetary resources are available for three full-time employees that would be employees of the Commission along with three part-time Consultants/Interns. This is a new process that has taken several months to finalize. Our hope is to move forward as soon as possible.

Status of State-Wide Assessment Survey

The State-wide survey has been designed and the Commission is currently undergoing the approval processes within the DOE to officially launch the survey. The data collection process will begin in December and end by February 1st. The Commission has also developed a dissemination plan for the data collection process to maximize the survey return/completion rate state-wide. As mentioned in prior settings, the purpose of the survey is to gather valuable information that will guide the conversations on the development of the five-year strategic plan in the months ahead. The three-part survey will assess state-wide level of awareness of the Amistad Law; professional development exposure/participation in relation to the Amistad Law; and individual/school/district- based experiences with implementation of the Amistad curriculum.

MOA with NJEA Partnership and Donation

The Amistad Office met with NJEA since the last meeting on September 22nd. We have received the revisions on the MOA from general counsel for NJEA. We are finalizing a few details before the document is review by the Attorney General Office. The Office has also developed a preliminary curriculum for teachers traveling to Africa and identified a tentative date of August 8th-20th for the event. The estimated cost per traveler is approximately \$3,200.

Engaging More Teachers, Students and Districts

The Amistad Commission is in the process of creating a social studies contest on African American History in New Jersey. The goal of this committee will be 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. This program is designed to prepare students to participate in the National History Day Contest and promote the Amistad Commission's mission. Students will be asked to submit projects in the following categories: exhibit, website, documentary, performance, and paper. We are currently looking at two locations (North and South) Jersey, in the late spring of 2024. This is part of the Commission's new student engagement initiatives as defined in one of the six strategic priorities noted in the new strategic plan.

The Amistad Lesson Plan Committee. The goals of the *Amistad Commission Lesson Plan Review Committee* are to screen and select model lessons from educators in New Jersey, so that the staff can make these lessons available through the Amistad Website. The committee will be responsible for selecting the Amistad Commission's Special Award for National History Day winners. The committee members will be responsible for participating in the design of the Amistad Commission's Summer Curriculum Institute. Committee members will be asked to assist staff in Amistad Professional Development Trainings. We currently have 24 Lesson Plan Committee members, from eighteen of the twenty-one counties in New Jersey. These members play a critical role in providing the office staff with real-time information about what is happening in classrooms throughout New Jersey. They are also key to providing other educators with information about the Amistad Commission and the commission's goals and mission. The group will also serve as advisors on the Commission's new strategic plan.

Moving Forward

The Amistad Office team continues to address both challenges and opportunities to successfully meet the mandate of the Amistad Legislation. This is our moment to truly impact the lives of students, teachers, and educators from the great state of New Jersey. Through the support of our Board of Commissioners, our partners within the DOE, and the Governor's Office, we can accomplish the intent and purpose of the Amistad Legislation.