

THE AMISTAD COMMISSION

DIRECTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT

FY10

SUBMITTED BY

**Stephanie James Wilson
Executive Director**

SEPTEMBER 29, 2010

FY10 Status and Financial

On April 9, 2010, the Commission began the process of moving to the New Jersey Department of Education as a result of an intergovernmental agreement between the New Jersey Department of State and the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE)¹. This transfer will place the Amistad Commission, "in but not of" NJDOE, in the same manner as the New Jersey Commission on Holocaust Education and the Italian Heritage Commission of New Jersey to allow autonomy, yet give the Commission access to the NJDOE systems needed to comply with the Amistad mandate outlined in Public Law 2002, chapter 75. Currently, the transfer is approved through a Memorandum of Understanding signed by the former Commissioner of Education and the Lt. Governor/Secretary of State as of August 2010.

In June 2010 the State Board of Education adopted the Amistad Commission as an entity within the Department of Education to be placed under the Division of Academic Standards.

The biggest challenge for the Commission is getting the necessary legislative action to follow the Memorandum of Understanding that allows budgetary controls and appropriation authority to move to NJDOE as well as operate under similar terms and conditions as the Holocaust Commission AND shifts the Commission Chairperson from the Secretary of State.

Without legislative action, the Department of Education cannot open or operate accounts for the Commission, budgetary appropriation request must come through the Department of State, and any checks and/or monies must be sent back to the Department of State for deposit into the account of their newly formed Office of Programs; per 2011 budget language:

Fiscal year 2011 funding for the Amistad Commission, the Martin Luther King Jr. Commemorative Commission, and the Office of Faith--Based Initiatives has been consolidated into the new Office of Programs.

Hence, all of our carry forward monies from FY10 has been consolidated into the Office of Programs budget and accounts at the Department of State. In addition, the Department of State did not make any budget appropriation request for the Amistad Commission for FY11, and as of this date we have no operating budget for FY11; the Department of Education was not able to make the request because the interagency transfer documentation was only signed within the last month.

Although the commissioning body approved the FY11 proposed budget at our May meeting, there has been no appropriation from the state government for salary, operations, and/or programming for FY11. The Executive Director's salary is being paid directly by the Department of Education out of the general operating funds.

The Executive Director retains her position with the Commission and is now an employee of NJDOE; however, we are still awaiting the placement of the Amistad Commission's Administrative Assistant and Training Consultants so that the staff can be fully restored and functional. The Board of Amistad Commissioners, as well as the Executive Director, sent written request throughout the spring to the former Commissioner of Education Brett Schundler requesting the rehire and/or at least temporary assistance of our, Tashanna Williams, who has worked for the Commission for three years, and possesses the requisite expertise for the implementation of the Amistad curriculum and the legislated mandate for Social Studies instruction; so that the Commission might be able to continue our work within the NJDOE without additional interruption or delay.

The delay of any administrative or programmatic assistance has been a significant strain on Amistad Commission operations and planning activities. The only Amistad Commission staff since April 15, 2010 is the Executive Director. Our former Administrative Assistant, Tashanna, continued to work without pay as a volunteer throughout the summer to ensure the Commission is able to operate without interruption. The Commission continues to have a great need for her expertise in its day to day functioning, assisting with maintenance of the web-based curriculum, developing and maintaining training schedules and helping to prepare materials. Ms. Williams expresses a desire to return to her job with the Amistad Commission. It goes without saying that we are anxiously awaiting a response for the placement of our staff as we enter the School Year 2010-2011 having to field numerous requests for school district trainings in using the Amistad web-based curriculum as a resource.

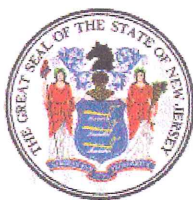
In June 2010, we received two grants from the Turrell Fund; one for **\$5000.00** for general operational funds, and the other for **\$10,000.00** for in-depth professional development trainings on the Amistad web-based curriculum resource in the school districts within the Northern counties of Essex, Hudson, Bergen, Union, and Passaic. Our proposal to the Turrell Fund requested the monies to underwrite the FY11 consultant stipend and travel expense cost of our curriculum resource training Consultant, Candace Pryor-Brown. **Those monies are being held in dedicated accounts at the Department of State and are to be used this school year.**

With the Amistad Commission's new placement within the NJDOE, we anticipate being able to work even more closely aligned with the Office of Academic Standards to continue to assist in the statewide compliance and implementation of the 2009 K-12 New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards (NJCCCS) for Social Studies. We will continue to develop curricular tools and lessons plans consistent with the Amistad mandate for K-12 Social Studies teachers, as well as facilitate professional development trainings in the school districts across the state with Executive and District Superintendents, Principals and Teachers for training on the new Social Studies curriculum requirements and the new resources, including the Amistad web-based curriculum resource. These activities will ensure implementation of the mandated directives as well as guarantee utilization of the Amistad web-based curriculum resource within all New Jersey schools. We will continue to further the collaborative efforts with Office of Academic Standards for SY 2010-2011 trainings as well as further the statewide compliance with the Amistad mandate with the adoption of the standards and utilization of the web-based resource. In addition, the Executive Director has joined the Civic Literacy Standards Taskforce, and discussion have now begun about common expectations for civic literacy for New Jersey's students at the middle and high school levels.

The movement of the Amistad Commission into the NJDOE in April, when faced with the dissolution of its staff, came with much advocacy on behalf of the school children of New Jersey, present and future, which will benefit from as K-12 Social Studies education that is inclusion of all our histories. However, we do have a lingering budgetary concern, which must take precedence if we are to continue this legislated educational policy work beyond FY11.

The remainder of the Amistad Commission's FY10 monies did **not** transfer with us from the State to the NJDOE to cover staff salaries and professional development trainings through June 30, 2010. They have since been consolidated into the Office of Programs at the Department of State. What has not been clearly articulated by either the State or the NJDOE is how our budget line in the State of New Jersey budget is to be restored for FY11, nor has anyone requested a supplemental appropriation budget line item for Amistad funding for FY11. If that is not done now, at this pivotal time, then the Amistad Commission will still have no funding or budget line item for FY11 and will not be able to continue in its programmatic agenda.

The following is the Amistad Commission's proposed budget for FY11 that was adopted and approved at the May 2010 Amistad Commission meeting - it was identified that the Commission needed at minimum a **FY11 allocation of \$290,000.00**. This budget was prepared with consideration of the State's financial realities and prioritizes the Commission's activities for FY11 that are necessary to continue to operationalize this legislated mandate uninterrupted.



New Jersey Amistad Commission
Proposed FY 11 Budget
(Adopted - May 26, 2010)

Staff Salaries		\$ 150,000.00
Executive Director	\$ 88,000.00	
Administrative Assistant (hourly blanket contract worker)	33,000.00	
Consultant/ Educator	\$29,000.00	
Programming Budget		\$ 85, 000.00
Summer Curriculum Development Institute August 2010	\$ 30,000.00	
School District Trainings 2010-2011 school term	\$ 20,000.00	
Exemplary Practice Grants (Five awarded for SY2010-2011)	\$ 25,000.00	
Annual conference	\$ 5000.00	
Ancillary Public Awareness Programs	\$ 5,000.00	
Web-based Curriculum		\$ 55, 500.00
Annual maintenance contract-	\$ 22,500.00	
2010 Mandatory curriculum revisions	\$ 29,000.00	
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	Total	\$ 290, 000.

Highlights of FY 10 Program Accomplishments

- In FY10, the Amistad Commission, Executive Director served as a member of the Social Studies Standards Task Force in the NJ Department of Education to rewrite and revise the Social Studies content standards for instruction for all teachers in New Jersey that included the recommendations of the Amistad Commission for compliance of this instructional and resource infusion mandate. Statewide compliance to these new standards and their respective cumulative progress indicators (CPI's) is the 2011-2012 school term.
- In FY 10, on September 1, 2009, the Amistad Commission created and released a comprehensive web based curriculum resource for Social Studies instruction and resources in response to the public's appeal for a sample curriculum that fully illuminates the legislated Social Studies course of study. This web-based curriculum entitled "An Inclusive Journey through American History" is in full compliance with the New Jersey standards, is a statewide model, is free of charge to every New Jersey educator, and is monitored and updated by the Amistad Commission.

The web-based curriculum is divided into 12 units of study in compliance with historical timelines covered by US History I & II, and includes: lesson plans, timelines, curriculum mapping for Social Studies, document based questions and answer keys, social studies skills, plays and dialogues for the classroom, rubrics, teaching strategies, literature connections for English, videos, PowerPoint presentations, primary sources, a library of ancillary resources, galleries of images and events, unit assessments, and a highlight of other programs and offerings of the Amistad Commission. It is available 24 hours a day and is free of charge to every New Jersey teacher.

- The Amistad Commission executed successfully its fourth annual curriculum institute in August 2009 on the campus of Montclair State University; this is a residential program designed for public school elementary and secondary social studies teachers and supervisors to learn additional methodological techniques in teaching American history, seamlessly infused with African-American content. The consortium gives educators access to prominent historians and scholars from both Drew University and Montclair State University. In addition, the Institute seeks to enhance teachers' curricular approaches while taking advantage of the resources offered at Montclair State University, Home of the Center for Pedagogy. Professional Development credit were earned as well as the opportunity to design and study current curriculum development strategies in the teaching of American

history at the Center for Pedagogy. Participants explore lesson ideas, and professional development methodologies used in the Amistad K-12 state wide curriculum; as well as study texts, topics, and ideas central to elementary and secondary social studies education. Last summer, the central focus for the Summer Institute was an extensive tutorial with the Amistad web-based curriculum. In a concerted effort to turnkey district by district the usage of this resource, in preparation of curriculum redesign for the 2009-2010 school year; the institute at Montclair State University, allowed Educators a unique opportunity to be trained on the utilization of our web-based curriculum, a premier multimedia resource for teachers in the state. With the onset of the highly anticipated curriculum release, the Commission recognized the necessity to expand its Summer Institute opportunities for Educators to provide extensive training opportunities for the multitude of district curriculum specialists and classroom teachers that will require training for statewide compliance with the Amistad legislation. The Summer Institutes has historically provided the extensive training, content knowledge of current scholarship in American History with an understanding of the significant contributions of African-Americans and teaching methodology necessary for our participants to turn –key the experience into subsequent district trainings and curriculum revisions throughout the state the next school year. This program is co-sponsored with Drew University and Montclair State University.

- In support of the curriculum release this school year, the Amistad Commission began an extensive professional development curriculum training module for New Jersey teachers and school districts curriculum specialist within their respective districts in September 2009. To date we have facilitated over 50 trainings; reviewing our current schedule we will have facilitated 88 professional development training session before the end of the 2009-2010 school term at the end of June 2010. The Commission has been all over the state facilitating professional development training with the Executive Superintendents, District Superintendents, Principals, District Curriculum Leads, and the Teachers. Trainings will continue until we reach all 630 New Jersey school districts. In partnership with the presentation of the new Social Studies web-based curriculum resource, these trainings also highlight utilization of the new Social Studies standards, the new directives for Social Studies instruction under this mandate and the importance of the integration of 21 Century technologies within classroom instruction.
- The Amistad Commission released in May 2010 a collaborative curriculum resource guide for educators in partnership with the Holocaust Commission on the subject of “Genocide” across history. This topical curriculum resource is a collection of articles, lesson plans and activities that can be used K-12 within the Humanities. It fulfills several content standards and CPI’s for Social Studies instruction and can be used for compliances with both the Holocaust mandate and the Amistad mandate (Economics, World and US history, as well as Civics).

- National Presentations - The Amistad Commissioners have made several presentations throughout the country in regards to our implementation plans, curriculum resource materials, signature teaching strategies, and training modules. The Commission does an education session every year for New Jersey Black Caucus members at the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation Convention in Washington, D.C. for the legislators and constituents across the country. The Commission has also done presentations at the United Nations in New York and is the national role model for other states implementing their own Amistad Commission. This year our Commission has done presentations to the New York Amistad Commission as well as the Illinois Amistad Commission, both headed by the Secretary of State in their respective states. We have taken the lead as the flagship state for operationalizing this educational policy initiative.
- For the past 5 years, the Amistad Commission has partnered with the Department of Education and the *Malcolm Bernard Historically Black College and Universities College Fair of New Jersey* in planning and orchestrating the *New Jersey Rising Scholars Recognition Program* and *Trenton College Fair* each November. This particular program was held Sunday, November 15, 2009, honored the academic excellence achieved by high school seniors throughout the state who are interested in attending a historically black college or university (HBCU). The Department of Education in collaboration with the Amistad Commission and the *Malcolm Bernard HBCU College Fair of New Jersey* recognized up to **75 students** as Rising Scholars. The recognition program is highly competitive. NJ Rising Scholars are eligible to receive the HBCU Rising Scholars Fund contingent upon their enrollment in an HBCU.
- The Amistad Commission has also co-sponsored a myriad of events, programs, and conferences this fiscal year alone with the following universities, national and state organizations and non-profit institutions that include (in alphabetical order) but not limited to:

the African American Museum in Philadelphia, the Association of Black Educators, Drew University, the Holocaust Commission, the Housing Authority, Interstate Realty, Juvenile Justice Center, Malcolm Bernard HBCU College Fair of New Jersey, the Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemorative Commission, The United States Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) Montclair State University, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the National Council for Social Studies, the National Urban League, the New Jersey Black Issues Conference (NJBIC), New Jersey Council for Social Studies (NJCSS), the New Jersey Education Association (NJEA), the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE), the New Jersey Historical Society, the Newark Black Film Festival, the Office of Faith Based Initiative, and Rutgers University

**INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT
BETWEEN
THE NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF STATE
AND
THE NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

This Intergovernmental Agreement ("Agreement") made by and between the New Jersey Department of State ("DOS") and the New Jersey Department of Education ("DOE") will confirm the mutual understanding and intention of the parties hereto as to the following:

RECITALS

WHEREAS, the Amistad Commission was established pursuant to N.J.S.A. §2:16A-87 to coordinate educational and other programs on slavery and African-American history; and

WHEREAS, the Amistad Commission is located within the New Jersey Department of State; and

WHEREAS, the New Jersey Department of State is charged with preserving and promoting the State's art, history, and culture; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to N.J.S.A. §2:16A-87, the New Jersey Department of Education is required to provide assistance to the Amistad Commission;

WHEREAS, although the New Jersey Department of State is central to preserving and promoting of the State's history and culture, the New Jersey Department of Education is appropriately suited to assist the New Jersey Department of State and the Amistad Commission in carrying out its responsibilities including developing curricula, disseminating information, and providing workshops beneficial to the preservation and promotion of the Amistad-Commission's mission; and

WHEREAS, the New Jersey Department of Education has experts in developing curricula and disseminating information to school districts throughout New Jersey which would further advance the Amistad Commission's mission; and

WHEREAS, the Amistad Commission can more effectively and efficiently carry out its duties and responsibilities with the assistance of the New Jersey Department of Education;

NOW, THEREFORE, DOS and DOE do hereby agree to the following:

1. The recitals set forth above are incorporated within the terms of this Agreement.
2. DOE shall assign an appropriate amount of personnel from its staff (the "Assigned Staff") to perform the services described below on behalf of the Amistad Commission.
3. DOS and DOE will continue their cooperation on the Amistad Commission as provided in N.J.S.A. §2:16A-87.