



THE AMISTAD COMMISSION

FY12 DIRECTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT

RECAP and UPDATE

SUBMITTED BY

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Executive Director

February 28, 2013

**Actionable Items
and
Updates from November 2011 Meeting
with
NJDOE Commissioner Chris Cerf -**

ACTIONABLE ITEMS

Budget FY12 and FY13 -

- Commissioner Cerf has stated his commitment to do everything he can to protect the Amistad Commission's budget. For FY13 the Amistad Commission to be issued an internal DOE "special purpose account", and NJDOE will place designated FY13 Amistad Commission operational and programmatic funds in a segregated account.
- The Amistad Commission budgets will be supported from within NJDOE and specific revenue streams will be identified to support this initiative moving forward.
- Commissioner Cerf has assured the Amistad Board of Commissioners that he will instruct NJDOE Administrative offices to complete the salary adjustment process and the salary adjustment for the Executive Director will be made for alignment with comparative NJDOE Director job title and job duties.

Placement within DOE -

- Commissioner Cerf will direct the State Board of Education to amend the DOE organizational chart and to place the Amistad Commission back into the Division of Academic Standards and "in but not of" NJDOE. The Executive Director will continue to report to the Commissioner of Education.

Compliance to the Mandate throughout the State -

- Commissioner Cerf will lend the strength of his office, and his "bully pulpit" to publicize the work of the Amistad Commission, the necessity of a diversified and infused curriculum, and to strongly encourage districts to utilize the web-based curriculum resource across multiple disciplines.
- Commissioner Cerf will be featured in some form of PSA for the Amistad Commission, whether that is via a letter to the districts, a Podcast, or a symposium session with Educators and Administrators, etc.
- The DOE is willing for the Amistad Commission to be involved in the development of statewide test questions that are based on an inclusive canon of literature and Social Studies curriculum. At minimum, the revamped HSPA exam, statewide tests and prototyped unit exams will reflect this inclusive curriculum.

UPDATES FOR FOLLOW-UP

Budget FY12, FY13, FY14 -

- The Amistad Commission's requested a FY14 operating and programming budget:

\$698,207.00 (includes salaries). As of February 2013, NJDOE has not opened a special purposes account for the Amistad Commission, there is no designated line item even within NJDOE budget to this date for the FY13 and/or FY14 internal allocations for the Amistad Commission, monies are being identified internally by budget and accounting to cover our cost and expenses on an as needed basis; we are still in need of a special purposes account within NJDOE.

In addition, monies received from the Turrell Fund in December 2012 for **\$5000.00** that were specifically designated for the Amistad Commission, for teachers training institute activities are held in a donations account at NJDOE for our 2013 Summer Institute in August 2013, which is part of FY2014. We have asked for a specific donation account so that we might extend our fundraising efforts. FY12 donations from the Turrell Fund donated to the Amistad by Turrell Fund trustee and Amistad Commissioner Judy Miller were sent over to the Department of State and absorbed by the Division of Programs.

- To date no Salary adjustments for the Executive Director have been completed for alignment with NJDOE Executive Director Job title and job duties. Although authorized by the Board of Commissioners and included in our annual budget for the last several years, no salary adjustments have yet to be executed by the Department of State or Education since the Executive Director obtained the promotion from Deputy Executive Director in January 2008

.Placement within DOE -

- Commissioner Cerf introduced to the State Board of Education in January 2012, the official adoption of our placement occurred at the March 8, 2012 State Board of Education meeting. The DOE organizational chart was amended to placed the Amistad Commission back into the Division of Academic Standards, and *"in but not of"* NJDOE. The Executive Director will continue to report to the Commissioner of Education, with all documents being signed by the Chief Academic Officer/ Division of Academic Standards.

Compliance to the Mandate throughout the State

- The DOE has extended an invitation for the Amistad Commission to join in the development activities and meetings regarding the design of the DOE developed model curriculum that will include comprehensive and specified student learning objectives and horizontal content articulations across the subject areas. The pilot date for release to school districts was Sept. 2012.
- These activities were to include statewide benchmark test and test questions that should be based on an inclusive canon of literature and Social Studies curriculum. At minimum, the model curriculum, the revamped HSPA exam, statewide benchmark tests and prototyped unit exams would have been reflective of this inclusive curriculum. The Amistad Commission will continue to work with Academic Standards throughout the year.

As of now, no benchmark assessments inclusive of Amistad mandate have been designed. The Commission will continue to work with Academic standards as NJDOE undergoes a migration to common core standards (CCS).

- NJDOE has also adopted the use of common core standards that will be phased into the statewide curriculums by September 2013.

The Amistad Commission web-based curriculum will be migrated over to be organized according to the common core skills acquirements and benchmarks, and the 2013 Summer Institute will focus on the fundamentals of the Common core in classroom application utilizing the web- based curriculum.

This theme for the summer institute will allow the Commission will extend our outreach to include more administrators and classroom teachers, who need a more pragmatic understanding of the common core standards and their application in teaching methods and curriculum design.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE AMISTAD COMMISSION

Since our last commission meeting, the Amistad activities have included the following:

- The Amistad web-based curriculum resource is currently undergoing the mandated revisions and updates that must be completed before September 2013 for compliance with the new NJDOE Social Studies content standards, cumulative progress indicators, and student learning objectives identified through the Common Core Curriculum Standards.

In conversation with the NJDOE Chief Financial Officer, it was determined that the necessary curriculum revisions and articulations for Social Studies compliance could be done under a addendum to our contract with the American Institute for History Education (AIHE).

Monies were identified for payment of this contract and the revisions to the curriculum. The Executive Director as the Contract Manager contacted the Procurement Specialist at Department of Treasury to begin the process of the contract extension and addendums needed for the additional mandated work on the web-based curriculum. In addition, the Executive Director worked with AIHE to determine the full scope of work to solicit a proposal for cost attributed for the addendums/ revisions and to move the web-based curriculum from **pdf format** to **on-line format** thereby eliminating host fees on upcoming years. The improvements to the web based curriculum also include common core standards skills alignment and organization, text to speech on all documents, embedded professional development for teachers, and expansion of content across the disciplines for cross curriculum use.

These curriculum updates for compliance with the newly adopted Social Studies standards will cost an estimated **\$234,412.00** in FY14 (including web-hosting fees for one year). This proposal will be submitted for review to the Amistad Board of Commissioners at our next Commission meeting and must be completed for compliance by the end of 2013.

- The sixth annual Amistad curriculum consortium for teachers at Montclair University was an academic success, with more than **60 Educators** participating in this residential three day content and methodology training seminar. We had a cross section of Educators and Administrators representing multiple nationalities, and districts represented from throughout the state, as well as a combination of grade cohorts. Response from the Education community was phenomenal; we were at capacity for curriculum institute designed for public school elementary and secondary teachers and supervisors and administrators. Our aim was to teach additional methodological and pedagogical techniques while looking at special topics in history in order to fulfill the mandate of the Amistad legislation.
- The Amistad Commission hosted a ten (10) year commemorative celebration of the Amistad legislation in August 2012 at the Newark Museum with more than 375 guests in attendance. This commemoratives celebration gave the Commission an opportunity to celebrate its successes and reflect on the ever present and daunting challenges that are still in the way of this statewide mandate.

- Amistad web-based curriculum district/countywide trainings has continued throughout the state; to date, we have trained 310 school districts on the utilization of the web based curriculum as a modality for compliance with the statewide mandate for an inclusive curriculum. Our trainings have identified specific people in a respective districts that can turnkey follow-up training activities within the district and can serve as point people for the Amistad Commission.
- More than 300 school districts and university Education departments throughout New Jersey are utilizing the Amistad web-based curriculum resource. In addition, since September 2012, we have provided community based and university sponsored training to a multitude of organizations for teachers professional development credits, including: the NAACP, the National Council of Negro Women, Raritan Valley Community College, Burlington County College, Kean University, NJ Dept. of Justice, Jersey City University, Jack & Jill, Inc., the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, Council for Social Studies, the School Boards convention, the NJEA, Facing History and Ourselves, the African American Museum in Philadelphia, Temple University Education Dept, Juvenile Justice Department, and the City of Camden.
- We have chaired and/or participated in more than fifty (50) African American memorization and public awareness programs throughout the state in this fiscal year already. This has run the gamut from school based programs to community programs, to scholarship recognitions.
- The Amistad Commission now serves as the host and organizers for NJDOE's *New Jersey Rising Scholars Recognition and Scholarship* program in partnership with the *New Jersey Malcolm Bernard Historically Black Colleges and University Fair*, held annually throughout the state in November. Seventy-five high school student seniors were nominated and selected by a committee consisting of New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) personnel and members of the Malcolm Bernard HBCU College Fair of NJ. Eligible students were evaluated based on their merit, academic and personal goals, school activities, and community service, personal statement, and other significant information, such as their desire to become future educators and first generation of college attendance. All current high school seniors who are interested in attending any Historically Black College or University (HBCU) and meet the following criteria may apply for this recognition and scholarship; they must: attend a New Jersey public school (including charter schools) or private school or home schooled; have a cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) of 3.0 or higher on a 4.0 scale **or** a 3.37 or higher on a 4.5 scale.; and, have obtained a Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) score of 900 or above (based on 1600 maximum) or 1350 or above (based on 2400 maximum) **OR** ACT score of 20 or above. The award ceremony is scheduled for November 17, 2013.