

Alma d'Arte Timeline

4/24/23 Kayla Martínez placed on administrative leave and Cecilia Romero appointed interim administrator by Alma d'Arte Governance Council in a Special Meeting

5/9/23 A town hall style meeting is convened by the Governing Council for the students and staff, to introduce candidates for the Principal position. Robert Sims & Adam Amador are introduced and present to assembly at Alma d'Arte. 80% of students "vote" for Mr. Sims. Later that same day, the Governance Council holds a special meeting at the school, and votes unanimously to offer Adam Amador a contract. During this meeting, Jennifer White (teacher) asks how the Council intends to answer potential questions from parents regarding Adam Amador's actions at Carlsbad High, and the Council says "You don't know the whole story."

5/15/23 Protest of vote made at regular Alma d'Arte Governing Council meeting registered by Jeanne Brown (parent), Kaila Brown (student), and Stephanie Preciado-Shelton (a contract artist who had worked with the school for the 22/23 school year). Jeanne Brown presented to the board at that time details about Amador's administrative history. Governance Council offered Amador a short-term contract, from 5/16/23 to 6/30/23, with a title of "auditor", not principal. (Jennifer White has an audio recording of this meeting.)

Mid-May to End of May Amador sends a few emails to staff regarding packing classrooms for the summer and providing him with "curriculum" for the classes they have been teaching. He provides no details as to either request, even when specifically asked to do so. Also, during this time, an email is set up (info@almadarte.org) that staff is asked to begin using when we have a question. It is not explained who has access to this email or why we cannot email Amador or Cecilia Romero directly any longer. Lastly, Amador starts making comments to various staff members that our school calendar for the 23/24 school year has been calculated wrong and that he will fix it. He takes no input from staff on calendar changes.

5/31/23 Letter to Governing Council with details about his employment history sent to board of directors by Jeanne Brown.

6/5/23 Governing Council offers Amador a permanent contract for head administrator position in a unanimous vote.

6/30/23: NM PED notified of administrator change

Summer 2023 prior to the beginning of school the following personnel were removed:

- Mr. Kirker, Film (replaced with a new non-certified teacher)
- Mr. Telles, P.E. & Science (not replaced)
- Ms. Jordan, math & baking (not replaced)
- Ms. Myers, social studies (not replaced)
- In addition, Ms. Romero was appointed "dean of students," while no one replaced her as SPED/ELL lead, leaving SPED/ELL students with limited support

The teachers that were terminated were given “Reduction in Force” (aka “RIF”) letters by Kayla Martinez, before she was placed on leave, however the Governance Council upheld them. Additionally, it should be noted that the RIF process outlined in the school’s Collective Bargaining Agreement was not followed. The staff sent a letter to the Governance Council stating that the RIF letters were out of compliance, and received no response.

Additional actions in **summer 2023**:

- Alma d’Arte website taken down (replaced January 2024), removing any access to information on Governing Council members or meetings
- Equity Council disbanded
- Although Kayla Myers, Kaila Brown, Sarah Davis received an Innovation Grant valued at more than \$200,000, AA turned down the grant
- Although Kayla Myers had a \$10,000 grant to work with La Semilla on the Alma d’Arte garden, her contract was not renewed and the garden was closed

Before School Year 2023 School contract nurse Edan Luschei contacted school to see if she should do physicals for students with I.E.P.s as required by law and she was informed her services were no longer needed (Open question as to whether students were given physicals)

The school calendar that had been submitted to and approved by PED for the 23/24 school year, had been provided to staff and parents at some point in either May or June 2023. This calendar showed that staff would return to the school on July 24th, and students would return July 26th.

7/10/23 Amador sends an email to staff (“Beginning of Year – Soft Welcome Back”) stating that the beginning dates of the school year have changed. Staff will report back July 31st, and students will attend “orientation” August 2nd and 3rd, resuming classes on August 4th. The email also states that staff may check in on July 27th and 28th, but can only stay at the school from 8am to noon either day, with no additional time for teacher preparation.

7/28/23 Jennifer White and another teacher (who wishes to remain unnamed) go to Alma to check in. Jennifer asks Cecelia Romero about scheduling, classes, etc. Romero describes the quarter-system and states that it will be implemented because the school was previously awarding “too many credits” to students. When Jennifer points out that the new system awards more credits, Romero ends the conversation. On July 31, Jennifer receives an email from Amador that states Jennifer was belligerent in her conversation with Romero and that behavior won’t be tolerated.

7/31/23 Staff returns to the school to begin the 23/24 school year. The following items occur:

- **Major academic change announced:** Alma d’Arte would go to a “quarter” system, meaning classes that had previously met for one year would now meet for two quarters, while semester-long classes that would previously have met for one semester would now meet for one quarter.
- **Jennifer White and Amador argue:** Amador removes Jennifer White from the auditorium where staff is assembled, and has an hour long conversation with her in another room.

Romero is in attendance as well. Both Jennifer and Amador record audio of the meeting. Amador makes various accusations about the school, the former principal and the teachers. Jennifer tries to explain things, but is largely spoken over or ignored. After the meeting, Amador goes to his office and Jennifer returns to the auditorium.

- **PD is presented to staff:** several sessions are presented by people that Amador has personal connections to. Amador also announces some evening sessions that will be open to parents, presented by these same people
- **Accusations against staff begin:** Tiffany (new office manager, never officially introduced to staff) informs teachers that they will not have keys to the building and that all staff must leave by 4:30pm each day. No one is allowed in the building when admin is not there. When pressed for a reason, Amador says that many items have gone missing (like a ladder and “things”) and he thinks teachers are stealing these items from the school.

8/2/23 and 8/3/23 Orientations are held for the students. Each grade level meets for half a day in the auditorium, where Amador makes many declarations of expectations.

- Amador immediately set in place rules that disregarded the emotional wellness and practices of Alma community, stating that the school was not a “hospital or clinic”
- Amador immediately set regulations in place that contradicted Alma’s beliefs about students’ ability to express themselves, stating that there would be a new dress code and other “codes of ethics” instituted
- Told teachers who were providing safe spaces to students that they were “harboring” students and that their relationships with students were inappropriate
- All tardies declared to be absences, making students more likely to skip classes, especially in the mornings. Amador also stated that he would be personally working with the District Attorney’s office to have truancies “processed” and that he would put parents in jail if he needed to do so.
- Amador informed students that they could no longer receive lunch through delivery services or from their parents, because these methods allowed the possibility of drugs to be snuck into the school this way. Students would have to bring lunch from home in the morning or eat the lunch provided by the school.
- Constant mockery and shaming of teachers (including telling students that he was bullied by the teachers at Alma so he know what its like to be bullied) with the purpose of creating distrust towards teachers instituted both in public assemblies and private conversations by both Amador and Romero

During this time, and for the first few weeks of classes, it was also clear that students with I.E.P.s or 504s immediately had no services. Despite this, Amador did have Vanessa de Leon (an attorney and personal friend of his) meet with parents during the week of August 7th to discuss SPED needs and practices.

8/7/23 Classes started, however, because of the lack of teachers, 50ish students per period warehoused in the cafeteria with nothing to do and little to no adult supervision.

8/8/23 The fire marshal and a representative from LCPS tour the campus and find safety violations. Amador refuses to answer most of their questions and “bans” them from the campus.

8/9/23 Mr. Wells (the only math teacher for Alma at this point) is let go. Mr. Wells had submitted his resignation letter with an end date of August 11th. On August 9th, Mr. Wells is called to Amador's office and told he can just go. Amador implies that the abrupt change is made because he suspects that Mr. Wells called the fire marshal about the school.

8/19/23 Malachi DeLanoy passes away

8/23/23 Candlelight vigil for Malachi at Alma—Amador took over candlelight vigil and blamed students, teachers and staff for Malachi's passing

9/1/23 Amador has staff meeting with all teachers in the auditorium before school. Students are present in the auditorium, within earshot, eating breakfast. Amador berates teachers. Amador tells teachers he "kicked the fire marshal out" and claims that whoever called the fire marshal initiated a personal attack on him (Amador). He also states that he will petition "the courts" to discover the name of the anonymous reporter and if that person is a teacher at the school, he will do whatever it takes to have their license revoked by PED. (Jennifer White has an audio recording of this meeting.)

9/18/23 Governance Council meeting is improperly noticed. No agenda is provided to the public ahead of the meeting, a violation of the NM Open Meetings Act. A complaint is filed with the Attorney General's office.

9/20/23 Jennifer White and Roanna St. Clair (teacher) ask Amador for clarification on the end of the first quarter, which is approaching. Amador states that students won't switch classes at the end of the quarter and will just stay in their current schedules.

Also, in early September, Jennifer White and Amador have a conversation about the school's chapter of National Honor Society, which Jennifer has been the faculty advisor for. Amador states he was unaware of this, but is happy to let Jennifer remain in that position. He asks her to begin inviting new students to be inducted, and to plan the induction. Jennifer informs Amador that she needs to order pins and certificates for the new inductees. Amador asks Jennifer to purchase the items on her own personal credit card because the school "can't process a P.O. that quickly". Jennifer purchases the items, and immediately submits a P.O. for reimbursement. It takes 6 weeks to receive the reimbursement check.

September/October 2023 Continued allegations by Amador and Romero that teachers were stealing property from the school. Amador often told parents and members of the community that the school failed to hire licensed teachers for the last decade.

10/9/23 Patrick Hernández (school registrar) is placed on administrative leave with a letter stating that his employment will be terminated at the end of the month. He is given 5 minutes to collect his personal belongings.

10/11/23 Jennifer White (the only science teacher at the time) is let go. Jennifer tries to give a resignation letter to Amador, and he states that her actions are unprofessional so he refuses the resignation letter and declares her contract to be “cancelled”. She is given 30 minutes to collect personal belongings and threatened with police action. She is informed that she is “banned” from campus. Hundreds of dollars of her personal belongings remain at the school.

10/12/23 Amador calls crazed assembly with all students. He speaks for 45+ minutes in a stream of consciousness rambling about him being targeted and how bad the teachers are at the school, among other topics. He shares personnel information with students during his rant. Transcription of assembly notes available from Chris Bardey (teacher).

10/12/23 Email sent out to all parents via anonymous “Alma account” inviting parents to “Alma Action Plan” meeting at Pioneer Women’s Park

10/15/23 Alma Action Plan meeting held at Pioneer Women’s Park, with approximately 20 people in attendance. Participants created action plan. Jennifer Dahlgren agreed to meet with Amador and Romero to discuss action plan.

10/16/23 Jennifer Dahlgren meets with Amador and Romero and sends out notes

10/16/23 Multiple complaints against AA and Governing Council registered at Governing Council meeting. Additionally, this Governance Council meeting is improperly noticed. No agenda is provided to the public ahead of the meeting, a violation of the NM Open Meetings Act. A complaint is filed with the Attorney General’s office.

10/16/23 Jennifer White has an in-person meeting with Kelly Rankin at PED’s offices in Santa Fe for over an hour

10/19/23 Jeanne Brown’s first complaint to PED, receives call back from Kelly Rankin, 1 hour conversation with her

More Staff Dismissals Fall 2023

- Mr. Ruben, general/SPED substitute (with many close connections to students)
- Marla, kitchen assistant

October/November/December: Multiple students involuntarily withdrawn. Many withdrawn students had IEPs or 504s, and were not given due process prior to their parents being given a surprise notification that their child was withdrawn

11/20/23 Governance Council meeting is improperly noticed. No agenda is provided to the public ahead of the meeting, a violation of the NM Open Meetings Act. A complaint is filed with the Attorney General’s office. Ongoing complaints during public comment.

November: Romero visits the hip-hop dance class and informs the students in that class that all the teachers at the school hate their class, and are trying to get Oscar Hernandez (dance teacher)

fired. Personnel information is shared with students. There is no evidence that the teachers are against the dance class or Oscar, and many teachers in fact attend dance events to show support. As a result of this misinformation, and staff information being shared with students, a group of students begins to bully teachers and other students outside of the dance class.

12/11/23 Governance Council meeting is improperly noticed. No agenda is provided to the public ahead of the meeting, a violation of the NM Open Meetings Act. A complaint is filed with the Attorney General's office. Ongoing complaints during public comment.

12/12/23 Kaila Brown's sculpture missing from Ms. Zerr's art studio on campus. (Kaila is a student at Alma.) The sculpture had been sitting in the studio since April/May 2023. Kaila Brown and Ms. Zerr report this to office, who say they know they know nothing about it. Ms. Zerr files police report on stolen art.

12/14/23 The Attorney General's office emails a letter to Amador about the Governing Council meetings for September through December being improperly noticed. The school has until January 4th to respond with requested information.

12/14/23 During the Winter Art Showcase (held in the evening, with parents and community invited), Ms. Zerr is placed on administrative leave. She is told that the leave relates to Kaila's sculpture, which administration now claims to have in their possession.

12/15/23 On the last day of school before winter break begins, Chris Bardey (art teacher, hired in September) and James Parr (film teacher) are given "Reduction in Force" letters which are effective immediately. The letters instruct these teachers to contact the school on January 4th to retrieve their personal belongings. The RIF process described in the school's Collective Bargaining Agreement is violated.

1/4/24 2nd semester classes begin. Registration disaster. Paper registrations are being done by hand, because no one at school knew how to use software to register students. Registration problems included:

- Credit recovery courses were given to students who had already taken the classes, because the school "lost proof" that those students had taken the classes, and those students were told "there's nothing we can do about it"
- Student prohibited from registering classes; seniors largely prohibited from taking electives; Mr. Dorn's students targeted and prevented from registering for his classes
- Roanna St. Clair's students targeted and prevented from registering for her classes
- Registration took multiple days while the entire student body sat in the cafeteria

1/4/24 Chris Bardey contacts Tiffany (front office manager) to set up a time to retrieve his personal belongings, as directed in the RIF letter he received on 12/15. Tiffany informs Chris that the "window has closed" and he is not allowed to retrieve his personal belongings.

1/4/24 Amador responds to the Attorney General's office with part of the information that office requested.

Approx. 1/10/24 Steven van Coblijn (student) is involuntarily withdrawn. This action takes place after his mother spoke at several board meetings, and also questioned why her son's Chromebook was taken away when it is an accommodation in his IEP. Steven's mother is "banned" from campus.

1/8/24 Governing Board Special Meeting - ongoing public comments and complaints at board meetings. The minutes for this meeting have not been made available to the public yet.

1/10/24 Amador sends an email to all staff/teachers. The email accuses teachers of "circumnavigating administration", and has a laundry list of accusations against teachers, ranging from "willful neglect of graduation requirements" to "Fiscal management and embezzlement" to "willful protection of staff who are committing violations of state statutes...". There are 11 allegations in total. He claims in this email that he has provided evidence to PED and other agencies, and has asked to be put on the agenda at the monthly PEC meetings so these items can be addressed.

1/22/24 Governing Board Regular Meeting – ongoing public comments and complaints. The minutes for this meeting have not been made available to the public yet.

Approx 1/24/24 Mr. Dorn's colleagues (two teachers from Alma) are called into a meeting with Amador and shown a painting of a KKK mob hanging a Black man, and they are told that one of Mr. Dorn's students painted it and he displayed it. Amador wants to know what these two teachers think of it. They both express that they don't think it was painted by an Alma student, and that they have never seen it before.

Early February 2024 Juan Magdaleno (secretary/registrar) leaves staff; consultant who was helping with transcripts for Alma because no one on staff knew how to do transcripts also left (the identity of this person is unknown, as Amador never released information to staff on this person)

2/16/24 Multiple public comments voiced at meeting of Public Education Committee. In action item, PEC votes to inform Alma that they will be placed on the state's "Intervention Ladder."

2/25/24 First meeting of "Support Alma d'Arte" group, convened by Chris Bardey.

2/26/24 Governing Board Meeting scheduled for this date is postponed to 2/29. A post is made to the school's Facebook page that the meeting was postponed due to an error on the website notice. The agenda posted for the 2/26 meeting is different than the agenda posted for the 2/29 meeting. This change requires a 72 hour notice, but the meeting is rescheduled for 48 hours later. Once again, Alma is not in compliance with the NM Open Meetings Act.

2/29/24 Governing Board Meeting takes place. Multiple public comments made at governing board meeting. Forty people in attendance. Patricia Gipson, chair of NM PEC, in attendance. Recording available from Chris Bardey.

3/14/24 Las Cruces Bulletin publishes article [“Alma d’Arte Charter School Again Under Scrutiny”](#)

3/14/24 Jeanne Brown sends letter to Public Education Committee encouraging them to take immediate action as Amador is an immediate safety danger.

3/17/24 Second “Support Alma d’Arte” meeting convened at Pioneer Women’s Park

3/18/24 “Save Alma” Facebook page initiated

3/18/24 Governing Board Meeting takes place. Multiple public comments made at governing board meeting. Senator Carrie Hamblen and Representative Angelica Rubio were in attendance, as well as reporters from local news agencies. Police called on a former student who said a cuss word during public comment. The police leave with no action taken. Board member Cesar Alvarez states that the board should create a policy about what can and cannot be said during public comments.

Approx 3/18/24 Amador holds a meeting with Raul Dorn (teacher) about the KKK themed painting (See 1/24/24). Amador claims that he has shown the painting to professors from NMSU, state police officers, and other members of the community. Mr. Dorn questions why it took so long to ask him, the art teacher, about the painting and Amador just replies “Well I am talking to you now!” Mr. Dorn has never seen this painting in its current state, though he does recognize that the KKK imagery is painted over top of a painting that was previously donated to the school by a local artist.

3/19/24 “Save Alma’s Amador and Romero” Facebook page initiated by a group of students at Alma, using fake accounts.

3/19/24 Las Cruces Bulletin publishes article, [“Charter School Calls Police Over Rude Comment”](#)

3/26/24 Las Cruces Bulletin publishes article, [“Principal’s Spouse Called Police to Charter School Meeting”](#)

Other items of note:

- From approx. November through February, a student was working at the front desk as the school’s secretary. This student was a legal adult, and was provided access to all other students’ records. They were not required to attend in-person classes, and instead their classes were moved to an online format. When PED began making regular site visits, in February, the student was moved from the front desk to another area.

- Amador has harassed Roanna St. Clair numerous times about a missing piece of kitchen equipment. This equipment was in disrepair and Roanna was instructed to dispose of it during the 22/23 school year, under Kayla Martinez's direction. Despite providing this information, Roanna was asked numerous times about this equipment by both Amador and Romero. This later turned into a general allegation against Roanna that Roanna was somehow stealing property and money from the school.
- Amador has defamed the character of several teachers, by spreading misinformation through the community about these teachers. He has made accusations of embezzlement, stealing school property, misuse of school funds, and other statements to members of the community, using teacher's names and other details. There is no evidence to support these claims.
- There are teachers at Alma that are not certified, or that are undercertified. Amador claims this is not the case, but a search of teachers' names on the PED License Look-up website shows that at least one current teacher has no license or certification at all.
- Amador brags about "banning" people from campus, and declares that he is there to save the school. Many of the statements that he makes are baseless, including the statements about the students being at 0% proficiency. Not only is this "0% proficiency" statement harmful to students, but it undermines the teachers at the school.