

1 **Amherst School Board Meeting**
2 **Thursday, May 19, 2011**
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4
5 **Attendance**
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7 Amherst School Board:

8 Peter Maresco, Peg Bennett, Lucienne Foulks, James Manning, Andrew Zell
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10 Administrative Team:

11 Nicole Heimarck, Porter Dodge, Gerry St. Amand, Renea Sparks, Janet Davis, Patty
12 Wons, Pam Gross, and Meg Trainor
13

14 Minutes Taker

15 Beth Penney
16

17 **Call to Order**

Call to Order

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19 Ms. Bennett called the meeting to order at 6:04pm.
20

21 **Announcements**

Announcements

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23 Principal's Report
24

25 Ms. Foulks asked about the fire incident at Wilkins.
26

27 Mr. St. Amand stated that everything is fine. The kids were back in the portable by
28 10:30am and there was minimal damage.
29

30 Committee Reports
31

32 Ms. Foulks stated that she went to the PTA meeting. They spent time talking about
33 June 1st with Dr. Sharma and how to get that date out to parents. There was also
34 some discussion about the calendar.
35

36 Dr. Jennings stated that the Calendar committee is convening and meeting with
37 union representatives and then the committee will meet. Mr. Zell is the
38 representative for the Amherst board.
39

40 Mr. Maresco stated that the Brick School committee met and they have \$30,000
41 budgeted for repairs. The major item is the roof repair costing \$23,000. The
42 committee has suggested fixing up the community room and doing outside
43 maintenance with the rest of the money.
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Public Time

Public Time

No public present.

Consent Agenda

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Mr. Maresco made a motion to accept the consent agenda including the minutes from March 30th and April 19th, the treasures report, the manifest, resignation, and the unanticipated revenue. Ms. Foulks seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

Presentations/ Reports

Presentations/ Reports

NECAP/ RTI Presentation

Nicole Heimark, Janet Davis, Patty Wons, Pam Gross, and Meg Trainor gave the presentation.

Ms. Wons reviewed RTI (Response to Intervention) and discussed the tiers of intervention (whole class, few students, one student).

The board and Ms. Trainor discussed recognition of teachers whose classes make significant gain. Teachers are celebrated as a whole and work is shared collaboratively to help with best practices school wide. Ms. Trainor gave examples.

Ms. Wons discussed Gap analysis at AMS and how a meeting is held every Tuesday to help support students and improve interventions. She also discussed how there has been a lot of research done in reading interventions and not as much in math. Nation wide reading intervention is much more successful. She discussed how the use of the program Reading Street has shown improvement.

The board and administrators discussed Title One, RTI in math, and after school programs to support students in math.

The board and Ms. Heimark also discussed the implementation of Reading Street.

Ms. Wons and Ms. Trainor reviewed how teachers work with RTI in their classrooms and the teacher’s feedback about RTI. They discussed how the school would continue to work improving communication about RTI.

Ms. Heimark reviewed why they use RTI along with NECAP and AYP scores. She explained what the data shows and discussed how progress still needs to be made. She also explained how fully implementing a core Reading program K-8 will help improve scores.

92 Mr. Manning and Ms. Heimarck discussed clarifying questions about what the data is
93 and how the data is analyzed.
94

95 Mr. Maresco and Ms. Heimarck discussed clarifying questions surrounding target
96 growth and if the graphs show that which they do not. The graphs are whole school
97 and the goal is to hit 100, which is based on points of how students do. The graphs
98 are not a percentage.
99

100 The board and Ms. Heimarck discussed the graphs and their observations about the
101 graphs. It was identified that there needs to be improvement in Math.
102

103 Ms. Trainor stated that the schools have a lot of work to do in Math. Whole class
104 instruction needs support. The schools are looking at this with the Math review and
105 they need a core program. Currently they are doing what they know to support
106 individual students.
107

108 Ms. Foulks stated that at the PTA meeting parents asked why they should go to Math
109 program night with Dr. Sharma; this is why.
110

111 Ms. Trainor reviewed the grade level data graphs for grade 4. She discussed
112 students with IEPs in more depth and how those students progress is monitored.
113 She stated that all these students are on a positive trend line for their IEP goals.
114

115 The board and the administrators discussed IEP students and how their
116 improvement is tracked, how the state test limits their ability to show what they are
117 truly capable of, and how IEPs are continually changing based on the improvement
118 and needs of individual students. The board also discussed the number of IEP
119 students from year to year and the effect changing numbers may have on scores.
120

121 Ms. Wons reviewed the graphs for grade 8.
122

123 Ms. Gross discussed variables for students with Educational Disabilities that may
124 affect their scores. She also discussed how the trends in the graphs are shown
125 throughout the country.
126

127 Ms. Davis discussed how a student's, with an educational disability, needs might
128 change as they grow.
129

130 Ms. Wons and Ms. Davis discussed why there is a bubble of students identified when
131 moving from 4th to 5th grade.
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133 The board and the administrators discussed how information and support is shared
134 when students move from 4th to 5th grade.
135

136 Ms. Gross and the board discussed how there is a nation wide trend of more
137 students being identified at the middle school level with emotional disabilities.

138 Ms. Wons and Ms. Trainor discussed what both schools have been doing for RTI and
139 gave examples for both Reading and Math.

140
141 Ms. Wons and Ms. Trainor discussed the faculty's observations when they analyzed
142 the Math and reading data.

143
144 The board discussed when collaboration for improvement happens between
145 teachers and how this time needs to happen more often and may need to be more
146 structured. They also discussed how the schools would know that improvement is
147 happening at the instructional level.

148
149 The board and the administrators discussed how RTI is about improving core
150 instruction and is not just for struggling students. Ms. Wons gave examples about
151 how teachers could run multiple activities in a classroom to provide intervention
152 and enrichment depending on each student's need.

153
154 The board discussed how there would always be a cohort of students on a different
155 trajectory because there are students with IEPs that do not have learning
156 disabilities.

157
158 Report: Academic Awards Night

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160 Mr. Dodge discussed the parental concerns about the lowering of GPAs for academic
161 awards night. AMS went back to 3.7 or higher for this year and it will stay that way.
162 Awards are given at end of the 8th grade year for students with GPA 3.7 or higher
163 and for students with straight A's. The 5th graders are talked to about striving to
164 work hard and doing the best they can and the awards given in 8th grade. Students
165 set goals right from the beginning.

166
167 The board, Mr. Dodge, and Dr. Jennings discussed the need to have straight A's in all
168 classes. They discussed the more subjective courses like Art and Music. For these
169 classes rubric are used to provide students with grades. They discussed how they
170 want to educate the whole student and that the school values all classes equally.

171
172 **Discussion** **Discussion**

173
174 Revision to SRO Agreement

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176 Dr. Jennings stated that she met with the Chief of Police and wrote an amendment to
177 be an addition to the agreement. The addition discussed the term of the SRO, how
178 the SRO would be hired and that the Chief of Police was direct supervisor of the SRO.
179 She also stated that Officer Knox would be allowed to apply for the position again.

180
181 The board discussed at length how the last statement in the amendment, which says
182 at any point the Chief of Police could change the SRO does not feel collaborative.
183 They discussed how the entire agreement indirectly addresses that the Chief of

184 Police has control over the SRO in collaboration with the principal. The board asked
185 Dr. Jennings to go back to the Chief of Police to discuss removing or changing the
186 second paragraph in the amendment.

187

188 Preschool Plans FY12

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190 Ms. Heimarck discussed the preschool curriculum and thanked all of the people
191 involved in the preschool curriculum planning. She discussed the importance of the
192 social and emotional development in this age group, the importance of play in a
193 school setting, and the importance of having an integrated curriculum where math,
194 literacy and science are inter-related.

195

196 The board discussed how this is a more interdisciplinary and comprehensive
197 program than the other 50 public preschools in New Hampshire most of which are
198 not integrated.

199

200 Dr. Jennings stated this would be an action item at the next meeting so the board
201 adopts this curriculum for students who attend our preschool or other preschools.

202

203 Ms. Sparks thanked everyone involved with the curriculum development. She
204 reviewed the process of the establishment of the public preschool for the new board
205 members. She discussed the progress of the partnership with Sunrise Children's
206 Center, which is not going to happen based on no students registering for the public
207 preschool. She gave the board the cost analysis of preschool with the 9 known
208 special education students and discussed different scenarios and the cost analysis
209 for each.

210

211 The board and Ms. Sparks discussed the placement of IEP students and how this is
212 determined. They also discussed having as few as three students in the program.
213 They discussed how inclusion and integration is important and is the law and even if
214 the classroom may only start with special education peers the students will have a
215 whole building of peers at Clark. Ms. Sparks explained how this is not their 1st
216 choice. She explained how the preschool has to start somewhere.

217

218 Dr. Jennings discussed how it was ambitious to try to go for a full-integrated
219 curriculum, and how it may still happen. She discussed that parents commit to
220 preschools in January and the public preschool was finalized in March. The
221 preschools could still have a few same age peers in this program. Next year in Oct./
222 Nov. they would launch the public preschool registration with the other preschools
223 and will have a place to show parents and a curriculum.

224

225 The board discussed the cost of the preschool for same age peers and how this could
226 be a sliding scale since it is a public preschool.

227

228 Ms. Sparks explained the licensing and program approval needed to make sure the
229 school is in compliance with all of the potential different settings.

230 The board further discussed the cost to the district and the risk associated with
231 starting the preschool. The board discussed going forward with the preschool even
232 if there are only three students that are all special education students. They
233 determined there is no risk beyond what is already allocated for out of district
234 placement of these students.

235

236 **Mr. Manning made a motioned to give Ms. Sparks approval to move forward**
237 **with any potential scenario for a public preschool even if it is potentially a**
238 **non-integrated program.**

239

240 Mr. Maresco asked to wait till the next meeting to vote to see if any of the special
241 needs students would be coming to the program and wanted to discuss having a
242 minimum to start the preschool. Ms. Sparks and Dr. Jennings discussed the many
243 reasons why they could not wait to vote.

244

245 The board discussed the original cost sheet and original options both private and
246 non-private partnership again. They also discussed the reasons why they had
247 trouble enrolling students and why that will change in the future. They also
248 discussed the tuition costs for the same age peers.

249

250 **Mr. Zell seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.**

251

252 Dr. Jennings stated they would discuss the cost for the same age peers and bring a
253 proposal back for a sliding scale for the tuition.

254

255 Job Description: Math Interventionist

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257 Ms. Heimarck discussed the changes to original document including the name
258 change to Math Specialist. She discussed the position and what the job
259 responsibilities would include.

260

261 Mr. Zell asked if this person would be the expert in the new math program and if the
262 job should include the role out new math material.

263

264 Ms. Heimarck compared the job descriptions to the reading specialist and Literacy
265 coach. She stated that the math specialist would have some responsibility in the
266 role out of new material, but the math coach would be more of the expert in the new
267 math program.

268

269 The board discussed the funding of the two positions and the progress of the state
270 with the pension bill.

271

272 The purpose of the discussion tonight was not about hiring but about the job
273 description in case there is enough funding to hire for this position.

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275

276 Policy JJE- Fundraising Activities – 1st reading

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278 Dr. Jennings stated that this policy has been amended since the board last saw it. She
279 explained the need for this policy was so the AD and principal would have some
280 muscle to regulate coaches and to show that the school does fund athletics.

281

282 The board discussed the need for any fundraising at all. They discussed that the
283 policy needs to include the principal in order for non-athletic fundraising to be
284 regulated also. They discussed the need and use of Buster Clubs and what they have
285 done for the schools in the past.

286

287 The board determined that this policy was mainly for the high school because AMS
288 and Clark Wilkins fund their athletic programs fully. The board thought that maybe
289 they need a separate policy

290

291 Dr. Jennings stated that maybe the Amherst Board's policy should be only paragraph
292 1 and 4 minus the last sentence.

293

294 Ms. Foulks stated that Jan Skegnelly's students did a great presentation and that the
295 students were awesome!

296

297 **Ms. Foulks made a motion to adjourn the regular meeting and to go into non-**
298 **public session. Mr. Manning seconded the motion and the roll call was**
299 **unanimous at 9:20pm.**

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