

1 **Amherst School Board**  
2 **September 15, 2010**

3  
4 **Attendance**

5  
6 **Amherst School Board:**

7 Nancy Head, Peter Maresco, Peg Bennett, Rob Graybill, Lucienne Foulks

8  
9 **Administrative Team:**

10 Mary Athey Jennings, Nancy McGuire, Elizabeth Shankel, Porter Dodge, Gerry St.

11 Amand, Renea Sparks

12  
13 **Minutes Recorder:** Beth Penney

14  
15 **Call to Order**

**Call to Order**

16  
17 Ms. Head called the meeting to order at 6:06pm.

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19 **Announcements**

**Announcements**

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21 **Principal's Report**

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23 The board discussed the enrollment of both schools. AMS has 798 students enrolled  
24 and Clark and Wilkins has 630 students. Clark and Wilkins lost two students, but  
25 will be adding a student as of October 1<sup>st</sup>.

26  
27 Mr. Maresco asked about the schedule of coffees and conferences being during  
28 religious holidays and if the school could change this in the future.

29  
30 Mr. St. Amand replied that maybe teachers are not making the connection and hopes  
31 parents will speak with him when this occurs.

32  
33 Mr. Dodge stated that when scheduling is done there is no excuse, but it is hard to  
34 schedule because some holidays change yearly. The administrators look at  
35 calendars for future years to make the school calendar and the school calendar takes  
36 into consideration all holidays. Parents have also given feedback about having  
37 parent coffees during the day because of working parents cannot attend.

38  
39 Ms. Head asked if the four lunches at Wilkins are working.

40  
41 Mr. St. Amand replied yes the four lunches has helped with scheduling issues.

42  
43 **Preschool survey and coffees**

44  
45 Ms. Sparks gave an update to the board about the district adding preschool to the  
46 coming budget season. Monday an email was sent to parents of elementary students

47 about the proposed preschool. The four local preschools were contacted and asked  
48 to give a letter and survey to the Amherst residents; 3 of 4 preschools agreed. There  
49 is information on the district's website about the survey and letter. The results of  
50 the survey are due by 21<sup>st</sup> of September. A group is meeting with the local  
51 preschools on the 28<sup>th</sup> of September to look at private/ public partnership to include  
52 extended care opportunities. There will be two information sessions on September  
53 30<sup>th</sup> for the public. Ms. Sparks stated that she would present a complete picture of  
54 the proposed public preschool to the board in October.

55  
56 Mr. St. Amand stated that there would be no Kindergarten proposal brought forward  
57 this year and the focus will just be on the preschool proposal.

58  
59 Mr. Graybill stated he would send this information to the PTA because this meeting  
60 could not be televised.

61

62 **Public Time**

**Public Time**

63

64 No public present.

65

**Consent Agenda**

66 **Consent Agenda**

67

68 Ms. Bennett asked to pull the August 24<sup>th</sup> minutes.

69

70 Mr. Graybill asked about the professional development revenue.

71

72 Mr. St. Amand explained that the revenue was from a technology course offered over  
73 the summer to teachers.

74

75 **Mr. Maresco made a motion to accept the consent agenda containing the**  
76 **minutes for June 3<sup>rd</sup> and August 24<sup>th</sup>, the treasures report, the manifest,**  
77 **donations and the unanticipated revenue from professional development. Ms.**  
78 **Bennett seconded the motion.**

79

80 **Mr. Graybill made a motion to accept the August 24<sup>th</sup> minutes. Ms. Foulks**  
81 **seconded the motion.**

82

83 Ms. Bennett asked that the wording on line 25 be changed to "Ms. Bennett inquired  
84 about the completion of the SINI plan and asked if it would be shared with the  
85 board."

86

87 Mr. Graybill asked that Ms. Sparks be removed from the attendance of the August  
88 24<sup>th</sup> minutes because she was not at the meeting.

89

90 **The vote was unanimous to accept the consent agenda.**

91

92

93 **Presentations**

**Presentations**

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95 **Goals FY11**

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97 Dr. Jennings explained that this was a follow-up to a two-day workshop in August  
98 where all grade levels met to form goals for the school year using data from the  
99 NWEA tests, which help track and show student improvement. Dr. Jennings  
100 explained why NWEA test scores were being used and not NECAP. The goals made  
101 were focused on reading and math and what percentile the teachers would like to  
102 see their students achieving in based on national norms for each grade level.

103

104 The board and Dr. Jennings discussed the NWEA is a test of student progress that  
105 helps us understand the instructional progress and the curriculum. This test also  
106 gives teachers tools and data to help with differentiated instruction and to help  
107 students set goals at the beginning of the year and throughout the year.

108

109 Dr. Jennings explained to the board that the national norms and the typical growth  
110 for a student at a specific grade level can change from year to year based on RIT  
111 scores from the NWEA tests.

112

113 Dr. Jennings reminded the board that the NWEA test scores show if the student is  
114 improving not if they are proficient or not. Each student is given an individualized  
115 target growth that is determined using national norms.

116

117 The board discussed how to communicate these goals to the community so they  
118 understand that the target percentiles goals set by the teachers are measuring  
119 growth and not achievement. The board also discussed teaching concepts and not to  
120 the tests. The district does compare their NWEA scores informally with other local  
121 districts.

122

123 The board discussed doing a better job of helping parents in the spring when they  
124 receive their student's NWEA test scores to better understand what they mean.

125

126 Mr. Dodge explained that every student has a conference at the beginning of the  
127 year to see their scores and discuss their goals with their teachers. This helps to  
128 challenge the students. Students and teachers meet again in January and at the end  
129 of year after getting the new scores.

130

131 Ms. McGuire explained the goal setting worksheet is used to show comparisons and  
132 not to focus on raw scores. Setting a goal helps keep kids invested. The test and the  
133 scores are not as abstract for kids as they are for the adults. The conferences help  
134 teachers be specific with students how they are going to work together to help the  
135 student achieve the goals.

136

137

138 **Reports**

**Reports**

139

140 Bullying

141

142 Mr. Dodge explained that the purpose of letter sent to parents about bullying was to  
143 be proactive and to get parents support. The letter sent home had definitions of  
144 bullying. He explained that the line between bullying and kids being kids is  
145 sometimes hard to distinguish. Bullying is in the eyes of the beholder and the law is  
146 trying to stop all the name-calling. If a child feels bullied than Mr. Dodge has to talk  
147 to the kids and parents about it no matter what and he spends more time  
148 investigating. The law is there to help children.

149

150 Ms. Sparks explained that at the bullying conference she attended they defined what  
151 a single significant event could be. The precaution was to be prudent in the  
152 interpretation of the law. When contacting the parent about a report it is to just let  
153 them know there was a report. The school still needs to do the investigation. The  
154 definition of bullying includes a perceived imbalance of power, which is important  
155 to understand.

156

157 Dr. Jennings stated that the district sent eight people to the bullying conference and  
158 they will meet with administration to share what they learned.

159

160 The board discussed the concern about the interpretation of the law at home. Mr.  
161 Dodge explained that if what happens outside of the school threatens the student in  
162 school then it falls under the bullying law.

163

164 Mr. Dodge stated that continued communication is important because the  
165 discussion is even back in the state legislature.

166

167 Math Placement

168

169 Dr. Jennings reported to the board how math placement, specifically for accelerating  
170 students in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade, will affect the students when they get to high school.  
171 She explained that currently in the high school calculus class there are ten students  
172 who were not in the accelerated math class in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade. She discussed  
173 options for students in 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade to help them accelerate in math. These  
174 options include using online courses, the Virtual Learning Academy, a website set-  
175 up by the school, and tutoring privately and by teachers.

176

177 The board discussed the website and tutoring by teachers that can happen part way  
178 through the year at 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade. The board expressed concern that gaps are  
179 being formed in these students and their understanding of concepts because of this  
180 form of acceleration.

181

182 Ms. Head asked about the board hearing the report on the new math curriculum.

183

184 Dr. Jennings explained that AMS would pilot the program this winter and parts of  
185 the program will be used in the entire middle school next year. The report will be  
186 given to the SAU board in March.

187

188 The board discussed the need to fix the problems in the current math program. Dr.  
189 Jennings stated that the teachers are on board and the schools are already  
190 addressing issues by using test scores to find strengths and weaknesses in the  
191 current math program.

192

193 Dr. Jennings stated she would report the timeline of the Math review committee and  
194 discuss the pilot program in more depth with the board at a future meeting.

195

196 **Action Items**

**Action Items**

197

198 Policy KED

199

200 Mr. Maresco asked what prompted this.

201

202 Ms. Sparks stated that the office of civil rights looked at the 2007 adopted policy,  
203 and the district needed to add some pieces to meet the law.

204

205 **Mr. Graybill made a motion to accept policy KED. Ms. Foulks seconded the**  
206 **motion and the vote was unanimous.**

207

208 **Non-Public Session**

**Non-Public Session**

209

210 Minutes taken by Mr. Graybill

211

212 **Mr. Graybill made a motion to go into non-public session at 7:58 p.m. Mrs.**  
213 **Foulks seconded the motion. A unanimous roll call vote followed and the**  
214 **board went into non-public session.**

215

216 The board discussed the candidates presented for Music Teacher at Clark/Wilkins.  
217 The board also discussed a grievance brought forward by the AEA.

218

219 **At 9:20, Ms. Bennett made a motion to come out of non-public session. Mrs.**  
220 **Foulks seconded the motion. A unanimous roll call vote followed and the**  
221 **board came out of non-public session.**

222

223 **Nominations**

**Nominations**

224

225 **Mr. Graybill made a motion to authorize the administration to hire Rachel**  
226 **Jackson for the position of Music Teacher at Clark/Wilkins at .2 FTE. The**  
227 **motion was seconded by Mrs. Bennett and approved unanimously.**

228

229 **Adjourn**

**Adjourn**

230

231 **Mr. Maresco made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mrs. Head seconded the**  
232 **motion. The motion passed unanimously and the board adjourned at 9:21**  
233 **p.m.**

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