

1 **Amherst School District School Board Meeting**
2 **Thursday, February 24th**
3

4 **Attendance**

5
6 **Amherst School Board:**

7 Nancy Head, Peter Maresco, Peg Bennett, Rob Graybill
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9 **Administrative Team:**

10 Mary Athey Jennings, Elizabeth Shankel, Porter Dodge, Gerry St. Amand, Renea
11 Sparks, Patty Wons, Pam Gross
12

13 **Minutes Taker**

14 Beth Penney
15

16 **Public Hearing**

Public Hearing

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18 Ms. Head called the public hearing to order at 6:01pm
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20 Dr. Jennings stated the hearing is for the public to have a chance to discuss a
21 donation of \$5,000 to be used for Special Education from the Dutile Family. The
22 board will vote to accept this donation later in the meeting.
23

24 No public present.
25

26 **Call to Order**

Call to Order

27
28 Ms. Head called the meeting to order at 6:02pm.
29

30 **Announcements**

Announcements

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32 **Principal's Report**
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34 Ms. Bennett stated it was incredible to attend the Wells Speaking contest and that
35 the contest is an amazing opportunity to allow kids to shine. She was also the judge
36 for the invention convention and stated that the teachers do a wonderful job
37 organizing this for the students every year.
38

39 The board congratulated the two winners, and also Nikki Hitt who was the winner
40 of both the Spelling bee and Geography bee.
41

42 The board discussed the 1st grade trip to Concord and the possibility of going to the
43 Courier Museum in the future. Mr. St. Amand reminded the board they have visited
44 the Courier in the past.
45

46 Ms. Head asked for clarification about the bullying prevention to ensure there was
47 discussion about being responsible to reporting bullying.

48
49 Mr. Dodge stated that they have been working with students as by-standards and
50 are brining in a speaker to discuss what it means to be nice. This will happen at SHS
51 and have they have also invited the 9thand 10th graders.

52
53 Ms. Head asked about a parent program happening about bullying.

54
55 Ms. Sparks stated March 9th 6:30-8pm in the AMS café is the parent program.

56
57 Dr. Jennings presented Rob Graybill a memento to thank him for his service on the
58 board from 2008 to 2011. Nancy Head also received a memento for her service on
59 the board from 2005-2011. This was the last meeting for both board members.

60
61 Ms Head stated thank you for all of your support and all the help you have given.

62
63 **Public Time**

Public Time

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65 No public present.

66
67 **Consent Agenda**

Consent Agenda

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69 Ms. Bennett asked to pull the December 14th and January 14th minutes.

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71 **Mr. Graybill made a motion to accept the Consent Agenda containing the**
72 **January 6th minutes, the January treasurers report, the manifest and the**
73 **\$829.10 donation. Mr. Maresco seconded the motion and the vote was**
74 **unanimous.**

75
76 **Ms. Bennett made a motion to accept the December 14th minutes. Mr. Graybill**
77 **seconded the motion.**

78
79 Ms. Bennett asked to fix the names Ballard and Giarruso under Public Time and
80 throughout the minutes. Also under the Principal's Report the word should be
81 Techsplorations

82
83 **The vote was unanimous to accept the December 14th minutes as changed.**

84
85 **Mr. Graybill made a motion to accept the January 14th minutes. Mr. Maresco**
86 **seconded the motion.**

87
88 Ms. Bennett asked to exclude AEAA from the sentence and put period after 2014
89 where she reviewed Article 13.

90
91 **The vote was unanimous to accept the January 14th minutes as changed.**

92 **Presentations**

Presentations

93

94 **AMS – NELMS Report**

95

96 Patty Wons, Pam Gross, and Porter Dodge gave the presentation.

97

98 Ms. Wons stated the presentation was to address recommendations made by
99 Turning Points 2000. A team of folks came to AMS to talk to the teachers, students
100 and administration.

101

102 Ms. Wons discussed the whole school strengths of AMS to pursue success for every
103 student.

104

105 The recommendations and how each was being addressed were also discussed as
106 follows:

107

108 Use of Rubrics: Is being addressed using DI coaches helping teachers to look at
109 lesson plans and assessments.

110

111 Utilization of planning time: AMS has structured how teachers use planning time
112 and each day is designated for different types of planning.

113

114 Ms. Head asked if every planning time designated and if the teachers have time to
115 just to plan.

116

117 Ms. Wons stated that the teachers do have one block a day to just plan on most days.

118

119 Ms. Wons continued with the recommendations.

120

121 Varying forms of assessment: AMS has focused on formative assessments, which
122 informs the teacher's instruction and summarization assessment, which is a end of
123 unit assessment.

124

125 Student council: The student council and the administration are meeting 1X per
126 month.

127

128 Charitable efforts: AMS does lots of charity events and initiatives including helping
129 Veterans and raising money for Breast Cancer research.

130

131 Mr. Dodge stated that he gives credit to the students and advisors of these events
132 who work hard and invest a lot of time.

133

134 Ms. Wons continued with the recommendations.

135

136 Communication with in AMS: An advisory committee was established, which meets
137 1X per month with department heads. Minutes are taken and shared with the staff.

138
139 Ms. Bennett asked has every child at AMS been exposed to a rubric at this time.
140
141 Ms. Wons stated there are many types of rubrics, but that all children are given
142 expectations in advance. Different teacher's rubrics may look different.
143
144 Mr. Graybill asked if Turning Points came back to resurvey.
145
146 Mr. Dodge stated that they have not, but gave AMS 17 recommendations and the
147 narrative is to address how AMS has used the suggestions.
148
149 Ms. Wons continued with the recommendations.
150
151 Flexible grouping: Students, currently, can move within the year for reading and
152 math.
153
154 Mr. Maresco asked if anyone ever moves.
155
156 Ms. Wons and Mr. Dodge explained to the board how flexible grouping happens both
157 between classes and with in a classroom.
158
159 Ms. Wons continued with the recommendations.
160
161 Differentiated Instruction: This is year 2 with 8 trained DI coaches. AMS utilizes late
162 starts to discuss and learn. This has been going well and teachers are excited. The
163 effects are being seen in the classroom.
164
165 Curriculum integration: Fairy Beach Environmental School integrates all subjects.
166 This is an area AMS would like to add more to. Each grade has units, but teachers
167 would like to develop more.
168
169 Technology Integration: Each teacher has to have 8 periods in the lab or using the
170 laptop cart in the classroom. The technology teachers are teaching with the
171 classroom teacher. The lesson has to be part of the academic core curriculum. Each
172 student has 32 days of technology integration per year.
173
174 The board discussed if this was enough use of technology and how technology
175 integration is not user friendly. This is an area AMS will continue to work on.
176
177 Ms. Wons continued with the recommendations.
178
179 Instructional Leadership: A team has been formed and meets monthly.
180
181 Ms. Head stated that the recommendation was for broad based representation. AMS
182 has done a lot to increase communication within school, but how do parents feel
183 they have a voice?

184

185 The board discussed that parents were involved with the SINY committee, but are
186 not included otherwise. The board would like to see more opportunities for parents
187 to be part of committees at AMS. Mr. Dodge stated that AMS is open to that and they
188 will work on adding parents to some of the committees.

189

190 Ms. Wons continued with the recommendations.

191

192 RTI: AMS has taken on RTI and it is working well. Every Tuesday is RTI day. The RTI
193 team acts as a consulting team. A schedule is given to teachers where they share a
194 watch list of students in math and literacy. For each student the team discusses
195 instruction and interventions.

196

197 The board discussed more about RTI process and how children brought to the RTI
198 team are followed. RTI has helped to intervene with students before taking them to
199 an IEP.

200

201 Ms. Wons continued with the recommendations.

202

203 Safety: Teachers are doing a better job of wearing badges and being a presence in
204 the halls. AMS practices lock downs and fire drills.

205

206 Co-teaching model: This is a challenge for a case manager to truly be co-teaching
207 because there is no planning time. AMS wants to do better and implement a co-
208 teaching model.

209

210 The board discussed times when a co-teaching model has worked and it usually
211 happens when teachers and case managers have common planning time.

212

213 Ms. Bennett asked who runs the monthly grade level meeting.

214

215 Ms. Wons stated that 1x per month an administrator attends, otherwise teachers
216 run the meeting. Each team hosts and they facilitate, have an agenda and take
217 minutes.

218

219 Ms. Wons continued with recommendations not met.

220

221 Diverse integrated arts curriculum: AMS does not offer a diversity of classes in
222 integrated arts because of a reduction in staff. In 7th and 8th grade it is an elective
223 program.

224

225 The board discussed why there was a change in staffing for integrated arts and what
226 students have access to now and the way the classes are offered.

227

228 Ms. Bennett stated that the board and school should work hard to make sure those
229 programs stay alive, there is concern that those programs are going away.

230

231 Dr. Jennings stated that they will make the integrated arts program a presentation
232 to show how it has changed over time and that the program has not declined.

233

234 Ms. Wons continued with recommendations not met.

235

236 Curriculum coordinators schedules reduced: Being a coordinator is an additional
237 duty and they do not evaluate teachers.

238

239 The board and Ms. Wons discussed her role as assistant principal with a focus on
240 curriculum and how her work is shared with the staff. Ms. Wons does evaluate
241 teachers with a focus on instruction.

242

243 Ms. Wons continued with recommendations not met.

244

245 Student advisory: Administrators have met with 7th and 8th grade teachers to
246 discuss possibilities of establishing an advisory like the high school has. AMS is in
247 the exploratory stage.

248

249 The board discussed the strengths of having an advisory in the middle school, what
250 the administration envisioned, and how it would be different than advisory at the
251 high school level.

252

253 Ms. Wons continued with recommendations not met.

254

255 Establish team identity: AMS does not have “red” team, “blue” team and there is no
256 competition between teams. This has been discussed with teachers and the student
257 council.

258

259 The board discussed the math curriculum and the standards for the upper end math
260 students. Mr. Maresco shared his concerns about not enough students having the
261 opportunity to advance to high-level math before leaving AMS. The administration
262 shared how students are advancing because of DI and that in 2 years the Math
263 program will be changed to help solve this issue. The board discussed how a better
264 math curriculum and the ability to advance needs to start in the lower grades.

265

266 AMS – My Voice Survey

267

268 Dr. Jennings explained that this was a questionnaire that was given to all districts in
269 grades 5-12, four years ago as an attempt for students to have a voice about the
270 climate of their school.

271

272 Ms. Wons explained the project and gave examples of the types of questions asked.
273 The results showed for grades 7 and 8 that some of the data was unfavorable. This is
274 one snapshot of where kids were at that time. AMS plans to reflect and respect

275 results. The administration has met with teachers to address the results and have a
276 follow-up meeting scheduled.

277
278 The board discussed other times AMS students have been complimented for how
279 well they behave, how respectful they are, and how they take things seriously.

280

281 **Action Items**

Action Items

282

283 **Preschool: Partnership with Sunrise Children's Center**

284

285 Ms. Sparks reviewed the Preschool process to date.

286

287 Ms. Sparks stated that the proposal came back from Sunrise Children's Center. The
288 partnership is a work in progress. Within the communities around us those that
289 have a private partnership still have an integrated preschool program. Sunrise is
290 well known and the district has a history with them and a good relationship.

291

292 Ms. Sparks introduced Judy Koch the executive director of RSEC and Nancy Gagnon
293 the director of Sunrise.

294

295 The board discussed with Ms. Sparks, Ms. Koch and Ms. Gagnon how the partnership
296 would work and is summarized as follows; Sunrise supplies the main teacher and
297 some equipment and supplies. The SAU supplies special education staffing
298 including OT, Speech, para-educator, preschool coordinator and 0.5 sped teacher.
299 The curriculum will be a joint decision between RSEC and the district. The oversight
300 of the program will be a collaboration between Nancy Gagnon and Janet Davis. This
301 will essentially be a privately run preschool located and equipped at Clark/ Wilkins.
302 The board discussed what would happen if numbers are not met and if students are
303 pulled from Sunrise how it will affect their business. The maximum class size is 12
304 for 3 year olds and 12 for 4 year old. The program will need about 15 regular
305 education students. All in-district special education students will come to this
306 program. The board discussed other programs RSEC has had partnerships with a
307 school district in the past. The board also discussed how the regular education
308 teacher would be hired.

309

310 The board discussed the financial responsibility of district. This is a net savings to
311 do this program and the budget does not reflect this program because the money
312 will come out of what was already allocated for out of district placement.

313

314 The board discussed returning the savings from the program back to the taxpayer
315 rather than allocating the money else where in the budget.

316

317 **Mr. Graybill made a motion to accept the proposal as presented for the private**
318 **-public preschool partnership with Sunrise Children's Center, contingent on**
319 **approval of the RSEC board. Ms. Bennett seconded the motion and the vote**
320 **was unanimous.**

321 **Reports**

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323 Preliminary NECAP Results

324

325 Dr. Jennings stated that the SAU had received the general scores last month and that
326 the analysis would be presented in 2 months.

327

328 Dr. Jennings discussed some of the scores.

329

330 Mr. St. Amand stated that at Wilkins they have started looking at sub groups and
331 have noticed that scores have plateaued. The observation that over time girls are
332 doing better than boys has been made. With in the special education sub group
333 there are some anomalies, which are being clarified with the state.

334

335 The writing scores will be shared with the board in April.

336

337 Dr. Jennings discussed the scores in comparison to the surrounding districts.

338

339 Mr. Graybill asked if the results were posted on the SAU website.

340

341 Ms. Sparks stated that the state posts the analysis on their website.

342

343 FY11Quarterly Report

344

345 Ms. Shankel stated that there is a savings in many areas totaling \$234,000. Amherst
346 received \$20,000 for catastrophic aide from state. The board discussed the
347 catastrophic aide and what happens to the surplus budget at the end of the year.

348

349 **Action Items (2)**

Action Items (2)

350

351 Acceptance of the \$5,000 dollar donation

352

353 **Mr. Maresco made a motion to accept the donation. Ms. Bennett seconded the**
354 **motion and the vote was unanimous.**

355

356 **Discussion**

Discussion

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358 Policy FF-Dedication and Naming of Facilities

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360 Dr. Jennings stated the reason for this policy is because when it is time to name
361 something, it usually happens during an emotional time for the person who wants
362 something named, so the SAU wants to have a policy for this.

363

364 The board discussed having a number attached to how many people sit on the
365 committee. The board decided it could be different depending on what is being
366 named.

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Mr. Graybill publically thanked each member on the board for their contribution, thanked the schools, administration, and the public. He asked the voters to support the school budget and the teacher contracts at the polls.

Ms. Head added her thanks also and stated it has been a joy.

Non-Public Session

Ms. Bennett made a motion to go into Non-public Session under RSA 91-A:3 II. (a) (c) at 8:29pm. Mr. Maresco seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

The following minutes were taken by Mr. Graybill.

Chairwoman Head called for the Board to enter non-public session under RSA 91-A:3 II (a) (c). The motion was made by Ms. Bennett and seconded by Mr. Maresco. A unanimous roll call vote was taken. The Board entered non-public at 8:30.

The Board discuss the status of the pending hardship transfer request. Mr. Graybill motioned to approve the hardship transfer request contingent on approval by the Mont Vernon School Board. Ms. Bennett seconded the motion. A unanimous vote was received and the motion passed.

The Board also discussed a pending arbitration request.

The Board also discussed proposed contracts for the School Administrators for the ASD. Ms. Bennett motioned to accept the Superintendent's recommendations for SAU and ASD administrator contracts as presented. Mr. Maresco seconded the motion. A vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

The Board also discussed AEA staff seeking retirement for June.

Ms. Bennett motioned to come out of non-public session, which was seconded by Mr. Maresco. A roll call vote was taken and the Board came out of non-public at 9:10.

Ms. Bennett motioned to move Pam Lafazanis to replace Peter Desnoyers as a retiree under Article 14.4 for the period of June 2012. Mr. Maresco seconded the motion. A unanimous vote was taken and the motion passed.

Ms. Head called for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Graybill motioned to adjourn the meeting, with was seconded by Ms. Bennett. The meeting adjourned at 9:11.