

1 **AMHERST SCHOOL BOARD**
2 **WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2011**

3
4 **ATTENDANCE**

5
6 Amherst School Board:

7 Peter Maresco, Peg Bennett, Lucienne Foulks, Nancy Head, James Manning

8
9 Administrative Team:

10 Peter Warburton, Porter Dodge, Gerry St. Amand, Pam Gross, Nicole Heimark, Renea Sparks

11
12
13 Minutes Taker

14 Beth Penney

15
16 **CALL TO ORDER**

Call to Order

17
18 Ms. Bennett called the meeting to order at 7:02pm.

19
20 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Announcements

21
22 Principals' reports

23
24 Ms. Head stated that she loves the emphasis on respect rather than the negative on
25 bullying. She also discussed the great work James Gates is doing and hopes the school
26 publicizes his work.

27
28 Mr. Dodge stated that they would be doing some publicity once his work is done.

29
30 The board and Mr. Dodge discussed the 20-minute organizational time. They discussed
31 how it was a good idea, but the board was concerned that something was being cut out.
32 Mr. Dodge explained how the schedule was reorganized to make all periods 50 or 52
33 minutes long and that allowed the 20-minute homeroom at the end of the day. Some
34 periods lost a few minutes and some periods gained time. The time is not impacting any
35 one subject greatly. This time allows teacher to get to know their homeroom students
36 better.

37
38 Mr. St. Amand explained that state law mandates Constitution Day and all teachers have
39 to do something related to the Constitution. Jamie Richardson gives teachers a reference
40 packet with ideas. Mr. St. Amand gave the board ideas of what teachers do.

41
42 The board discussed the purpose and the set-up of the principal's report. They discussed
43 making the principal's report have similar topics each meeting along with keeping the
44 informational part to the report. They also discussed aligning the principal's report with
45 the goals.

47 Mr. St. Amand explained that the councilors position last year was 0.8 and went up this
48 year by 0.2 for the pre-school.

49

50 **PUBLIC TIME**

Public Time

51

52 Annie Murray and her mother from Brookline were present to observe the meeting
53 because she is writing a paper for a BG civics course.

54

55 **CONSENT AGENDA**

Consent Agenda

56

57 Ms. Bennett asked to pull the August 23rd Minutes. Mr. Maresco asked to pull the
58 unanticipated revenue and Ms. Head asked to pull the Budget transfers.

59

60 Mr. Maresco stated that the money given to the school was for a specific class. He asked
61 if the board needed to do anything to ensure that money is used for that class.

62

63 Ms. Shankel stated that the money goes into the activity fund and the teacher will be able
64 to spend it for her classroom.

65

66 Ms. Head stated that the increase cost for retirement and health insurance should be
67 publicized so people understand that fewer students does not mean that the budget will
68 decrease.

69

70 Ms. Shankel stated that this is a good point and that the board and SAU need to make the
71 increase costs clearer to tax payers and voters.

72

73 Ms. Bennett asked why the Security Services line item was over.

74

75 Ms. Shankel stated that this was because of equipment for camera replacement at the
76 middle school.

77

78 Ms. Bennett made the following corrections to the August 23rd minutes: Page 8 line 147
79 – add insurances are in place and on line 167 change “matched” to aligned with the
80 boards goals.

81

82 **Mr. Maresco made a motion to accept the consent agenda containing the Minutes of**
83 **August 23, 2011, the Treasurer’s Report for August 2011, Unanticipated Revenue:**
84 **School activity fund - \$100, and Budget transfers. Ms. Foulks seconded the motion**
85 **and the vote was unanimous.**

86

87 **PRESENTATIONS**

Presentations

88

89 **Core and More**

90

91 Ms. Gross introduced the members of the core and more study committee present at the
92 meeting: Teachers: Deb Hinricks and Deb Curran, Paraprofessionals: Mary Epstren and

93 Marilyn Sanfaces, Math Coach: Diane Hamel and Special Education Teacher: Amy
94 Birck. Ms. Gross thanked them for their time and being at the meeting tonight. She
95 stated that the goal for the work over the summer was to ensure every student receives the
96 level of challenge they need during core and more.
97

98 Mr. Dodge gave background about what happened before Core and More, including
99 study hall, SSR, and Flex Period. Core and More has been in existence 2 years and
100 changes each year to meet all students' needs.
101

102 Ms. Gross discussed what Core and More is and when it is scheduled. This year Core
103 and More will run in 7-week rotations on team. Four of the days will focus on
104 intervention and curriculum extensions.
105

106 Ms. Hinricks explained that Thursdays are for Academic Excellence. This is a day for
107 catch-up, independent studies, or current events. The students needed time to be
108 successful. The time gives students time to finish work in any subject because they are
109 not in control of their schedules when not in school. They also use the time for partner
110 study. They work on what skills will make the students good academic learners. The
111 students are engaged and excited to use all of the teachers available to them during the
112 period. They go back to homeroom for this period and sign out to the teachers they need
113 to see.
114

115 Ms. Curran stated that this is also time to help organize students. They work with
116 binders, clean out lockers, and train the students to use the time to help them become
117 excellent learners. The teachers offer lots of ideas of how to use the time. The students
118 can also use the time to work with the teachers one on one. Teachers can also call
119 students aside to give them extra support.
120

121 The board discussed the subset of students who may not need time or who do not need
122 extra help. Ms. Hinricks explained that those students are usually perfectionists and they
123 greatly enjoy the time to finish work to their level of expectation and satisfaction. Those
124 students can also do independent studies.
125

126 Ms. Hinricks explained that the driving force behind Core and More was for identified
127 students to get additional services and not have to pull them from a class.
128

129 Ms. Head asked about students who need OT and Speech, but also need accelerated
130 Math.
131

132 Ms. Gross stated that the accelerated math is offered before and after school or on other
133 days when the student is not doing OT and Speech. The school has identified specific
134 teachers to give that support to the students.
135

136 Mr. Dodge explained that Core and More is not a study hall, is not time to finish core
137 curriculum course work, is not time for introducing new material, is not allowed to
138 complete graded work for core classes. He explained the reasoning for each of these. He

139 also stated that Thursdays are the exception to the above statement.
140
141 Ms. Hinricks discussed how study hall was run and how Academic Excellence day is run.
142 She explained how they are different and how the Academic Excellence day is more
143 valuable for both students and teachers.
144
145 Ms. Gross discussed the further steps the Core and More study team will take including
146 bringing feedback from teachers, maintaining consistency, checking in with the board
147 and having regular grade level meetings about Core and More.
148
149 The board discussed that all teachers are required to run the Academic Excellence day the
150 same way. Expectations for that time have been given to the teachers. The board also
151 discussed that this may be a place to assess the impact of Core and More on student
152 learning. They discussed the possibility for an impact assessment.
153
154 Ms. Gross stated that they would come back to the board with ideas. They are already
155 using patterns seen in RTI data as topics for Core and More.
156
157 Mr. Maresco discussed the past Core and More and he thanked the committee for giving
158 up time over summer. The new structure sounds good and that it will help all students.
159
160 Ms. Hinricks discussed the 15-minute period at the end of the day. She stated that the
161 period is focused on truly organizing each individual child and getting them ready to go
162 home and start their homework. The Academic Excellence period is student choice and
163 this period is teacher driven. She gave examples of things that happen during this time
164 and how students work together.
165
166 Ms. Curran stated that many students like the last 15 min because they are less stressed,
167 and are ready when the bell rings. Parents have also commented that they do not have to
168 drive back to school to get forgotten materials.
169
170 Ms. Gross stated that this 15-minute block has expectations so that there is consistency
171 with in the school for every student.
172
173 Mr. Warburton discussed past experiences at schools with a similar block of time. He
174 stated that the school is giving the gift of time to these students. It gives them a breather
175 and some structure at the end of the day, which is great for early adolescents. He stated
176 that the study committee would come back mid-year and at the end of the year with more
177 information and an update. He thanked the teachers for their work.

178
179 **ACTION ITEM**

Action Item

180
181 Draft Template for Action items

182
183 Mr. Warburton discussed a template for tracking action items that are not always on the
184 agenda and items that are on the agenda.

185

186 The board added their first Action Item to the template: Meet 1pm on Friday, September
187 30th to walk the Olsen Property.

188

189 **NOMINATIONS**

Nominations

190

191 Mr. Dodge stated that Holly Sheppard Vordenberg is being hired to fill in for a leave of
192 absence for Christy Gray the life skills teacher. Holly lives in town, is an accomplished
193 writer, and has had television spots. Mr. Dodge said she is already cooking and sewing
194 with 18 students in each class.

195

196 Mr. St. Amand stated that Judy Blood is being hired for a 0.2 position in Music at Clark.
197 She retired from Brookline, is very experienced and has good training in the required
198 areas. Colleen McCarthy is being hired as a technology educator. This is a critical
199 shortage area, but there were many highly qualified candidates. She has been a
200 classroom teacher and has had experience in many districts with technology education.

201

202 **Mr. Maresco made a motion to accept the nominations of Holly Sheppard**
203 **Vordenberg, Judy Blood, and Colleen McCarthy. Mr. Manning seconded the**
204 **motion and the vote was unanimous.**

205

206 **DISCUSSION**

Discussion

207

208 Goals

209

210 Mr. Warburton thanked the board for waiting for input from the staff before determining
211 their goals. He gave the board an article and copies of the goals set by the staff at the
212 schools. The goal is to come up with 4 or 5 goals and also future goals or multiple year
213 goals.

214

215 Mr. Dodge described how AMS used the first late start to establish goals to address RTI
216 and SINY. He described how the staff worked on creating goals. The packet given to the
217 board shows all of the goals that were addressed and the discussion to come up with the
218 four main tentative goals. Mr. Dodge explained in more detail how the staff determined
219 the goals.

220

221 Mr. St. Amand explained that his staff started in the summer. He described the process
222 of getting ideas and that he put out three areas as a starting point. He discussed the
223 process used at Clark/Wilkins to set the goals and some of the goals for each grade level.
224 The staff was actively involved in writing the goals.

225

226 Mr. Warburton discussed the article he gave to the board and summarized its main points.

227

228 Ms. Heimarck explained the process the board and administrators would use to discuss
229 the goals and to set goals. The idea is to have 3-5 district goals by the end of the night.

230

231 The board asked clarifying questions to the administration. They discussed that
232 Differentiated Instruction was a focus for professional development and that there are
233 coaches in the schools. The administration discussed how the coaches are still being used
234 in the schools. The board also discussed why Clark Wilkins goals are all Math and
235 Literacy focused. Mr. St. Amand explained that this is because that is were he suggested
236 the goals should be focused and because the teachers spend a lot of their teaching time in
237 those areas.

238

239 The board started discussing the goals set forth by the schools:

240

241 Mr. Manning stated that the Pre-K and K goals are clear, the categories are clear, and
242 they show how to achieve and how to measure the success of each goal. The other grades
243 are less clear because of the more sophisticated content and curriculum.

244

245 Mr. Maresco agreed and stated that it is refreshing that none of the goals are related to
246 test scores and that they are related to the understanding of the material. He struggled to
247 begin to try to put the goals into 3-5 goals.

248

249 The board discussed that all of the goals from both schools are excellent.

250

251 Ms. Head stated that she would like to see the board goals be more inclusive of other
252 subject areas including Arts, Technology, and Science.

253

254 Ms. Bennett stated that the board should include Technology in goals, especially since
255 they hired a technology teacher at Clark/ Wilkins.

256

257 Ms. Manning discussed the difference between goals for a year and a strategic plan.
258 Maybe for this year these are the areas for emphasis.

259

260 Ms. Head suggested starting with an umbrella goal and then establishing goals under the
261 larger vision.

262

263 The board discussed Differentiated Instruction (DI) and that maybe this is the link
264 between the schools. They also discussed how the board needs a better understanding of
265 DI.

266

267 Ms. Foulks stated that she would like to see a discussion or goal discussing the transition
268 for grades 4 to 5 and 7 though 9. It seems to always be a struggle to find time for the
269 schools to meet.

270

271 Mr. Manning stated that the schools should discuss goals to make a seamless transition.

272

273 Ms. Head likes the communication goals because there can be good learning from other
274 teachers and that is part of that transition. 9th grade teachers should go to 8th grade and
275 vise versa. Communication is the key to a seamless transition and to consistency between
276 schools.

277 Ms. Foulks suggested that the goals should focus on areas that could be consistent for all
278 grade levels. The areas could include communication between the schools and parents,
279 homework, student support, and others.
280

281 Mr. Warburton stated that he likes hearing the board discuss more consistency preK-8th
282 grade and would like to see the same discussion preK-12th grade. He stated that a large
283 piece of connections and consistency between the schools is communication. He also
284 stated that the seamless transitions between schools are essential for students.
285

286 Mr. Manning stated that the curriculum, communication, and culture should be seamless
287 preK-8 or ideally 12.
288

289 Ms. Foulks stated that she is uncomfortable looking at the specific goals in the packets.
290 She stated that the goals are great and the schools should use them, but the board's job is
291 to look at the bigger picture rather than being specific. She would like to see broader
292 goals set by the board.
293

294 Mr. Warburton suggested that the board makes the goals more general and then adopt the
295 other goals the schools have made.
296

297 Mr. Manning stated that the board should set aspirational goals and maybe the teacher's
298 goals are the tactics to get to the boards goals.
299

300 The board discussed getting student and parent input about the goals that should be set.
301

302 Mr. Maresco stated that he understands the need to have an overall structure, but fears
303 taking on too much and not being able to obtain the goals set. The reading program and
304 the new Math curriculum are a start towards consistency for the entire SAU. The specific
305 goals at grades levels tie into the new math approach and should not be changed. The
306 teacher's goals will help move toward the requirements for SINY and DINY.
307

308 The board and administration discussed an integrated curriculum preK-8th grade using the
309 math and reading programs as a starting point.
310

311 Mr. Manning suggested maybe instead of a fully integrated curriculum that maybe there
312 needs to be an understanding of the mission in the SAU or at least preK-8.
313

314 Ms. Foulks stated that the board could take a first step, using the lessons from the Math
315 experience. Maybe goals should be set, and also set steps to achieve that goal over the
316 years.
317

318 Ms. Heimark stated there should be a culture of collaboration in all areas including
319 teachers, school boards, and the administration. There will not be a seamless, smooth
320 curriculum or learning experience without collaboration.
321

322 Ms. Head stated there needs to be communication for collaboration to be successful. She

323 asked how can the teacher's goals be integrated into this idea.
324
325 The board continued to discuss a larger set of goals with subsets of school and teacher
326 goals that are all related so everyone is moving in the same direction. They also
327 discussed how the goals could impact the resources and budget.
328
329 Mr. Warburton stated that collaboration is great. The more people work together to solve
330 problems and trust each other the better, and the district is already seeing this in the Math
331 initiative. He stated that he likes the idea of an over arching goal to not eliminate the
332 school and grade goals. Creating a collaborative network and culture would be a great
333 overarching goal for the district. He stated that he will discuss goal with all districts and
334 will discuss how to get the schools to discuss their goals with each other.
335
336 Ms. Sparks suggested the board read the article to help them establish the over arching
337 goal.
338
339 The board discussed how to set and meet objectives within a goal. They also discussed
340 the scope of the discussion.
341
342 Ms. Heimarck stated that this has been a great conversation, and is the work we should be
343 doing. She stated that there is great stuff on the websites and that SAU 39 has a mission,
344 but does not have a preK-12 vision. Each school has its own vision and great work is
345 done in each school's around the vision. She discussed the Academic Learner
346 Expectations (ALEs) used at SHS and how they inform all decisions made at the school.
347 She suggested that the board looks at taking elements of the great work at all of the
348 school and make Leaner Expectations that are preK-12 to help inform all decisions. This
349 will lead to seamless integration within the districts and the SAU.
350
351 Ms. Foulks stated that this is a great idea because the expectations do touch every
352 component of the student and are the language and culture at SHS.
353
354 The board discussed using Ms. Heimarck's idea to start to set goals and form priorities.
355 They also discussed how maybe this discussion should be with a larger group at the SAU
356 board meeting. They discussed establishing a committee to look into Ms. Heimarck's
357 idea. The board discussed that the SAU board would be setting goals and that may better
358 inform the board to set their own goals and will help them to define their scope. They
359 discussed the impact of the goals that will be set on the budget and resources. The board
360 discussed the difficulty in deciding on goals and prioritizing them. They discussed that a
361 big goal is to make our students competitive internationally. The board discussed having
362 a special meeting to set goals after the SAU board meeting so that they are not waiting till
363 October to set goals. They discussed using the last two AMS goals as overarching goals.
364 The board discussed that they need to have their goals determined by December 1st so
365 that staff can set their own personal goals.
366
367 Mr. Warburton suggested that the principals go ahead with the school goals and will that
368 he would inform the administrators more after the SAU board meeting.

369 NHSBA Policy - new teacher evaluation

370

371 Ms. Bennett stated that this is a new policy from the school board administration. The
372 policy committee meeting was today to discuss this and determined that the policy should
373 be rewritten. The committee has work to do and will have a first reading in October at
374 the SAU board meeting.

375

376 **ADJOURN**

Adjourn

377

378 **Ms. Head made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:43pm. Mr. Manning**
379 **seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.**