

# Amherst School District

Annual Report & Guide to Official  
Ballot Voting

March 14, 2023

Souhegan High School  
6:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.



PLEASE BRING THIS GUIDE  
WITH YOU TO BALLOT  
VOTING ON MARCH 14, 2023

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### **Letter from the Amherst School Board Chair**

Thank you for taking the time to review the articles up for your vote in this year's school elections. Much like last year, there are several items that will determine the immediate and long-term future of the Amherst School District. We have worked closely with Administration to put forth articles that are critical to the success of students in this district over the coming years. We have also worked closely with the community. We spent the year engaging in dialogue with residents in a variety of feedback sessions, coffees, information sessions, committee meetings, and school board meetings. We strive to keep residents up to date by providing a monthly letter in the Amherst Citizen, by making information available at the Amherst Town Library in paper form, and on the SAU 39 website. Our ultimate goal is to arrive at solutions that are supported by the community and that support our students so that they may flourish.

We look forward to seeing you at the polls on Tuesday, March 14.

Respectfully,  
Tom Gauthier  
Chair, Amherst School Board

### **Article 12 – School bond project - \$54,250,179**

#### **Review of 2022**

The school ballot in 2022 laid out the Amherst School Board's long-term vision for the facilities of this district – a new Clark-Wilkins Elementary and a completely renovated Amherst Middle School. That proposal was the culmination of nearly five years of work between the Amherst School Board, administration, architects, construction, and engineering professionals, and the SAU 39 Joint Facilities Advisory Committee.

Following the March 2022 election, the board offered numerous community sessions to garner feedback regarding the defeated proposal. Many conversations with town leaders, business owners, SAU 39 school boards, school administration, and building leaders, and, most importantly, Amherst and Mont Vernon residents led the board to present the project you are seeing this year. A singular focus on the Elementary School and a plan to phase and prioritize work at the Amherst Middle School. While the space constraints and end of life maintenance needs at both schools remain, our Facilities Director, Building and Grounds Committee, and engineering and maintenance professionals have worked tirelessly to map a course of action that will meet the most immediate and pressing needs of our district.

The scope of the elementary project has been reviewed multiple times, in great detail. The design includes the proper square footage and space to run current programs, with options for future expansion should the need arise. Careful consideration has been taken to ensure that the design does not exceed the needed capacity. We have continued to partner with Banwell Architects and DEW Construction to ensure their expertise is reflected in design, costs, and quality of the project. NESDEC enrollment reports support this sizing.

#### **Clark-Wilkins Project Details & Overview**

The proposed project will create a one-building elementary school to serve preschool through fifth grade, allowing grade five to move from the Amherst Middle School to the elementary level. This shift from grade 5 out of AMS will begin to ease space constraints at the middle school.

Should the project pass in 2022, the bond sale would take place over the coming year with groundbreaking expected in summer of 2024. Completion of the project is projected to take place in summer 2026.

## **Facility Project Goals**

### **Address the following:**

- MECHANICAL/ELECTRICAL/PLUMBING SYSTEMS - We are nearing the end of life for major systems at Wilkins— mechanical, electrical, plumbing, lighting, and roofing – and these will soon require significant investment to replace/repair.
- HEALTH & SAFETY - The portable classrooms still in use at Wilkins are end-of-life, detached from the main building, and do not benefit from the full security measures within the main building. Improve ventilation and climate control.
- STUDENT LEARNING - Our school buildings were constructed in a different generation. Education and best practices, as well as the list of required, state-mandated services, have evolved and increased. Facilities designed for contemporary public education delivery will allow our students to have the best education possible, including students with IEPs and 504 plans.
- SPACE CONSTRAINTS - Design one building that is flexible to accommodate current and future program and space needs, including special programs, full day kindergarten, pre-school, and the removal of portables.

## **Student Learning**

Years of discussion have utilized one primary planning lens for our facilities— how do we augment or design spaces that provide the greatest opportunity and educational benefit for the children of this district. Factors such as lighting, indoor air quality, climate control, acoustics, and noise play a critical role in a student's ability to focus and learn new information. This board and this district rely on research and evidence-based instructional practices. A new building becomes a tailwind in our improvement journey, rather than a headwind.

The ability to implement the most optimal instruction is improved in a number of ways:

- Increased teacher collaboration space
- Private and dedicated office space for school counselors and administrators.
- Dedicated unified arts spaces. The current practice to meet enrollment requirements involves moving a unified arts teacher onto a cart to push into classroom learning spaces. This leads to lost instructional time and creates disruption and noise for neighboring classrooms.
- Current programming is driven by lunch schedules and the limitations of having one large communal space for lunch, physical education, and assemblies.
- Intervention space for one-on-one programming is shared, high-noise, and high-distraction. In the new building, these programs have dedicated and appropriate space.
- Library space in the new building supports the board and the administration's goals to improve literacy acquisition throughout the district.
- One building creates efficiencies for administrators, teachers, and supporting facilities and food services staff.

## **Educational Space**

- The district has needed additional space for a number of years. In order to maintain, the administration has utilized temporary portables, moved staff and intervention space into closets, tripled and quadrupled interventionists (reading and math, speech) into one



shared space, and placed specialists on carts moving from classroom to classroom (instead of a dedicated teaching space).

- The DOE requirements for space have changed since the buildings were originally designed. The proposed project allows the district to adequately meet current DOE requirements without sacrificing storage closets and intervention space to do so.
- Special needs educational requirements have changed dramatically over the last 50 years. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires public school districts to offer support and program options for students with a variety of needs. The district is also required to provide these services to Amherst children as early as age 3, before entering kindergarten. These programs currently encompass 8 classrooms across the district with a need for additional space.

## Class Size & Enrollment

Keeping class sizes small to allow for better interaction between students and teachers continues to be a focus of the board. A community survey conducted in 2020 found that this was the number one concern among respondents as well.

Amherst School District has addressed staffing to meet the desired student-teacher ratio over the last four years, and it continues to be a priority in this year's budget (see Article 13). Class sizes are within a reasonable range but this exacerbates the sacrifices to educational space. For example, when an additional classroom is needed to maintain reasonable and appropriate class size goals, the result is one of the aforementioned integrated arts teachers moving from a dedicated space to a push-in model in individual classrooms. This is inefficient, leads to a loss of instruction time, and can be highly disruptive to neighboring classrooms.

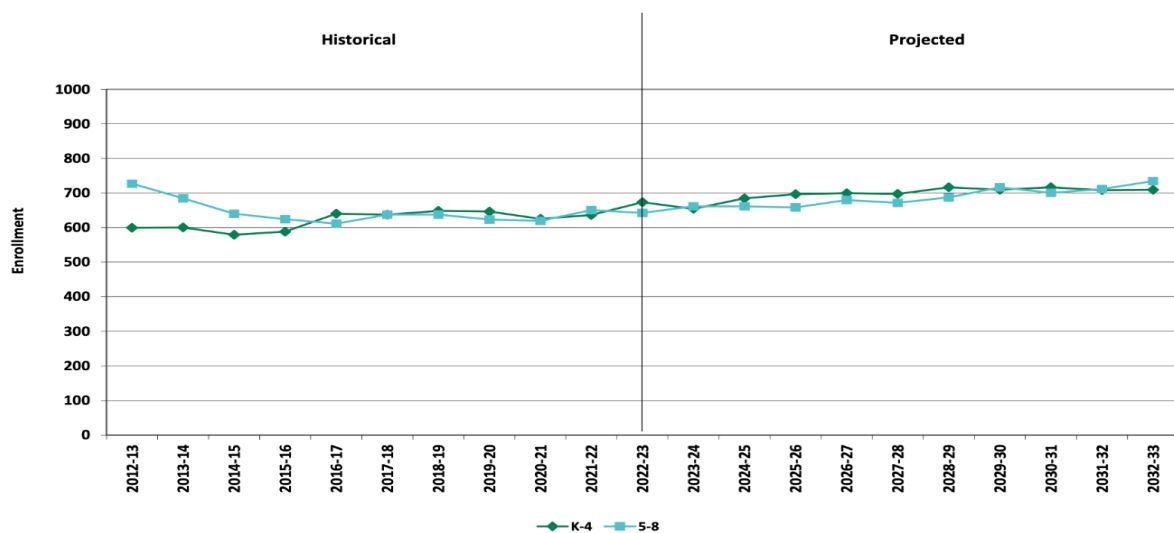
Since class size ratios have been addressed, additional teachers are not projected as a result of the building project. The addition or reduction of staff will be driven by enrollment demands. Enrollment projections are steady and allow the team to feel confident in the size of the proposed project. The following graphic highlights our expected class sizes for FY24.

Grade Level	Targets			NESDEC Projections FY 23	FY23 Current - Oct 1			FY 24 Projected		
	Min	Goal	Max	Enrollment	Enrollment	Teachers	Ratio	Enrollment	Teachers	Ratio
Kindergarten	15	17	19	124	121	6	20.2	106	7	15.1
Grade 1	16	18	20	133	140	8	17.5	136	8	17
Grade 2	16	18	20	131	132	6	22	151	7	21.6
Grade 3	18	20	22	125	123	6	20.5	133	6	22.2
Grade 4	18	20	22	151	157	7	22.4	128	6	21.3
Sub-Total				664	673	33	20.4	654	34	19.2
Grade 5	20	22	24	131	138	6	23	160	8	20
Grade 6	20	22	24	155	152	8	19	142	6	23.7
Grade 7	20	22	24	164	170	8	21.3	188	8	23.5
Grade 8	20	22	24	178	182	8	22.8	171	8	21.4
Sub-Total				628	642	30	21.4	661	30	22
Total				1292	1315	63	20.9	1315	64	20.5

Minimum or Below    Above Minimum    Maximum or above

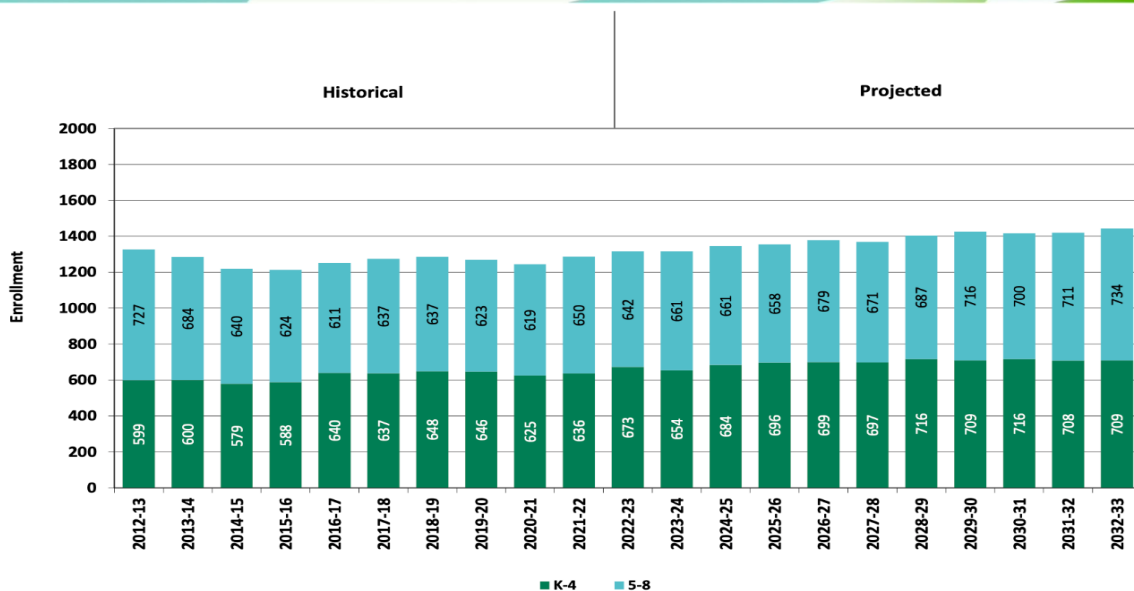
The building has been designed after thorough discussion of programming needs with administration and staff. The classroom design has a capacity of 889 students, while the core spaces are designed to accommodate 1,079 students. A professional, external enrollment report was completed to confirm enrollment data and the sizing of the proposed facility project for the application for NH DOE State Building Aid. NESDEC (New England School Development Council) was hired to create this enrollment report. The report provides 10 year projections and will be updated annually by NESDEC. The size of the building design is in line with the projected enrollment now and in the future and provides flexibility for the type of needs that arise within the school population. Should a need arise for additional space, the building will be constructed to accommodate a second floor with more classroom space over the street facing side of the first floor of the building, though this is not anticipated by the professional enrollment reports.

### NESDEC Historical & Projected Enrollments in Grade Combinations



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## **Cost**

Bond Requirements: Placing a dollar amount on the ballot for voters requires the formation of a cost estimate that becomes the legal high-water mark for district borrowing and spending on the project. The cost of the project is \$54,250,179. This cost includes all design work, system upgrades, renovations, additions, and sitework. As a result of the necessary high-water mark figure, when deciding what amount to put forward to voters, the board has chosen to be conservative in selecting a number that includes contingencies for unknown costs that may arise.

The cost estimates include several layers of contingencies that are appropriate for this phase of planning, including:

- Design contingency: covers costs associated with code compliance or unforeseen costs during the design phase
- Estimate contingency: covers costs that could arise as a result of the estimating process
- Escalation: covers increases in material and labor costs that will occur between now (when the estimate is created) and when the project is bid.
- Construction contingency: covers unexpected costs that could arise during the construction phase
- Owner's contingency: covers unexpected costs due to owner directed changes or unexpected site conditions

To assure residents that every possible step will be taken to keep costs down, a construction manager (CM) will oversee construction of the project and coordinate subcontractors. When the project is fully designed, the CM bids the entire project to subcontractors and works with the district to select the best bid for the community. Once that process concludes, the CM agrees to a guaranteed maximum price (GMP) to complete the project and is bound to deliver the project at that GMP. The district and community have full transparency into the bidding and costs of the project from start to finish.

It should be noted that throughout the project, every single dollar will be transparently accounted for and each unspent dollar in contingency or construction funds will be returned to taxpayers.

SAU39 has applied to the DOE for state building aid. Building aid is not guaranteed until after the bond passes per the timing of voting and state budget finalization. If approved, Amherst could be awarded 0%-30% aid. We cannot be awarded funds until a project has been supported by voters. Building projects were ranked on various criteria and awarded points to each of the following: safety and security, obsolete or inefficient conditions, overcrowding/increased enrollment, operational cost efficiency, maintenance program, and district's eligibility for free & reduced meals. The outside source reviewing our project, despite not being awarded any points in the largest category of eligibility for free & reduced meals, ranked this project seventh out of seventeen proposed projects for building aid priority, should aid be granted by New Hampshire's legislature.

By working with the New Hampshire Municipal Bond Bank (NHMBB), the taxpayers are granted a level of oversight that remains steady despite inevitable change in board members or administrators. The NHMBB will review our investments and refinance, if appropriate, throughout the life of the loan.

The board's original presentation at the bond hearing and public hearing in January structured bond repayment over a 30-year period. Since that presentation, we have shifted focus to a 25-year period, resulting in a lower projected interest rate with an estimated savings of \$14 million over the life of the loan.

The board is currently focused on level-debt repayment of the bond, ensuring the yearly impact is the same for current taxpayers as well as those living in the district in the future. **These decisions have been made with our best intentions based on current information, and subtleties could change in order to save taxpayers money when final bond rates are set.**

## Elementary School Building Project Tax Impact and Total Cost, 25 Year Term

Tax Impact and Cost Assumptions				Total Cost	
Payment Type	Level Debt				\$103,384,725
Assessed Valuation	\$2,362,984,237			Bond Amount	\$54,250,179
Average Home	\$482,000			Term *	25 Years
				Interest Rate *	5.75%

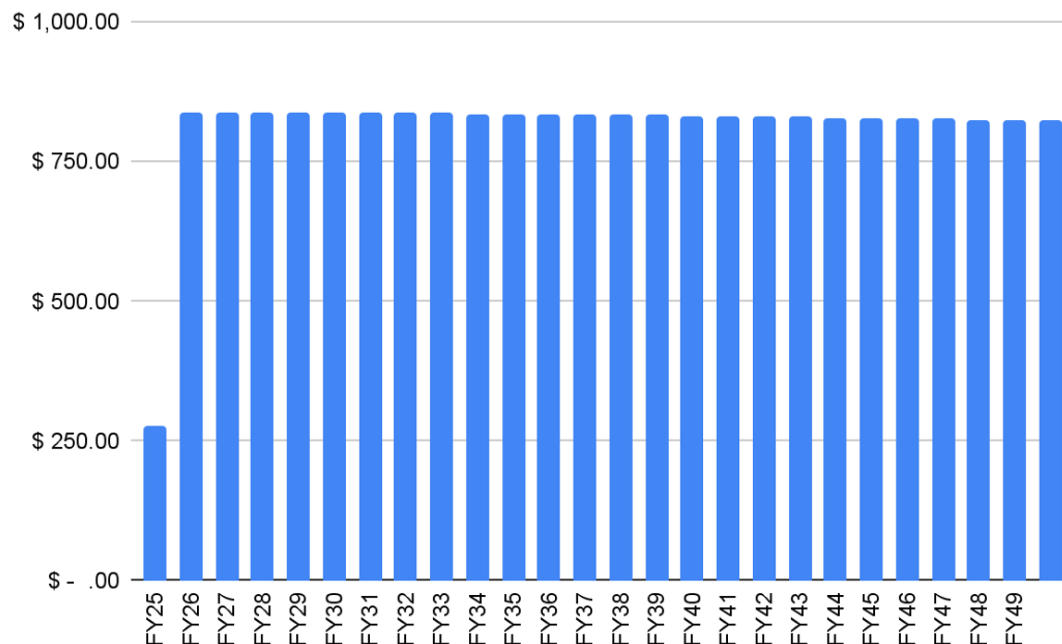
  

Year	FY24	FY25	FY26	FY27	FY28	FY29	FY30	FY31	FY32	FY33	FY34
Est. Tax Impact	\$0.57	\$1.74	\$1.74	\$1.74	\$1.74	\$1.74	\$1.74	\$1.74	\$1.74	\$1.73	\$1.73
Est. Cost/ Ave Home	\$277	\$839	\$839	\$839	\$839	\$839	\$839	\$839	\$839	\$834	\$834

*June 2022 Bond Sale was 3.66%; NHMBB using 5.75% to be conservative for budgeting purposes*

Based on the assumptions, a \$482,000 home will see an average tax impact of \$839 per year, or roughly \$70 per month.

## Elementary School-Bond Financing Level Debt 25 Year Term



## Clark-Wilkins Project Overview

- Renovation of multi-purpose room - 9,569 square feet
- New kitchen (including equipment)
- Asbestos abatement of current multi-purpose room
- Replacement of flooring, doors, and windows
- Technology upgrades
- Security upgrades
- Major addition - 136,660 square feet
  - New exterior envelope (brick, insulation, siding, roof, etc.)
  - New mechanical, electrical, plumbing systems including high efficiency HVAC
  - New interior (flooring, doors, windows, FFE, etc.)
- Sitework

## Site plan



This is the initial site plan that was developed with the civil engineering firm of Tighe and Bond who have extensive school project experience in New Hampshire.

- Multiple play areas for multiple grades are a priority of the administration and board.
- A further traffic study will confirm the Jones Road access for emergency use and to alleviate Boston Post Road traffic during arrival and dismissal. The Board has been in touch with town committees who plan to review the traffic of the area in the next several years to ensure there is no doubling effort. Last year's study by the town was favorable for the traffic impact of combining Clark and Wilkins school buildings.
- There is increased parking for school and community events at the school and Upper Wilkins field as the car/bus loop will hold 75 cars in a 2 lane loop.



## Front Approach



- The current multipurpose room is on the left and remains as it anchors the building to maintain the character of Amherst. Consider this the beginning of the design process, not the end. Design will evolve in partnership with the architects and will continue to be refined if the bond is approved.

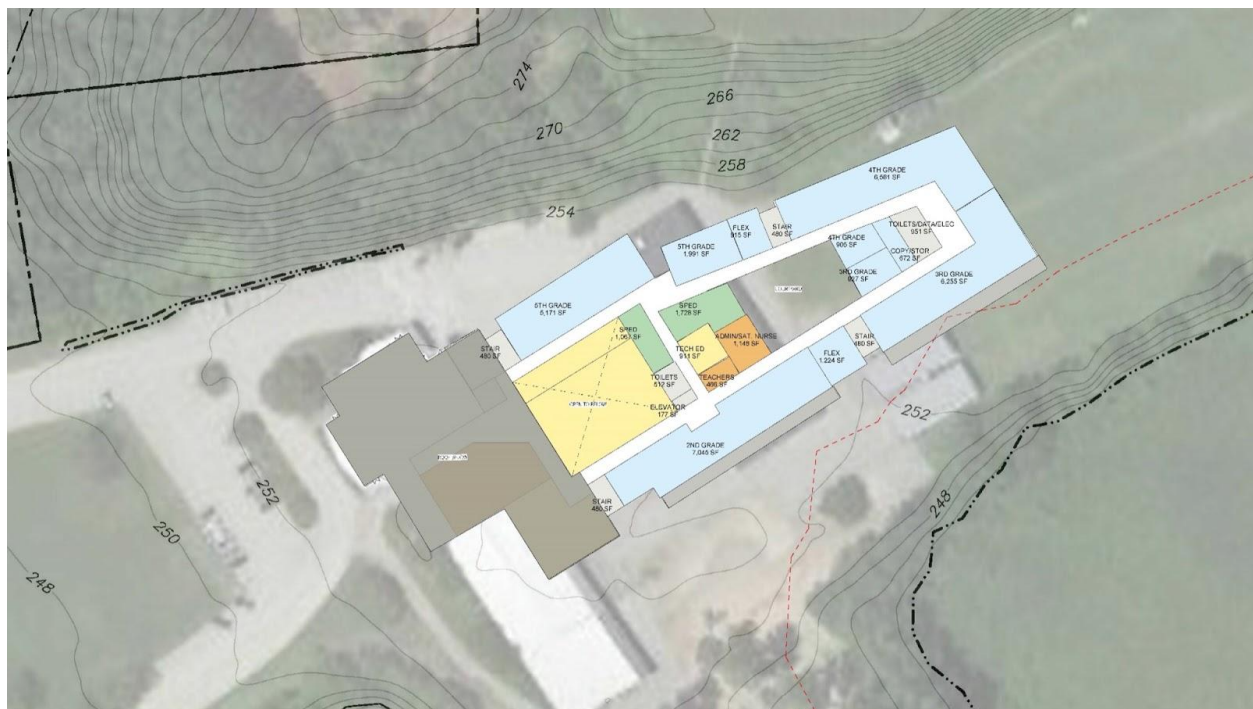
## First floor





- The first floor will renovate the existing multi-purpose room into a full-size cafeteria that will provide the school and community with a stage and recreation space. Asbestos will be remediated from this space during renovation.
- The addition will include a secure entrance, offices, library/media center, and music at the front of the building.
- The center of the building will include a proper gymnasium, which will serve students and the community. The community will be able to reserve and access community spaces in the building after school hours. Currently, our recreation department utilizes the multi-purpose room as a gym for after-hours programming once the after-school care has closed for the day. The addition of this gym will add recreational opportunities.
- During non-school hours, the interior of the building will be accessible through the front entrance, while the back of the building will be secure and closed to the public.
- Classrooms for the youngest students will be located on the first floor per DOE regulations with special services classrooms located on the first floor for those students. Services will also be located on the second floor to best serve student needs.
- The conceptual design includes a courtyard allowing classrooms on each floor to have windows for natural light and air flow, which has a positive impact on learning. This courtyard will provide enclosed, secure outdoor space.

## Second floor





## **Phasing**

Should Article 12 pass, design refinement and input sessions for community, staff, administration, and board will take place over the following 10 months. Construction is expected to begin in spring 2024 with completion in time for the 2026-2027 school year. During construction, all schools will remain open, utilizing current space to avoid rental costs of portable classrooms.

## **Next Steps for Amherst Middle School**

### **Article 12 includes plans for the elementary level only.**

Through conscious saving over the last four years into the capital reserve fund and paying particular attention to the capital needs assessment, we have identified needs and a long term funding plan to take necessary steps in facility improvement at AMS.

During this school year, AMS has experienced water damage from roof leaks and unit ventilator floods. These items were previously identified as part of the 2017 capital needs assessment and were part of the list of projects to be funded through the capital reserve funding. The board has approved funding for the design work related to these projects and the design work has begun. This will be a phased approach to first replace the original sections of the roof and the ventilators that are in most need of repair. The roof and unit ventilator replacement project is anticipated to cost more than \$1.3 million and will take the first step in making AMS water-tight. A more comprehensive plan is laid out in the voter's guide detailing Article 18 and will be delivered to the board in the spring.

The space constraints at AMS will be lessened by moving fifth grade to the elementary school while not requiring an addition to AMS.

Should Article 12 pass and the elementary project begin, the plans for updating the systems at AMS that are noted in the capital needs assessment and living document work will be funded through the capital reserve fund. A new elementary school building would allow the capital reserve funding to focus on improvements at the middle school rather than the need for those annual funds to be spread across the district.

## **Overall Program Advantages:**

- Simple construction phasing to have the least impact to student learning
- Increases capacity of the cafeteria and gym at the elementary school, creating additional opportunities for community activities in the building
- Provides needed space for academic classes and team alignment
- Appropriate special education classroom and programming space
- Asbestos abatement
- Increased ventilation
- A greater degree of safety and security
- Upgrades and replaces mechanical systems near or at end-of-life
- Elementary school under one roof to include preschool through fifth grade
- Moving fifth grade to elementary school allows space for AMS to host grades six through eight

**Financial Considerations:**

- Creates a long-term facility plan for preschool through eighth grade
- Eliminates the need for inefficient, temporary portable classrooms
- Uses current building sites to keep costs down
- Full solution for the district by addressing the elementary facilities through bond and middle school facilities through capital reserve funds
- Replaces antiquated systems with healthy, efficient systems
- The elementary building is cost comparative, if not less expensive, than a renovation because of the additional space needed as well as repair/replacement of antiquated systems.

**For a full review of the history of this project, enrollment data, and options considered, please go to [jfac.sau39.org](http://jfac.sau39.org) or view the Deliberative session recording and slides available on [sau39.org](http://sau39.org).**

**This is an important moment in the trajectory of our community schools, and the board encourages in-depth review of this article. In past years, voting in the town elections have not been particularly strong. Voting in the town election is where these decisions take place. Last year, over 3,500 registered voters cast a ballot in the town elections compared to nearly twice that amount in the 2022 federal election. On town voting day, every vote and voice counts. We hope that you and all eligible members of your household will come to the polls on March 14 to vote.**

**Article 13 – FY24 Proposed Budget**

The proposed budget for FY24 is \$32,399,486, a 3.9% increase (\$1,229,578) over the FY23 default budget we are currently operating under. The FY24 default budget is \$31,996,633, a decrease of \$1.3% from the FY24 proposed budget (\$402,853).

The main drivers of budget increases are:

- Special education programming and services based on student needs. This includes increased transportation needs and costs.
- A new full-time kindergarten teacher and kindergarten para-professional to bring kindergarten to seven classes based on enrollment projections. This was reduced to six for this current school year due to an unexpectedly large first grade cohort.
- Library reading specialists. A focus on literacy education adds a library assistant at the elementary level and a reading specialist for the middle school. Interim superintendent Steve Chamberlin and the board are united in the effort to increase reading skills for all students, creating a more solid foundation for education and life.
- Two special education fellows are in the budget in a proposed partnership with Saint Anselm College. These fellows are already qualified as regular teachers but are pursuing special education certifications. This represents the addition of two full-time special education teachers at a cost of just \$50,000.
- We are proposing the addition of a full-time facilities technician for Clark-Wilkins, creating efficiency in caring for the building while also opening it up for additional community use.
- A cook position is being added to Clark-Wilkins to alleviate staffing pressure in this building.
- Technology. We are proposing a 2:1 student-to-laptop program for fifth grade. The purchase of these devices will also help replace severely outdated computers for grades six through eight.
- Our allocation for the SAU budget has increased.
- There are also increases in transportation for the next year of our bus contract, special services transportation, and overall fuel costs.

This year's proposed budget is an increasingly important one for this district. We are currently operating on a default budget after last year's proposed did not pass. When a district has a second consecutive default, the base of the new default would revert back to the last voted budget in FY22. This means that it's increasingly difficult to meet the districts every day, mandatory needs, and it would severely handicap the opportunity to pursue our goals, including the educational building block of literacy achievement for all students.

#### **Article 14 – AEA Collective Bargaining Agreement**

The board has come to a new agreement with the Amherst Education Association after last year's four-year proposed deal did not pass. The new agreement is a three-year deal that would start July 1, 2023.

There were a few initiatives in this year's negotiations for the board – fixing a broken salary schedule, attracting and retaining teachers, and increasing educational time for students. The board is pleased to present the positive results in these categories.

- The new salary schedule levels out the step increments which were inconsistent in the current schedule, ranging from two to greater than four percent. The increase is now 3% until it rises to 3.2% over the final steps of each track. There are also 20 total steps, an increase from the previous 18.
- It eliminates the 'jump step' that took place between steps 17 & 18, which resulted in teachers receiving increases of roughly 12 percent in that year. In addition to the unsustainable year-over-year jump, this 'jump step' resulted in a teacher with a bachelor's degree earning more than those with a master's with the same level of experience.
- Starting pay has been raised to \$45,000. This makes Amherst more attractive to new teachers beginning their careers and it allows us to retain those teachers who could be attracted to districts with higher pay in those earlier years. These gaps are now drastically reduced.
- There is a new, full student day on the calendar beginning with the second year of the contract.
- New teachers will have three additional days for summer training, bringing them up to speed on Amherst's programs and curriculum. This is invaluable to someone new to the district or a teacher beginning their career.
- Veteran teachers will have a new professional development day added in years two and three, removing six late-start days from the student calendar. PD days provide valuable training for all teachers while the removal of late-start days provides increased, continuous educational time for students.
- There is no broad-based salary increase with the creation of the new salary schedule in year one. Year two will see a 3.5% increase followed by 3% increase in year three.

The board believes this new contract provides reasonable increases for teachers (3-7% per year the majority of members) in an unknown inflationary cycle, and it increases valuable educational time in the classroom for students. Should this article not pass, teachers will have a second straight year without any compensation raise or step increases, making retaining and attracting teachers an increasingly difficult task for administration.

### **Article 15 – Special Meeting**

If Article 14 fails, this article would give the board the option to host a special meeting to come to a new financial agreement with the AEA. This would then be presented to voters in a public hearing and deliberative session before another voting day would be held over the summer.

### **Article 16 – ASSA Collective Bargaining Agreement**

This article presents a new three-year collective contract with the Amherst Support Staff Association, replacing a five-year agreement that expires June 30, 2023. The board's focus here was similar to the AEA goals – creating a new salary schedule that is competitive to the overall job market.

While the AEA contract focused, in part, on being competitive with other school districts, the ASSA salary schedule has a much broader competitive mandate. When we hire paraprofessionals, office managers, kitchen works, etc., we are not only competing with schools but with the regular open job market. Drive practically anywhere and you will see job postings averaging \$15, \$17, even \$20 starting pay. Our current ASSA salary schedule is simply outdated.

Highlights of the new agreement with ASSA:

- Starting pay will range from \$14.75 to \$18.00, up from \$12.23-\$16.64 currently.
- We reduced the number of steps in the schedule from 40 to 20, making each step more financially beneficial while reducing the time it takes to reach 'max earning potential' in the district.
- Differentials have been raised to better compensate additional degrees and certifications. Support staff covering regular teaching duties will also be compensated more appropriately.
- A new mentor program will be established to increase performance and drive employee retention.
- Additional changes are being made to staff evaluation and development programs.

Simply put – these individuals were no longer being paid in line with market conditions, making it difficult (and in some cases impossible) to find qualified, dedicated staff to fill positions critical to the education and care of students in the district.

### **Article 17 – Special Meeting, ASSA Contract**

If Article 16 fails, this article would give the board the option to host a special meeting to come to a new financial agreement with the ASSA. This would then be presented to voters in a public hearing and deliberative session before another voting day would be held over the summer.

### **Article 18 – Capital Reserve Fund**

Regardless of the outcome of Articles 12 & 13, the current buildings continue to need maintenance and repairs. The school district has a long-term plan to fund major capital projects and this capital reserve fund is key to fulfilling those plans. We are currently in year four of a twenty year plan, and there is a balance of \$1,368,000 in the fund. However, a large portion of those funds are being allocated to a roof and unit ventilator replacement project to help make Amherst Middle School water-tight.

The money raised by this warrant will not come through added taxes but from surplus funds at the end of the current school year. This contribution to the CRF will support the funding of the following projects. If the new school projects pass, these plans may be altered accordingly.

<b><u>Fiscal Year</u></b>	<b><u>Contribution</u></b>	<b><u>Withdrawal</u></b>	<b><u>Balance</u></b>
Balance			\$1,368,000
FY23/24	\$605,000	<b>\$1,673,000**</b>	\$300,000
FY25	\$675,000	\$10,000	\$965,000
FY26	\$675,000	\$1,340,000	\$300,000
FY27	\$675,000	\$380,000	\$595,000
FY28	\$550,000	\$322,000	\$823,000

- **FY23/24-Roof and Unit Ventilators**
- **FY25-AMS Outdoor Courts**
- **FY26-AMS Emergency Generator; Clark Sealcoat, Boilers, Emergency Lights, Ext. Walls, Multipurpose Walls & Ceilings; Wilkins Boilers, HVAC, Lighting, Ext. Walls, Caulking Trim, Soffit, Fascia**
- **FY27-AMS Roof PVC Membrane**
- **FY 28-AMS Elevator, Radio Systems; Clark Int. Walls/Ceilings/Floors; Wilkins Sealcoat, Lighting, Radio**

### **Article 19 – Tax Cap Petition Article**

The ballot will also feature a new petition warrant article submitted by a resident after collecting the requisite number of signatures. In short, this article, if passed, would limit the school district's budget increases to no more than a two percent impact on taxpayers. While, in theory,

this represents a thoughtful approach to a constrained budget, in reality it takes the budget process virtually out of the hands of the board and the administration.

If this article passes, the board and administration would no longer be utilizing a zero-based budget to thoughtfully plan out needs and goals, but instead would simply apply calculations to line items to fit the mandatory limit. In a year when our default budget is a 2.9% increase, this presents unintended consequences.

Think of this likely extreme but certainly possible example: We have an increase in special needs programming for students, as we do in our FY24 budget. Since we are above the 2% cap impact, we might need to counter these legally-required services by cutting three first grade teachers. This would mean, using the FY24 first-grade enrollment of 140 students, we could go from eight classes to five classes, resulting in an average class size increasing from 17.5 to 28 students. Yes, this example is an extreme but scenarios like this would develop throughout the budget.

The board voted unanimously against this article.

We are grateful for your continued support of our schools and we look forward to seeing you on voting day. If you have questions, please email [ASB@sau39.org](mailto:ASB@sau39.org) or attend one of our monthly meetings. The board meeting schedule is available on [www.SAU39.org](http://www.SAU39.org).



### **Voting in Amherst**

Amherst School District follows the guidelines of Senate Bill 2 (SB2) which are outlined in RSA 40:13. Voting on budgets, appropriations, and other articles culminates with ballot voting; however, prior to the March ballot vote is the Deliberative Session, which is held February 6, 2023 (Amherst) and the Public Hearing, which took place in January.

The Deliberative Session is the first session of the annual meeting and consists of explanation, discussion, and debate of each article on the warrant. Only voters registered in Amherst can amend wording and dollar amounts and vote on approving the warrant articles.

All warrant articles that were presented at the Deliberative Session, including articles that were amended, are then placed on the official ballot and moved to the second session (ballot voting) of the annual meeting for a final vote.

### **Voting in Amherst is a Two-Step Process:**

Deliberative Session: February 6, 2023, 6:00 p.m.

SHS Theatre

Ballot Vote: March 14, 2023, 6:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.

SHS Gymnasium

Please contact the Amherst Town Clerk for voter registration information and for absentee ballots: [www.amherstnh.gov/](http://www.amherstnh.gov/)

**Amherst School District  
Annual Meeting Warrant  
February 6, 2023 and March 14, 2023  
Amherst, New Hampshire**

To the inhabitants of the Amherst School District in the Town of Amherst, in the County of Hillsborough, and State of New Hampshire qualified to vote in District affairs:

You are hereby notified of the following Annual School District Meeting schedule:

**First Session of Annual Meeting (Deliberative)**

You are hereby notified to meet at Souhegan High School, 412 Boston Post Rd., Amherst, NH in said District on the 6th day of February 2023 at 6:00 p.m. This session shall consist of explanation, discussion, and debate of warrant articles numbered 12 through 19. Warrant articles may be amended subject to the following limitations: (a) warrant articles whose wording is prescribed by law shall not be amended, (b) warrant articles that are amended shall be placed on the official ballot for a final vote on the main motion, as amended, and (c) no warrant article shall be amended to eliminate the subject matter of the article. An amendment that changes the dollar amount of an appropriation in a warrant article shall not be deemed to be eliminating the subject matter of the article.

**Second Session of Annual Meeting (Official Ballot Voting)**

You are hereby notified to meet on Tuesday, March 14, 2023, between the hours of 6:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. to vote by official ballot on warrant articles numbered 11 through 19.

*IMPORTANT NOTE ON WARRANT ARTICLE NUMBERS: To avoid confusion caused by warrant articles with the same number; Souhegan Cooperative School District warrant articles are numbered one (1) through ten (10), Amherst School District warrant articles are numbered eleven (11) through nineteen (19), and Town of Amherst warrant articles are numbered twenty-one (21) and above.*

**Article 11. Election of Officers** (voting by official ballot March 14, 2023)

To the following school district offices:

- a. To choose two (2) School Board Members for the ensuing three (3) years;
- b. To choose one (1) School District Moderator for the ensuing three (3) years;
- c. To choose one (1) School District Clerk for the ensuing three (3) years; and,
- d. To choose one (1) School District Treasurer for the ensuing three (3) years.

**Article 12.** To see if the District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of fifty four million two hundred and fifty thousand one hundred seventy nine dollars **(\$54,250,179)** (gross budget) to finance the major addition, reconstruction and renovation project for the Clark /Wilkins Elementary School, located at 14 Foundry Street, Amherst, NH and 80 Boston Post Road, Amherst, NH and to authorize the issuance of not more than **\$54,250,179** of bonds or notes under and in compliance with the Municipal Finance Act, RSA 33:1 et seq., as amended; to authorize the School Board to apply for, obtain and accept federal, state or other aid, if any, which may be available for said project and to comply with all laws applicable to said project; to authorize the School Board to issue, negotiate, sell and deliver said bonds and notes and to determine the rate of interest thereon and the maturity and other terms thereof; and to authorize the School Board to take any action or to pass any other vote relative thereto, and further to raise and appropriate an additional sum of one million three hundred fifty six thousand two hundred fifty five dollars **(\$1,356,255)** for the first year's interest payment on the bond. **3/5 ballot vote required.**

**Amherst School District  
Annual Meeting Warrant  
February 6, 2023 and March 14, 2023  
Amherst, New Hampshire**

Recommended by the Amherst School Board (5-0)

Not Recommended by the Amherst School District Ways & Means Committee (1-6)

Estimated tax impact of passing this article is: \$0.57 per thousand.

**Article 13.** Shall the Amherst School District raise and appropriate as an operating budget, not including appropriations by special warrant articles and other appropriations voted separately, the amounts set forth on the budget posted with the warrant or as amended by vote of the first session, for the purposes set forth therein, totaling thirty two million three hundred ninety nine thousand four hundred eighty six dollars **(\$32,399,486)**? Should this article be defeated, the default budget shall be thirty one million nine hundred ninety six thousand six hundred thirty three dollars **(\$31,996,633)** which is the same as last year, with certain adjustments required by previous action of the Amherst School District or by law; or the governing body may hold one special meeting, in accordance with RSA 40:13, X and XVI, to take up the issue of a revised operating budget only? **Majority vote required.**

Recommended by the Amherst School Board (5-0)

Not Recommended by the Amherst School District Ways & Means Committee (0-7)

Estimated tax impact of passing this article is: \$0.37 per thousand.

Estimated tax impact of not passing this article is: \$0.20 per thousand.

*\*NOTE: Warrant Article 13 (operating budget) does not include appropriations proposed in any other warrant articles.*

**Article 14.** Shall the Amherst School District approve all cost items included in the collective bargaining agreement reached between the Amherst School Board and Amherst Education Association (AEA) which calls for the following estimated increases in salaries and benefits at the current staffing level over the amount paid in the prior fiscal year:

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Estimated Increase</u>
2024	\$691,834
2025	\$648,309
2026	\$640,399

and further to raise and appropriate the sum of \$691,834 for the 2023-2024 fiscal year, such sum representing the additional costs attributable to the increase in salaries and benefits required by the new agreement over those that would be paid at the current staffing levels? **Majority vote required.**

Recommended by the Amherst School Board (5-0)

Not Recommended by the Amherst School District Ways & Means Committee (3-4)

Estimated tax impact of passing this article is: \$0.29 per thousand.



**Amherst School District  
Annual Meeting Warrant  
February 6, 2023 and March 14, 2023  
Amherst, New Hampshire**

**Article 15.** Shall the Amherst School District, if Article 14 is defeated, authorize the governing body to call one special meeting, at its option, to address Article 14 cost items only? **Majority vote required.**

Recommended by the Amherst School Board (5-0)

Recommended by the Amherst School District Ways & Means Committee (4-3)

**Article 16.** Shall the Amherst School District approve all cost items included in the collective bargaining agreement reached between the Amherst School Board and the Amherst Support Staff Association (ASSA) which calls for the following estimated increases in salaries and benefits at the current staffing level over the amount paid in the prior fiscal year:

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Estimated Increase</u>
2024	\$108,214
2025	\$68,769
2026	\$68,879

and further to raise and appropriate the sum of \$108,214 for the 2023-2024 fiscal year, such sum representing the additional costs attributable to the increase in salaries and benefits required by the new agreement over those that would be paid at current staffing levels? **Majority vote required.**

Recommended by the Amherst School Board (5-0)

Recommended by the Amherst School District Ways & Means Committee (7-0)

Estimated tax impact of passing this article is: \$0.05 per thousand.

**Article 17.** Shall the Amherst School District, if Article 16 is defeated, authorize the governing body to call one special meeting, at its option, to address Article 16 cost items only? **Majority vote required.**

Recommended by the Amherst School Board (5-0)

Not Recommended by the Amherst School District Ways & Means Committee (2-5)

**Article 18.** Shall the Amherst School District raise and appropriate the sum of up to six hundred and five thousand dollars (\$605,000) to be added to the Amherst School District Capital Facilities Repair, Maintenance and Improvement Expendable Trust Fund for repairing, maintaining, and improving capital facilities, previously established in March 2003? This sum to come from the June 30, 2023 year-end unassigned fund balance (surplus) available for transfer on July 1, 2023. No amount to be raised from new taxation. **Majority vote required.**

Recommended by the Amherst School Board (5-0)

Recommended by the Amherst School District Ways & Means Committee (7-0)

Estimated new tax impact of passing this article is: \$0.00 per thousand.

Estimated new tax impact of not passing this article is: -\$0.26 per thousand.

**Amherst School District  
Annual Meeting Warrant  
February 6, 2023 and March 14, 2023  
Amherst, New Hampshire**

**Article 19.**

Shall we adopt the provisions of RSA 32:5-b, and implement a tax cap whereby the governing body (or budget committee) shall not submit a recommended budget that increases the amount to be raised by local taxes, based on the prior fiscal year's actual amount of local taxes raised, by more than the lesser of (a) 2% (two percent); or (b) the annual percentage increase in the U.S. Consumer Price Index-All Urban Consumers for the Northeast, published by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, as of the month of December of the immediately-preceding year? **3/5 Majority vote required.**

Not Recommended by the Amherst School Board (0-5)

Not Recommended by the Amherst School District Ways & Means Committee (1-6)

***Article 19 as amended during the ASD Deliberative Session on February 6, 2023:***

**Article 19.** Shall we adopt the provisions of RSA 32:5-b, and implement a tax cap whereby the governing body (or budget committee) shall not submit a recommended budget that increases the amount to be raised by local taxes, based on the prior fiscal year's actual amount of local taxes raised, by more than 100% (one hundred percent)? **3/5 Majority vote required.**

Not Recommended by the Amherst School Board (0-4)

Not Recommended by the Amherst School District Ways & Means Committee (1-5)

# SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT THIRTY-NINE

Amherst, Mont Vernon, and Souhegan Cooperative School Districts

STEVEN CHAMBERLIN  
Interim Superintendent of  
Schools

CHRISTINE M. LANDWEHRLE  
Assistant Superintendent

MARGARET A. BEAUCHAMP  
Director of Student Services

AMY FACEY  
Business Administrator



## *Frequently Asked Questions*

Amherst School District/Amherst Education Association  
Tentatively Agreed Upon Collective Bargaining Agreement  
January 13, 2023

1. *What positions are covered under this agreement?*

For this agreement, the term teacher includes classroom teachers, librarians, speech therapists, occupational therapists, school psychologists, guidance counselors, behavior specialists, and nurses. This agreement covers 146 teachers.

2. *What is the current contract status?*

The teachers and school board came to a tentative agreement last year. The voters did not ratify the contract. As such, the teachers have not received a pay increase this year.

3. *How long is the proposed contract?*

This agreement is for three years.

4. *What are the critical financial aspects of the agreement?*

- a. The salary schedule was dramatically changed. The starting salaries for the agreement were increased significantly. This revised salary schedule allows ASD to be more competitive in attracting teachers early in their careers. A broad-based salary increase is not included in the first year of this agreement. As the negotiation focused on creating an effective salary schedule, additional catch-up steps from not having a contract last year are not included in this proposed agreement.
- b. Large steps (referred to as jump steps) included previously to overcome the lack of a contract, have been eliminated. Both parties understood these jump steps created an unsustainable financial burden and an inequity in pay. There were instances where a teacher with a bachelor's degree was earning more than a master's-qualified teacher on identical steps. This contract eliminates the jump steps and extends the number of years until the top step/max salary is reached.
- c. Broad based increases in the contract:
  - i. Year 1: 0 %
  - ii. Year 2: 3.5%
  - iii. Year 3: 3.0%

5. *What is the cost in each year of the agreement?*

- a. Year 1: \$691,834, which is a \$0.29/1000 tax increase (estimated)
- b. Year 2: \$648,309, which is a \$0.27/1000 tax increase (estimated)
- c. Year 3: \$640,399, which is a \$0.27/1000 tax increase (estimated)

6. *Are there any changes connected to health insurance?*

The agreement changes plan offerings – sunsetting a more expensive Point of Service plan and offering a more economical high deductible plan.

7. *What are the educational improvements contained in this agreement?*

	Item	Notes
1.	Three additional days for new staff induction	New staff members will now be required to attend five days of training. This increase will support the implementation of heavily invested programs.
2.	An additional professional development day in year two and year three	This change will allow for full-day professional development, reducing three late starts each year. The right balance of full-day and shorter-time professional development will be reached. The reduction of late starts will support an increase in instructional time.
3.	An additional student day in year two	An additional student day supports the school board's goal of increasing instructional time.

8. *Are there additional significant language changes?*

The board and association placed teacher improvement as a priority in this agreement. This agreement begins structuring improvement plans and provides additional funds for professional development. The agreement also codifies an approved memorandum of understanding regarding summer work.

9. *What happens if this contract does not pass?*

If the contract does not pass, the 2021-2022 current contract stays in effect. Teachers on the salary schedule will experience a second consecutive year without receiving a step raise. Teachers at the top step will not receive an increase for the second consecutive year. Teachers will receive increases related to educational track changes only. The ability to attract and retain high quality staff will be in jeopardy. The education-related gains will not be implemented.

# SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT THIRTY-NINE

Amherst, Mont Vernon, and Souhegan Cooperative School Districts

STEVEN CHAMBERLIN  
Interim Superintendent of  
Schools

CHRISTINE M. LANDWEHRLE  
Assistant Superintendent

MARGARET A. BEAUCHAMP  
Director of Student Services

AMY FACEY  
Business Administrator



## *Frequently Asked Questions*

Amherst School District/Amherst Educational Support Staff  
Tentatively Agreed Upon Collective Bargaining Agreement  
January 19, 2023

1. *What positions are covered under this agreement?*

Office managers, administrative assistants, information specialists, office assistants, specialized paraprofessionals, paraprofessionals, cooks, health assistants, library assistants, and school nutrition service workers

2. *What is the current contract status?*

The Support Staff are currently in the final year of a five-year contract.

3. *How long is the proposed contract?*

This agreement is for three years.

4. *What are the key financial aspects of the agreement?*

The Support Staff salary schedule was dramatically changed. The starting salary for each employee was necessarily increased. The wages of new employees were no longer competitive. The wages of new employees were no longer competitive with other school districts or regular business which routinely start employees at more than \$15/hour. The new schedule starts each employee at \$14.75 or above. In addition, the number of steps has been decreased from 40-20. The step compression will aid in retaining employees as staff will rise on the salary schedule more quickly.

5. *What is the cost in each year of the agreement?*

- a. Year 1: \$108,214, which is a \$0.05/1000 tax increase
- b. Year 2: \$68,769, which is a \$0.03/1000 tax increase
- c. Year 3: \$68,879, which is a \$0.03/1000 tax increase

6. *Are there additional financial-related changes?*

The pay related to educational status has increased – from \$0.33 - \$0.50 for an associate's degree/paraprofessional certification and \$0.66 - \$0.75 for a bachelor's degree. The pay rate for Support Staff members who substitute for teachers has increased from \$2.75/hour to \$5.00/hour. This contract proposal codifies a Memo of Understanding regarding payment for support staff who attend overnight trips.

7. *What are some additional changes in contract language?*

	Item	Notes
1.	Opens pay by timesheet process	Improves efficiency and increases oversight.
2.	Establishes a Support Staff Mentorship Program	The mentoring program will improve employee performance and increase the District's ability to retain staff.
3.	Refines procedures regarding staff discipline	The new procedures provide support for employees and direction to administrators.
4.	Redesigns the support staff evaluation process	The redesign supports employee improvement by requiring every employee to be evaluated. The support staff will have input on the instrument utilized in this process.
5.	Establishes a formal Reduction in Force process (RIF)	The RIF process will utilize staff performance, academic preparation, and professional growth in making the personnel decision.

8. *Are there any changes connected to health insurance?*

The agreement changes plan offerings – sunsetting a more expensive Point of Service Program.

7. *What happens if this contract does not pass?*

If the contract does not pass, the current contract stays in effect. Support Staff members will not receive an increase. The District's ability to attract and retain employees will remain a significant challenge.

# **ASD Ways & Means Committee Report and Recommendations on the FY24 Warrant Articles**

**February 2023**

## **Introduction**

When a highly reputable education assessment firm (NWEA) forecasts that only a third of current ASD K-8 students are likely to graduate from high school college-ready in *both* English Language Arts and Math, and that over a third of all current students will *not* be college ready in *either*, it's no longer time for business as usual. When it becomes clear that peer communities are doing a better job of educating their students for millions of dollars less on an All-In Cost-Per-Pupil basis, it's no longer time for business as usual in ASD. What is called for is systemic change to markedly improve our educational and financial outcomes through stronger planning, implementation, and oversight.

## **Committee Members**

The following members were appointed by ASD Moderator Nate Jensen: Dwayne Purvis, Chair; Jeff Candito, Vice Chair; Greg Fritz, Secretary; Mike Akillian; Rick Barnes; Steve Frades; Mozammel Husainy; and Marilyn Gibson, Alternate.

## **W&M Mission**

The ASD Ways & Means Committee is a self-organizing advisory committee that provides independent input into and assessment of the executive budgeting decisions of the Amherst School Board, SAU39, and school leaders. Its role is to conduct due diligence into the strategic fiduciary decisions of the school district on behalf of the residents of Amherst.

While its focus is on the proposed, upcoming annual school budgets, its perspective can cover multiple years of expenditures (past and future) as well as insights into how the Amherst School District schools compare with similar and aspirational ones in delivering educational value (academic outcomes achieved given the investments made).

The Committee's final deliverable is an independent report to the town's voters on its findings about the budgeting process and the educational value of the proposed budgets and warrant articles – including narratives explaining votes taken for and/or against specific articles. This is that report.

## **Collaborative Engagement**

W&M worked closely with representatives from the SAU including Steve Chamberlin, Interim Superintendent; Amy Facey, Business Manager; and others, along with representatives from the ASD School Board including Tom Gauthier, Board Chair; and Victoria Parisi, Vice Chair. Besides engaging with these people directly in our working meetings, we asked for and received a wide variety of financial and academic performance information from them. We very much

appreciate their cooperation, responsiveness, and transparency. While we did not always agree on positions, our interactions were respectful, professional, and collaborative.

We were also pleased to be able to engage with committed professionals across the administration and schools in budget subcommittee meetings through which we discussed spending patterns and requests covering hundreds of line items.

## **Analyses & Public Communication**

As part of our preparation to address the warrant articles, we conducted several different foundational analyses, the results of which we have published in separate reports that can be found on the ASD [W&M webpage](#) on the SAU39 website. These include: a multi-year assessment of the educational value of an ASD K-8 education along with cost analyses on spending patterns in ASD and the SAU, and an analysis of the proposed new construction of the Wilkins School.

## **Our Votes and Recommendations**

### ***Article 12: Clark-Wilkins Addition, Reconstruction & Renovation***

ASD W&M does not support this article by a vote of 1-6.

- Committee members unanimously agree that space issues exist at Clark-Wilkins, which should be addressed. However, most do not believe that a strong case has been made for the town to spend \$103 million (\$54 million construction costs plus interest) to solve them.
- We also feel that the ASD Board hasn't provided detailed cost/benefit analyses of alternate plans that could also address space needs more cost efficiently. For example, one option could be to retain Clark and add a wing onto Wilkins to provide the space that is lacking and to upgrade all the systems to accommodate the larger space. Another option that doesn't appear to have been thoroughly considered is using space that already exists at the Souhegan Cooperative Annex building to redistribute grade levels in a different configuration to relieve space issues generally. Because it is not possible to conclude that the current proposed plan is the best available option, W&M believes that the Board has more homework to do prior to asking for an informed vote.
- It seems design plans haven't accounted for special services growth or volatility. Alternatively, enrollment growth may have been over-estimated for the general student population, which could lead to a building that is larger and more expensive than it need be. Thus, more work needs to be done to present these alternative choices and general related costs to the community as is typically done in these matters.
- An alternate view of this article is that underfunding of maintenance needs for an aging building with critical systems that are end-of-life have forced Amherst residents to consider radical action. The current proposal is the only one that has been vetted and can be acted upon in the shortest amount of time. While the project is not likely to receive state aid to offset the cost of the article, ASD maintains a relatively



favorable ranking of 7 out of 17 on the New Hampshire Department of Education priority list of schools should the funds become available.

**Article 13: The Operating Budget**

ASD W&M does not support this article by a vote of 0-7.

- The proposed budget isn't tied to targeted outcomes or to a strategic plan. This budget request represents a "business as usual" spending request, even in the face of declining academic performance and unsustainable tax growth.
- If ASD were operating close to the fiscal efficiency of peer communities such as Hollis or Bedford, it's budget would be millions of dollars lower than it is today. Rather than proposing a budget that decreases, the Board is proposing a budget with a *million-dollar increase*.
- The administration says that their budgets are tight. However, at present, they have an unspent fund balance of almost \$800K and are proposing that \$605K of that balance be used to increase the maintenance reserve trust by \$605K. This raises the question of just how tight these budgets really are.
- There is \$1.7 million dollars in ASD's proposed operating budget for its share in underwriting SAU (Brick School) proposed \$3 million budget – a budget that has increased significantly in recent years even as the academic outcomes driven by the SAU have declined. This does not represent the educational value residents deserve. The school boards have chosen not to let the voters decide on the SAU budget as a separate article, as does SAU41 that serves Hollis and Brookline, for example. We believe that the SAU budget should be subject to the same voter review and approval as the other school budgets.

**Article 14: The AEA Collective Bargaining Agreement**

ASD W&M does not support this article by a vote of 3-4.

- This article, which covers the collective bargaining agreement with the Amherst Educators Association (AEA), generated significant deliberation amongst the W&M members. We unanimously value and support our teachers. We also acknowledge the challenging environment in which teachers have operated for the past several years:
  - A lack of real strategic plans and targeted academic outcomes and metrics by the Board and administration which could provide focused direction for teachers.
  - An array of unnecessary educational experimentation that has adversely affected students and teachers, and which should have been constrained through effective governance and oversight.
  - The challenges of contending with COVID and the many needs of parents and students in dealing with the crisis.
  - An SAU administration whose previous management style turned increasingly autocratic (e.g., teachers threatened with dismissal if they spoke to anyone outside of the schools) at a time when more transparent, community-wide collaboration was called for.

- At the same time, we believe that ASD's high educational costs are excessive and must come down. That effort will be thwarted if the AEA contract is not as assiduously reviewed and trimmed as other cost drivers. The reason for this is, of the current \$32 million spent on ASD schools, almost \$18 million (55%) is driven directly by the AEA contract alone.
- Amherst teachers are among the highest compensated in the state, comparable to Hanover. We support and value excellence in teaching as the foundation for excellent academic outcomes. (We note that Hanover's academic performance is tops in the state and view them as an aspirational district.)
- We unanimously support the proposed contract changes that better redistribute the salary schedule to compensate lower-paid teachers more equitably, and we certainly applaud the increase in learning time covered by the proposed contract. If the article is defeated, these changes may not go into effect until a new contract is ratified.
- That said, instead of reducing costs, this proposed AEA contract *increases* costs by \$691,834 in 2024, \$648,309 in 2025, and \$640,399 in 2026 and will increase baseline costs by \$2 million. These increases are *in addition* to the million-dollar increase proposed in the operating budget. If the net result of approving the AEA contract is a material *increase* in costs, then any measurable cost-cutting will have to come from the remaining 45% of the budget, which includes support staff, non-union personnel, and non-personnel costs. Such a narrow focus may either forestall meaningful cost-cutting or risk unanticipated degradation of those activities.

**Article 15: Special One-Time Meeting**

ASD W&M supports this article by a vote of 4-3.

- Since the voters will have spoken in March, some W&M members see no need for taxpayers to incur the costs of a special warrant, deliberative session, and election in which fewer voters are likely to weigh in on what was already decided upon by a greater number of voters.
- Conversely, if the AEA contract is voted down, this meeting could be a mechanism whereby the School Board and union could find a way to provide some additional compensation to teachers until the next contract is renegotiated.

**Article 16: ASSA Collective Bargaining Agreement**

ASD W&M supports this article by a vote of 7-0.

- W&M very much appreciates the sustained efforts of members of the Amherst Support Staff Association (ASSA) to provide high quality services across our schools and believes the elements of this article deserve strong public support.

**Article 17: Special One-Time Meeting**

ASD W&M does not support this article by a vote of 2-5.

- It is our hope that this meeting is not necessary because article 16 passes.

### **Article 18: \$605K Contribution to the ASD Maintenance Expendable Trust**

ASD W&M supports this article by a vote of 7-0.

- We are upset that ASD buildings have been allowed to fall into such disrepair. It is especially disturbing that persistent roof leaks in AMS have not been corrected for several years. These leaks, which were discussed by the Board as early as 2017, continue to damage the facility and disrupt activities every time it rains.
- The current maintenance capital reserve fund has \$1.3 million in it. While we believe that normal repairs and maintenance should be covered by the operating budget, we unanimously agree that an additional \$605K be added to the reserve fund to address these dire needs. W&M has no say over where this money might be spent, but we believe that the AMS leak problem should be addressed immediately. Going forward, the capital reserve fund should be used for unplanned and emergency issues, and normal repairs should be covered in the budget. This is more likely possible going forward because the SAU now has a competent, thoughtful facilities director who has crafted a sensible multi-year facilities maintenance plan.

### **Amended Citizens Petition Warrant Article Setting a 100% School Tax Cap**

***ASD W&M does not support this article by a vote of 1-5.***

The tax cap proposal reflects the public's frustration with excessive school spending. However, it is an artificial constraint and a blunt instrument to what should be more effective management and governance. The reality is that ASD school spending should be *reduced* significantly if our schools are ever to provide the fiscal parity that comparable communities enjoy. Setting an artificial tax limit will likely only keep our spending high, with school boards bumping up against the cap every year rather than looking for ways to lower spending.

Another view is that the tax cap will impose some predictable limits on higher taxes each year. The effect may be negligible on spending this year, as the proposed budget increase is 3.9%, but the School Board will likely spend only half of that and ask that the other 2% be transferred to the capital reserve fund at "no new tax impact" next year. This same view holds that taxpayers deserve to know the limits to which their taxes can be raised with less than a 60% majority.

ABSENTEE  
OFFICIAL BALLOT  
AMHERST SCHOOL DISTRICT ELECTION  
AMHERST, NEW HAMPSHIRE  
MARCH 14, 2023

*C. Butler*  
SCHOOL DISTRICT CLERK

INSTRUCTIONS TO VOTERS

- A. TO VOTE, completely fill in the OVAL to the RIGHT of your choice(s) like this: ●
- B. Follow directions as to the number of candidates to be marked for each office.
- C. To vote for a person whose name is not printed on the ballot, write the candidate's name on the line provided and completely fill in the OVAL.

<b>FOR SCHOOL BOARD</b> <small>(For 3 Years)      Vote for not more than TWO</small> TERRI BEHM <input type="radio"/> MARK CHENEY <input type="radio"/> GREG FRITZ <input type="radio"/> SHANNON GASCOYNE <input type="radio"/> MOZAMMEL HUSAINY <input type="radio"/>  <input type="radio"/> (Write-in) <input type="radio"/> (Write-in)	<b>FOR SCHOOL DISTRICT MODERATOR</b> <small>(For 3 Years)      Vote for not more than ONE</small> MARK VINCENT <input type="radio"/> ELLEN GRUDZIEN <input type="radio"/>  <input type="radio"/> (Write-in)	<b>FOR SCHOOL DISTRICT CLERK</b> <small>(For 3 Years)      Vote for not more than ONE</small> TONY ORTIZ <input type="radio"/>  <input type="radio"/> (Write-in)  <b>FOR SCHOOL DISTRICT TREASURER</b> <small>(For 3 Years)      Vote for not more than ONE</small> MARGARET BENNETT <input type="radio"/>  <input type="radio"/> (Write-in)
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ARTICLES

Article 12

To see if the District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of fifty four million two hundred and fifty thousand one hundred seventy nine dollars **(\$54,250,179)** (gross budget) to finance the major addition, reconstruction and renovation project for the Clark /Wilkins Elementary School, located at 14 Foundry Street, Amherst, NH and 80 Boston Post Road, Amherst, NH and to authorize the issuance of not more than **\$54,250,179** of bonds or notes under and in compliance with the Municipal Finance Act, RSA 33:1 et seq., as amended; to authorize the School Board to apply for, obtain and accept federal, state or other aid, if any, which may be available for said project and to comply with all laws applicable to said project; to authorize the School Board to issue, negotiate, sell and deliver said bonds and notes and to determine the rate of interest thereon and the maturity and other terms thereof; and to authorize the School Board to take any action or to pass any other vote relative thereto, and further to raise and appropriate an additional sum of one million three hundred fifty six thousand two hundred fifty five dollars **(\$1,356,255)** for the first year's interest payment on the bond. **3/5 ballot vote required.**

YES ☐  
NO ☐

Recommended by the Amherst School Board (5-0)  
Not Recommended by the Amherst School District Ways & Means Committee (1-6)

Estimated tax impact of passing this article is: \$0.57 per thousand.

Article 13

Shall the Amherst School District raise and appropriate as an operating budget, not including appropriations by special warrant articles and other appropriations voted separately, the amounts set forth on the budget posted with the warrant or as amended by vote of the first session, for the purposes set forth therein, totaling thirty two million three hundred ninety nine thousand four hundred eighty six dollars **(\$32,399,486)**? Should this article be defeated, the default budget shall be thirty one million nine hundred ninety six thousand six hundred thirty three dollars **(\$31,996,633)** which is the same as last year, with certain adjustments required by previous action of the Amherst School District or by law; or the governing body may hold one special meeting, in accordance with RSA 40:13, X and XVI, to take up the issue of a revised operating budget only? **Majority vote required.**

YES ☐  
NO ☐

Recommended by the Amherst School Board (5-0)  
Not Recommended by the Amherst School District Ways & Means Committee (0-7)

Estimated tax impact of passing this article is: \$0.37 per thousand.  
Estimated tax impact of not passing this article is: \$0.20 per thousand.

\*NOTE: Warrant Article 13 (operating budget) does not include appropriations proposed in any other warrant articles.

VOTE BOTH SIDES OF BALLOT

ARTICLES CONTINUED

Article 14

Shall the Amherst School District approve all cost items included in the collective bargaining agreement reached between the Amherst School Board and Amherst Education Association (AEA) which calls for the following estimated increases in salaries and benefits at the current staffing level over the amount paid in the prior fiscal year:

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Estimated Increase</u>
2024	\$691,834
2025	\$648,309
2026	\$640,399

and further to raise and appropriate the sum of \$691,834 for the 2023-2024 fiscal year, such sum representing the additional costs attributable to the increase in salaries and benefits required by the new agreement over those that would be paid at the current staffing levels? **Majority vote required.**

YES ☐  
NO ☐

**Recommended by the Amherst School Board (5-0)**  
**Not Recommended by the Amherst School District Ways & Means Committee (3-4)**

**Estimated tax impact of passing this article is: \$0.29 per thousand.**

Article 15

Shall the Amherst School District, if Article 14 is defeated, authorize the governing body to call one special meeting, at its option, to address Article 14 cost items only? **Majority vote required.**

YES ☐  
NO ☐

**Recommended by the Amherst School Board (5-0)**  
**Recommended by the Amherst School District Ways & Means Committee (4-3)**

Article 16

Shall the Amherst School District approve all cost items included in the collective bargaining agreement reached between the Amherst School Board and the Amherst Support Staff Association (ASSA) which calls for the following estimated increases in salaries and benefits at the current staffing level over the amount paid in the prior fiscal year:

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Estimated Increase</u>
2024	\$108,214
2025	\$ 68,769
2026	\$ 68,879

and further to raise and appropriate the sum of \$108,214 for the 2023-2024 fiscal year, such sum representing the additional costs attributable to the increase in salaries and benefits required by the new agreement over those that would be paid at current staffing levels? **Majority vote required.**

YES ☐  
NO ☐

**Recommended by the Amherst School Board (5-0)**  
**Recommended by the Amherst School District Ways & Means Committee (7-0)**

**Estimated tax impact of passing this article is: \$0.05 per thousand.**

Article 17.

Shall the Amherst School District, if Article 16 is defeated, authorize the governing body to call one special meeting, at its option, to address Article 16 cost items only? **Majority vote required.**

YES ☐  
NO ☐

**Recommended by the Amherst School Board (5-0)**  
**Not Recommended by the Amherst School District Ways & Means Committee (2-5)**

Article 18.

Shall the Amherst School District raise and appropriate the sum of up to six hundred and five thousand dollars (\$605,000) to be added to the Amherst School District Capital Facilities Repair, Maintenance and Improvement Expendable Trust Fund for repairing, maintaining, and improving capital facilities, previously established in March 2003? This sum to come from the June 30, 2023 year-end unassigned fund balance (surplus) available for transfer on July 1, 2023. No amount to be raised from new taxation. **Majority vote required.**

YES ☐  
NO ☐

**Recommended by the Amherst School Board (5-0)**  
**Recommended by the Amherst School District Ways & Means Committee (7-0)**

**Estimated new tax impact of passing this article is: \$0.00 per thousand.**  
**Estimated new tax impact of not passing this article is: -\$0.26 per thousand.**

Article 19.

Shall we adopt the provisions of RSA 32:5-b, and implement a tax cap whereby the governing body (or budget committee) shall not submit a recommended budget that increases the amount to be raised by local taxes, based on the prior fiscal year's actual amount of local taxes raised, by more than 100% (one hundred percent)? **3/5 Majority vote required.**

YES ☐  
NO ☐

**Not Recommended by the Amherst School Board (0-4)**  
**Not Recommended by the Amherst School District Ways & Means Committee (1-5)**

VOTE BOTH SIDES OF BALLOT



## SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT THIRTY-NINE

Amherst, Mont Vernon, and Souhegan Cooperative School Districts

STEVEN CHAMBERLIN  
Interim Superintendent of  
Schools

CHRISTINE M. LANDWEHRLE  
Assistant Superintendent

MARGARET A. BEAUCHAMP  
Director of Student Services

AMY FACEY  
Business Administrator

February 2023

Dear Amherst Residents:

My name is Steve Chamberlin. I have been privileged to serve as your Interim Superintendent for the 2022 – 2023 school year. It is an honor to contribute to the Amherst School District Voter Guide. This guide is the culmination of a 6-month process to develop a budget and provide critical information to the residents of Amherst.

The 2022- 2023 school year has been impactful. The Amherst School District has welcomed new principals, Kathleen Murphy at Clark-Wilkins, and Kristen Gauthier at Amherst Middle School. In addition, Allison Plante has joined Clark-Wilkins as the special education administrator and former principal Anna Parrill has moved to the Assistant Principal role.

The students have enjoyed returning to a school with pre-pandemic practices and events restored. I have been honored to work with the board that is tireless in the efforts to support student learning. The focus on student learning has guided their work in coming to agreement with the Amherst Education Association and the Amherst Support Staff Association on contracts. It has also been their motivation to put forth a long term solution to the substantive facility challenges while working to repair/replace roofs and HVAC equipment in the near term.

The board has been dedicated to accomplishing the following goals:

- To be active in the policy approval process at the SAU level.
- Support the implementation of the new k – 5 math program, support the efforts in improving student behavior at Amherst Middle School, and gain a better understanding of student achievement in literacy.
- Increase communication and engagement with the community around the FY24 budget, facility project, other District happenings.
- Support the search process for the next Superintendent of Schools
- Participate in good faith bargaining with the AEA and ASSA.

Board members have been active in the policy process, received presentations on math, behavior, and literacy. They have conducted community-based listening sessions supporting the building project and district work in general. The board accomplished their final two goals: a new Superintendent of Schools has been appointed and two contracts are on the ballot, ready for the community to weigh in.

I hope the Voter Guide provides you the information necessary for you to make an informed decision. Please feel encouraged to reach out to me at [schamberlin@sau39.org](mailto:schamberlin@sau39.org) if you have any questions.

Thank you for this extraordinary opportunity.

Take good care,

Steven M. Chamberlin  
Interim Superintendent



In August of 2022, Clark-Wilkins School opened its doors to welcome approximately seven hundred and nineteen students and we have continued to see our enrollment hold steady throughout the year. Clark-Wilkins is proud to have the largest number of students enrolled in SAU #39. Students can begin their journey with us in preschool or kindergarten at Clark School, while first through fourth graders attend school at Wilkins. The integrated preschool program at Clark-Wilkins houses the three and four-year olds, which is servicing approximately 48 students this year. The preschool and kindergarten programs provide outstanding opportunities for our youngest students to develop valuable social, emotional, and early learning skills that will prepare them for the expectations of future grades.

We are continuing our schoolwide positive behavior program, focused on our school mascot, Hootie, the Clark-Wilkins Owl. We have consistent OWL expectations that are used across all settings in the school community. Students have the opportunity to be recognized for positive and expected behaviors with stickers and shout outs. In addition, we promote positive behaviors in the lunchroom with our signature Golden Spatula Luncheons on the stage and through the use of earning gold coins for use in our new Book Vending Machine. Students demonstrating above and beyond behaviors and perseverance are recognized by earning a golden coin and choosing a new book from the vending machine.

In addition to our schoolwide positive behavior programs, we have established several student leadership opportunities for Clark-Wilkins students. Fourth graders have the opportunity to participate in the Principal's Council, a group that helps to model expectations for younger students and works closely with our school leadership team. Fourth grade students can also participate in Recess Rangers, a group that supports our younger students during recess time with structured activities and peer models. We were also very excited to offer an abundance of afterschool activities for students to participate in this year. Some of these programs were Chess Club, Spanish Club, Musical Theater Club, Story and STEM, Dodgeball Club, and Arts and Craft Club. We had nearly 200 students participate in these no-cost activities this fall.

Clark-Wilkins staff members have joined with professionals from other schools throughout the SAU to attend a week-long professional development training focused on Responsive Classroom over the last several years. We currently have approximately 60 staff members comprehensively trained in this approach. Responsive Classroom is an evidence-based approach to teaching that focuses on engaging academics, positive community, effective management, and developmental awareness. In tandem with our work with Responsive Classroom, we continue to use the "Second Step" social-emotional learning program as a Tier 1, or core, component of our instructional program. Our guidance counselor and teachers have included time for direct instruction and embed the language and approach into everyday situations and learning opportunities. Second Step teaches children skills for learning, empathy, emotion management, and problem-solving skills. We have also implemented a school-wide morning meeting, in which all students and staff participate in a morning meeting during the first twenty minutes of the

school day. It is an engaging way to start each day, build a strong sense of community, and set children up for success socially and academically. Each morning, students and teachers gather together in a circle for twenty to thirty minutes and interact with one another during four purposeful components: greeting, sharing, group activity, and the morning message.

Clark-Wilkins teachers utilize high quality curriculum to provide students with exceptional educational experiences. Students engage in explicit and systematic phonics instruction at all grade levels, use a workshop model to develop reading and writing skills, and are using a new resource to support the curriculum in Mathematics as determined by a committee across SAU #39, Bridges in Mathematics. The students continue to take assessments such as the New Hampshire State Assessment System (NHSAS) in grades three and four in the areas of language arts and mathematics. All students in grades kindergarten through four also take the NWEA computerized assessment in reading and mathematics at least two times per year. The results of all assessments help teachers to inform and develop their instructional practices, to create a range of learning groups, and to identify students who can benefit from tiered instruction inside and outside of the classroom learning environment.

The Amherst PTA continues to work closely with Clark-Wilkins and we have been able to offer several different events and activities this school year with their support. In September, we had a record turnout at our Ice Cream Social event, which was held outdoors and allowed for families to gather, connect, and celebrate the start of a new school year. In October, we partnered with the PTA to host the Read A Thon. This several week event provided students with learning opportunities in the area of character education and also served as a fundraiser for the school. These fundraising opportunities help us continue to offer residencies and assist us in purchasing materials for our students. We hosted a Holiday Story Time evening for students and families in December, complete with chocolate milk and cookies for students to enjoy while listening to holiday stories and music. This year we hosted our week-long residency program for all grade 3 students where they learn all about circus arts. The residency program culminates in a fantastic show for all third-grade families and includes juggling, human stunts, clowning, and entertaining magic tricks. Special thanks must be extended to the Amherst PTA for their financial support of events and activities including the visiting author and curriculum enrichment activities that benefit all grade levels.

The following staff members will retire at the end of the 2022-2023 school year: Debra Provencher. We are so appreciative of her work with the students at Clark-Wilkins and wish her well on her future journeys.

The Amherst community can continue to take great pride in the tremendous work that our students and their teachers accomplish daily. Clark-Wilkins School continues to provide an outstanding educational and learning environment that works collaboratively to engage, challenge, and nurture all learners. We recognize and appreciate the commitment, effort, and support that Amherst residents provide to our schools and value greatly the time contributed by our many volunteers, our families, and our PTA. Clark-Wilkins School provides the ideal model of the entire village stepping in to educate every child.





In September 2022, Amherst Middle School welcomed six hundred and thirty four students in grades 5-8 from the communities of Amherst and Mont Vernon. In planning for this school year, we took a close look at the current needs of learners, and implemented organizational structures in the building to support those needs. The AMS community continues to be committed to our students' social, emotional, and academic success which is what has earned us the distinction of being named New Hampshire's 2022 Middle School of Excellence.

One big change we made this year was to adjust our administrative and guidance structures to develop two schools within our larger school. Our *Upper School* (Grades 7 & 8) and *Lower School* (Grades 5 & 6) are each supported by a dedicated assistant principal, social worker, and school counselor. Dividing resources in this way allows students and staff to build positive rapport and collaborative relationships with specific point persons, making a large student population feel a bit smaller.

The Amherst Middle School staff continues to demonstrate a strong commitment to their own learning to improve their instructional practices and support all students. Throughout this school year, we have committed to a planned professional development model, where teachers were given the opportunity to choose a specific strand related to strengthening instructional practices. Each strand group is being facilitated by a teacher leader or administrator from within the district. These groups meet regularly—typically once per month on Late Start days—to review instructional best practices, discuss selected readings related to their topics, and to share examples of what is working well in their teaching practice. At the end of the school year, these groups will share this work with the full staff in an effort to inspire others and focus future professional development.

Middle school is a time of great change and growth for students especially with friendships and social emotional awareness. AMS works to support the whole child through a variety of structures, programs, and curricula to help students navigate these changes as they travel through their middle school years. AMS is a community built on respect, where it is essential that every member of our community of learners is connected, seen, heard, and has trusted adults they have built positive relationships with. Teachers in grades 5 and 6 use resources from Responsive Classroom and hold Morning Meeting each day to support community building and greater self-awareness. In grades 7 and 8, each day begins with Launchpad, our version of an advisory program. During both Morning Meeting and Launchpad, students meet with a small group and their anchoring adult who supports them throughout the school year. This time is dedicated to ensuring that every child begins their day taking care of their human needs and connection before diving into academics.

Our Eagle Support Team is a group of diverse staff from across the school including administrators, the school resource officer (SRO), school nurse, counselors, and social workers. This team works to support both students and staff throughout the school day in both proactive and responsive interventions and strategies. They support the design of professional learning, focus on increasing staff understanding of social emotional and behavioral strategies, support Morning Meeting and Launchpad groups, increase parent and family partnership, and organize school-wide events. School counselors and social workers join teaching teams in bi-weekly meetings in an effort to strengthen communication amongst staff in regards to students and work collaboratively to develop and assess interventions. Most recently, our Eagle Support Team organized events for Red Ribbon Week including daily announcements, activities during lunch, and a guest speaker for grades 7 and 8.

AMS continues to build its Multi-Tier System of Support (MTSS). MTSS is a whole school improvement model that supports students academically, behaviorally, and socially-emotionally. Within the MTSS model, AMS offers a range of tiered levels of instruction, intervention, remediation, extension, and services. Grade level teams meet monthly to analyze data of NWEA, NHSAS, attendance, and discipline, organized on a digital platform for each grade level, to plan for timely support, intervention, and extension. Individual teaching teams meet bi-weekly to develop plans for supporting individuals and small groups of students. Student plans may include behavior coaching, counseling, family attendance plans, specialized reading instruction, math programming, and opportunities to expand skill sets. Within our MTSS model, AMS has done extensive work developing New Hampshire Department of Education approved specialized programs to help meet the needs of all of our students. Our specialized programs continue to thrive and are delivering a research-based curriculum, resources, and support to ensure that all our students have the opportunity to learn in their community school with their peers. MTSS provides a range of experiences, opportunities, and specialized resources for our students.

Amherst Middle School communicates student learning and growth through standards-based progress reporting, implementing an important piece of our SAU39 Mastery Learning System. Students receive separate scores on each learning target assessed so that they can work with their teachers to better understand their strengths and opportunities for growth. Students receive separate scores in areas such as writing, geometry, patterns, and civics. Each course is divided into several content competencies and work study practices in which students need to show a deep level of mastery. Our teachers have worked tirelessly to understand these shifts in practice and help our students better understand themselves as learners. Teachers share that they have never known the strengths and areas of opportunity for each individual student as well as they do now assessing in a standards-based system.

At Amherst Middle School, we recognize that learning can take place anytime and anywhere. While we have had to rethink or suspend many activities in recent years, our clubs, activities, and teams are now back up and running, meeting regularly. We have been able to offer a variety of diverse opportunities through extracurricular activities, integrated arts, sports, interdisciplinary learning experiences, and specialized programming. Environmental school camp weeks, indoor rock climbing, watershed monitoring, and SEE Science Center visits are just a few of the unique offerings our students experience that truly go beyond a traditional curriculum. At Amherst Middle School, the learning doesn't stop when the final bell of the day rings. In a typical school year, over two-thirds of our students participate in one or more interscholastic sports. AMS offers a diverse line-up of sports including lacrosse, volleyball, wrestling, field hockey, soccer, cross country, track, basketball, cheer & dance, softball, and baseball. Many more students take advantage of our after-school clubs. Clubs including art and pottery, role playing games, culinary arts, chess, innovation and design, mountain biking, just to name a few, add another important element of exploration and learning beyond the classroom to our school community. Involvement in the school community is vital for helping students feel safe and included each day.

We are incredibly proud of the work we do at AMS to support our school and local community. We recently partnered with the Amherst PTA to raise funds for outdoor and indoor improvements. While we were able to raise over \$17,000, the true reward was the fun and spirited activities that took place throughout the two week drive. We were also able to continue the tradition of the Veterans' Day Walkathon and fundraiser. This event raised over \$2,000 for local veterans, including Operation Delta Dog, and offered students an awareness and an appreciation of the sacrifices that veterans make to protect our country. We continue to promote our slogan, *Courage to Care* through this important work. We hope that these experiences will have a lifelong impact on students who will continue to be caring, thoughtful, and compassionate citizens within our community.

While we often refer to Amherst Middle School staff and students as our community of learners, the truth is our families, local organizations, and the larger community are also a critical part of our success and continued efforts in fulfilling our mission. Partnerships with and the support of the PTA has helped us to fund classroom grants, support Kindness and Anti-bullying programs, and will fund indoor and outdoor beautification efforts. In addition, our community has given to our school countless volunteer hours helping in our cafeteria, chaperoning dances and field trips, sharing expertise with students, participating in, helping in the library, supporting our fundraising efforts, and other ways too numerous to list! It is that same spirit of giving that we hope to instill in our students.

In closing, and on behalf of the entire Amherst Middle School, I would like to say thank you to every member of our community. As a resident, parent, and educator, I continue to be humbled by the generosity of our town. The support for the Amherst School District, and Amherst Middle School in particular is unique and heartwarming. I feel fortunate to work in a community that believes in a strong education for all students and will go to great lengths to ensure that our educators have the resources they need to meet that goal. Whether you have a child currently in our schools or not, Amherst Middle School has felt your support consistently throughout the years. As we head into our 49th year, we look forward to maintaining the traditions we value, while helping our learners realize their full potential as caring, courageous, creative and diligent citizens in the years to come.

### Letter from the Director of Student Services

It is a pleasure to address the Amherst community as the Director of Student Services. As I begin my eleventh year with the SAU, I am increasingly impressed by the exciting things that are occurring daily within our schools, as well as with the impressive collaborative and hard-working staff who are so invested in your children. Our department currently provides supports and services to approximately 223 students across our entire district, beginning with our youngest learners in our preschool programs and ending with our eighth-grade students as we transition them into the Souhegan Cooperative School District as high school freshmen.

Last spring, we faced an increase in our preschool population who required and were eligible for preschool programs. We saw this as an opportunity to create an additional half day of preschool which allows identified students as well as other children within the community to access a highly enriching program that includes activities designed to support appropriate developmental milestones. The preschool program is an active and exciting place to be, where our youngest learners thrive. It is a wonderful environment and one that I am proud to support.

Our talented staff continue to be engaged in collaborative work that includes the utilization of data to improve instructional practices. Improvements that we make are designed to afford all students within the Amherst community the opportunity to have common, high quality experiences at appropriate developmental levels. The SAU has adopted a new math curriculum that student services has also embraced and has helped to support. In addition, we continue to focus on strategy-based reading interventions designed to increase literacy skills. It is always our goal to meet each student where they are and provide specially designed instruction that will allow maximum progress.

I am honored to continue to be a part of the work we are doing within the Amherst School District. It is exciting to work with all staff and administrators alike to meet the challenges we face each day, and to see the rewards of our work in the progress of the children entrusted to our care. I remain humbled to serve the Amherst community within my role as the Director of Student Services.

Respectfully submitted,  
Meg Beauchamp  
Director of Student Services

**Amherst School District**  
**Actual Expenditures for Special Education Programs and Services**  
**FY 2020-2021 and FY 2021-2022 per RSA 32:11a**

ITEM	FY 2020-2021	FY 2021-2022
REVENUES		
Special Education Aid	\$532,729	\$248,715
IDEA Grant	\$396,751	\$303,785
Medicaid	<u>\$82,216</u>	<u>\$227,888</u>
Total Revenues	\$1,011,696	\$780,387
EXPENDITURES		
Salaries	\$4,589,399	\$5,007,327
Employee Benefits	\$2,716,238	\$3,027,461
Purchased Services	\$796,960	\$892,759
Supplies	\$50,841	\$36,360
Equipment	\$27,065	\$1,955
Other	<u>\$290</u>	<u>\$122</u>
Total Expenditures	\$8,180,793	\$8,965,984
Net Cost of Special Education	\$7,169,097	\$8,185,597

**Amherst School District**  
**Annual Report of the Treasurer**  
**as of 6/30/2022**

	Starting Balance	Deposits	AP-PR Expenses	Ending Balance
July-2021	\$2,399,109.81	\$4,497,425.57	(\$2,146,942.08)	\$4,749,593.30
August-2021	\$4,749,593.30	\$2,118,746.86	(\$2,555,495.53)	\$4,312,844.63
September-2021	\$4,312,844.63	\$575,634.43	(\$2,967,137.94)	\$1,921,341.12
October-2021	\$1,921,341.12	\$2,241,547.02	(\$2,538,931.05)	\$1,623,957.09
November-2021	\$1,623,957.09	\$4,568,860.82	(\$2,391,749.97)	\$3,801,067.94
December-2021	\$3,801,067.94	\$3,381,430.98	(\$2,565,766.14)	\$4,616,732.78
January-2022	\$4,616,732.78	\$640,029.70	(\$2,392,759.31)	\$2,864,003.17
February-2022	\$2,864,003.17	\$4,294,671.82	(\$2,470,727.48)	\$4,687,947.51
March-2022	\$4,687,947.51	\$205,686.21	(\$3,388,633.35)	\$1,505,000.37
April-2022	\$1,505,000.37	\$3,378,253.16	(\$2,428,408.12)	\$2,454,845.41
May-2022	\$2,454,845.41	\$2,059,507.68	(\$2,281,684.10)	\$2,232,668.99
June-2022	\$2,232,668.99	\$2,525,397.05	(\$3,911,769.35)	\$846,296.69
<b>Total</b>	\$2,399,109.81	\$30,487,191.30	(\$32,040,004.42)	\$846,296.69

Bank Accounts	Peoples United xxxxxxx0942	Peoples United xxxx0557	Peoples United xxxxxxx8087	Outstanding
	Cash Management	Municipal NOW	Municipal Savings	Checks/Debits
7/1/2021	\$239,499.64	\$100,006.33	\$3,200,250.15	\$(1,140,646.31)
6/30/2022	\$1,504,940.60	\$100,005.75	\$502,942.30	\$(1,261,591.96)
				<b>Total</b>
				\$2,399,109.81
				\$846,296.69