

1 **Amherst School Board**
2 **Thursday, September 20, 2012**

3
4 **ATTENDANCE**

5
6 Amherst School Board

7 Peg Bennett, Lucienne Foulks, Amy Facey, and Paul Prescott

8
9 Administrative Team

10 Peter Warburton, Gerry St. Amand, Porter Dodge, Renea Sparks, Betty Shankel, and
11 Nicole Heimark

12
13 Minute Taker

14 Beth Penney
15

16 **CALL TO ORDER**

17 Ms. Bennett called the meeting to order at 6:07pm.

18 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

19 Principals' reports

20 Ms. Foulks asked how the late start went, which was a training session for Math in Focus.

21 Mr. St. Amand stated that people were overwhelmed, but the training was effective and
22 teachers are forging ahead.

23 Ms. Foulks asked if the teachers are getting into a rhythm and are ok with NECAPS
24 starting in a week.

25 Mr. St. Amand stated that teachers expect the testing and teachers have the curriculum
26 going.

27 Mr. Warburton stated that Mr. St. Amand has a new iPad he is using.

28 Ms. Bennett asked about the Welcome Kira Assembly.

29 Mr. St. Amand stated this assembly is for the service dog, Kira. The trainers will answer
30 questions about the dog and remind the kids about the fact that Kira is a service dog and
31 should not be played with. Feedback from families and staff about Kira has been very
32 positive.

33 Ms. Foulks asked if the community members and volunteers coming into the school
34 would learn about the service dog.

35 St. Amand stated that the school would send something home eventually once the school

36 knows how it will work since this is new territory. He gave praise to the teacher,
37 Amanda, for helping the students get ready for Kira.

38 Mr. St. Amand reminded the public about, Child Check, which is October 19th at Clark
39 School and is free for preschool aged children to get developmentally checked.

40 Mr. St. Amand stated that the Trimester Report Card Committee, which has 14 members,
41 has met and will go forward with the trimester report card for this year. The format of the
42 report card will not change this year. There will not be a progress report this trimester,
43 because the committee is still looking at formats. The report card will be going through
44 program review, eventually. Kindergarten has always been on a trimester system. All
45 students will receive the first report card in December. He thanked Barbra Protrosky,
46 whom is the chair of the committee and Eric Kidder, who gave the committee examples
47 of progress report cards.

48 Ms. Bennett stated that she and Ms. Foulks went to Ferry Beach and had a fantastic day.
49 The camp is a great opportunity for the kids. She thanked the teachers for all their hard
50 work for making the camp happen. The Mont Vernon (MV) 6th graders are in
51 Connecticut with the AMS 6th graders.

52 Mr. Dodge stated that this is a wonderful opportunity for the MV and Amherst kids to get
53 together. He stayed for two evenings with the MV boys and had tons of fun. He
54 discussed the bad weather Tuesday night and the great organization of the people hosting
55 the students.

56 Correspondence

57 None

58 **PUBLIC TIME**

59 Ms. Bennett introduced past students from Amherst, Jake McMalin and Caroline Budroe,
60 who are attending the meeting for an assignment in their Civics class at BG.

61 **CONSENT AGENDA**

62 **Ms. Foulks made a motion to accept the consent agenda containing the minutes**
63 **from August 28, 2012 and the Unanticipated Revenue: Donations to Student**
64 **Activity Fund: \$529.32 from Target- Take Charge of Education and \$302.00 from**
65 **Holly's Kona Ice, LLC. Ms. Facey seconded the motion and the vote was**
66 **unanimous.**

67 **PRESENTATIONS/REPORTS**

68 RTI

69 Mr. Dodge introduced Kim Boothroyd, Deb Curran, Sue McKenney, Tiffany Maher, and
70 Sue Wilson.

71 Mr. Dodge stated that this is year 2 working with the Department of Education to be a
72 RTI pilot site. AMS will be a spot light pilot school next year. Pam Gross and Patty
73 Wons are presenting at several different RTI conferences this fall.

74 Ms. McKenney stated that she is a Learning Specialist who sits on the RTI team. The
75 biggest changes that have happened because of RTI are an increase in data collection and
76 collaboration between teachers. There is less isolation and subjectivity in teaching.
77 Teachers will collaborate together and often plan together. The model is teaching and
78 then reflecting after teaching to find and change weaknesses. To enhance the weaknesses
79 teachers will go back to collaboration to get support. There is a specific starting point for
80 skills with students and teachers set a goal for where they want the students to be in June.
81 They can always make adjustments to the plan to ensure the students reach the goal. RTI
82 is about looking at the individual child and moving that child ahead in skills. RTI
83 identifies need areas for the school also. She gave an example where AMS, like most
84 schools nationally, have seen students struggling with executive functioning. AMS then
85 made a plan need to strengthen core curriculum to support the executive function. The
86 school offered two professional development sessions for teachers and offered a night
87 program for parents to better support students at home. Soon the school will publish a
88 book for teachers to help support executive function in each subject area. RTI builds
89 skills and accommodates the needs of students and at the same time enhances the students
90 learning.

91 Ms. Boothroyd stated that all of the children are in the core classes all of the time. The
92 literacy and math coaches come into play to support the needs of the children and
93 teachers. There is data driving all of this and teachers are constantly collecting data. The
94 data helps teachers to reflect to ensure all students' needs are being met across the core
95 curriculum.

96 Mr. Prescott asked if there is a minimum amount of time the teachers are collaborating
97 with the RTI team.

98 Ms. McKenney stated that there is a scheduled rotation every month to meet with all
99 grade levels, but the RTI team can solve smaller issues in between the grade level
100 meetings if needed. The team deals with questions and concerns all the time.

101 Ms. Curran stated that teachers could go to the RTI team at anytime to get guidance to
102 better reach the child who is not getting the curriculum or to enhance another students
103 learning. The RTI team can give strategies and collaboration with a teammate also helps.
104 She gave an example of having a white board in and out of the classroom. The entering
105 agenda is out side stating what kids need for class and the exiting agenda inside tells
106 students when leaving what they need to do for HW and what to take home.

107 Ms. Maher and Ms. Boothroyd explained that the literacy and math coaches have a
108 rotating schedule, but coaches are in and out of classrooms all the time.

109 Ms. Maher stated that the Reading Street curriculum has a baseline test and on going
110 assessment to help group students. Groups are fluid and kids can move around depending

111 on the child's skills. This curriculum allows for groups with in the classroom.

112 Ms. Wilson stated that Core and More is an opportunity to have smaller groups of kids to
113 extend and dive deeper into content or to take the bigger concepts to develop the topics.
114 She gave an example of Language Arts teachers enhancing the Holocaust unit by looking
115 at Anne Frank and doing some theater. During the novel unit they may have open format
116 oral discussions, which usually does not happen till high school. Students are being
117 exposed to different levels in the classroom, so there is not a ceiling to the learning and
118 kids can take each other further.

119 Ms. Curran stated that there is no gifted and talent program at AMS. The school aligns
120 the curriculum with standards and has projects that are more open to give students a
121 choice. Students at the higher end tend to do more investigating or writing. Teachers
122 help students choose research paper topics based on their NEAA and NECAP score.
123 Things are naturally embedded in the school that the higher performing students lean
124 towards like the Wells Speaking Contest.

125 Ms. Maher discussed the students who do not choose to push themselves and how
126 teachers help to push those students. The data supports pushing those students. Teachers
127 use the RTI team to help get input on how to reach those students.

128 Ms. Wilson stated that RTI helps to identify deficiencies and enhances learning and
129 teaching also. RTI has made teachers better listeners and better communicators. They
130 see a bigger picture than what is just in the classroom. RTI promotes greater thinking
131 and sets greater standards in the classroom.

132 All four teachers discussed how RTI and best practices go hand in hand. RTI has become
133 a way of thinking and how teachers collaborate at the school. There is a community of
134 teaching and the needs of the students is the number one priority. The projects, activities,
135 and lessons are just good teaching. RTI helps with better progress monitoring,
136 collaborating, and supporting the children more. There is a continuum from year to year.
137 RTI supports the schools' goal that all students are challenged.

138 Ms. Bennett thanked the teachers for letting the board hear about how students are
139 supported and how students on the higher end are enriched.

140 Evaluation conference

141 Mr. Warburton stated that on the agenda they added the districts mission statement and
142 the SAU 39 goals. All four goals have been touched on tonight and the district has been
143 committed to these goals since March and will be till June.

144 Mr. Warburton discussed evaluation and how it happens. He stated that five people went
145 to a conference to learn about new thinking to evaluate the evaluators. They received
146 information and research from a school district in Maryland and are beginning a
147 partnership with Montgomery County, MD. Their work is interesting and is showing
148 results. The district is putting evaluation and supervision on the program review, which
149 will involve teachers and administration. There will be training on how to evaluate and

150 there will be change.

151 **DISCUSSION ITEM**

152 Policies: Staff Conduct & Ethics

153 Ms. Bennett stated that this would be postponed till after the SAU board meeting.

154 Grading

155 Ms. Bennett stated that the intention was to have a philosophical discussion about
156 grading, but Mr. Manning could not be here. The discussion will be tabled till next
157 month.

158 Mr. Dodge stated that AMS realized they have a wide range of grading practices. The
159 ways of grading have changed and the school wants to be more consistent and
160 transparent. AMS put a committee together because of parent concerns about how
161 students get graded. The committee was formed last November with 16 members. They
162 took a survey to check AMS' practices. They have started to discuss the data and
163 antidotal statements. It is incredible how different the answers are. He discussed some
164 of the questions that were asked. The committee will continue to work with the data. Mr.
165 Dodge has attended many workshops and conferences that talk about how children are
166 being graded and the injustice because there is no consistency. There has been a
167 discussion about online grading and some teachers already do this weekly. This is a
168 communication piece, so parents see grades before report cards. The school does not
169 expect people to do the exact same thing all the time, but to have some consistent policies
170 about grading, rigor, and expectations.

171 Mr. Warburton stated that grading is a big discussion and is not a quick fix. Most high
172 schools have online grading and some middle schools do also. The district is starting to
173 have that conversation.

174 Mr. Dodge stated that at AMS all teachers are expected to put information on Angel. If
175 parents do not see that information they should please contact the teacher. Parents and
176 students should be able to go onto Angel to see homework.

177 **ACTION ITEMS**

178 Policies

179 None

180 Professional Nomination/Personnel

181 Mr. St. Amand recommended Brittany Doyle to take over the 1st grade position. She did
182 her student teaching at Wilkins, has been long term substitute at CW and AMS, and
183 worked as tutor for children who are at home. She has her Elementary Education and
184 Special Education certifications.

185 The board discussed how she is an excellent candidate.

186 Mr. St. Amand stated that she is replacing Martha Wagner and has been working since
187 the first day of school.

188 **Ms. Facey made a motion to accept Mr. St. Amand's recommendation to hire**
189 **Brittany Doyle. Mr. Prescott seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.**

190 **INFORMATIONAL**

191 Visits/Coffees

192 Mr. Warburton discussed how the wood shop makes Adirondack Chairs and he bought
193 one. The buyer makes a check out to any charity and the program has raised over \$15,000
194 for many different charities.

195 Mr. Warburton stated that there would be Coffees at the Brick School monthly. Each
196 coffee will try to focus on a particular subject; the next one is Math specific. He is going
197 to try to get into 20 homes to discuss great things that are happening in education. People
198 have offered to open their home for 1 hour and the administration will be there to talk to
199 the people who come. These meetings will be video taped and will be on the website.
200 The first one is next Tuesday. In MV, Sue Blair and Mr. Warburton will be doing a
201 monthly coffee at the library.

202 Ms. Heimark stated that there is a Math parent evening on Oct. 3rd from 6:30-8:30 at
203 SHS. Andy Clark, the American author for Math in Focus, will speak and the program is
204 geared towards parents and supporting students at home. The latest research about
205 mathematical thinking will also be discussed.

206 Ms. Foulks asked if the program will be video taped and put on the website. That would
207 be great and will be valuable for parents who cannot attend.

208 Retirement information

209 Ms. Bennett stated that this would be discussed at the SAU board meeting.

210 **Mr. Prescott made a motion to adjourn to go into a non-meeting under RSA 91-A:I**
211 **(a) at 7:19pm. Ms. Foulks seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.**

212

213