

1 **Amherst School Board**  
2 **Thursday, May 23, 2013**

3  
4 **ATTENDANCE**

5  
6 Amherst School Board

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

8  
9 Administrative Team

10 Peter Warburton, Gerry St. Amand, Porter Dodge, Renea Sparks, and Nicole Heimarck

11  
12 Minute Taker

13 Beth Penney  
14

15 **CALL TO ORDER**

16 Ms. Bennett called the meeting to order at 6:30pm.

17 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

18 Principals' reports

19 Mr. Manning asked Mr. St. Amand about the iWalk observations.

20 Mr. St. Amand stated that this is an iPad app., which uses 16 established formats to do an  
21 observation in 15 minutes. The feedback can be emailed to the teacher right away and  
22 the teacher has an opportunity to give feedback. The administration and the staff like it.  
23 The focus for these observations has been on Math this year. Mr. St. Amand thanked Sue  
24 Blair, who found the app. Clark/Wilkins has bought the updated version, which comes  
25 with technology support.

26 Mr. Manning asked for a presentation of the iWalk app.

27 Mr. Dodge stated that they use the traditional observation method using a protocol and do  
28 walk through observations also, but without the use of technology. The AMS  
29 administration went to a training at UNH yesterday to discuss the future of feedback and  
30 observations.

31 Ms. Foulks asked if there was any discussion of doing more bar modeling training for  
32 parents next year.

33 Ms. Heimarck stated that she had spent time working with the Amherst PTA getting a  
34 sense of where parents need support with the new Math curriculum and program. She  
35 discussed a number of topics that will be covered with trainings for next year. The  
36 administrative team has a work session this summer to discuss trainings in Math and

37 Common Core Standards. The next bar modeling training would occur in the fall when it  
38 starts to come up in the student's curriculum. The trainings and other information is  
39 online and parents have been notified about it via email and through the Amherst PTA  
40 website. The trainings online include 4 videos from prior trainings in the schools, parent  
41 tutorials and there are videos on the Math in Focus website, which discuss how to support  
42 children at home.

43 Mr. Dodge stated that the parent training last week was video taped and will be posted on  
44 the school's website. The training was well attended with about 20 people.

45 Mr. Manning and Ms. Heimarck discussed how many parents have accessed the training.  
46 She did not know. The discussion about how to better get information to parents has  
47 happened with the PTA so everyone can better support students. Emails are not getting  
48 read for the detail. They have not yet come up with another solution, but the  
49 administrative team will work on it this summer.

50 Ms. Foulks stated that she is happy the outdoor classroom stage has been built. The art  
51 show at the library is fantastic. The writing festival was fantastic also and Kathi  
52 McIntyre did a great job.

53 Ms. Bennett stated that she liked the watercolor work and the picture writing. It is  
54 exciting to see the progression of the 1<sup>st</sup> grader's writing.

55 Mr. Manning and Mr. Dodge discussed changing the 4<sup>th</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> grade transitions night.  
56 The Parent Partnership and parents who attended the night also had given similar  
57 feedback. They discussed that the student panels should be kept and that the 5<sup>th</sup> grade  
58 teachers should attend. The video should be changed, updated, and made shorter.

59 Mr. Warburton discussed the 7<sup>th</sup> grade transition night for Mont Vernon students. He  
60 discussed how to change it and that they will get video support from John Ranta. The  
61 SAU made a comment sheet for parents to give feedback and they will be using that for  
62 every parent night in the future.

### 63 Correspondence

64 Ms. Bennett read a letter from the Amherst Education Association (AEA) asking to  
65 bargain a new 2013-2015 contract. She stated that she had read the letter at the March  
66 meeting, but did not contact Peter Desnoyers after the March meeting.

67 **Mr. Prescott made a motion to enter contract discussions with the AEA early this**  
68 **year. Ms. Facey seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimous.**

### 69 PUBLIC TIME

70 Larry Ballard, the President of Amherst Education Association, spoke to the board about

71 the layoff of the 4 grade level aides at AMS. He had already spoken with Mr. Warburton  
72 and Mr. Dodge. He discussed the unintended consequences of these layoffs. He discussed  
73 the support of these aides and their role in the classrooms including the work at the  
74 beginning of the year before the teachers and kids come to ensure the school is ready to  
75 go. The grade level aides support the programs and the school. They manage back to  
76 school registration, many programs, large events, large units, class fieldtrips, and  
77 presentations. They provide a safety role including, coverage of classes so teachers can  
78 be at meetings and supervise arrival and dismissal outside. This supervision is 1440  
79 additional duty spots for arrival and dismissal for 180 days. The aide's position has been  
80 critical for decades at the school. He wondered who would cover the work they do and  
81 asked is there are other things that can be examined to cut rather than those positions. He  
82 was at the meeting on behalf of the teachers to ask the board to discuss this issue further  
83 with the building principals.

84 Mr. Prescott and Mr. Ballard discussed further the duty slots, which include afternoons  
85 and mornings for 4 aides for 180 days equals 1440 slots.

86 Mr. Ballard discussed the fantastic concert last week with the band and chorus kids where  
87 Mont Vernon joined them. He stated that is was a great evening and nice experience.  
88 There is an 8<sup>th</sup> grade concert next Thursday. He took 82 of the 8<sup>th</sup> graders to Wilkins and  
89 performed for the students during lunch. The kids loved it and needed to be reminded to  
90 eat. They will also be performing for the Mont Vernon students when they come for  
91 Shadow Day.

## 92 **CONSENT AGENDA**

93 Ms. Foulks asked to pull the minutes.

94 **Ms. Foulks made a motion to accept the Consent Agenda including Treasurer's**  
95 **report for April 2013, and the Unanticipated Revenue: Donation to Wilkins Student**  
96 **Activities from Westat- \$25.00, Donation to Wilkins Student Activities from Westat-**  
97 **\$25.00, Donation to Wilkins Student Activities from Box Tops for Education- \$5.80,**  
98 **Donation to Special Revenue Fund from Energy North, Inc./ExxonMobil**  
99 **Educational Alliance Program- \$500.00, and Autism Bridges, Inc. – ABA Therapy**  
100 **Services. Ms. Facey seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.**

101 Ms. Foulks asked to fix the Bruce Chakrin's name and to change Mr. Prescott's time of  
102 arrival.

103 **Ms. Foulks made a motion to accept the April minutes as amended. Mr. Manning**  
104 **seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous, except Ms. Bennett abstained.**

## 105 **PRESENTATIONS/REPORTS**

106 AMS Washington, D.C. trip – Sue Wilson/Vicki Leknes

107 Ms. Wilson and Ms. Leknes discussed their trip with 20 students and a parent. They left  
108 AMS at 10pm Sunday night, slept on the bus and arrived in DC at 5:30am and hit the  
109 ground running. They toured the Smithsonian, walked through the Mall (grassy area), and  
110 got to the hotel at 7:30pm. Each morning they were up by 6am and on the bus by 7am  
111 and back to hotel at night by 9pm. They did a lot but did not feel rushed. They discussed  
112 the excitement of the students and how students could focus on what they were interested  
113 in. They discussed how students saw things they had learned about and how they were  
114 interested in seeing things they had heard about, seen a video on, or had learned about.  
115 Kids did a great job, were very focused, and learned a lot. There was not as much Math  
116 as Ms. Leknes had hoped. They will have a video and will celebrate on Tuesday night  
117 with the parents. Ms. Wilson will email the board a link to the video once the parents see  
118 the video. The trip was 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders and some 8<sup>th</sup> graders had also gone to Costa  
119 Rica.

120 Ben, Alyssa, Hannah, all 7<sup>th</sup> graders, spoke about the trip with the board. Ms. Leknes and  
121 Ms. Wilson were also part of the discussion. DC was really fun and they had been  
122 looking forward to it for 3 months. Their favorite was the Holocaust Museum because  
123 they had just finished a unit on the Holocaust and to see the museum a week later was  
124 crazy, moving, sad, and worth it. The museum taught them a lot that had not been learned  
125 in the unit. The students wrote reflections and kept a journal while on the trip. They also  
126 kept a blog, which was a great way for kids to share with their parents what they were  
127 doing and seeing. They also saw Washington's House, Mount Vernon, and explained  
128 how it was cool to take a tour and to walk around his yard, which is 8,000 acres on the  
129 Potomac River. The house was being repainted and it was interesting to see how much  
130 materials were needed because it was so big. The students saw other school groups, but  
131 there was little interaction between the groups. They also had a Memorial Tour at night.  
132 The group got many compliments about how great the students were and how well  
133 behaved they were.

134 The Board thanked the students, Ms. Wilson, and Ms. Leknes for coming to talk to the  
135 board.

136 Jake, Hannah's dad, spoke to the board about the importance of these types of trips and  
137 this kind of learning. He discussed the Holocaust Museum and the importance for this  
138 generation to not repeat history. He discussed the comparison between the lessons in  
139 class and seeing the museum. He stated that when discussing what his daughter learned  
140 she was brought to tears because what she saw and learned had such a profound impact  
141 on her life. He urged the school board to promote this type of education in Amherst. He  
142 stated that his family is very fortunate and that these trips are really important to  
143 education and to being concerned citizens.

144 3 -Year Tech Plan – Bruce Chakrin

145 Mr. Chakrin discussed the history of technology planning in NH. Schools use to have to  
146 submit to the state Department of Education a plan based on a rubric. It was usually 50-  
147 60 pages long. Based on feedback from the boards they have changed the plan's format  
148 and no longer have to submit it to the state. They now have created a three-year

149 technology plan, which is a rolling plan to try to adapt to the changing technology. He  
150 discussed how to read the plan and how the plan includes integration into the Common  
151 Core state standards since technology is build into every piece of the standards. The  
152 district needs a technology plan for eRate funding, which is federal funding for  
153 connectivity expenditures. The plan also includes a description of a model classroom,  
154 which will differ from grade to grade. This is a diagram of what technology would be  
155 included in the next three years. He discussed the other highlights in the technology plan  
156 including mobile device management, cloud computing, rich media communication,  
157 virtual desktops, improve internal and external communication, and efficiency measures  
158 for document management and print management. He discussed that document and print  
159 management helps to eliminate paper and files, by scanning files without having paper.  
160 Print management keeps track of printing to see where they are printing too much and to  
161 limit the amount people can print. The goal is to reduce paper and the maintenance of  
162 printing, including toner.

163 Mr. Chakrin discussed Office 365 and the new website. Teachers are piloting the  
164 Learning Management System. Teachers are using students to show teachers how to use  
165 the Management system and kids are excited about being part of the process. The district  
166 needs the technology plan approved by the end of June, so he asked the board for  
167 additions and changes.

168 Mr. Prescott asked Mr. Chakrin to come back to the board fairly often to give updates on  
169 the plan, which will help with the next budget season also.

170 Mr. Chakrin stated that at the end of the plan there is a budget projection. They are trying  
171 to keep the costs similar, but there are increases because of what the schools will be  
172 facing in years to come. He discussed that the increases are based on people bringing in  
173 their own devices, which will create a need for an increasing bandwidth and better  
174 wireless.

175 Ms. Heimarck discussed the importance of technology because starting in spring of 2015  
176 NH will start testing on the new Common Core standards and this high stakes test will be  
177 given using technology. 46 states have adopted the standards and the states have had to  
178 give a readiness survey. When using this type of assessment it has to align with  
179 instruction. Students have to use the technology before the high stakes assessment is  
180 given.

181 Ms. Facey asked Mr. Chakrin to look for savings that may be realized from implementing  
182 new technology.

183 Mr. Warburton asked that feedback from the board about the technology plan go directly  
184 to Bruce, so the technology plan can be posted by the end of June.

#### 185 Assessments Results/Charts

186 Ms. Heimarck reminded the board that this is a single assessment from a single point in  
187 time. The NECAP is administered in the fall and is a reflection of the previous academic

188 year. The administration did a deeper analysis in math than in reading because of the  
189 focus in Math in the last 2 years. She explained how to read the graph discussing how the  
190 green cohort of students have seen growth and the red shows a decrease in achievement  
191 over time. She discussed how grade 3 is the first time students see the assessment.  
192 Grade 3 did see an increase in performance this year, 4% more of the population showed  
193 an increase in proficiency. Grades 3-8 this year showed the greatest performance increase  
194 in years with significant growth in last years 3<sup>rd</sup> graders and last years 6<sup>th</sup> graders. There  
195 was a shift in student performance from 6<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> as a decrease in performance. When the  
196 item analysis reports were pulled for the 7<sup>th</sup> grade results the largest population of  
197 students, 29 students, fell into performance level 2. 19 of the 29 students missed  
198 proficiency by 1 (9 students) or 2 (10 students) points. This is not an excuse, but sheds  
199 light that the numbers are not as significant as they look. The teachers need to look  
200 deeper at the school level at what questions were missed and what skills are weak.

201 Ms. Heimarck discussed topics in math. 7<sup>th</sup> grade did well in numbers and operation with  
202 70% of students proficient or above and Geometry and Measurement were the weakest  
203 skills with only 55.5% of students were proficient or above. This is not a surprise because  
204 there is less of an emphasis on these topics in the Common Core standards. The state  
205 assessment is assessing kids on old standards where the SAU has been focusing on the  
206 Common Core standards, which focuses on integers and numbers in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade. The  
207 timing of when these skills are taught and the weight of the topics are changing.

208 Ms. Landwehrle stated that students had trouble with numbers and operations problems  
209 because they were multistep word problems and not because they struggled with the  
210 computation. She discussed the growth data, which is a way to track growth in students.  
211 She explained the calculation and the student growth percentile, which uses a median not  
212 an average. 50% or above is strong growth. In Math, each grade level showed growth or  
213 high growth.

214 Ms. Heimarck discussed the area district comparisons. She was excited to see the district  
215 had its highest performance in Math in the history of the NECAP. The district is closing  
216 the gap with other districts, but more growth can happen. Reading scores are very strong  
217 and have been very stable over time. The district has some of the strongest scores in the  
218 state because of the five-year strategic plan in literacy, which has given great gains.  
219 Research shows it is possible for districts to have 95% proficiency in reading.

220 Ms. Landwehrle discussed strands in reading. Word identification and vocabulary is an  
221 area of strength across all grades. There were surprises in the initial understanding of  
222 literary text, which are basic comprehension questions. There is not a huge distinction  
223 between the results of the strands at the different grade levels. Students were better at the  
224 more rigorous concepts than the more simple ones. Students could be reading more into  
225 the questions. The growth data had to look at the individual level because so many  
226 students are performing so high.

227 Ms. Heimarck discussed the comparative data to other districts. The district has a very  
228 strong performance in reading and thanks to all of the teachers work across the content

229 areas. She discussed assessments in the future. This spring they administered the  
230 Common Core aligned Math NWEA test, Fall of 2013 is the last NECAP, Fall 2014 will  
231 be the Common Core aligned NWEA, and Spring 2015 will be the first SBAC (common  
232 core assessment).

233 Mr. Manning discussed how he is encouraged by the math scores and has seen his own  
234 kid's comprehension of math improve. He is impressed with the rigor they have gone  
235 through. He also appreciated the explanation for the 7<sup>th</sup> grade scores.

236 Mr. Prescott discussed the scores from 4<sup>th</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> grade and the transition from Wilkins to  
237 AMS. He is concerned because there is a trend where scores go up and down. He  
238 wondered if there are plans to address this.

239 Ms. Heimark stated that they are having a hard time analyzing and making sense of the  
240 the data because with the student growth percentiles grade 5 is second lowest and grade 4  
241 had the highest rate of performance. When looking at the assessment at the item level,  
242 the 4<sup>th</sup> grade struggled on multistep word problems and there are more of them on the 5<sup>th</sup>  
243 grade assessment.

244 The board discussed that this could be because the students are not exposed to those types  
245 of problems at the lower levels. They also discussed how this year's assessment is not  
246 showing the work that has been done this year with Math in Focus and how having a  
247 SAU wide curriculum may remedy this issue. The NECAP next year will help to show  
248 the success of this new math program. Mont Vernon also saw a decrease in proficiency  
249 of students from 4<sup>th</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> grade in both Math and Reading. They discussed that the 4<sup>th</sup>  
250 graders struggle with the word problems might be reading comprehension and not math  
251 computation. They discussed how the math assessment is not only demanding in Math,  
252 but in reading comprehension and writing skills also. Mr. St. Amand reminded the board  
253 that students can have the Math problems read out loud to them, but they cannot have the  
254 reading assessment read out loud to them.

## 255 **DISCUSSION ITEM**

256 Mr. Warburton discussed that Mr. Hendrix (Jim) is looking for the committee  
257 recommendation to name the diamond and he will have a recommendation from the  
258 committee in the next few days. The board will move forward on this at the next  
259 meeting.

260 Mr. Manning asked for a strategic committee at the SAU level to discuss the  
261 responsibility to the community to do something with the Baboosic Lake property.

262 Mr. Warburton stated that the town administrator had recently emailed him starting the  
263 conversation about that land and the town being involved. He suggested that the board  
264 should look into the possibilities further with small group from the board and Jim O'Mara  
265 He will forward the email to the board.

266 **Mr. Manning made a motion to begin the conversation amongst the board and the**  
267 **town to look closely at what could be done with the Baboosic Lake property. Ms.**  
268 **Foulks seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.**

269 Mr. Warburton stated he would put this on the agenda for the next meeting.

270 **ACTION ITEM**

271 **Building use of AMS portable by Amherst Town Employees**

272 Mr. Warburton stated that the town is renovating the town hall this summer and has asked  
273 to relocate some of the offices to one of the AMS portables for the summer. It will be  
274 office space for people without traffic. The board needs to vote to move forward with the  
275 process.

276 Mr. Dodge stated that they will use the AMS furniture to have little impact and there will  
277 be no additional cost to the district.

278 Mr. Warburton stated that the timing will be tight and they have discussed plans B and C  
279 for what could happen if school starts and they still need to be in the portable. He  
280 discussed traffic and that the school and the students come first over the town's use of the  
281 portable.

282 **Ms. Foulks made a motion allowing the Amherst town employees use of one AMS**  
283 **portable during the town hall renovation. Mr. Manning seconded the motion and**  
284 **the vote was unanimous.**

285 Mr. Warburton informed the board that the town employees and Mr. Warburton meet  
286 monthly and are doing bulk purchasing to save money.

287 **INFORMATIONAL**

288 **Town Liaison to Amherst School Board**

289 Mr. Warburton stated that Mike Akillian would come to the June meeting to discuss his  
290 role.

291 **Summer Workshop Date**

292 Ms. Bennett stated that she would send an email to everyone about proposed dates for  
293 July.

294 **Ms. Foulks made a motion to go into Non-Public Session RSA 91-A:3, II (c) at**  
295 **8:34pm. Ms. Facey seconded the motion and the roll call was all yes.**