

1 **Amherst School Board**
2 **Wednesday, February 15, 2012**

3
4 **ATTENDANCE**

5
6 **Amherst School Board**

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

8
9 **Administrative Team**

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

12
13 **Minutes Taker**

14 Beth Penney

15
16 **CALL TO ORDER**

17 Ms. Bennett called the meeting to order at 6:03pm.

18 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

19 **Principals Report**

20 Mr. Warburton discussed the new format of the principal's report and how the report was
21 written to reflect where the buildings are with the SAU goals.

22 **PUBLIC TIME**

23 No public present.

24 **CONSENT AGENDA**

25 **Mr. Maresco made a motion to accept the consent agenda containing the**
26 **Treasurer's report for December 2011 and January 2012, Unanticipated Revenue,**
27 **Restitution payment - \$102.27 and the Transfer. Mr. Manning seconded the motion**
28 **and the vote was unanimous.**

29 Ms. Bennett pulled the January 5th minutes.

30 Ms. Bennett asked to change line 34 to; are there going to be any trips to PMEC for the
31 2nd grade".

32 **Ms. Foulks made a motion to accept the January minutes as changed. Ms. Head**
33 **seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.**

34 **PRESENTATIONS/REPORTS**

35 **FY12 2nd Quarterly financial report**

36 Ms. Shankel explained the quarterly report for December 2011. The revenue will not be
37 as high as expected in the local area due to interest rates decreasing. For expenditures
38 there have been savings in salaries and benefits. There are additional staffing in special
39 education, but there will be no deficit because there was a trade made for this position
40 with the math specialist for special education. There are also savings in the debt service
41 that is due to the reissuing of the bond, which saves about \$41,000. The total saving was
42 a total of \$132,000. This is a little less than what was projected at the deliberative
43 session. The projection usually increases as time goes by.

44 Goals and Principals Reports

45 Mr. St. Amand explained how he is improving his technology skills and used publisher to
46 make this document and he had never used the program before.

47 All professional staff will have had at least two observations by March 5th and the third
48 observation will be completed by May. All three principals are observing all regular
49 education teachers and the focus is on literacy for the observations.

50 St. Amand stated that supervision and evaluation are going into a program review in the
51 fall and it will be similar to the program review for Math, but it will not take 5 yrs.

52 Mr. St. Amand stated that Goal C & D are not applicable and there are no financial
53 implications at this time.

54 Ms. Heimark explained the process of the program review including: Phase 1: a self
55 study phase, literature review of best practice (take less than a year), Phase 2: action plan
56 for change, Phase 3: implementation, which maybe a multiyear process based on how
57 significant the change is, Phase 4: a summative evaluation, but they will continue to
58 evaluate the changes on a yearly basis.

59 The board and the administration discussed why changes and a program review take so
60 long. A program review looks more holistically. They discussed that part of this review
61 is the discussion of linking assessment results to teacher evaluations. Evaluations will
62 still be taking place during the program review. They also discussed small changes that
63 are made to the process of evaluation yearly, including the literacy checklist.

64 Mr. St. Amand stated that the principals have been spending much more time in
65 classrooms and with teachers than in the past and they are proud of this process.

66 Mr. St. Amand discussed goal 2. Clark and Wilkins have not had to do anything related
67 to the first parts of this goal, but they do send out weekly emails to the board and to
68 Patch. The community members are invited to all events. Mr. St. Amand discussed the
69 number of voice mails versus the hundreds of emails he gets per day and how email is a
70 valuable tool.

71 Mr. St. Amand discussed goal 3. He stated that an update about the transitions should be
72 given to the board every month. He discussed the many transitions that are already
73 happening including: Preschool, Kindergarten, and 1st grade registration, information
74 sessions, a visitation day and parent coffees; work with AMS for transition from 4th to 5th
75 grade; arrange tours for groups of kids who need something different; had a program for
76 culinary arts and Clark students came to Wilkins and at other times Clark students come
77 to Wilkins also. There is a labor-intensive process for placement and work for smooth
78 transitions. The schools are very good at having balanced groups and placing students
79 with teachers. He also discussed transitions and strategies used for anxious students and
80 new students and families.

81 The board and the administration discussed the interaction between 4th and 5th grade
82 teachers. Face to face time is difficult because of the schedules of the different schools.
83 They do meet once a year, 4th grade teachers go to the parent transition night, and there are
84 many electronic discussions. This is an area the schools are trying to improve. There has
85 also been some discussion of looping 4th grade teachers to 5th grade, which would be
86 extremely valuable and is only in the beginning stages of discussion.

87 Mr. St. Amand discussed goal 4. He discussed partial and full implementation in the
88 different grades. He sent all of the SAU goals and the review of them to all of the staff at
89 Clark/Wilkins and hopes for feedback tomorrow. They have not started looking at the
90 academic learner expectations (ALE) at Clark/Wilkins yet.

91 Mr. Maresco expressed his concern about the academic learner expectations used at SHS
92 because they are confusing and frustrating to students at that level. He feels they would
93 be really hard for younger students to understand.

94 Ms. Heimarck discussed how the learner expectations are a way to contribute to a
95 seamless curriculum, but the language would need to change at the lower levels. She also
96 stated that the assessment piece is one spoke of the wheel. The ALE also drive
97 curriculum. The assessment and reporting out part may not be included in the
98 conversation at the lower levels.

99 Mr. Warburton stated that the idea is to get some continuity between the schools and
100 these are just beginning conversations to create that continuity.

101 Mr. St. Amand discussed collaboration and differentiated instruction (DI). At Clark/
102 Wilkins they have 6 trained DI facilitators who have been doing visits, peer observations,
103 and applying learning to their own instruction. This has been well received by the staff.
104 There will be an ongoing focus on DI and is part of the formal observation for staff also.
105 Clark/ Wilkins will have 14 facilitated leaders next week to lead groups and will use
106 those individuals for smaller group work and problem solving with in the school.

107 Mr. St. Amand discussed goal 3, bullet 2. He stated that the administration is working on
108 a SAU wide program review committees. He discussed conversations about quarters

109 versus trimesters and that they are using Mont Vernon as a pilot to get feedback about
110 progress reports. Clark and Wilkins are working hard to communicate with AMS, the
111 village school, and the high school.

112 The board and the administrators discussed moving Clark/Wilkins to trimesters, the
113 report cards, and mid-term progress reports. They discussed how the depth and
114 information from the progress report is valuable. They discussed time put in by teachers
115 for the progress reports and the need to make the comments valuable on progress reports.

116 Mr. Dodge discussed goal 1. He stated that all teachers in year 3 of their cycle are
117 scheduled or have been observed and all of their observations will be complete in the
118 next 2 weeks. The principals started walk through learning, which is a walk through,
119 spending 5-10 min. in the classroom and the visit is unannounced. The focus of the walk
120 through is on student engagement and the principal tries to get a picture to look for trends
121 that can be addressed throughout the school. The evaluation tool being used has been
122 focused on a few major areas including: learning in the classroom, assessment, DI, and
123 personal one-on-one (what does the teacher want the evaluator to look at).

124 Ms. Bennett asked for Mr. Dodge to share anonymously what teachers ask for the
125 evaluators to look at.

126 Mr. Dodge discussed goal 2, which is also a building goal. They have tried to improve
127 communication with teachers including having certain people that report to teachers
128 important information, the instructional leadership team shares information, staff
129 advisory council meets with an administrator present, and they are looking at using
130 Sharepoint as a tool for communication to staff.

131 Mr. Manning asked if they have surveyed parents to see what kinds of communication
132 people want.

133 Mr. Dodge stated that they send weekly emails and reports for everything going on, but
134 they have not currently surveyed parents. The principals always try to get back to parents
135 with in 24 to 48 hours of contact.

136 The board and the administrators discussed how verbal parents are, what parents do not
137 know, and what the board gets asked about. They discussed the value of finding out what
138 parents want and how communication needs to go both ways. They discussed using a
139 survey and having a focus group.

140 Mr. Warburton discussed return rates of surveys and using Patch and the Amherst Citizen
141 more often to communicate with the community.

142 Mr. Dodge discussed goal 3. He stated that Mr. St. Amand had summed it up and that
143 they will have a great transition presentation for the SAU board meeting looking at
144 transitions from K-12. They are proud of their work with transitions, but they can also

145 improve.

146 Mr. Warbruton stated that for the first time this fall AMS and MV 6th graders are going to
147 science camp together.

148 Mr. Dodge stated that Ms. Wons has been working with the SAU on curriculum and they
149 have scheduled a grading and assessment committee meeting for next week. They are
150 working on looking at the report card because the current A-F evaluation system does not
151 fit anymore.

152 Ms. Wons discussed a late start recently where the focus was RTI and DI. She discussed
153 how the dialog between teachers was excellent and how the discussion about grading and
154 evaluation started. At the end of the late start the administration surveyed teachers about
155 grading and it is a topic they want to discuss.

156 Mr. Dodge stated that the grading committee would also be doing some best practice
157 research.

158 Mr. Dodge discussed goal 4. He stated that the Math coaches are working hard with the
159 principals and teachers to line-up with the math program review. AMS also has 14
160 trained people as facilitative leaders.

161 Mr. Warburton asked the board to think about what the administrators can do better for
162 communication. They are looking for the board's and the public's input.

163 Ms. Bennett stated that this is a good thing for the board think about and then when they
164 have a workshop the board can share that information.

165 Core and More update

166 Ms. Wons stated that Core and More is going well. She explained again to the board
167 what this period of the day is used for including: IEP students receiving services, some
168 students are in math intervention (not always IEP, but need remediation identified by
169 using assessment data), and all other students are with their team of content teachers
170 doing an extension of the current content curriculum. This is not a graded course, but is
171 enrichment encouraging motivation and engagement. Ms. Wons discussed some of the
172 recent uses of the Core and More period including the 8th grade's look at the 80's, 7th
173 grade's extension of their bridge building unit, 6th grade's focus on literacy, and 5th
174 grade's focus on math.

175 Mr. Dodge stated that they are continuing to try to get more rigor and consistency into
176 Core and More. They have seen an improvement in the students who need math support.

177 Ms. Wons explained that the Math teachers on team provide the math support and
178 intervention; so all other students do not see their math teachers for Core and More.

179 Students usually go through a 7-week rotation in Core and More.

180 The board and the administration discussed students who are not involved in the fun
181 activities during Core and More and have to go to math help. It is hard for these students,
182 but this time is meeting the student's needs, which is most important. The student will
183 feel good when their grades are going up. They discussed how they never pull kids out of
184 integrated arts, music, or technology classes and will continue to use Core and More for
185 the support and enrichment.

186 Read 180 update

187 The presenter was unable to be here tonight and the presentation will be moved to the
188 next meeting.

189 **DISCUSSION ITEM**

190 Grading trimester update

191 Mr. St. Amand stated that they are having a joint faculty meeting with Mont Vernon,
192 getting a committee up and running for the next year, and having a new report card
193 document in the following year.

194 Ms. Heimarck stated that Mont Vernon had a committee of teachers look at trimesters for
195 a year and then brought the idea to the board. They did this because they wanted more
196 time to see student growth. They thought the narrative progress report was key and that it
197 increased the number of times the faculty reported to parents on student improvement.
198 They do not do a progress report every trimester. The progress reports are more
199 reflective and describe the changes students can make to enhance their performance.

200 The board and the administration discussed that AMS reports student progress 6 times
201 per year in 3 progress reports and 3 report cards. They discussed just using Mont
202 Vernon's report card form and how that may work, but there needs to be more time for
203 discussion with teachers at Clark/ Wilkins to see if that form will work for them. They
204 also discussed the need to get parents involved in this process also. They discussed
205 leaving this item on the agenda and having the Mont Vernon trimester committee and
206 principal come to the Amherst board to give their trimester presentation.

207 World Languages/Related Arts

208 Mr. Warburton discussed his recent meeting with the integrated arts and world language
209 staff at AMS. He discussed the importance of students being able to speak a second
210 language and that Amherst students have no language before AMS. He discussed how
211 world language and integrated arts have received less time over the years. Colleges and
212 employers are looking for people who have an alternative look at the world and have
213 skills related to the arts. He stated that they are beginning conversations with the SAU

214 leadership group and may have budget implications. This will take time to determine
215 what languages we want. They need to have conversations with the board and the
216 community also. We do not want our kids to be less successful in the future. We need to
217 continue to have the conversation about related arts and world language and we need to
218 reinvest in these areas.

219 Policies

220 Ms. Bennett stated that they were not going to review any policies tonight but instead she
221 discussed a new format for reviewing policies. If the policy committee needs to change a
222 policy they will take the new policy to the leadership team and then to the SAU board.

223 2012-2013 School Year “Draft” calendar

224 Mr. Warburton discussed how the draft of the calendar has been given to the union
225 leaders and the SAU has received feedback, the central office team has looked at it, and
226 the SAU board will see a revised draft. This draft is similar to Milford’s calendar. He
227 stated they are looking for more changes and feedback. The final calendar will be passed
228 in March. Adding more time to the calendar is an agenda item for the SAU board
229 meeting.

230 **NON-PUBLIC SESSION**

231 **Mr. Manning made a motion to go into non-public session under RSA 91-A:3 II. (a)**
232 **(c) at 7:36pm. Ms. Head seconded the motion and the roll call was all yes.**

233 A personnel matter was discussed.

234 Peg Bennett made a motion to exit non-public session at 7:58 p.m. Motion seconded by
235 Peter Maresco. Unanimously accepted by roll call vote: Peg Bennett: yes, Nancy Head:
236 yes, Peter Maresco: yes, Jim Manning: yes and Lucienne Foulks: yes.

237

238 **Motion to adjourn**

239

240 At 8:00 p.m. Jim Manning made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Motion seconded by
241 Lucienne Foulks and was unanimously accepted.