

1 **Amherst School Board**  
2 **Thursday, April 19, 2012**

3  
4 **A Non-Public meeting was called to order 5:30 p.m. Those present-Peg Bennett,**  
5 **Lucienne Foulks, Paul Prescott, Amy Facey, Peter Warburton, Nicole**  
6 **Heimarck, Betty Shankel, Porter Dodge, Gerry St. Amand**

7  
8 The board discussed reports to the school board and structure of school board meetings.

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10 **Non-Public Meeting adjourned at 5:55 p.m.**

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12 **ATTENDANCE**

13  
14 Amherst School Board

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

16  
17 Administrative Team

18 Peter Warburton, Porter Dodge, Gerry St. Amand, Nicole Heimarck, Renea Sparks, and  
19 Betty Shankel.

20  
21 Minute Taker

22 Beth Penney

23  
24 **CALL TO ORDER**

25 Ms. Bennett called meeting to order at 6:04pm.

26 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

27 Student discussion re: World Languages

28 Katie Lynch, a senior at SHS, is doing her Senior Project about World Language. She is  
29 going to Assumption College in Worcester studying foreign language paired with  
30 business or accounting.

31 Katie discussed her essential questions and why it is important to have a foreign language  
32 program. She discussed that children love learning; they want to learn more about their  
33 parent's heritage, they are less self-conscious about making mistakes, they develop good  
34 habits and pronunciation just by listening, and they are open to new ways of life and  
35 other cultures.

36 Katie discussed the different types of programs including: FLE, Foreign language in  
37 Elementary school, K-6; Sequential FLE, introduction to language which includes  
38 speaking, little writing, and lots of culture, 49% of schools offering Foreign Language  
39 have this; Flex, which is more than one language and is mostly speaking and basics with  
40 no depth in culture, 49% of schools offering Foreign Language have this; Immersion, all  
41 day every day, starting in first grade they only speak the language which is usually

42 Spanish, only 2% of schools have this.

43 Katie discussed how to create a program and the considerations including having goals in  
44 place; funding (there are government grants), curriculum, teachers, which are hard to find  
45 certified in elementary and language, scheduling, and materials.

46 Katie discussed the data, which shows the schools that offer foreign language programs  
47 are dropping from 31% to 28% from 1997 to 2008. Only 24% and 15%, respectively,  
48 were public schools. In 2008, 4.2 million students were taking language, out of 27  
49 million and only 2 million were in public schools. The languages offered have also  
50 varied. Spanish has increased to 88%, schools now offer Chinese, there are fewer French  
51 and German programs offered and more Latin is being offered.

52 Katie discussed interviews she conducted with superintendents and the Director of  
53 Curriculum for all Boston schools. She discussed the importance of languages including  
54 improvement in skills, improved pronunciation, better test scores, more self-confidence,  
55 more cultural experience, makes learning easier in high school and college, increases  
56 flexibility and helps with divergent learning.

57 Mr. Dodge asked if the research shows Middle Schools decreasing modern language  
58 programs

59 Katie stated that middle schools and high schools were declining in the number of  
60 programs offered. She stated that the programs offered should not be declining because  
61 the world is becoming more cultural.

62 Mr. Prescott asked from what area of the country was the data from.

63 Katie stated that data was from across the states and explained how many schools  
64 contributed to the data.

65 The board thanked Katie for her presentation.

#### 66 Principals' Reports

67 Ms. Foulks asked what Purple up for Military kids was.

68 Mr. Dodge explained that this is the third year celebrating kids' whose parents are  
69 serving for the US. He discussed the challenge for military families and the importance of  
70 the day. He stated that Colonel Hanson is coming for Memorial Day.

71 Mr. Warburton stated that one of the reasons for the Common Core is for the military  
72 children that go from school to school.

73 Ms. Bennett asked to know about different initiatives like the Sue Stitt Global Initiative  
74 Exposition.

75 Mr. Dodge stated that he thought that the board and SAU were invited. He also stated  
76 that things like this are always in the weekly emails.

77 Mr. St. Amand discussed the range of educators that have been selected to be NH  
78 Teacher of the Year, along with Kathy McIntyre. He explained that they would narrow  
79 to 6 teachers soon. Those 6 will have visiting teams at their schools in May and then will  
80 be narrowed to three candidates. The announcement of the winner will be made in Sept.  
81 of 2012. He stated that Kathy is honored to be in the top 17. He and the school are  
82 looking forward to having Kathy move forward in the process.

83 Mr. Warburton stated that Kathy had a plethora of items, her display looked great, and  
84 she was happy.

85 Ms. Bennett stated that the district is very lucky to have her.

86 Ms. Facey asked about the restructuring of AMS including a self-contained classroom.

87 Mr. Dodge stated a few years ago he presented teams of two for 5<sup>th</sup> grade because the  
88 research shows teams of two are better than three and teams of one are better than two.  
89 The decision was made based on discussions with Dr. Sharma and Ms. Heimarck. In the  
90 future the school will also be looking at the idea of looping or multi-aged classrooms  
91 because of the dropping numbers in enrollment.

92 Ms. Facey asked if the teachers need any training for the subjects they have not taught in  
93 a while.

94 Mr. Dodge stated that he confident that the people who will be in those positions will  
95 excel.

96 Committee Assignments

97 School Year Calendar – Amy Facey

98 Master Plan – Paul Prescott

99 Amherst PTA – Lucienne Foulks

100 Mont Vernon School Liaison – Peg Bennett

101 Manifest – Amy Facey and Paul Prescott

102 Policy – Lucienne Foulks and Peg Bennett

103 Ways and Means – Peg Bennett and Paul Prescott

104 Facilities Expendable Trust – Paul Prescott and Peg Bennett and Ms. Shankel will put an  
105 ad in the paper to get committee members from the community.

106 RSEC – Amy Facey

107 AEA Negotiations – Peg Bennett and Lucienne Foulks

108 Town of Amherst – Peg Bennett

109 CIP – Peg Bennett

110 Recreation – James Manning

111 Brick School – Peg Bennett and James Manning

112 **PUBLIC TIME**

113 No public present.

114 **CONSENT AGENDA**

115 **Ms. Foulks made a motion to accept the consent agenda containing the minutes**  
116 **from March 22, 2012 and April 9, 2012, Treasurer’s report February 2012 and**  
117 **March 2012, Unanticipated Revenue- Donations to Student Activity Fund, \$500.00 -**  
118 **The Amherst Garden Club, \$228.00 - Hannaford Helps Schools Program, the**  
119 **Budget transfer and a Resignation letter. Mr. Prescott seconded the motion and the**  
120 **vote was unanimous.**

121 **PRESENTATIONS/REPORTS**

122 FY12 3rd Quarter report

123 Ms. Shankel stated that she gave a preview last month to talk about the default budget.  
124 Karen Taylor was close last month with her estimates. There are ups and downs in  
125 revenue. The Cat. Aide is higher and Medicate is lower than expected. The local revenue  
126 is lower than expected. The tuition will possibly be flat. For expenditures there were  
127 savings in salaries and benefits and the debt was reissued at a lower rate.

128 NECAP

129 This is the presentation is continued from last month.

130 Ms. Heimark recapped the discussion last month.

131 Mr. St. Amand discussed grade 3 reading scores showed 92% of students are proficient or  
132 above proficient. This is important because the school is identified as a year 1 SINY

133 school. The school is optimistic because this is the first group of students with the core-  
134 reading program. The administration is conducting round 3 of observations in the area of  
135 literacy. These observations are important to confirm best practices, small reading  
136 groups, and direct instruction. Those students not proficient in reading are getting  
137 additional support. He would like to highlight this as a success and that the school is on a  
138 positive road. Since NECAP reading and literacy coaches have met with AMS reading  
139 coaches to discuss which areas need more work. Spelling is weak, but comprehension is  
140 strength. AMS has some programs that Clark/Wilkins does not use. The schools also  
141 recognize they need to have more communication in all subject areas but reading has  
142 been pushed forward rapidly. Grade 3 is the first grade to take the assessment which tests  
143 instruction k-2 and one month in grade 3. This is the first reflection on what the  
144 foundation was. Only 10 students were below proficient and all are receiving  
145 interventions at grade 3. 46% of the students scored in the proficient with distinction  
146 range. This has been an increase over time and has not always been that high.

147 Mr. St. Amand discussed Grade 5 math results, which is the assessment of grade 4  
148 instruction. The school will remain a SINY school year three, but the school made AYP  
149 this year. 37% of the students scored proficient with distinction and this is the highest  
150 percentage ever. 85% of the students scored above proficient. 15% scored below  
151 proficient, which were 21 students. Many of which were one point away from the  
152 proficiency mark.

153 Ms. Heimarck stated that in grades 3-8, 61 students were 1 point away from the  
154 proficiency cut point. They will be looking at trends in the types of questions students  
155 missed.

156 Mr. St. Amand discussed scores from last year for two students where an accommodation  
157 box was incorrectly checked giving the students the lowest possible score. This year both  
158 students got full assessment results. He discussed the shift in assessments in the years to  
159 follow.

160 Ms. Bennett asked if the 21 students were getting services or support.

161 Mr. Dodge stated that yes all of the students are getting support.

162 Mr. St. Amand discussed the steps the school will be taking. The Math program review  
163 has made everyone more comfortable with discussing math. At the faculty meeting the  
164 whole staff discussed where the school is headed in math and there is a level of  
165 excitement. He discussed the Math coach; how she supports all the teachers in the  
166 school, and will have more time next year to dedicate to direct coaching. He discussed  
167 the DI facilitators working on instructional rounds including observations and training.  
168 He also discussed the unpacking of the core curriculum and how the school will provide  
169 further PD training for support staff.

170 Mr. St. Amand discussed in English/ Language Arts there needs to be focus more in  
171 writing. He discussed the integration of the Writing Workshop Model into Reading Street  
172 and how the school is looking at expanding the English/ Language Arts block by 20

173 minutes to allow for more time in writing. The school has not unpacked the common  
174 core standards yet in English/ Language Arts.

175 Ms. Bennett asked if the school has a committee for scheduling.

176 Mr. St. Amand stated yes, many teachers are involved and will meet in May and June to  
177 discuss next year. He discussed the challenges of scheduling in Elementary schools and  
178 the idea of having a reading and Math lab like AMS has. He stated that Mahesh Sharma  
179 would be back in the schools May 21-25.

180 Mr. Dodge thanked Patty Wons and Jackie Vale for putting together the slides. This data  
181 follows a group of children who are current 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> graders from grade 3. The data  
182 shows improvement and the school is pleased with the data. He stated he gives the  
183 teachers credit for the increase in the scores. They have increased the reading time in  
184 grade 5 and 6 in the past few years.

185 The board and Ms. Heimarck discussed the different areas of the assessment.

186 Ms. Heimarck stated that Ms. Wons and the literacy coach focused on Word Id and  
187 Vocabulary because in the past that was an area of weakness. They were trying to show  
188 the change over time for the group of kids that were 5<sup>th</sup> graders in 2008. Other parts of  
189 the test include comprehension in literacy and non-fiction text. Amherst students perform  
190 better in non-fiction, which is opposite to the national data and this is true system wide.  
191 Critical thinking skills and reasoning are a weakness because students need to work more  
192 on writing, grammar, and spelling.

193 Mr. Dodge stated that all content areas include the skills that are assessed in literacy.  
194 Read 180 and System 44 have helped to support the students, but both programs have not  
195 been used long enough to determine if the data shows their success. There needs to be 3  
196 years of data. Having a literacy coach for the past 4 yrs. has made a difference in helping  
197 the teachers to become better teachers. He believes the school will see the same results in  
198 math as the schools intensify their work in Math and he is pleased to have a math  
199 program.

200 Mr. Dodge discussed NECAP gap analysis from the identified and the non-identified  
201 students. The IEP students' scores really increased in 2010; in 2005, 39% were proficient  
202 and now 86% are proficient. Read 180 and System 44 programs have helped increase  
203 these student's scores. The students also feel better about themselves and are more  
204 confident.

205 Ms. Heimarck discussed the transition from NECAP and the grade level expectations to  
206 the new national standards known as Common Core standards. These standards look  
207 very different from the current standards. Clark/ Wilkins has almost fully transitioned for  
208 grades K-2 and next year K-9 will transition. The new standards must be in place by  
209 2014-2015. The last NECAP assessment will be in the fall of 2013. The new assessment  
210 will be the smarter balance assessment, which will replace NECAP in spring of 2015 for  
211 grades K-8 and 10 focusing on reading, writing, and math. The new assessment is more  
212 focused on problem based questions and real world application. The Common Core is

213 important because each state has different sets of standards. NH is in the top 5 for rigor,  
214 but there needs to be a level playing field and common set of expectations. More students  
215 are moving state-to-state and district-to-district and the United States students need to be  
216 globally competitive. The common core standards have been bench marked to  
217 international standards including the top performing countries of Finland, Singapore,  
218 Hong Kong, Japan, and Germany.

219 Ms. Foulks thanked the administration for the very clear presentation. She stated that she  
220 liked hearing the improvement and the last graph of the improvement in the IEP students.  
221 She asked Mr. Dodge to speak to the math scores.

222 Mr. Dodge explained that he did not go over the math scores because they were flat. He  
223 stated that similar areas were recognized that were identified last year. The teachers  
224 continue to work on these areas and because of the work with Dr. Sharma's routines the  
225 schools will see improvement. All kids are getting the same language and kids are more  
226 engaged. He gave an example of why having a common language is important.

227 **DISCUSSION ITEM**

228 Policies

229 Ms. Bennett stated that the staff ethics policy would be presented at the SAU board  
230 meeting May 1<sup>st</sup>. The service animal policy has a few changes and at the next policy  
231 meeting they will be talking about field trips and surveillance cameras. Share point is  
232 now working for the policy committee and is very efficient. She thanked Bruce and  
233 stated the committee will be more efficient because of the use of Share point.

234 **ACTION ITEMS**

235 Professional nomination

236 Mr. Warburton stated that this is a nomination for an AMS special education position.

237 Mr. Dodge stated that Ann Bailey is a Special education teacher currently working in  
238 Mont Vernon and asked the board to accept her nomination.

239 Ms. Foulks made a motion to accept the nomination. Mr. Prescott seconded the  
240 nomination and the vote was unanimous.

241 FY13 ASD Default Proposal

242 Ms. Shankel reviewed the default budget proposal as seen last month and discussed the  
243 reasoning for some of the items. She discussed purchasing before year-end and how that  
244 will give a savings in the FY 13 budget. She discussed going forward with the plan but if  
245 they noticed a deviation then the administration would come back to the board to adjust  
246 the plan. The savings in FY13 will help to purchase items that were not included in the  
247 default budget. Ms. Shankel discussed those items as given in the presentation last

248 month. She stated that there is still \$30,000 in technology that is not included. The  
249 administration would come back next year if there were extra savings to purchase this  
250 technology.

251 The board and Ms. Shankel discussed the well thought out approach to the default  
252 budget. They also discussed the need to purchase the VM server license to save money.

253 Ms. Shankel explained that \$80,000 would be put into the Expendable Trust. The article  
254 stated that if there was a surplus this year then the district could put up to \$80,000 into  
255 the trust. There will be about \$30,000 given back to tax payers this year. The money in  
256 the Expendable Trust is important for a default budget because the schools are operating  
257 close to zero. The money in the trust would cover an unexpected occurrence.

258 **Ms. Foulks made a motion to accept the default budget proposal as presented by**  
259 **Ms. Shankel. Ms. Facey seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.**

260 The Board thanked Ms. Shankel.

261 ASSA agreement July 1, 2012-June 30, 2015

262 Ms. Bennett stated that the board needs to sign the ASSA agreement and will sign it in  
263 Non-Public Session.

264 **Ms. Foulks made a motion to go into NON-PUBLIC SESSION under RSA 91-A:3**  
265 **II. (a) (b) (c). Ms. Facey seconded the motion and the roll call was all yes at 7:35pm.**

266 Those present-Peg Bennett, Lucienne Foulks, Paul Prescott, Amy Facey, Peter  
267 Warburton.

268  
269 A personnel matter was discussed.

270  
271 **Meeting adjourned at 8:09 p.m.**

272  
273 **Public Meeting called to order at 8:10 p.m.**

274  
275 Those present-Peg Bennett, Lucienne Foulks, Paul Prescott, Amy Facey, Peter  
276 Warburton.

277  
278 There was a motion to accept the salary increases for Assistant Principal of AMS as  
279 proposed by Superintendent, Peter Warburton.

280  
281 **Unanimously accepted by roll call vote.**

282  
283 **Public Meeting adjourned at 8:11 p.m.**  
284