

AMHERST SCHOOL BOARD

Minutes

September 4, 2008

Chairman Dwight Brew called the meeting to order at 8:10 p.m.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Present

ATTENDANCE

Amherst School Board: Chairman Dwight Brew, Peg Bennett, Peter de Bruyn Kops, and Nancy Head.

Administrative Team: Gerry St. Amand, Dr. Mary Jennings, Porter Dodge, Jim Miner, Elizabeth Shankel, Nicole Heimark and Nancy Maguire.

Minutes Recorder: Heather Loewy Nichols

A. Principal's Report

II. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chairman Brew stated that the Board Members had previously received the principals' reports and asked if there were any questions. Nancy Head thanked the staff and administration for doing such a great job during the construction on the Elementary Schools. In response to a question from Nancy Head, Gerry St. Amand stated that while there would be some opportunity for grade level interaction during the late start meetings, grade level interaction would continue to occur during regular school hours.

B. Enrollments

Dr. Mary Jennings, Superintendent, stated that every year the district receives projections for the next year from NESDEC. Then the administration and the principals review the projections and make recommendations to the Board as to their enrollment projections. She noted that for 2008-2009 NESDEC projected 1570 students, however the district budgeted for 1548 students, which caused them to reduce staff and the actual current enrollment is 1544. She stated that she is glad that the actual numbers support their decision to reduce staffing at the Middle School. She also noted that the official enrollment figures are not reported to the state until October 1st.

C. Board Business

a. Workshop on Board Assignments

The Board decided to hold a work session on September 16th and discussed what items they would like to work on at that time.

b. Bargaining Team

Chairman Brew explained that the current Amherst support staff agreement ends on

July 1, 2009 so the contract will need to be renegotiated this year. He stated that the Board would have a non-meeting after the meeting to determine who will represent the Board in the negotiations.

Chairman Brew thanked Wal-Mart for the donation of 6 chairs for a classroom and asked that they be put on an upcoming consent agenda. He also asked the secretary to write a thank you letter to Wal-Mart.

III. CONSENT AGENDA

The Board requested that the minutes be pulled from the Consent Agenda.

A. Minutes

- August 14, 2008 Minutes

A MOTION was made by Nancy Head and SECONDED by Peg Bennett to approve the minutes of April 14, 2008 with amendments:

Voting: 4 ayes; motion carried unanimously.

A. Summer Program – Title I

Nicole Heimarck, Director of Curriculum and Professional Development, explained that Title I monies are targeted at underachieving students who may not have opportunities available to them due to their financial situation. She stated that historically Amherst has received Title I funds but until last year had not received any of these funds for the past 4 years. She explained that the funds are granted based on the number of children in the district who qualify free and reduced lunches. She noted that the numbers of student who qualify is growing in both Amherst and Mont Vernon however these are not necessarily the children who receive the Title I services. She noted that the summer program provided intervention for students entering grades 1 through 6. She then introduced Nancy Maguire, Literacy Coordinator.

IV. PRESENTATIONS/ DISCUSSION ITEMS

Nancy Maguire stated that she is very happy to be working in Amherst as she started in July and has had a wonderful beginning. She gave the Board an overview of the summer Title I program including the pre and post reading scores. In response to question from the Board, she explained that the incoming first and second graders received their instruction in the portable classrooms at Clark School and grades two through six went to the Middle School. First and second graders received 9 one-hour sessions and second through six graders received 6 two-hour sessions in groups ranging from 2 to 6 students. She explained that all the grades showed improvement except for third and fourth grade and noted that their attendance was poor and they had two different teachers through the course of instruction. She stated that the results validate the direction that the district is taking. In response to a question from Nancy Head, Nicole Heimarck explained that they would like to lengthen the program but finances determined a lot of the amount of instruction as the district had only

\$19,000 to allocate. She noted that they chose to schedule the instruction in the month of August so it was right before the students entered school in hopes that the intervention would carry over into the school year. In response to a question from Nancy Head, Nicole Heimarck explained that originally Title I services were not to be given to coded students but after some investigation they found that there was some leeway in that rule so there were two coded children in the summer program. She noted that next year they are hoping to have a program with both coded and Title I children together.

B. ASD Metrics

Mary Jennings explained that the Board had asked for baseline data that they could use to track the improvements of the district. Nicole Heimarck explained that she has brought the baseline data for the NECAP, NWEA and DIBELS tests to the Board separately before but today she has compiled all the data into one baseline set. She reviewed the gains and losses by each school, on the NECAP, test over the last three years.

Peter de Bruyn Kops noted that the results compare different children and that he is looking for a way to weed out the variables such as the student population changing from year to year and variables in the test itself.

Nicole Heimarck reviewed the NWEA data with the Board noting that the growth by grade level in 2008 was better than in 2007. She then reviewed the DIBELS testing summary reports noting that previously this test was administered just to kindergarten and first grade students but will now be given to all students in first through fourth grades and to students in second through twelfth grade who are performing at 50% or below.

In response to a question from Nancy Head, Nicole Heimarck discussed how DIBELS is used in the Response to Intervention program.

Peter de Bruyn Kops noted that how one organizes the children and their supports should be looked at in order to provide the best intervention and that he is thrilled about the program.

C. Board Goals for 2008-2009

The Board continued their discussion from last meeting regarding the 2008-2009 Board goals. They felt that several of the topics being discussed during the work session would be of benefit to the goal discussion so they decided to table the selection of a goal until the work session.

D. Key District Initiatives 2008-2009

Chairman Brew asked the Board to prepare a list of initiatives they would like to

discuss at the work session.

E. Renovation Update

Chairman Brew asked Nancy Head to give the Board an update on the renovations. Nancy Head thanked the administration, custodians, and teachers from both the Elementary and Middle Schools for their great efforts during the renovations. She stated that it has been an exciting summer; seeing things happening in the schools that are making the school safer and the way they should be. She noted that whenever anything was found that was not up to code it was fixed. The renovations included work on safety items at Clark, new windows with screens and sprinkler systems at Clark and Wilkins, ceiling and wire replacement, and new lighting. She explained that now there are two lunch lanes at Wilkins, the kitchen is much safer and there is a new alcove, which will be a computer alcove next year. At the Amherst Middle School the health area has been expanded, the administration area has been reorganized, storage has been added, and freezers have been added so that items can now be bought in bulk. She noted that everything except for the Middle School was relatively finished for the start of school. She stated that the custodians at all the schools have been fantastic in getting things organized again. She stated that the district had a good construction team including the architect. She also noted that Jim Miner was fantastic in overseeing the project. She further explained that this fall the architects will work with the consulting engineers to set up the third phase of the project which would occur next summer. She also noted that the final plans will be completed by mid December or January and the district will have a Guaranteed Maximum Price by the end of January or beginning of February.

A. Collateralization

Elizabeth Shankel reviewed the findings of the Investment Committee noting that Ocean National Bank has no risk in the sub prime market and offers more than the required percentage of collateralization to the district.

V. ACTION ITEMS

B. Policies

The Board asked that Policies JFAB, IJ, and JICD be discussed individually.

A MOTION was made by Peg Bennett and SECONDED by Nancy Head to approve the following policies:

- **EGA- School District Internet Access for Students**
- **EGAD – Copyright Compliance**
- **EHAA – Computer, Security, E-Mail and Internet**
- **KB- Title I Parent Involvement in Education**

Voting: 4 ayes; motion carried unanimously.

-JFAB – Admission of Tuition and Non – Residential Students

A MOTION was made by Nancy Head and SECONDED by Peg Bennett to approve Policy JFAB.

The Board noted that on the 15th line of the 2nd page there is an extra period.

Mary Jennings explained that previously when employees wanted their children to be students of the Amherst School District the home district of the student paid any special education costs the student incurred. However, a recent ruling found that the district the student was attending is liable for these costs. Therefore, this policy mandates that before the any agreement is made the home district of the student must agree to be responsible for any special education expenses the student incurs. She noted the legislature currently has the issue in committee to make a recommendation as how to create a law to correct the situation. She noted that once the law is changed the policy could be changed back to the way it was previously.

A MOTION was made by Peter de Bruyn Kops and SECONDED by Nancy Head to amend the motion to approve Policy JFAB with amendments.

Voting: 4 ayes; motion carried unanimously.

Voting: (on the amended motion) 4 ayes; motion carried unanimously.

IJ – Instructional Materials

Peter de Bruyn Kops noted that “under (a) (4)” on Page 2 should be changed to “under (4)”. He also expressed concern about the language “the Board is legally responsible to provide the necessary instructional materials” and suggested that there ought to be a definition of “necessary.” Chairman Brew suggested that Peter de Bruyn Kops, being the Board’s policy representative, check into the wording.

- JICD – Student Conduct Discipline and Due Process

The Board discussed their reporting practices in response to a concern expressed by Peter de Bruyn Kops.

A MOTION was made by Nancy Head and SECONDED by Peg Bennett to approve Policy JICD.

Voting: 4 ayes; motion carried unanimously.

A MOTION was made by Nancy Head and SECONDED by Peg Bennett to enter into non-public session per RSA 1-A:3, II. (b)

Voting: The Board Members were polled and all voted in favor.

**VI. NON-PUBLIC
SESSION**

The Board entered into non-public session at 8:22 p.m.

The Board discussed sidebar agreements between the ASD and ASSA.

A MOTION was made by Peter de Bruyn Kops and SECONDED by Nancy Head to return to public session.

Voting: Members were polled and all were in favor.

The Board returned to public session at 8:47p.m.

A MOTION was made by Peg Bennett and SECONDED by Nancy Head to approve the sidebar agreement between ASD and ASSA regarding the School Technology and Data Operations Manager.

Voting: 4 ayes; motion carried unanimously.

A MOTION was made by Nancy Head to approve the sidebar agreement between ASD and ASSA, regarding employees with additional skills, as amended.

A MOTION was made by Peter de Bruyn Kops and SECONDED by Nancy Head to adjourn the meeting.

Voting: The Board Members were polled and all were in favor.

**VII. REVIEW OF
MEETING/
ADJOURN**

Chairman Dwight Brew declared the meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.