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Amherst School Board

Thursday, December 15, 2016

Meeting Minutes

Attendees:

Administrative Team: Peter Warburton- Superintendent, Adam Steel- Business Administrator, Porter Dodge-Principal AMS, Bethany Bernasconi-Dean of Instruction AMS, Christine Landwehrle-Director of Curriculum & Professional Development, Meg Beauchamp-Director of Student Services

Amherst School Board: Amy Facey-Chair, Jim Manning-Vice Chair, Galen Tremblay, Elizabeth Kuzsma, Paul Prescott

Minute Taker: Jen Messner

Public: Frank Brown-Ways and Means Committee, Terri Behm, Maggie McCabe

I.CALL TO ORDER—Chair Amy Facey

Chair Amy Facey called the meeting to order at 6:06 PM

II. ANNOUNCEMENTS

A. Principals' reports

Chair Amy Facey then introduced Principal Dodge

Principal Dodge then introduced Amanda Rogers, Head Coach of the AMS Field Hockey Team and a representative group of the team.

Coach Rogers introduced the girls and they discussed their recent championship win. Coach Rogers thanked Principal Dodge and the Board for all the years of support. Team Captains read letters to the board describing their experiences and thanks.

Ms. Facey asked them to talk about the final game.

Coach Rogers then announced that next year team will be moved to Division 1.

The Board thanked the students and congratulated them on their championship.

Ms. Facey stated that Principal St. Amand would not be at the meeting. He was attending the NH Teacher of the Year awards ceremony with Clark-Wilkins Teacher Liz Alexakos, who was a finalist for this year's Teacher of the Year.

- 32 Ms. Facey asked if anyone had any questions for Principal Dodge.
- 33 Ms. Tremblay asked Principal Dodge about the gardens at AMS.
- 34 Ms. Kuzsma asked the difference between aquaponic and hydroponic gardens.
- 35 Discussion about the gardens and two systems.
- 36 Mr. Manning asked why Student Council had a name change.
- 37 Principal Dodge explained that now any student could be involved in the student government, no
38 elections. It was also combined with the Not So Secret Club.
- 39 Principal Dodge stated that a very generous donation had been made to the Amherst Maker
40 Space by BAE Corporation. He wanted to make a public thank you to them. Thank you notes
41 had already been sent.
- 42 Ms. Facey asked if any further questions for Principal Dodge.
- 43 Ms. Facey stated the district had received a letter from the DOE about the application for AMS
44 Life Skills Program.
- 45 Ms. Beauchamp spoke about submitting the application to the NH DOE for the new Life Skills
46 Program. This program would create in-district capacity to meet the needs of students with
47 intellectual impairment or autism. It is a very lengthy process and AMS received approval for
48 phase 1 last week. That will include the rest of this school year and hope to expand for next
49 school year.
- 50 Ms. Facey asked if anyone had any questions about the program.
- 51 Mr. Prescott asked Ms. Beauchamp to describe how this impacts the budget.
- 52 Ms. Beauchamp explained that it will be a positive impact. It will lower our expenses that are
53 currently paid to place students out of district. Those students would no longer be need to be
54 placed out of district in the future. Would no longer have to pay costs for analysts and Autism
55 Bridges.
- 56 Mr. Prescott congratulated Ms. Beauchamp on approval for Phase 1.
- 57 B. Pillar reports
- 58 Mr. Prescott-Connect—has been meeting with the team. They are putting together a slide
59 presentation. Will be next week.
- 60 Ms. Tremblay-Invest-nothing to report
- 61 Ms. Facey-Streamline—on hold. Would like to revive systems when the chairs meet next.
- 62 Mr. Warburton would like to let the public know what is going on and have public input. Wants
63 public to know that there is no Warrant Article this year.

64 Ms. Kuzsma-Unite—Had a meeting before Thanksgiving. Will bring information to SAU
 65 meeting next week. The group came up with ideas that encompassed whole group philosophy.
 66 Assessment grading and reporting group met last week. Their work is moving forward.

67 Mr. Manning-Advance- Meeting next Monday

68

69 III. PUBLIC COMMENT

70 Maggie Mc Kay had questions on standardize testing, and stated her concerns with PACE, and
 71 suggested we us SBAC and NWEA until we have more data with PACE. Not as many schools
 72 to compare data with on PACE. Still very unknown.

73 Ms. McCabe has questions on the budget columns labeled discretionary and non-discretionary.
 74 She feels that employees should pay a larger percentage for benefits, lowering portion district
 75 pays, saving money.

76 Mr. Steel stated that can be discussed once the budget is finalized.

77 Ms. Facey stated we have to budget for what we have in place right now, not for what could be
 78 future changes.

79

80 IV. CONSENT AGENDA

81 A. Minutes

82 Ms. Facey asked if anyone had any questions about the minutes

83 B. Treasurer's Reports

84 C. Unanticipated Revenue

85 D. Tree Cutting

86 E. Auditor's Report

87 **Ms. Elizabeth Kuzsma made a motion to accept Consent Agenda items A. Minutes 1.**
 88 **November 17, 2016, B. Treasurer's Reports 1. October 2016, 2. November 2016, C.**
 89 **Unanticipated Revenue 1. \$4568, 2. \$1000, 3. \$1000, 4. \$10000, D. Tree Cutting and E.**
 90 **Auditor's Report. Ms. Galen Tremblay seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion passed.**

91

92 V. PRESENTATIONS

93 A. FY18 ASD Budget-Draft 2

94 Mr. Steel went over draft 2 of the budget.

95 Mr. Steel reviewed the following:

- 96 ▪ Increase in Special Education budget for transportation.
- 97 ▪ Preschool Coordinator position eliminated for next year.
- 98 ▪ .6 Special Education position at AMS eliminated for next year.
- 99 ▪ Tech support at AMS eliminated for next year.

100 Mr. Steel also wanted to congratulate both principals for working very hard to make the budget
101 numbers get to where they needed to be. Great work.

102 Mr. Steel stated that the default budget looks to be higher than actual budget.

103 Ms. Facey asked if anyone had any questions for Mr. Steel.

104 Ms. Facey asked Ways and Means committee to speak. She thanked the committee for all their
105 work. They have met as a full group twice and have had a huge input on the budget we have
106 now.

107 Mr. Frank Brown stated that the committee felt that personnel costs and benefits were high and
108 he requested to look at re-classifying some personnel from full to part-time to reduce costs.

109 Ms. Facey asked Mr. Steel to do analysis on personnel. Mr. Steel stated he would see what he
110 could get done by next meeting.

111 Terry Behm -Thanked the Board for their patience. She has a question on the matter of adding a
112 coach to the budget.

113 Mr. Steel stated that they are looking internally for a coach. May not be able to meet the need
114 this year. Will be revisited in the future.

115 Discussion ensued on coaches.

116 Ms. Facey stated that feedback from the public is welcome and needed.

117 Mr. Prescott would like to see metrics for the 1 to 1 device program that is in place for 8th grade.

118 Would like to know if successful. When should it be measured?

119 Ms. Facey is also interested in research on the effectiveness of the 1 to 1 program.

120 Ms. Facey asked if there were any other budget questions.

121

122 B. NWEA- Achievement and Growth

123 Ms. Facey asked Ms. Landwehrle to fill us in on SBAC (Smarter Balance Assessment
124 Consortium) and updates.

125 Ms. Landwehrle told the Board about her trip to the White House and the information she
126 received about standardized tests. Why do we have tests?

127 Ms. Landwehrle went on to explain PACE tests and their benefits. Teachers keep assessment
128 maps. Can keep track all year on meaningful tests and projects. Teachers can create assessments
129 throughout the process instead of 1 test at the end of the year. Would have several smaller tests
130 throughout the year.

131 Ms. Landwehrle stated that Smarter Balance tests interrupt instruction for 4 days at AMS and has
132 a huge impact on the computer availability during that time.

133 Ms. Landwehrle stated that money is being saved by not taking the SBAC. There is a higher cost
134 to be a Tier 1 PACE (Performance Assessment of Competency Education) school. Will come
135 back to the Board in the spring to seek approval.

136 Mr. Manning asked Ms. Landwehrle if PACE will allow us to perform better on the 11th grade
137 SAT.

138 Ms. Landwehrle stated that yes, it would. With PACE, you get a deeper level of instruction with
139 deeper level of learning achieved.

140 Mr. Manning asked Ms. Landwehrle what is the level of standardized testing in Singapore and
141 Finland

142 Ms. Landwehrle stated that Singapore has very rigorous testing while Finland has none.

143 Mr. Manning would like to know if we are culturally aligned to our system of testing.

144 Ms. Landwehrle stated that at SHS yes, we are. Big culture of testing at SHS. Looking to make
145 K-8 the same way by becoming a Tier 1 school.

146 Ms. Landwehrle stated that we can compare on PACE and SBAC to other schools.

147 Mr. Warburton stated that we need to invite the Board and public to look at PACE, to see and
148 speak with the students so that they can see the benefits.

149 Ms. Facey asked if anyone had any questions on the NWEA (Northwest Evaluation Association)
150 data

151 Ms. Landwehrle went over the NWEA MAP. Stated was given earlier this year than in previous
152 years.

153 Ms. Landwehrle stated that immediately after results met with Mr. St. Amand about 1st grade.
154 This was last group of children to be a part of the ½ day K classes. The teachers went through
155 the phonological awareness review very slowly. By November they had progress monitored 70
156 students, 55 of which have now reached benchmark. Will continue to monitor this group.

157 Ms. Facey asked if this was more lack of experience because of ½ day, the curriculum, or just
158 “this group”.

159 Ms. Landwehrle stated more likely “the group” as no changes had been made to curriculum.

160 Ms. Facey asked if Ms. Landwehrle would be at the meeting next week and provide info and
161 guidance on growth. Ms. Landwehrle stated she would be there.

162 Ms. Landwehrle then went over the Math NWEA test results.

163 Went over math growth K-8. Stated Ms. Eccleston did a lot of work to make sure that all grades
164 were aligned. Many classroom visits throughout the year.

165 Ms. Landwehrle stated although concerned about this 6th grade class, they are still making strong
166 growth.

167 Ms. Facey opened discussion concerning scores presented.

168 Is attention being paid to implementation of curriculum? Are we using coaches?

169 Discussion ensued about pedagogy.

170 Ms. Landwehrle stated that we are down to 2 coaches from 4 and it is hard for administration to
171 provide help with curriculum with the caseloads they already have.

172 Mr. Manning asked what is more important; More coaches or more teachers and fewer coaches?

173 Ms. Landwehrle stated that if classrooms only had 15 or 16 students than maybe less teachers.
174 But noted that we are higher than that. We need teachers as we are already very lean.

175 Mr. Steel stated not 1 right answer on that. From what he has seen this town wants low class
176 size, this in turn dictates how many teachers you need. Need to study to find an effective
177 solution.

178 Mr. Dodge stated that this has been a struggle for years. Amherst went with fewer coaches and
179 more teachers. Also, stated, not coaches, Curriculum Specialists.

180

181 C. Science Overview of summer work

182 Ms. Bernasconi and Ms. Landwehrle went over the summer work that was completed with the
183 Next Generation Science Standards.

184 Ms. Bernasconi stated that STEM is a critical need for our students now and in the future. NH
185 has adopted NGSS.

186 She stated that NGSS is a shift from memorization to what can you do with the knowledge you
187 have learned.

188 She stated that NGSS elevated the engineering process to the same level as the scientific process.

189 She then went over what is STEM and common characteristics of a successful STEM program.

190 Ms. Landwehrle then went over the summer work and what was accomplished.

191 She gave an overview of the curriculum framework. Stated that by using One Note the teachers
192 and planners had greater flexibility in designing the program. She went over the reflections and
193 feedback.

194 Mr. Manning asked if Phase 1 of Stem curriculum will be ready by September of 2017.

195 Ms. Landwehrle stated already is at AMS goal is to have it for K-4 as well. SHS started NGSS 2
196 or 3 years ago, so alignment is already there.

197 Mr. Manning thanked them for their hard work. He would like to know how do we measure to
198 see if it is working? Benchmarks?

199 Ms. Landwehrle stated that PACE includes Science, especially in the 8th grade. NWEA does
200 have a science component, but we have not used it. Could add, but would cost.

201 Ms. Bernasconi said we could use other measures as well. How many students are enrolled in
202 advanced STEM coursework, how the numbers of students enrolled is changing, course requests
203 for challenging STEM, student attitudes towards science.

204 Ms. Landwehrle stated will take a few years to really get good data.

205 Ms. Facey asked if any more questions. Thanked them both for their hard work.

206

207 VI. DISCUSSION ITEMS

208 No discussion items

209

210 VII. INFORMATIONAL

211 A. Strategic Plan

212 Ms. Facey stated that will be meeting next week at the SAU to continue strategic plan. Will be
213 pro

214 Mr. Warburton stated that his job was to hire the best people to do the job and he saw that
215 tonight. Was his honor to work with these people.

216 He stated that the strategic planning people are reenergized and are ready to work. There are
217 new chairs on the committee as well as new consultants that are working free of charge.

218 B. Digital Magazine

219 Mr. Warburton stated that there are many people working on the project and hope to have a draft
220 in January.

221

222 VIII. PUBLIC COMMENTS

223 Maggie McCabe had several questions.

224 Wanted more information on the Special Education Program. Is any of this in current budget
225 draft? Answer—staff is in budget, tuition is not. Goal is to get students back

226 Ms. McCabe-Looking at the NWEA numbers—problems in the 5th grade again. Have we looked
227 at the teachers? Do we have quality teachers? Are NWEA numbers tied to the teachers?

228 Ms. McCabe thinks that we need both throughout the year tests and summative tests. Why
229 would we get rid of summative tests? Life is full of them, LSAT, GRE, MCATS, etc.

230 Discussion ensued about testing.

231

232 IX. ACTION ITEMS

233 A. Math Curriculum

234 **Ms. Galen Tremblay made a motion to accept the math curriculum. Ms. Elizabeth**
235 **seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion passed.**

236 B. Policies

237 First reading of Policies

238 Ms. Tremblay stated we can review these policies.

239 Discussion ensued on policies

240 **Mr. James Manning made a motion to move to the second reading of the policies. Ms.**
241 **Elizabeth Kuzsma seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion passed.**

242 **Mr. Manning made a Motion to enter non public session under RSA 91-A:3 II.**
243 **(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(g)(h)(i) at 8:30pm to discuss a personnel matter. Ms. Galen Tremblay**
244 **seconded the Motion. The vote was unanimous, Motion passed.**

245 Chair Amy Facey called a Roll Call: Prescott- yes, Manning-yes, Facey-yes, Kuzsma-yes,
246 Tremblay-yes

247 **At 8:44 pm Mr. Paul Prescott made a Motion to exit non-public session. Ms. Galen**
248 **Tremblay seconded the Motion. The vote was unanimous, Motion passed.**

249 Chair Amy Facey called a Roll Call: Prescott- yes, Manning-yes, Facey-yes, Kuzsma-yes,
250 Tremblay-yes

251 **Ms. Amy Facey made a Motion to accept 4 Amherst teachers for early retirement benefit.**
252 **Ms. Beth Kuzsma seconded the Motion. The vote was unanimous, Motion passed.**

253 **At 9:13 pm Mr. James Manning made a Motion to Adjourn. Mr. Paul Prescott seconded**
254 **the Motion. The vote was unanimous, Motion passed.**