

**Joint Meeting of the Amherst, Pelham and Amherst-Pelham Regional School Committees
Tuesday, September 24, 2013
Library, Amherst Regional High School**

In Attendance:

Kip Fonsh, Regional Chair	Maria Geryk, Superintendent
Katherine Appy, Amherst Chair/Region	Kathy Mazur, Human Resources Director
Debbie Gould, Pelham Chair	Faye Brady, Director of Student Services
Lawrence O'Brien, Amherst/Region	Lisa Desjarlais, Pelham Principal
Kathleen Traphagen, Amherst/Region	Mike Morris, Director of Evaluation & Assessment
Trevor Baptiste, Pelham/Region	Ian Stith, K-8 Math and Science Coordinator
AnneMarie Foley, Pelham/Region	Mark Jackson, ARHS Principal
Rick Hood, Amherst/Region	Betsy Dinger, ARMS Principal
Amilcar Shabazz, Amherst/Region	Monica Hall, FR Principal
Dan Robb, Pelham/Region	Nick Yaffe, WW Principal
Absent:	Jean Fay, APEA President
Michael DeChiara, Region	Debbie Westmoreland, Recorder
Darius Modestow, Pelham	Public and Press

1. Welcome and Agenda Review 6:40 PM/7:02 PM

A. Mr. Fonsh called the Regional School Committee to order and Ms. Appy called the Amherst committee to order at 6:40 p.m. Mr. Fonsh announced that the Regional School Committee will enter Executive Session to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining as authorized by MGL Chapter 30A, Section 21 (3). Ms. Traphagen moved to enter Executive Session and by unanimous roll call vote of the members in attendance (Mr. Fonsh, Ms. Appy, Mr. Hood, Mr. O'Brien and Ms. Traphagen), the committee entered Executive Session at 6:40 p.m.

B. Return to Open Session—Ms. Fonsh called the Regional School Committee back to order in open session at 7:02 p.m. Ms. Appy called the Amherst School Committee back to order and Ms. Gould called the Pelham School Committee to order at 7:05 p.m. Mr. Fonsh reviewed the agenda, noting that there is a business matter to complete from the last meeting. Ms. Westmoreland then distributed and reviewed a schedule of events and guest list for the Kanegasaki visit next Tuesday, October 1st. Mr. Baptiste then reviewed the resolution he drafted regarding the School Committee's commitment to reinvigorate the exchange of Amherst students to Kanegasaki. Mr. Fonsh suggested adding an additional phrase, and the committee unanimously approved the resolution as amended.

C. Approve Minutes—Ms. Appy moved to approve the Regional School Committee minutes of September 10, 2013 as presented. Mr. O'Brien seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

2. Announcements and Public Comments 7:18 p.m.

Marylou Conka, district grandparent, spoke about her concern about lunch detentions and the issue of connecting discipline with food. Ms. Geryk noted that she believes the issue Ms. Conka is referencing has been addressed. She will confirm that and be in touch with Ms. Conka. Mr. Fonsh then announced that the three units of the APEA have ratified their contracts and the Regional School Committee voted tonight to approve the contracts. He then introduced APEA President Jean Fay who recognized the hard work and hours that went into negotiating and approving this three year contract. Ms. Fay, Mr. Fonsh and Ms. Geryk each expressed appreciation to Kathy Mazur and Mike Morris for their extraordinary work in the negotiations process. Ms. Appy announced that there will be a fund raiser dinner for the Roger Wallace Awards on October 27 at 5:00 p.m. at Amherst College. The cost of tickets is \$75, and the event will honor the first award recipient, Kathryn Runyun, who will also be the guest speaker for the evening.

3. Superintendent's Update 7:24 p.m.

Ms. Geryk thanked the negotiating team members for their outstanding work and dedication in coming to agreement on the three -year contract approved tonight. She then distributed updates and highlighted a few:

- The 14th Annual Minority Student Achievement Network National Student Conference begins tomorrow, with a community keynote address by Calvin Terrell;
- The first ARPS Family Center event, Juntos We Play!, hosted by the Village Park Management, was held on Saturday, September 21 and was very successful;

- Based on recommendation of the Wellness Committee in recognition of the large number of staff and students with life-threatening allergies, the district will become an "allergy aware" district. This means students, parents/guardians and personnel will be respectfully asked not to bring nut products into the schools beginning after the Columbus Day weekend break;
- Wildwood Principal Nick Yaffe is facilitating a study group for educators entitled "Teacher Reflection and Contemplative Practices;"
- Crocker Farm hosted a Welcome Back Picnic for more than 200 students and families on September 17;
- Pelham PTO is sponsoring a Scholastic Book Fair from September 24-27;
- Wildwood parents and guardians are invited to volunteer for the Courtyard Clean-Up Weekend on September 28 and 29; and
- The Open House dates for each school.

Mr. Fonsh encouraged School Committee members to attend Family Center events, noting that the Village Park event on Saturday was wonderful and this work is groundbreaking. Mr. Fonsh then noted that Tim Weiss, a contemporary of Calvin Terrell, is speaking at UMass tomorrow evening at the same time Mr. Terrell is presenting his keynote address for the MSAN conference. Due to his role at UMass and on the MSAN conference planning committee, Mr. Fonsh asked Mr. Shabazz if he knows how the scheduling conflict came about. Mr. Shabazz noted that the event tomorrow night is the Western MA premiere of a documentary film based on Tim Weiss's book *White Like Me*. The selection of the date was based on when Mr. Weiss would be available for a post-screening discussion after the film premiere. Mr. Shabazz noted that he will look into whether the event is being taped so it can be used in the district.

4. New and Continuing Business

7:41 p.m.

A. MCAS Presentation

DOCUMENT: MCAS Report—September 24, 2013

Mr. Morris utilized a Powerpoint presentation to review the MCAS results for the districts. He first addressed how educators use MCAS data to inform instruction, the ELA and Mathematics data for the elementary schools, and next steps. The School Committee then had an opportunity to ask questions about the elementary data. Mr. Hood asked if implementing PARCC will mean that we will have to wait several years to see trend growth. Mr. Morris noted that we have to wait to see how transferable the data from PARCC will be, but it is likely to be different from information collected through MCAS. Ms. Traphagen noted that there are some substantial performance differences between the schools and asked what the conversation is regarding those differences. She noted that she is nervous that there may be some pressure on those schools to narrow the focus of instruction, and she hopes the focus will remain on the whole child. Mr. Morris agreed that more test prep is not beneficial and explained that the conversation and training is around building district-wide practices that have been shown to work in individual schools. He noted that moving to a model of "worksheets on Thursdays" is not under consideration in any way. Mr. Shabazz noted that the white subgroup is exceeding the target of 75 while all other subgroups failed to meet it. He asked how this information will be used to focus efforts around the proficiency gap. Mr. Morris noted that the new INFORM system will allow teachers to look at the data for their own students diagnostically. Mr. Baptiste spoke about how beneficial it is that concerns and comments that have been easily-dismissible anecdotal information in the past can now be used as clean data due to INFORM. Mr. Robb noted that drops in scores, particularly in ELA, can have everything to do with how information is presented. Mr. Morris then reviewed the MCAS data for the secondary schools before taking questions from the School Committee. Mr. O'Brien asked if there are efforts to have teachers look at how their students are doing on standards and including it as part of the formal evaluation system. Mr. Morris confirmed that piloting district-determined measures is part of the evaluation process and was identified as a need by teachers. Mr. Jackson noted that the Common Core Standards have more resonance with educators than anything he has seen before. He stated that he wants to use the Common Core to define the conversation around literacy and math.

B. Data Report

DOCUMENT: Five-Year Trend Data (DRAFT--9/24/13)

Ms. Geryk distributed a draft of a potential data report, noting that this is the beginning of a conversation around the type of data the School Committee would like to see tracked over time. Mr. Hood distributed a series of simple graphs illustrating his vision for the type of visual comparison he would like to have available. He noted that he would like to see other types of academic data besides MCAS if possible. Mr. Morris noted that he would be interested in presenting data for some of the local, non-normed measures in addition to the state and nationally-

normed measures. He stated that it would be important to hear from the School Committee what types of information would be useful. Ms. Foley noted the importance of remembering the whole child in the data. Ms. Appy agreed, noting that she would be interested in student and family surveys on issues such as school climate. Mr. Robb noted that he is interested in things that are harder to quantify, as well, such as the philosophy and culture being encouraged in the schools. Ms. Traphagen agreed about the importance of climate, noting that she would also like to hear from teachers as well as families. She noted that attendance, SAT/ACT trends and access to enrichments is important data. Mr. Fonsh said that he would like to see data on what happens for students who do not graduate.

C. Superintendent's Evaluation Process

DOCUMENT: Process for Superintendent Evaluation, September 24, 2013; Instructions for School Committee Members--Establishing Priority Elements; Draft Goals for DIP

Mr. Morris briefly reviewed the five steps in the Superintendent evaluation process along with the timeline for the process. The committee provided feedback regarding which elements they each believe is the highest priority for moving the district forward:

- Mr. O'Brien—Element IA1 and 3A1
- Ms. Gould—Elements IB3, IE3, and 3D1
- Mr. Hood—Elements 3A1 and 3C2
- Mr. Baptiste—Elements 3B2 and 3C1
- Ms. Appy—Elements IB3, IE1 and 4E1
- Ms. Traphagen—Elements IA1, ID2, IE3, 3C1, 4A1, 4D1, 4E1 and 4F3
- Ms. Foley—Elements 3C2 and 4D1
- Mr. Shabazz—Elements 3C2 and 3A1
- Mr. Robb—Elements 1B3 and 3C2
- Mr. Fonsh—Elements 2A3, 2B1 and 1B3

5. School Committee Planning

9:23 p.m.

Calendar and Items for Future Agendas—Ms. Geryk distributed and reviewed an updated calendar and topics document. She noted that the calendar will be included in Google docs.

6. Subcommittee Reports

9:26 p.m.

Mr. Fonsh reported that the Policy Subcommittee is meeting on October 9 and that the RSDPB met last night. Ms. Appy noted that there has been some shifting in the Amherst subcommittee membership so she asked to review the subcommittees and appoint representatives where necessary. After discussion, the representation is:

- **Audit Committee:** Mr. Hood
- **ACTV Liaison:** Mr. Hood
- **Budget Coordinating Group:** Mr. Hood and Ms. Appy
- **Policy Subcommittee:** Mr. O'Brien and Ms. Traphagen
- **Joint Capital Planning Committee:** Ms. Appy and Mr. Hood
- **The Collaborative:** Mr. O'Brien
- **Budget Subcommittee:** Mr. Hood, Ms. Appy and Ms. Traphagen

8. Adjournment

9:32 p.m.

Mr. Baptiste moved to adjourn the Pelham School Committee at 9:32 p.m. Mr. Robb seconded and the motion was unanimously approved. Mr. O'Brien moved to adjourn the Amherst School Committee at 9:32 p.m. Mr. Hood seconded and the motion was unanimously approved. Mr. Hood moved to adjourn the Regional School Committee at 9:32 p.m. Mr. Baptiste seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

Respectfully Submitted,
Debbie Westmoreland