

**Joint Meeting of the Amherst, Pelham and Amherst-Pelham Regional School Committees
Tuesday, October 22, 2013
Library, Amherst Regional High School**

In Attendance:

Kip Fonsh, Regional Chair
Katherine Appy, Amherst Chair/Region
Debbie Gould, Pelham Chair
Lawrence O'Brien, Amherst/Region
Kathleen Traphagen, Amherst/Region
Trevor Baptiste, Pelham/Region
AnneMarie Foley, Pelham/Region
Rick Hood, Amherst/Region
Amilcar Shabazz, Amherst/Region
Dan Robb, Pelham
Michael DeChiara, Region

Maria Geryk, Superintendent
Marta Guevara, Director of Equity and Achievement
Faye Brady, Director of Student Services
Lisa Desjarlais, Pelham Principal
Mike Morris, Director of Evaluation & Assessment
Ian Stith, K-8 Math and Science Coordinator
Mark Jackson, ARHS Principal
Betsy Dinger, ARMS Principal
Monica Hall, FR Principal
Nick Yaffe, WW Principal
Jerry Champagne, Information Systems Director
Michele Tesauro, CF Principal
David Slovin, SEC Principal
Diane Chamberland, FR Assistant Principal
Miki Gromacki, ARHS Assistant Principal
Carole Learned-Miller, Superintendent Intern
Debbie Westmoreland, Recorder
Public and Press

Absent:

Darius Modestow, Pelham

1. Welcome and Agenda Review

7:05 PM

A. Ms. Fonsh called the Regional Committee to order, Ms. Appy called the Amherst Committee to order and Ms. Gould called the Pelham Committee to order at 7:05 p.m. Mr. Fonsh welcomed the audience and reviewed the agenda.

C. Approve Minutes—Ms. Appy moved to approve the minutes of October 1, 2013 as presented. Mr. DeChiara seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

2. Announcements and Public Comments

7:08 p.m.

Ms. Gould noted that Annie Foley is stepping down from both the Pelham and Regional School Committees effective tomorrow and thanked her for her outstanding service to both. Ms. Appy gave a reminder about the AEF Trivia Bee coming up on Thursday and the Roger Wallace Award Fundraiser Dinner scheduled for Sunday. Erin Baker, parent, spoke about her concerns regarding the district ban on nuts in the school. Jean Sherlock, Pelham parent, distributed a document which she referenced in speaking about her concerns around ongoing racial disparity in disciplinary actions in the district schools. Susan Kennedy Marx, community member, spoke briefly about the Roger Wallace Excellence in Teaching Award and the first recipient, Kathryn Runyan. She explained how tickets can be obtained to the dinner and noted that there will be a free public reception at 6:30 p.m. Mr. DeChiara noted that he has been in contact with Mr. Fonsh and Superintendent Geryk regarding whether the new nut ban is actually policy. He stated that he has no strong feelings about the ban itself, but he wants to have a discussion around the roles of the School Committee and the Superintendent regarding policy. Mr. DeChiara noted that he would also like to see updated PBIS information in the next School Committee packet since there have been public comments about the issue at the last three meetings. Mr. Fonsh noted that Superintendent Geryk reported, as part of the Superintendent's Update, on the allergy aware schools plans at the September 24 Joint Meeting and no concerns were raised by the board at that time. He also stated that there is a Wellness Policy in place and a Wellness Committee that guided the decision. Superintendent Geryk noted that she is frustrated that this is coming up as a possible discussion at this point since it has been vetted by the Wellness Committee, the district nursing staff and the district's attorney and was announced at a School Committee meeting with no feedback received. After discussion, Mr. Fonsh asked that a discussion of what falls under policy be added to the November 12th Regional meeting agenda.

3. Subcommittee Updates

7:39 p.m.

Mr. Fonsh noted that Subcommittee Updates have been moved to the beginning of the agenda to reflect the importance of the work that is done outside of the regular meetings. He asked that Debbie Westmoreland be informed if a member of a subcommittee plans to present a report. Ms. Westmoreland noted that the deadline for submission of items for agenda packets is Noon on the Thursday before the Tuesday meeting. Mr. Hood reported that the Budget Subcommittee met on October 15 to discuss what can be done to improve the budget process and documents for this year. He briefly reviewed the recommended changes and noted that the next meeting is October 29th. Mr. Shabazz noted that he is planning to attend the 2013 MASC Conference and is willing to serve as the MASC representative. Mr. Fonsh expressed appreciation for his willingness to serve. Mr. Fonsh reported that the Policy Subcommittee met on October 9 and had the opportunity to hear

from members of the community regarding concerns about some policies related to equity. As the Regional representative to The Collaborative, Mr. Fonsh also reported that The Collaborative is in the process of selecting a new director since the current director will retire this year. Ms. Appy reported that the Amherst JCPC has met and has begun discussion regarding the levy for Capital projects.

4. New and Continuing Business

7:50 p.m.

A. Enrollment Update

DOCUMENT: October 1 Reports--Demographic Data 10/1/2013

This item was tabled because Kathy Mazur, Human Resources Director, was unable to attend the meeting to present the data. Mr. DeChiara said he believes Massachusetts General Law requires that enrollment data be provided to School Committees at each meeting, noting that this has been the practice in Shutesbury. He asked if this data can be provided to the Regional School Committee as well, and Ms. Geryk confirmed that it can.

B. District and School Improvement Plans

DOCUMENT: District Improvement Plan: A Blueprint for Continuous Growth September 2013 (DRAFT--9/24/13); Crocker Farm School Improvement Plan 2013-2014; Fort River School Improvement Plan 2013-2014; Pelham School Improvement Plan 2013-2014; Wildwood School Improvement Plan 2013-2014; ARMS School Improvement Plan 2013-2014; ARHS School Improvement Plan

Ms. Geryk introduced Michele Tesauro, Crocker Farm Principal, and Carole Learned-Miller, Superintendent Intern, who are attending their first School Committee meeting tonight. She then began the presentation of the District and School Improvement plans, noting the interconnectedness of the plans at all levels. Mr. Morris, Dr. Cohen, Dr. Guevara, Mr. Yaffe, Ms. Dinger and Mr. Jackson presented information about how *Goal Area 1: Develop the structures and systems needed to support a continuous district-wide instructional improvement model* is being addressed. Dr. Cohen, Dr. Stith, Ms. Dinger, Mr. Jackson, Ms. Hall, Ms. Desjarlais and Dr. Brady spoke about *Goal Area 2: Ensure access to a guaranteed, viable, and coordinated standards-based curriculum and expand our implementation of the Massachusetts Tiered System of Supports*. Mr. Morris, Dr. Stith, Ms. Tesauro Mr. Jackson, Dr. Brady and Ms. Desjarlais provided information about plans to address *Goal Area 3: Utilize data tools and analyses to improve classroom instruction, student learning, teacher/administrator evaluation, and student engagement and participation*. Dr. Guevara and Mr. Yaffe reported on *Goal Area 4: Create a systemic strength-based approach to family and community engagement, strengthening connections to families, students, and community partners—an approach that leads to gains in student achievement*. After the presentation, Mr. Fonsh opened the floor for School Committee questions. Mr. DeChiara expressed disappointment in the process because he thought this would be an opportunity for discussion by the School Committee rather than an extended presentation. Mr. Shabazz agreed and then addressed a number of concerns. He suggested that students be provided course credit for their work in equity activities and programs such as STRIVE to ensure they are not being asked to do extra work without remuneration; noted that he has asked numerous times for a copy of the MSAN video and has never received it; and expressed concern with Goal Area 3, noting that he does not believe it includes adequate strategies for dealing with improvement for student subgroups since it deals just with intervention curriculum, not core curriculum. Mr. Morris thanked Mr. Shabazz, noting that he agrees that improvement is not just about intervention but about the core curriculum as well. He noted that much of Goal Area 2 is designed to address that issue. Mr. O'Brien stated that he thought the presentation was wonderful and well thought out. He asked what process was used to rewrite the Code of Conduct for the Middle School. Ms. Dinger explained that the process began with feedback from a grandmother in the district, which highlighted the punitive language in the Code of Conduct. She then reviewed the process that was followed in the rewrite. Mr. Baptiste stated that he appreciated the presentation and he appreciates the structure it takes to develop our internal capacity. He noted; however, that he shares Dr. Shabazz's concerns and Mr. DeChiara's sentiment that he hoped for more discussion. Mr. Baptiste expressed concern about the power dynamic when hearing from students about their experiences. Ms. Geryk requested that the Chair remind the committee that this is a time for clarifying questions about the District Improvement Plan and they should be addressed to her, not the staff. Ms. Traphagen thanked the staff for the presentation. She asked what the timing is for the plans presented. Ms. Geryk clarified that this is a multi-year plan so some goals are continuing and some are new. Ms. Traphagen noted that she did not hear anything in the presentation about students who are performing above grade level. Ms. Geryk clarified that the curricular work is for all students performing at all achievement levels. Ms. Gould noted that the educator evaluation model was a large goal last year and asked if it is not included this year because it is complete. Ms. Geryk explained that last year was a roll-out year which required extensive work for implementation. That is why it was included as a separate goal. Mr. Hood stated that he was really pleased with what he heard Mr. Jackson and Ms. Dinger say around the equity goal. He noted that what is being said now is very different from what was being said five years ago, and he thinks it should lead to results. Mr. Robb noted that he would like to know more about the intensive discussion this summer with Calvin Terrell and said it would be good if such an experience could be done for the School Committee. He encouraged the district to consider what measures will be used to determine if things are better three years from now. Mr. DeChiara requested edits to the Continuous Improvement Plan document clarifying what the core beliefs were based on and using language that indicates there are three districts, not just one. Ms. Appy spoke about the remarkable amount of change that has taken place in the district during her

three years on the School Committee and thanked the administrators for their work. Mr. Fonsh noted that in his 40 years of experience with the Amherst Schools, this is the first time he has seen words turned into actions. He expressed concern that the communities have a tendency to cannibalize their allies, noting that this is an opportunity to build on a foundation of four years of work. Mr. Baptiste noted for the record that he appreciates the administrators who educate his children. Mr. Shabazz noted that he would abstain from the vote on the Regional School Improvement Plans because he did not believe he got an adequate answer regarding his concerns about Goal Area 3. Mr. Baptiste then moved to approve the Pelham School Improvement Plan. Ms. Foley seconded and the motion was unanimously approved. Ms. Traphagen moved to approve all three of the Amherst School Improvement Plans. Mr. O'Brien seconded and the motion was unanimously approved. Ms. Appy then moved to approve the two Regional Schools Improvement Plans. Mr. O'Brien seconded and the motion was approved by a vote of eight to zero, with Mr. Shabazz abstaining.

C. Superintendent Evaluation Proposed Plan

DOCUMENT: Self-Assessment (dated 10/22/13)

This item was tabled until the November meetings.

5. Adjournment

10:15 p.m.

Ms. Foley moved to adjourn the Regional School Committee at 10:15 p.m. Mr. O'Brien seconded and the motion was unanimously approved. Mr. O'Brien moved to adjourn the Amherst School Committee at 10:15 p.m. Ms. Traphagen seconded and the motion was unanimously approved. Ms. Foley moved to adjourn the Pelham School Committee at 10:15 p.m. Mr. Robb seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

Respectfully Submitted,
Debbie Westmoreland

Approved November 12, 2013