

MINUTES

AMITY BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Julie Altman, William Blake, Christopher Browe, Patricia Cardozo, Sue Cohen, Steven DeMaio, John A. Grasso, Jr., James Horwitz, Thomas Hurley, Tracey Lane Russo

AMITY BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Diane Crocco, Rita Gedansky, James Stirling

Staff Members Present: Charles Britton, Richard Dellinger, Kathleen Fuller Cutler, Kevin Keller, Jack Levine, Marianne Lippard, Marie McPadden, Michael Nast, Mary Raiola, Jim Saisa

Also Present: Patrick Dudley; other members of the Public

A regular meeting of the Amity Regional Board of Education was held on Monday, September 9, 2013, at 6:30 p.m., in the Presentation Room at the District Offices.

1. **Call to Order:** William Blake called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.
2. **Pledge of Allegiance** was recited by those present.
3. **Approval of Minutes**
 - a. Regular BOE Meeting, August 12, 2013
Motion to approve the minutes as presented (Mr. Hurley, 2d Mr. Browe).
Vote in favor: Julie Altman, Steven DeMaio, John A. Grasso, Jr., Thomas Hurley, Tracey Lane Russo
Vote opposed: none
Abstain: Christopher Browe, Patricia Cardozo, Sue Cohen, James Horwitz
Motion passed.
4. **Public Comment**

No members of the public addressed the Board.
5. **Student Report**

Patrick Dudley, the new student representative to the Board, gave an update on the latest happenings at the High School. He noted that the first unified meeting is taking place tonight at 7 p.m. and he is hoping for a good turnout of freshmen. The Amity Link Crew welcomed over 350 freshmen. Calendars displaying student artwork are \$10 and they are now available for purchase. Patrick congratulated Mr. Mengold for being inducted into the New Haven Grid Iron Hall of Fame. A number of events are planned to take place soon, including the annual Club Day and a pep rally.

6. Report on 2013 CMT/CAPT Results

Dr. McPadden presented the report on the test results. For the CAPT, Amity was #2 in the DRG in mathematics. In Reading Across the Disciplines, Amity was ranked #3 in the DRG. She would like to see improvement in reading. The District may need a stronger focus on reading.

Mr. Hurley noted that the difference from 2012 to 2013 in science is very small (.3). He noted that there is a gender gap between boys and girls in reading, with girls scoring higher than boys.

Dr. McPadden said that gender differences are examined. In general boys tend to be interested in reading about topics such as animals and science.

In interviews with top CEOs, it was noted by the College Board that writing is very important. Students must be able to write well. On the CAPT, students have to write a persuasive essay. The District needs to expand upon what we've been doing with writing.

Ms. Russo said that the drop in the percentage of students at advanced in math when you compare eighth and tenth graders is troubling.

Dr. McPadden noted that writing is more consistent.

Dr. Britton said that the CMT and CAPT are totally separate tests and can't be compared. There are completely different standards and assessment techniques for these tests. A lot can be determined looking at current level three students.

Dr. McPadden said that we are moving toward more explicit teaching of vocabulary. The seventh and eighth graders did phenomenal. In eighth grade writing, Amity was #1 in the DRG. Dr. McPadden reviewed the CMT goal scores cohort comparison 2012 & 2013 showing the percentage of students at or above goal.

The overarching goal of school improvement is to assist students in reaching their highest potential. Amity will continue to raise student achievement through instructional methods that support close text reading, and expand vocabulary and writing across the curriculum. The District will continue to ensure that all subgroups meet the state's new Accountability Annual Performance Targets (TBD). Amity will continue to use data-driven decision-making to inform instruction, curriculum and professional development including results from the Gates MacGinitie Reading Test, CMT/CAPT, and common core assessments. The District will continue to develop and present training modules by the district reading consultants to support full implementation of the CCSS and the new SBAC testing.

Mr. Hurley questioned whether any study has been done to compare the success achieved with the tablet versus a book. Dr. McPadden said that students generally still want to use a book.

Mr. Hurley said that it is important for students to understand how to take tests online.

Mr. Blake said that this appears to be enough data to make some preliminary observation. More information can be provided at a future meeting.

Mr. Browe questioned the formula used for putting students into different levels. Dr. Britton said that the teacher from the previous year makes a recommendation.

The District will continue to examine methods. Mr. Nast said that Amity is part of ACES and can use ACES as a resource.

Ms. Cardozo said that she would be interested in seeing what other regions are doing.

Mr. Horwitz said that he is satisfied, but not content with how we are doing.

Dr. McPadden said that she is focusing on grades 7 through 12. Amity isn't controlling what happens in the lower grades due to the district's structure.

7. Facilities Update

Mr. Nast said that the Black Box Theater is almost ready. Work on the lighting needs to be completed. The room could be ready as early as tomorrow. We would like to invite Dr. Brady to come look at the space. We are confident that it will be ready by September 16th.

8. Superintendent's Report

A. Personnel Report

Mr. Nast noted two new hires at the High School.

B. Announcements and Correspondence from the Board and Administration

1. CABA/CAPSS Annual Convention Invitation

Mr. Nast announced the CABA/CAPSS annual convention is coming up soon.

2. Information on Opening of School

Mr. Nast said that he felt that the opening of the schools went very smoothly. He noted that the school production 'Sweeney Todd' received a significant number of awards. There will be no major changes in the District's goals and objectives. Environmental concerns are being looked into.

C. Other

Air quality problems in Orange are being explored. High humidity has caused moisture to seep into the building. An environmental consultant showed us the area of concern. Mold growth is a concern. We need to have a proper test before cleaning can be done. The situation is taking up a lot of our attention. One teacher slipped in the gymnasium.

Ms. Cohen said that there was no sign of this problem last year.

Ms. Fuller Cutler said that the handlers can't keep out all the moisture.

Mr. Saisa said that he is working with programmers.

Ms. Russo thanked the administration and staff for how they are handling this situation.

Mr. Nast said that the Orange campus was built in a swampy area. The idea that nothing can be done isn't acceptable. He will provide a weekly progress report.

Mr. Blake said that we would like to get this resolved as quickly as possible.

9. Chairman's Report

Mr. Blake said that he is grateful to have Mr. Nast as the interim superintendent. The search for a new superintendent continues.

Mr. Levine said that PowerSchool will be implemented over the next few months.

a. Committee Reports

1. ACES – There was no report.
2. CUBE – There was no report.
3. Curriculum – There was no report.
4. Facilities – Topics were addressed under Item #7 and #8c.
5. Finance

a. Discussion of Proposed 2014-2015 Budget Calendar

Mr. Nast said that the budget calendar will be somewhat flexible. We are following basically the same model as last year.

Ms. Russo said that she thought the District had a working budget before the end of the year in the past. Mr. Levine said that time needed to be adjusted to allow the Orange Board of Finance an opportunity to review the budget.

b. Presentation of Annual Report on Reserve Fund for Capital and Nonrecurring Expenditures Fund

There were no questions.

c. Discussion of Monthly Financial Statements

There were no questions.

- d. Director of Finance and Administration Approved Transfers Under \$3,000
There were no questions.
- e. Discussion and Possible Action on Budget Transfers of \$3,000 or More
The Mathematics Department Chair, Frank Baretta, conducted extensive research over the spring of 2013. The research was designed to identify a data warehouse that will allow Amity teachers to capture student growth data. Scantron was identified as the system and vendor of choice. The system will allow teachers to develop multiple choice, selected-response, and open-ended assessments in a format that, once assessed, will upload data and results for teachers and administrators. These results will be organized by Common Core Standard, and allow teachers and administrators to evaluate student performance and growth against the standard. The system will help identify skills deficits on a cohort, subgroup, and individual student level. This capacity is critical as teachers and administrators monitor student progress against Student Learning Objectives (SLO's), and prepare students for the demands of the S-Bac assessment. This initial investment will provide Amity Regional High School with site licenses for the entire freshman class, as well as equipment and training.

Move to make the following budget transfer to purchase Scantron student licensing for software and on-site training for \$8,856.80 (Ms. Cardozo, 2d Ms. Russo):

| Account Number | Account Name | From | To |
|-----------------------|------------------------|-------------|-----------|
| 03-14-2219-5611 | Instructional Supplies | \$8,857 | |
| 05-14-2350-5690 | Other Supplies | | \$8,857 |

Discussion:

Dr. Britton noted that iPass is currently used. We would like to get this in place for freshmen. If it works well, it can be added to other classes. The newer system will offer the ability to analyze data, as it provides more detailed feedback.

Ms. Russo questioned the price. Dr. Britton noted that the price includes training, hardware, and software.

Mr. Hurley said that if this works well, it should be included in the budget. Mr. Browe questioned whether this feeds into PowerSchool. Dr. Britton said that he doesn't know. This will provide a data warehouse and the ability to analyze data through multiple lenses, capability that we don't currently have.

Vote in favor unanimous.

Motion passed.

Each administrator at Amity Regional High School will assume primary evaluator responsibility for an equal share of teachers and counselors at Amity Regional High School. This will increase the number of teachers and counselors each administrator has historically evaluated from 11 to 15 to 25 to 30. As per new evaluation guidelines, non-tenured teachers will receive three formal and four informal observations, all tenured teachers will receive one formal and four informal observations, and all teachers who need structured support will receive four formal and five informal observations. This will dramatically increase the amount of time administrators are in the classroom scripting and evaluating teacher performance online using the Bloomboard and CCT models. Each building administrator currently has a laptop computer circa 2007. These laptops are slow to load, battery life is minimal, and operating capacity has degraded over the lifetime of the system. New laptops are needed to support administrators as we capture and analyze teacher classroom performance using the online Bloomboard system.

Move to make the following budget transfer of \$6,472.00 to purchase five laptop computers (Mr. Hurley, 2d Ms. Cardozo):

| <u>Account Number</u> | <u>Account Name</u> | <u>From</u> | <u>To</u> |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|-------------|-----------|
| 03-14-2219-5611 | Instructional Supplies | \$1,144 | |
| 03-14-1009-5611 | Instructional Supplies | \$4,000 | |
| 03-14-2120-5690 | Other Supplies | \$1,000 | |
| 03-14-2400-5550 | Communications – Tel Post. | \$ 328 | |
| 05-14-2350-5730 | Equipment – New | | \$6,472 |

Discussion:

Dr. Britton added that the laptops crash regularly and the startup time takes approximately five minutes. The laptops aren't reliable.

Mr. Hurley noted that the technology plan is designed to address these types of problems. In the next cycle, we need to upgrade the old machines.

Vote in favor unanimous.

Motion passed.

- 6. Policy – There was no discussion.
- 7. Personnel – A meeting will be scheduled to discuss one issue.

10. Consideration and Possible Appointment of Cooperative Educational Services as Search Consultant to Board of Education

Motion to approve Cooperative Educational Services as search consultant provided Chairman Blake can negotiate a contract for no more than \$15,000 (Sue Cohen, 2d Christopher Browe).

Discussion: Mr. Blake said that it was the consensus that a new consultant would be a benefit. Once the appointment is approved, the new consultant will be ready to proceed. Two-thirds agreement will authorize Mr. Blake to enter negotiations.

Vote in favor unanimous.

Motion passed.

11. Items for the Next Agenda

Ms. Cohen said that she would like to request a report on the adult education program, including the finances, and description of the program.

12. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:20 p.m. (Mr. Hurley, 2d Mr. Grasso).

Motion passed; meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Marianne Lippard, recording clerk
Rita Gedansky, secretary

References/Attachments:

Minutes:

Amity Finance Committee, August 12, 2013
Board of Education, August 12, 2013

Reports:

Board of Education Presentation, 2013 CAPT/CMT Results
Amity Regional School District No. 5 Revenues and Expenditures
for FY 2013-2014

Amity Regional School District No. 5, Year-to-Date Budget
Report, 9/3/13

Memos:

Amity Regional School District No. 5 Budget Transfers 2013-2014

Jack B. Levine to Michael R. Nast (8/30/13) re: Budget Transfers
of \$3,000 or More for Fiscal Year 2013-2014

Jack B. Levine to Michael R. Nast (8/30/13) re: Proposed 2014-
2015 Budget Calendar

Jack B. Levine to Michael R. Nast (8/30/13) re: Reserve Fund for
Capital and Nonrecurring Expenditures