

Dear Members of the Amherst, Pelham, Leverett, and Shutesbury Public Schools Community,

There has been some speculation regarding the contract between Superintendent Rodriguez and the School Committees of Union #26 and Amherst-Pelham Regional School Districts.

Should the School Committees enter into contract talks with non-unit personnel (such as the Superintendent), the decision to enter into or not enter into such talks would have taken place in executive session; thus, state regulations, school committee ethics guidelines, as well as policies of the school system regarding the confidentiality of executive session matters would not allow the discussion of the decision until such time as the reason for having carried out the conversation in executive, as opposed to open, session no longer applies. If such negotiations were to take place, naturally the matter would be handled by attorneys for both parties. Thus, the School Committees are not in a position to confirm or deny any speculation on the matter at this time. The School Committees are dedicated to providing the public with appropriate information in a timely manner within the legal guidelines under which we are governed.

The districts of Amherst, Pelham, and Amherst-Pelham Regional benefit from the work of an experienced and dedicated professional staff who are committed to ensuring that there be no disruption in the teaching and learning that happens every day in our schools. A working and smoothly-operating administration helps to ensure that. If the Superintendent is not in the district for any length of time, there is a well-established protocol in place for Assistant Superintendent Maria Geryk to be in charge. The principals and central office staff are engaged in multiple initiatives such as a comprehensive review of the special education program, and of course the preparation of budgets for Fiscal Year 2011, two among eighteen goals for the districts approved by the School Committees. I would like to take this opportunity to invite the public to the joint meeting of the School Committees on March 9th, 6:30 pm at the Amherst Town Hall, where a report from consultant Dr. Barry Beers on the assessment of the effectiveness of the Middle School along with an evaluation of the work of Superintendent Rodriguez thus far are the two main scheduled agenda items.

Farshid Hajir
Amherst-Pelham Regional School Committee, chair