

Amherst-Pelham Regional School Committee Meeting
Tuesday, November 13, 2012
Library, Amherst Regional High School

In Attendance:

Kip Fonsh, Chair	Maria Geryk, Superintendent
Rick Hood	Marta Guevara, Director of Achievement & Equity
Lawrence O'Brien	Jerry Champagne, Information Systems Director
Katherine Appy	Rob Detweiler, Director of Finance & Operations
Trevor Baptiste	Miki Lee Gromacki, ARHS Assistant Principal
Annemarie Foley	Mark Jackson, ARHS Principal
Almicar Shabazz	Mary Custard, ARHS Dean
Michael DeChiara	Monica Coley, Fort River Principal
Rob Spence	Talib Sadiq, ARMS Guidance Counselor
	Sharri Abbott, ARHS Social Studies Teacher
	Debbie Westmoreland, Recorder
	Public
	Press

Welcome and Agenda Review

7:03 p.m.

Mr. Fonsh called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. and welcomed the audience, particularly the ARHS students in attendance to make a presentation. He reviewed the agenda, noting that the item "fee schedule review" will be postponed to a later meeting.

Minutes—Mr. Fonsh asked if there were any requests for changes to the minutes of August 28, September 11, September 24, October 9 or October 23, 2012. None were suggested and the minutes were all approved as presented by unanimous consent.

Announcements and Public Comments

None

There were no announcements or public comments.

Superintendent's Update

7:06 p.m.

Dr. Guevara introduced Sharri Abbott and Mary Custard, teachers of the ARHS MSAN course. She noted that eight of the 10 students who attended this year's MSAN student conference in Phoenix are on hand to talk about plans for ARHS to host the conference in 2013. Melvin Espinosa-Rosa spoke about the action plan the students have developed for hosting the conference next year. Lorenz Harris, spoke about the issues the students plan to address in the 2013 student conference. Adrian Rodriguez addressed how the students will prepare to participate as leaders in the conference. Tasha Collins spoke about the work of Calvin Terrell who will be a guest speaker who will explicitly address issues of racism. Eric Goodin mentioned that school often does not feel like a safe place for students of color and talked further about Mr. Terrell's ability to help people step outside their comfort zone. Ramona East talked about the need to have Mr. Terrell due to his ability to reach out to all audiences. Camilla Carpio also spoke about Calvin Terrell and his work on the influence of media. Anthony Cruz announced that the theme of the 2013 MSAN conference will be *Take the Road Less Traveled: The Courage to Act* in honor of poet Robert Frost. Ms. Geryk noted that there will be about 250 students from around the country in attendance at the MSAN student conference in Amherst next year. She thanked the students and noted that she is looking forward to working with them throughout the year in planning for the event. Ms. Appy asked if Mr. Terrell has committed to coming. Dr. Guevara stated that she and Ms. Geryk have a conference call scheduled with Mr. Terrell to try to finalize his commitment. Ms. Geryk noted that there will be funding requirements and a need to make his presentation accessible to the community. Mr. Shabazz noted that the keynote speaker at the MASC conference he just attended, Marion Levenson, spoke about the civic empowerment gap. He said he believes the students who presented tonight are taking a step in helping to close that gap. Mr. Baptiste expressed appreciation for the theme chosen for the conference, noting that he is very interested in hearing about the workshops these students will work on with their peers. Mr. DeChiara thanked the students. He said it is deeply troubling to hear a student make the statement that it is not safe for students of color, noting that it is not O.K. for students to experience that at ARHS. Ms. Carpio noted that the student conference is scheduled for Sept 23-28, 2013 and

said she wants to emphasize the importance of getting Mr. Terrell booked as soon as possible as a first step in making sure everything is well organized. Mr. Fonsh thanked Ms. Abbott, Ms. Custard, Dr. Guevara and the students, and echoed Mr. DeChiara's statement noting that it is unacceptable for any student to feel unsafe at any moment in our school or community. He emphasized that adults must take the lead role in ensuring that students feel safe. Mr. Fonsh said the students should look to the School Committee as allies in this endeavor and come to them for help as needed.

New and Continuing Business

7:33 p.m.

A. FY13 First Quarter Report

DOCUMENTS: Amherst-Pelham Regional School District FY2013 First Quarter Update

Mr. Detweiler reviewed the first quarter budget update report that was distributed to the School Committee in their agenda packets. He concluded that the district is on track with regard to the budget at this early point in the fiscal year. Mr. Shabazz asked if there is a way to disaggregate how much of the special education expenses are for legal services. Mr. Detweiler explained that the data is available historically and can be updated for the committee. Mr. DeChiara expressed appreciation to Mr. Detweiler, noting that his reports are always informative and well presented.

B. FY14 Budget Guidelines Discussion

DOCUMENTS: Memo to the Amherst-Pelham Regional School Committee from Kathryn Mazur, Human Resources Director, regarding Enrollment Projections dated November 8, 2012; Regional Enrollment Projections October 2012; Budget Priorities

Enrollment Projections

Ms. Geryk briefly outlined highlights of the Regional enrollment data that was provided to the School Committee in their agenda packets. Mr. Shabazz asked if the district has efforts in place to showcase the schools in order to stem the reducing enrollments. Ms. Geryk noted that we do have such things in place for families considering enrolling in the district through school choice. She said nothing has been done in trying to bring families back who have withdrawn, but said something can be put in place. Mr. DeChiara noted that the current enrollment numbers are similar to what they were in the early 1990s. Mr. Hood noted that it would be helpful to see a column of historical staffing data in the report as well. Ms. Geryk said that such staffing data is available, but noted that staffing is very dependent on the demographics of the student population not just on total enrollments.

Budget Priorities

Ms. Geryk briefly outlined the process in planning the FY14 budget. She then reviewed the priorities she is suggesting to guide the budget discussions and asked the School Committee to send her any suggestions for additions or changes. Mr. Hood noted that he likes the priorities as presented. Mr. DeChiara said that it will be helpful to provide the rationale for any areas that are cut along with information about how the cuts relate to the core work. Ms. Geryk agreed, noting that more information will be available about the budget gap within the next few weeks so work can begin on prioritizing needs. Mr. Baptiste noted that we should emphasize and prioritize things that can provide efficiencies, such as technologies that can meet multiple needs. Mr. Shabazz asked where the MSAN conference falls within the listed priorities. Ms. Geryk noted that she sees it falling within all of the priority areas and support for it will come before the School Committee as specific budget requests in various areas. Mr. Fonsh noted that he would like to see the budget narrative include information about the demographic profile and needs of our current students, which has a profound impact on per-pupil spending.

Capital Plan Discussion

Ms. Geryk noted briefly that last year was the first year a formal capital plan was implemented for the Regional district. She explained that the capital plan is a five-year plan put together by Mr. Detweiler and the Budget Subcommittee. Tonight was the first time the Budget Subcommittee met about the FY14 capital needs, and a draft document can be forwarded to the School Committee for review in advance of the next budget discussion. Ms. Appy requested that any comments about the draft be emailed to the subcommittee prior to their meeting next week. Mr. Fonsh, Mr. Hood, Mr. Shabazz and Ms. Appy are the members. The full committee will be asked to vote on the updated capital plan.

E. Accept Gifts

DOCUMENT: *Memo to the Regional School Committee from Mary Wallace, Treasurer, dated November 8, 2012*

Mr. Baptiste moved to accept \$19,996 from the ARHS Parent Guardian Organization for ARHS use at the Principal's discretion; \$500 from Timothy Mitchell for the Ted Madden Scholarship; and \$1,000 from Brian Ecclestone to purchase a piano for the ARHS Performing Arts department. Mr. O'Brien seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

Subcommittee Updates

8:20 p.m.

A. RSDPB Update

Mr. DeChiara provided an update on the work of the RSDPB since the last Regional School Committee meeting. He reported on the town official forum, the planned public forum schedule, the DESE grant application that has already been submitted, the CIC grant application that is due at the end of this month, and the work of the core issues committees. Ms. Appy briefly reported on the work of the Education Subcommittee of the RSDPB, noting that they are meeting with the School Governance Councils from each of the schools. Mr. Shabazz expressed concern that the work of the RSDPB would go forward even if one of the four town's school committees chooses to opt out. Mr. DeChiara explained that the members of the RSDPB were appointed by the Town Moderator of each town, and includes representatives from the School Committee of each town. Therefore, if a town pulls out, it will be the members of the RSDPB doing so rather than the town's School Committee.

7. School Committee Planning

8:34 p.m.

A. Calendar—Ms. Geryk reviewed the agenda items for the joint meeting on November 27, including an MASC conference update by Mr. Shabazz and a vote on the CIC grant by the Amherst and Pelham School Committees.

8. Adjournment

8:38 p.m.

Mr. Shabazz moved to adjourn at 8:38 p.m. Mr. DeChiara seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

Respectfully Submitted,
Debbie Westmoreland

Approved December 11, 2012