

**Amherst-Pelham Regional and Union 26 School Committee Meeting**  
**Tuesday, January 10, 2017**  
**Library, Amherst Regional High School**

**IN ATTENDANCE**

Katherine Appy, Region & Union 26	Mike Morris, Interim Superintendent
Emily Marriott, Region	Sean Mangano, Finance Director
Anastasia Ordonez, Region & Union 26	Rachel Bowen, Assistant HR Director
Eric Nakajima, Region	Kathryn Mazur, HR Director
Vira Douangmany-Cage, Region	Mark Jackson, ARHS Principal
Cara Castenson, Union 26	Patty Bode, ARMS Principal
Audra Goscenski, Region	Kate Holcomb, Budget Analyst
Stephen Sullivan, Region (arrived at 6:09 p.m.; left at 8:04)	Public and Press
Ron Mannino, Union 26	Debbie Westmoreland, Recorder

**ABSENT**

Trevor Baptiste, Region & Union 26  
Phoebe Hazzard, Region & Union 26

**1. Call to Order and Approve Minutes 6:03 p.m.**

Mr. Nakajima called the Regional School Committee to order and Ms. Ordonez called the Union 26 School Committee to order at 6:03 p.m. Ms. Appy moved to approve the minutes of December 13, 2016. Ms. Ordonez seconded and the motion was unanimously approved. Ms. Appy moved to approve the minutes on behalf of the Union 26 School Committee. Ms. Marriott seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

**2. Announcements and Public Comment 6:05 p.m.**

There were no announcements or public comments.

**3. Interim Superintendent's Update 6:06 p.m.**

***DOCUMENT: Interim Superintendent's Update to the Amherst-Pelham Regional School Committee dated January 10, 2017***

Dr. Morris reported on a number of topics including:

- Families, staff and students are being asked to complete a survey providing feedback on the "no homework over break" plan that was put in place over the winter break. Results will be shared with the School Committee and on the website after the family survey closes on January 17.
- The ARMS and Fort River Principal positions will be posted as interim positions again next year so the permanent Superintendent can oversee the hiring of the permanent principals. Ms. Bode and Ms. Chamberland have been encouraged to apply. Upon the retirement of Kathryn Mazur, Human Resources Director, that position will be reclassified and renamed Assistant Superintendent for Diversity, Equity and Human Resources.
- ARMS teachers Heather Sullivan-Flynn and Elena Betke-Brunswick have been awarded \$1,000 and \$1,200, respectively, Amherst Local Cultural Council Grants for upcoming projects.
- The Four Towns meeting was held last Saturday, January 7 in the ARMS library. Dr. Morris reported that the towns were not able to come to agreement on an assessment method, and one town asked that the district develop a second budget based on the Statutory method. That method would result in a \$376,000 deficit for the Regional Schools, which would lead to major budget cuts. Dr. Morris noted that he will be asking the Regional School Committee to take a leadership role in advocating for the budget. Mr. Nakajima and Ms. Ordonez spoke about the need to find a solution among the four towns, with both noting that three of the towns indicated that they can work with the alternative method for at least one more year. Ms. Appy reminded the committee and the community that the four towns have been a Region for 60+ years and have always found a way to work together to support the schools. She noted that she feels confident that our larger community will get to a place where we figure this out to avoid a worst-case scenario for our students. Dr. Morris noted that this is the third year of looking for a solution and he does feel a sense of urgency to deal with this. Mr. Nakajima agreed, noting that he believes it is a real possibility that one town may vote no on the assessment method. Mr. Mangano clarified that if one of the town meetings votes no, the budget returns to the Regional School Committee to consider a possibly different

budget to return to the town meetings. Dr. Morris noted that the administration will present the implications of budgets with both assessment methods at the next meeting on January 24.

#### **4. New and Continuing Business**

**6:22 p.m.**

##### **A. Approve Superintendent Search Consultant**

###### ***DOCUMENT: Amherst-Pelham Regional Schools Superintendent Search Topics for Discussion; Amherst-Pelham Regional Schools Superintendent Search Suggested Process and Timeline***

Mr. Mangano explained that, based on the request for quotes, Ray and Associates is the search firm being recommended for the Superintendent search. On behalf of the Regional School Committee, Ms. Goscenski moved to approve the proposal of Ray and Associates and contract with the firm for the superintendent search. Ms. Marriott seconded and Mr. Mangano briefly outlined the highlights of the contract, including anticipated costs. The motion was then unanimously approved. On behalf of the Union 26 committee, Ms. Appy made the same motion. Ms. Castenson seconded and the motion was unanimously approved. Mr. Mangano then introduced Dr. Michael Rush from Ray and Associates who provided some background about the firm and his credentials. Dr. Rush distributed a list of topics for discussion and the timeline for the process, which he reviewed. After brief discussion, Ms. Douangmany Cage moved to approve the timeline as presented. Ms. Appy seconded and the motion was unanimously approved by the Regional School Committee. Ms. Appy made the same motion on behalf of the Union 26 committee. Ms. Ordonez seconded and the motion was unanimously approved. Dr. Rush noted that the School Committee needs to think about where they want to advertise the position. He provided Ms. Mazur with a list of potential advertising venues, a salary comparison and a sample flyer for the School Committee's information. Ms. Mazur will send the list of constituent groups to be interviewed to the School Committee for their review/suggestions.

Mr. Mannino moved to adjourn the Union 26 committee at 7:02 p.m. Ms. Castenson seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

##### **B. Policy Vote**

###### ***DOCUMENT: Policy--Teaching about Alcohol, Tobacco and Drugs; Policy--Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Use by Students Prohibited***

Ms. Appy reminded the committee of the need to approve these policies to meet DESE requirements. Ms. Ordonez noted that she believes it is important to specify "controlled substances" rather than just drugs and discussion followed. Ms. Ordonez moved to amend both policy Teaching about Alcohol, Tobacco and Drugs and Alcohol as well as policy Tobacco and Drug Use by Students Prohibited to include the parenthetical statement "hereby defined as controlled substances and misuse of prescription drugs" after the first reference to drugs. Ms. Marriott seconded and the motion was unanimously approved. Ms. Appy moved to approve the policy Teaching about Alcohol, Tobacco and Drugs as amended. Ms. Goscenski seconded and the motion was unanimously approved. Ms. Goscenski moved to approve the policy Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Use by Students Prohibited as amended. Ms. Marriott seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

##### **C. Appoint Sabbatical Requests Subcommittee**

Dr. Morris reported that multiple sabbatical applications were received for the Regional Schools for next year, which means a subcommittee needs to be established to review them next week and make a recommendation at the January 24 meeting. Ms. Appy moved to form a subcommittee to review sabbatical requests. Ms. Marriott seconded and the motion was unanimously approved. Ms. Appy and Mr. Nakajima volunteered to serve on the subcommittee.

##### **D. Food Services Presentation/Discussion**

###### ***DOCUMENT: Amherst Public Schools, Pelham Elementary School and Amherst-Pelham Regional Schools Powerpoint Presentation dated 1/10/17***

Mr. Mangano acknowledged and thanked the members of the Food Services Visioning Group for their work exploring food service options, including whether to continue to outsource with a contractor or return to an in-house program. He then gave a Powerpoint presentation that highlighted the history of food services in the districts, the current program, financial and data information regarding food services options, the work of the Visioning Group, student survey results and next steps in the process. He noted that by the end of January the School Committee needs to decide whether to renew the Whitsons contract for one year or to move to an in-house program. If the committee extends the Whitsons contract by one year in FY18, for FY19 they will need to decide whether to conduct RFPs for a food service management company or move to an in-house program. Mr. Mangano answered clarifying questions for the committee during the presentation. Ms. Douangmany Cage noted the importance of having the district's food policies align with our social justice commitment.

Mr. Nakajima noted that the timeline is tight if a decision is made to change to an in-house program for July 1. Dr. Morris noted that hiring the right food services director would be the critical first step. Ms. Appy noted that she would like to hear from the Visioning Committee to know what their recommendation is. Alex Lafave, ARHS parent and Visioning Committee member, stated that the committee came to the conclusion that moving to an in-house program is the only way to make the changes the community is saying are important because we cannot force a contractor to make them. Joanne Lennon, Chicopee Food Services Director and Visioning Group Facilitator, noted that the participation rate is higher in all districts that have in-house programs than in those that use contractors. She spoke about the importance of finding a good food services director. Ms. Ordonez suggested that the School Committee should develop a vision for food service in schools that explains the link between food service and education. Ms. Douangmany Cage spoke about the direct impact food has on households and families. Dr. Morris noted that he fully supports the Food Service Visioning Group. If the committee votes to move to an in-house program, he encouraged them to be very firm in why this is important and the impact on students since there may be questions about why food service costs are being increased if budget cuts are required. Mr. Nakajima noted that the committee needs a breakout of costs and information about a realistic timeline to help them make an intelligible decision on January 24.

#### **E. SETF PAR Presentation**

##### ***DOCUMENT: Overview of School Climate Data Collection and Analysis Policy (Policy CJ); Untitled Document regarding Restorative Justice Program using Participatory Action Research approach***

Katie Landowski, SETF member, reviewed the history of the School Climate Data Collection and Analysis Policy which calls for Participatory Action Research to gather data. Caridad Martinez and Kelly Norris, SETF members, read a document that outlines the subcommittee's recommendation that the district utilize a Restorative Justice Program, which embraces a PAR approach, to help address equity issues. Ms. Martinez noted that SETF believes that putting the funds and the will behind a program that uses a youth participatory action process will address many issues in our schools and will come from the students and families actually being effected. The proposed annual budget for the three-year program SETF is recommending is \$145,000. Ms. Goscenski asked where the efforts should be focused if the full program cannot be funded at once. Ms. Martinez noted that the PAR youth program would be the fundamental thing to begin with. At Ms. Ordonez's request, Ms. Martinez described the role of the Director of Youth Organizer position. Mr. Jackson shared a story about a Restorative Justice circle experience that happened at ARHS last year, noting that there is a high degree of receptivity to the program being proposed by SETF. Dr. Morris thanked the SETF members who attended and presented the request. He noted that we have to attempt to preserve the many successful things we have, add more things that influence our students the most and deal with the reality of budget cuts. Dr. Morris noted that these are the things that are at stake in getting our four towns to come together to fund a budget that is best for our students. Mr. Nakajima noted that the next level of dialogue that involves the Superintendent, Finance Director and the Principal is needed in order to move this from a well-thought-out concept paper to a budget proposal. Ms. Douagnmany Cage thanked the members of the School Equity Task Force for their hours of research that went into this proposal.

#### **F. FY18 Budget--School Choice**

Dr. Morris noted that a vote is not required tonight since this is a chance for the public to provide comments regarding whether the district should remain a school choice district next year. He noted that the Regional Schools accept choice students in grades where seats are available, not to increase class sizes. A vote would be needed on the issue in February. Ms. Goscenski noted that the decision is made reluctantly to accept choice students in Leverett because they realize they are taking students and funding from other schools. Mr. Nakajima noted that it would be helpful to have a brief Powerpoint presentation regarding school choice before the vote is taken. Dr. Morris asked the committee to send any questions they want addressed to Ms. Westmoreland.

#### **5. School Committee Planning**

**9:03 p.m.**

Upcoming topics include food service vote, search consultant, equity work update, sabbatical vote, FY18 budget presentation, homework update, superintendent goals, and water update. Topics on January 24 will include the FY18 budget presentation, the search consultant, the food services vote, and the sabbatical vote. Ms. Westmoreland will do a Doodle poll to find an additional meeting date.

#### **6. Adjourn**

**9:10 p.m.**

Mr. Nakajima moved to adjourn to Executive Session at 9:10 p.m. in accordance with MGL chapter 30A, section 21(3) to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining (Units A, B and C) if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on

the bargaining position of the public body and the chair so declares, with no intention of returning to open session. Ms. Goscenski seconded and, by unanimous roll call vote, the committee adjourned to Executive Session.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Debbie Westmoreland