

AMITY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 5 BOARD OF EDUCATION
AUGUST 17, 2020 REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
6:30 P.M.
25 Newton Road, Woodbridge, CT

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

John Belfonti, Robyn Berke (virtual), Christopher Browe, Patricia Cardozo, Shannan Carlson, Paul Davis, Steven DeMaio, Carla Eichler, George Howard (virtual), Sheila McCreven (virtual), Patrick Reed, Dr. Jennifer Turner (virtual)

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

Andrea Hubbard

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES PRESENT

Alison Bowler, Caroline Chen

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT

Dr. Jennifer Byars, Theresa Lumas, Thomas Brant, Kathy Burke, Stephan Ciceron, Shaun DeRosa, Ernest Goodwin, Kathy Kovalik, Jill LaPlante, Anna Mahon, Dr. Marie McPadden, James Saisa, Dr. Jason Tracy

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Belfonti called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Recited by those present

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. Regular Board of Education Meeting -- June 8, 2020

*MOTION by Patrick Reed, SECOND by Robyn Berke, to approve as submitted
VOTES IN FAVOR, 12 (unanimous)
MOTION CARRIED*

- b. Special Board of Education Meeting -- July 23, 2020

*MOTION by Paul Davis, SECOND by Shannan Carlson, to approve as submitted
VOTES IN FAVOR, 12 (unanimous)
MOTION CARRIED*

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- c. Special Board of Education Meeting -- August 3, 2020

*MOTION by Patricia Cardozo, SECOND by George Howard, to approve as submitted
VOTES IN FAVOR, 10 (Belfonti, Browe, Cardozo, Davis, DeMaio, Eichler, Howard, McCreven, Reed, Turner)
ABSTAINED, 2 (Berke, Carlson)
MOTION CARRIED*

4. STUDENT REPORT

- a. Monthly Report

5. PUBLIC COMMENT

Received from president of Amity Educators' Association, teachers, and citizen

6. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

- a. Personnel Report
- b. Superintendent Report

7. CORRESPONDENCE

8. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Chairperson Belfonti publicly thanked Dr. Byars and the administrators for all their hard work, including putting aside several items like Dr. Byars' review and the Board of Education Retreat to get "all hands on deck" to open the schools. He thanked everybody for their patience.

- a. Committee Reports
 - 1. ACES
 - 2. Ad Hoc School Safety
 - 3. CABE
 - 4. Curriculum

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5. District Health and Safety
6. District Technology
 - a. Monthly Report

Chairperson Belfonti publicly thanked Shaun DeRosa and the Technology Department for all their hard work.

7. Facilities
 - a. Monthly Report
8. Finance
 - a. Presentation and Discussion of Second Quarter 2020 Executive Summary Review of Amity Pension Fund, Sick and Severance Account, and OPEB Trust
 - b. Discussion and Possible Action on Contracts over \$35,000
 1. Electrical Contract

MOTION by George Howard, SECOND by Patrick Reed, to authorize the Superintendent to sign a contract for electricity supply that extends the current contract with Engine Resources, LLC or a provider offering better rates for up to 48 months, on behalf of the District, provided the rates are in the best interest of Amity.

VOTES IN FAVOR, 12 (unanimous)

MOTION CARRIED

- c. Presentation and Discussion of 2021-2022 Budget Calendar
- d. Presentation of Annual Report on Reserve Fund for Capital and Nonrecurring Expenditures
- e. Discussion and Possible Action on to initiate process to appropriate funds to Capital and Nonrecurring

MOTION by Patricia Cardozo, SECOND by Shannan Carlson, to direct the Administration to start the planning process to appropriate 1% (\$495,482) of the 2019-2020 operating funds to the Capital and Nonrecurring Account and bring the resolution and dates to the September Board Meeting for approval.

VOTES IN FAVOR, 11 (Belfonti, Berke, Browe, Cardozo, Carlson, Davis, DeMaio, Eichler, Howard, Reed, Turner)

VOTES OPPOSED, 1 (McCreven)

MOTION CARRIED

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- a. Discussion of Monthly Financial Statements
 - 1. Fiscal Year 2019-2020
 - 2. Fiscal Year 2020-2021
 - b. Director of Finance and Administration Approved Transfers Under \$3,000
 - 1. Fiscal Year 2020-2021
 - c. Discussion and Possible Action on Budget Transfers of \$3,000 or More
 - 1. Fiscal Year 2019-2020 (information only –approved in June)
 - d. Other
 - 1. Update on Bond Issue
9. Policy
- e. First Read
 - 1. Roles and Responsibilities of School Security Officers

MOTION by Sheila McCreven, SECOND by Robyn Berke, to postpone this item until the next Board of Education Regular Meeting

VOTES IN FAVOR, 3 (Berke, McCreven, Turner)

VOTES OPPOSED, 9 (Belfonti, Browe, Cardozo, Carlson, Davis, DeMaio, Eichler, Howard, Reed)

MOTION FAILED

MOTION by Sheila McCreven, SECOND by Robyn Berke, to get legal advice on this policy before proceeding

VOTES IN FAVOR, 12 (unanimous)

MOTION PASSED

- 2. P5145.5 Prohibition Against Sexual Harassment
- 3. P5145.511 Exploitation: Sexual Harassment
- 4. P5145.4 Nondiscrimination - Transgender and Non-Conforming Students
- 5. P5145.42 Section 504 and Title II
- 6. P5145.45 Non-Discrimination

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7. P6114.81 Emergencies and Disaster Preparedness

8. P6173 Homebound/Hospital Instruction

f. Second Read

1. P4112.6 Personnel Records

2. P5132 Dress and Grooming

MOTION by Sheila McCreven, SECOND by Shannan Carlson, to approve Policy 4112.6 Personnel Records and Policy 5132 Dress and Grooming as submitted

VOTES IN FAVOR, 12 (unanimous)

MOTION CARRIED

10. Personnel

9. NEW BUSINESS

10. ITEMS FOR THE NEXT AGENDA – Due to Chairperson by August 31, 2020

Sheila McCreven requested the next meeting be hybrid and that she would offer her time to test the technology preparation prior to that meeting.

11. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Steven DeMaio, SECOND by Christopher Browe, to adjourn the meeting

VOTES IN FAVOR, 12 (unanimous)

MOTION CARRIED

Meeting adjourned at 8:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Pamela Pero

Pamela Pero

Recording Secretary

From: [Carla Eichler](#)
To: [Pamela Pero](#)
Cc: [Jennifer Byars](#)
Subject: Fw: Problems with Synthetic Turf Fields
Date: Sunday, August 2, 2020 8:03:20 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

Hi Pam,
I'm forwarding this email to include as correspondence for our August meeting.
Thanks,
Carla

From: Tucker, Mary Evelyn <maryevelyn.tucker@yale.edu>
Sent: Friday, July 31, 2020 9:57 PM
To: Andrea Hubbard <andrea.hubbard@amityregion5.org>; Carla Eichler <Carla.Eichler@amityregion5.org>; Christopher Browe <Christopher.Browe@amityregion5.org>; George Howard <George.Howard@amityregion5.org>; Jennifer Turner <Jennifer.Turner@amityregion5.org>; John Belfonti <John.Belfonti@amityregion5.org>; Patricia Cardozo <Patricia.Cardozo@amityregion5.org>; Patrick Reed <patrick.reed@amityregion5.org>; Paul Davis <paul.davis@amityregion5.org>; Robyn Berke <Robyn.Berke@amityregion5.org>; Shannan Carlson <Shannan.Carlson@amityregion5.org>; Sheila McCreven <Sheila.McCreven@amityregion5.org>; Steven DeMaio <Steven.DeMaio@amityregion5.org>
Cc: Alderman, Nancy <nancy.alderman@yale.edu>
Subject: Problems with Synthetic Turf Fields

This message has originated from an **External Source**. Please use proper judgment and caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding to this email.

Dear Amity Board of Education:

I hope you are well in these challenging times. I value the time you are giving to insure quality education in our community.

For this reason, I am writing as a concerned citizen of our wonderful Woodbridge community and as someone who teaches at the Yale School of the Environment.

Nancy Alderman, the President of Environment and Human Health, has given considerable time over many years to studying the problems of artificial turf. I wanted to draw your attention to her website and to the reports posted there on this topic. No doubt she would be happy to speak with you to explain further the considerable hazards of artificial turf fields. I have copied her above.

I hope this information is helpful in your deliberations. Clearly the health of our children and our bioregion is a primary concern for all of this.

Artificial turf puts both of these at risk. My colleagues at Yale have researched the chemical risks involved in artificial turf.

Synthetic Turf Research Conducted at Yale University

Chemical analysis conducted at Yale University on synthetic turf crumb rubber infill and playground rubber mulch. There were 96 chemicals found in 14 samples analyzed. Half of those chemicals have had no government testing on them.

[more info](#)

Thank you for your consideration of these issues before we cause harm to our young people and our area.

Warm regards,

Mary Evelyn Tucker
Yale School of the Environment

Go to this website <https://www.ehhi.org/artificial-turf.php>

There are various reports there

You can down load this brochure **12 Reasons Why Synthetic Turf Fields Pose a Health Risk**



Nancy Alderman, President
Environment and Human Health, Inc.
1191 Ridge Road
North Haven, CT 06473
(Phone) 203-248-6582
<https://www.ehhi.org>
<https://www.ehhijournal.org>

August 17, 2020

Dear Members of the Amity Region 5 Board of Education and the Amity community,

The special relationship that Amity teachers have with our parents, students and community is highly valued by the members of the Amity Education Association (AEA). The AEA represents more than 220 teachers from all three buildings. We have serious concerns about our safety and the safety of our students when resuming on site instruction. The Board, parents and the Amity community can do better for teachers, particularly those who need greater consideration for their safety. Although the concerns outlined below are not the unanimous opinion of all teachers, many of us have serious concerns about safety, instructional delivery, and funding. I ask that you seriously examine the details of the three plans, ensure all the safety details, protocols, and processes are made clear to the public and fully transparent in a way that the community and the teachers can understand the full extent of risk to the teachers and the students. Each detail related to public health and employee safety should also have the specific scientific support, identify the specific authority making the decision, and indicate where the specific recommendations originated.

Amity teachers have fully committed ourselves to this district and this community. We need to see the same commitment returned to us. We now need the safety of the teachers moved to the forefront. The Board and the state have clearly done that for the students and families by allowing an as of yet undeveloped opt-out to remote instruction option. What real and genuine provisions have been made for teachers who are putting themselves at risk? What considerations are there for the teachers who are at greater risk? What adjustments have been made to assist us in taking care of our families, families that have also been disrupted by this ongoing health emergency.

SAFETY CONCERNS

The CDC recommends social distancing of 6 feet, with masks, when indoors when with people who are not from your household. These guidelines have not changed and are in place in all other situations. Amity's full in person instruction model does not meet this recommendation and our hybrid instructional model only mostly meets this recommendation. The Governor's reopening plan added the phrase "when feasible" to several public health and safety guidelines. Feasible reads as optional. This is unacceptable, particularly when you have employees who are at high risk for serious illness. Why are public health and safety in schools being treated differently by the Governor? Currently, in Connecticut, indoor gatherings are restricted to 25 people. Even the most generous number for

a gathering is 150 people and that is in place only for outdoor graduations. Please let science and diligent attention to public health and safety guide your decision making, not partisan, personal, or anecdotal conclusions.

Words have meaning and details impact safety of everyone in our buildings: cleaning wipes and disinfecting wipes are two significantly different kinds of wipes. Which do we have? Whose recommendation is being followed on this point? If the medical experts are recommending disinfecting wipes then we should have recommended wipes and not cleaning wipes that do not sanitize.

All the recommended PPE, included the appropriate face coverings, must be on-site and available before any teachers or students are allowed to return to our buildings. This includes the additional PPE for those who have greater risks in their job function as well as those who are at greater risk due to existing health conditions.

Cohorting at the middle schools in our plan in not completely isolated. The cohorts will be broken during the day and students will be intermingled between the cohorts during the day. These opportunities for community spread of COVID-19 starts as soon as students get on the bus in the morning.

A STUDENT DAY.

The students will not experience a regular Amity day. The student day in either of the return models, if all the protocols are followed correctly, will not be a normal, robust, energetic educational day. The students board the bus, sit in the order they are picked up (not with friends). When they arrive at school they are immediately be directed to their period one class – no lockers, no socializing. There they will remain seated until class starts at 7:34. They will then receive instruction from their teacher who will be teaching to both those students in the room and those students at home simultaneously while remaining seated. This type of instruction has not been done before. It will involve heavy use of the new laptops in both environments by students and teachers. Each classroom activity, assignment, and lesson plan will need to be modified and student engagement will only be from their seats/computers. At the High School, they will then move to their next class in an orderly fashion during a structured passing period – no lockers, no socializing. They will go directly to their next class and repeat. This will go on until they leave the building. At the middle schools, for most of the day, they will be in the same seats. Students will not be returning to the school and friends they remember.

INSTRUCTIONAL CONCERNS

The instruction in our classes will be dramatically different than anyone has ever experienced at Amity. The model of providing instruction to at-home students simultaneously with students in the classroom has many unknowns surrounding it and unintended consequences will likely be significant. Further, the middle

school's plan will debut an entirely novel approach to grouping students across ability levels and instructional needs. This model will further complicate instructional requirements for teachers and provide ample opportunities for unintended consequences.

FUNDING

Are the required additional personnel and resources in place for the new instructional models? If they are not, teacher and student health and safety are at risk. Maintaining the safety protocols will be difficult to meet consistently each and every day. This is dependent on funding. Additional supplies for students in hands-on courses need to be purchased and in place. We are less than a week from when teachers are expected to return. And two weeks for students. Where is the extra support staff and funding coming from? Has the hiring been completed?

The Governor directed schools to do the impossible. To maximize student safety the Governor has enshrined in the state plan that parents have full choice to keep their child home. He made a key CDC safety guideline optional. What about the teachers' safety? Under Amity's plan, there is no provision for at risk teachers to work remotely and stay safe. We are flexible in meeting the needs of the students. Please show flexibility to ensure that each teacher has the work environment that accommodates her individual health requirements. If not, we lose expertise, continuity, and dedication by forcing teachers to choose between a career and community they love and returning to an unsafe work environment. Some of the teachers are at high risk of serious complications if they contract COVID-19. I need you to ensure they have a safe option. The Board can and must make provisions to support the teachers and support public health and safety. The Return to Schools Committee has worked tirelessly over the summer to come up with a plan for us to return to school. Amity teachers are known for their dedication to the students and this community. Now Amity teachers need this board to be just as dedicated to our health and safety.

I ask you to ensure that all Amity teachers have the safest possible return to school.

Respectfully,
Peter Downhour
President, Amity Education Association (AEA)

August 13, 2020

To the Amity Board of Education and BOWA Community,

On June 30th, the Amity Reopening Schools Committee was convened and tasked with designing a reopening plan that would prioritize the safety of students and staff while maintaining the long-honored tenets of our district's comprehensive instructional program.

In addition to district and building leadership, students, and custodial and secretarial staff, the committee included 31 teachers. Though such a degree of teacher participation helps create the perception that the final draft of the plan represents a consensus of the teacher committee members, this was not always the case.

Throughout the summer, a commonality emerged among a number of the subcommittees: decisions were being made that did not reflect the input and concerns that teachers raised during the meetings. This approach resulted in a plan that many of us believe does not adequately ensure the safety of our students and staff, or offer the best approach to instruction.

As planned, the **daily schedules** detailed in **Appendix B, C, and D** are no different than those from previous years. Without considering a redesign of our daily schedules, including several alternatives for block schedules put forth by teachers to reduce class sizes and achieve a greater degree of distancing, **the district can only provide 3 to 4-foot distancing in many classrooms -- even in the hybrid plan.** Such schedules, regardless of in-person or remote, also require students and teachers to be at their computers to the point of exhaustion. **Safety and learning are paramount. To ensure both, we must divert our attention from a physical reopening to the development of a more robust, thoughtful, and fulfilling remote learning plan.**

As planned, the **structure for arrival, dismissal, and passing times** does not account for the adequate supervision of students and applies unnecessary pressure on bus companies and drivers to make sure that students remain masked and do not eat on the bus or share food. To guarantee all students will be supervised, **over 100 volunteers or paid monitors are needed.** *These positions have yet to be posted.* **Without ample monitors, students will go unsupervised** from 7:15-7:34 each morning as well as in between classes at the Middle Schools.

As planned, **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)** will be provided with the expectation that it will be used by all staff and students. Despite the provision of masks and hand sanitizer, teachers, including those at high-risk, have been made aware that other appropriate PPE (plexiglass dividers, face shields, etc) crucial to their protection **may not be available or are on backorder.** "Green" cleaning wipes, not EPA-registered disinfectants, will be the product

available to clean desks, books, keyboards, and shared objects between and during classes. **All requested PPE** and disinfectants proven to protect against COVID-19 **should be secured and allocated before school opens**. We are also calling for **a more clear and consistent policy** to address students who refuse to wear a mask or routinely take off or forget their mask.

Finally, parents, teachers, and students are receiving the reopening plan with just **1-2 weeks to prepare for a school year unlike any of us could imagine**. *This is not going to be school as we know it.* **Without delaying the physical opening of school**, we cannot ensure the design and implementation of a sufficient professional development plan, and we cannot expect a smooth transition for students, parents, and staff to learn and adjust to the requirements necessary to remain safe in the state of a global pandemic.

In our collective voice,

13 Concerned Teacher Representatives of the Amity Reopening Committee