

AMITY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 5 BOARD OF EDUCATION
FEBRUARY 8, 2021 REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
6:30 P.M., 100 Ohman Avenue, Orange, CT

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

John Belfonti, Christopher Browe, Patricia Cardozo, Shannan Carlson, Steven DeMaio, Carla Eichler, George Howard, Paul Davis (remote), Andrea Hubbard (remote), Sheila McCreven (remote; exited the meeting at 9:27 pm), Patrick Reed (remote), Dr. Jennifer Turner (remote), Robyn Berke (6:40 pm arrival, remote)

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

None

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES PRESENT

Alison Bowler (remote), Caroline Chen (remote)

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT

Dr. Jennifer Byars, Theresa Lumas, Kathy Burke, Anna Mahon, Dr. Marie McPadden, Dr. Jason Tracy

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Belfonti called the meeting to order at 6:37 p.m.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Recited by those present

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. Regular Board of Education Meeting – January 11, 2021

*MOTION by Steven DeMaio, Second by Shannan Carlson, to approve minutes as submitted
VOTES IN FAVOR, 13 (unanimous)
MOTION CARRIED*

4. STUDENT REPORT

a. Monthly Report

AMITY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 5 BOARD OF EDUCATION
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6:30 P.M., 100 Ohman Avenue, Orange, CT

5. PUBLIC COMMENT

75 emailed public comments summarized by Carla Eichler

6. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

- a. Personnel Report
- b. Superintendent Report
- c. 2021-2022 Budget Updates

7. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON REVISION TO 2020-2021 SCHOOL CALENDAR FOR AMITY MIDDLE SCHOOL BETHANY

MOTION by Shannan Carlson, Second by Christopher Browe, to add March 19, 2021 as a student learning day for Amity Middle School in Bethany

VOTES IN FAVOR, 13 (unanimous)

MOTION CARRIED

8. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH PROPOSAL IN AMITY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 5

MOTION by Steven DeMaio, Second by Patricia Cardozo, to add Michele Delucia's research questions to the 2020-2021 School Climate Survey

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

OPPOSED, 2 (Berke, McCreven)

MOTION CARRIED

9. CORRESPONDENCE

A joint letter sent by the Selectmen of Bethany, Orange, and Woodbridge was read to the Board by Carla Eichler.

10. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

a. Committee Reports

1. ACES
2. Ad Hoc School Safety
3. CABE
4. Curriculum
 - a. Discussion and Possible Action on Textbook Proposals
 1. I'll Be Gone in the Dark, Humanities Elective, High School Grade 12
 2. Introduction to Mass Communications, English, High School Grade 12
 3. Bring Science Alive: Forces and Energy, Science, Middle School Grade 8

MOTION by Christopher Browe, Second by Steven DeMaio, to approve all three textbook proposals: I'll Be Gone in the Dark, Introduction to Mass Communications, Bring Science Alive: Forces and Energy

VOTES IN FAVOR, 13 (unanimous)

MOTION CARRIED

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

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8. Finance

- a. **Presentation and Discussion of Fourth Quarter 2020 Executive Summary Review of Amity Pension Fund, Sick and Severance Account and OPEB Trust**
- b. **Discussion of Monthly Financial Statements**
- c. **Director of Finance and Administration Approved Transfers Under \$3,000**
- d. **Discussion and Possible Action on Budget Transfers of \$3,000 or More**

MOTION by Christopher Browe, Second by Steven DeMaio, to approve the following budget transfer from contingency to cover the operations of the School Lunch Program:

<i>ACCOUNT NUMBER</i>	<i>ACCOUNT NAME</i>	<i>FROM</i>	<i>TO</i>
<i>05-15-0000-5850</i>	<i>Contingency</i>	<i>\$ 75,000</i>	
<i>05-15-3100-5590</i>	<i>Cafeteria Other Purchased Services</i>		<i>\$75,000</i>

VOTES IN FAVOR, 13 (unanimous)

MOTION CARRIED

MOTION by Christopher Browe, Second by George Howard, to approve the following budget transfers between technology accounts to cover the purchases in the Technology Department:

<i>ACCOUNT NUMBER</i>	<i>ACCOUNT NAME</i>	<i>FROM</i>	<i>TO</i>
<i>05-14-2350-5730</i>	<i>Equipment – New</i>	<i>\$ 4,816</i>	
<i>05-14-2350-5731</i>	<i>Equipment - Replacement</i>		<i>\$ 4,816</i>
<i>05-14-2350-5330</i>	<i>Professional Technical Services</i>	<i>\$30,000</i>	
<i>05-14-2350-5690</i>	<i>Other Supplies</i>		<i>\$30,000</i>

VOTES IN FAVOR, 13 (unanimous)

MOTION CARRIED

- e. **Budget Update**

9. Policy

- a. **First Read**

1. Policy 3324.1 Contracts

2. Policy 3560 Capital Outlay

3. Policy 5118 Non-Resident Attendance

4. Policy 4000 Concepts and Roles in Personnel

5. Policy 4212.42 Drug and Alcohol Testing for School Bus Drivers

b. Second Read

1. Policy 3541.44 Transportation Equipment - Privately Owned Vehicles

MOTION by Patricia Cardozo, Second by Shannan Carlson, to approve Policy 3541.44 Transportation Equipment – Privately Owned Vehicles

VOTES IN FAVOR, 13 (unanimous)

MOTION CARRIED

10. Personnel

a. Discussion of Administrative Assistants' Contract (Executive Session)

b. Discussion of Amity Education Association Contract (Executive Session)

c. Discussion of Superintendent's Mid-Year Evaluation (Executive Session)

d. Action on Administrative Assistants' Contract

e. Action on Amity Education Association Contract

f. Action on Superintendent's Mid-Year Evaluation

MOTION by Steven DeMaio, Second by Shannan Carlson, to enter Executive Session to discuss Administrative Assistants Contract and Amity Education Association Contract and invite Dr. Byars and Ms. Lumas

VOTES IN FAVOR, 13 (unanimous)

MOTION CARRIED

AMITY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 5 BOARD OF EDUCATION
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ENTERED EXECUTIVE SESSION at 8:30 p.m.

EXITED EXECUTIVE SESSION at 8:41 p.m.

MOTION by Shannan Carlson, Second by Christopher Browe, to approve Administrative Assistants Contract

VOTES IN FAVOR, 13 (unanimous)

MOTION CARRIED

MOTION by George Howard, Second by Patricia Cardozo, to approve Amity Education Association Contract

VOTES IN FAVOR, 13 (unanimous)

MOTION CARRIED

MOTION by Carla Eichler, Second by Shannan Carlson, to enter Executive Session to discuss Superintendent's Mid-Year Evaluation and invite Dr. Byars

VOTES IN FAVOR, 13 (unanimous)

MOTION CARRIED

ENTERED EXECUTIVE SESSION at 8:45 p.m.

Dr. Byars exited Executive Session at 8:58 p.m.

EXITED EXECUTIVE SESSION at 9:27 p.m.

MOTION by Christopher Browe, Second by Patricia Cardozo, to have the Board's discussion notes on the mid-year evaluation sent to the Board for review and for Chairperson Belfonti to meet with Dr. Byars to review

VOTES IN FAVOR, 13 (unanimous)

MOTION CARRIED

11. NEW BUSINESS

12. ITEMS FOR THE NEXT AGENDA – Due to Chairperson by February 22, 2021

13. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Steven DeMaio, Second by Shannan Carlson, to adjourn meeting

VOTES IN FAVOR, 12 (unanimous)

MOTION CARRIED

AMITY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 5 BOARD OF EDUCATION
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Meeting adjourned at 9:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Pamela Pero
Pamela Pero, Recording Secretary

From: [mbona22](#)
To: [Pamela Pero](#)
Subject: 2/8/21 Public Comment
Date: Sunday, February 7, 2021 6:25:10 PM

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

To whom it may concern,

In times where mental health and SEL should be at the forefront for our schools is cutting staff the best decision for our children or the town and it's budget? Furthermore, PE and physical education is a need not a luxury. PUT our children FIRST!

Respectfully,
Mindy Murphy

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Peter Sulkis](#)
To: [Pamela Pero](#)
Subject: 2021 Budget Cuts
Date: Sunday, February 7, 2021 9:45:22 PM

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 Ms. Pero,

As an educator and Bethany resident with relatives in the Amity system, I'm emailing you out of concern over the possibility of budget cuts and/or cuts to current programs at Amity. During this more than challenging school year, I would certainly not consider it prudent for Amity to make cuts that would obviously negatively impact the students, the staff and the overall Amity community.

Amity is a source of pride for the residents of Bethany, Woodbridge and Orange and it remains an education of quality.

I intend to contact our Board of Education members to voice my concerns. I feel strongly that any budget cuts would be harmful to the Amity community, and I certainly do not support any cuts at this critical time.

Sincerely,

Peter Sulkis
81 Round Hill Road
Bethany

From: [Molly Rosner](#)
To: [Pamela Pero](#)
Cc: [Justin Anderson](#)
Subject: Attention: Board of Education-Concerned resident
Date: Sunday, February 7, 2021 9:26:22 PM

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To Whom it May Concern:

My husband and I were made aware of some potential program cuts and elimination of personnel in the Amity School District. We understand that the only way to reduce the budget is to cut programs and people, but we support the superintendents proposed budget as it stands without cuts to personnel or programs. We believe in funding quality education for all of our students.

Sincerely,
Molly and Justin Anderson
3 Old Barnabas Road, Woodbridge

From: [Jesse Weinzimmer](#)
To: [Pamela Pero](#)
Subject: Board of Ed Budget Cuts
Date: Sunday, February 7, 2021 9:19:55 PM

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

To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing to you regarding the possibility of program cuts/reductions in force in the Bethany-Orange-Woodbridge school district. As a resident of Orange, and someone who plans to utilize the Orange/Amity school system for my children in the future, I find it extremely disheartening that the programs and faculty that my wife (a lifelong Orange resident and proud Amity alum) enjoyed and learned so much from might not be there for future generations. I also find it unconscionable that in the midst of a pandemic, with millions out of work, the board of education is considering laying off educators who have heroically shown up to work, risking their own safety, and taken on more responsibility when remote learning took effect.

I urge you to strongly reconsider these short-sighted, cost cutting measures that will surely have a negative impact on our children's educational experience, and end discussions on reducing educator headcount.

Sincerely,

Jesse Weinzimmer
Concerned Orange resident

From: [Marika Wissink](#)
To: [Pamela Pero](#)
Subject: Board of Education Meeting 2/8 Public Comment
Date: Sunday, February 7, 2021 6:14:41 PM

Dear Amity Board of Education,

I am concerned about the sudden changes to staffing that are being proposed at the middle schools. I was surprised to hear about the plan to remove the Life Arts Literacy Enrichment class. Middle school students need more opportunities to read texts in school, not fewer. The Life Arts Literacy Enrichment class provides an opportunity for all students in the building to read more books for a quarter in seventh and eighth grade and to learn valuable reading comprehension strategies. Reading more improves reading comprehension, writing skills, and leads to a general improvement in understanding our world. Reducing the structured time in school that is designed to promote independent reading will not benefit our students. I really cannot understand how removing a class that serves every student in our school in both seventh and eighth grade to develop their reading skills and to increase their reading is in the best interest of our students.

I am also concerned about the proposed cut of our Life Arts Health class. Our students are faced with more and more challenges that our health program has been designed to help them meet, reducing this health curriculum for middle school students will be detrimental to our students. Middle school is a challenging time for young adolescents. The health curriculum has been designed to help them meet those challenges and I am really surprised that this is being considered in the midst of a pandemic when so many students are facing even more challenges than before. Physical education is also important for the healthy growth of our young adolescents. The idea of requiring the physical education teachers to teach health curriculum and taking away time from the physical education program does not seem like it is in the best interest of our students. Our students need both regular physical education and a well-developed health education. Please help us to fulfill our mission statement, to "Provide a safe, healthy, and caring environment that maximizes the social, physical, and intellectual growth of the young adolescent." We need these programs to fulfill our mission.

Thank you for your consideration,
Marika Wissink, Woodbridge Resident
Team Black Teacher

From: [Amy Benton](#)
To: [Pamela Pero](#)
Subject: BOE Budget Meeting - Public Comment
Date: Sunday, February 7, 2021 7:37:01 PM

Dear Amity Board of Education,

I am a teacher in the Amity District and a proud parent of an Amity student. I cannot remain silent in the face of the current proposed budget cuts. I understand that these are difficult times. In fact, as a parent and a teacher, I understand that better than anyone. However, the demand by some towns to keep the budget increase under 1% is unreasonable and will require the elimination of staff and programming.

It is my understanding that our superintendent is proposing a budget that would cut the literacy enrichment and health teachers from the middle schools. Right now, every middle school student takes a literacy enrichment class for one quarter that teaches reading strategies and requires students to read a book during the class. This program serves every student in seventh and eighth grade. When young adolescents read more, they improve their reading comprehension, their writing, and their overall understanding of the world. I work every day with young adolescents who are reading less on their own due to digital distractions, and I work every day to combat that with my own personal book recommendations to students. But it takes a village, and removing a class that is designed to support our students' reading will simply mean they read less and receive less support in their development as readers.

Every middle school student right now also has a quarter of health education taught by a certified health teacher in both seventh and eighth grade. Young adolescents face many challenges, from the social and emotional health, to the pressures of vaping and drug use. The health curriculum has been designed to help students meet these challenges. The proposal at Monday's meeting will remove the health classes from the middle school. Instead, the physical education teachers would teach some health as part of the physical education class. If the health curriculum is cut to one or two units taught during physical education, then the students will not get enough health. If the physical education teachers take a whole quarter to teach health, then the students will not have physical education for a whole quarter. Anyone who has taught middle school will tell you that young adolescents need regular physical education. A proposal in which students lose physical education time is not in the best interest of the students.

The Amity Middle School Mission Statement promises to "*Provide a safe, healthy, and caring environment that maximizes the social, physical, and intellectual growth of the young adolescent.*" Cuts in staffing and programming in literacy, health, and physical education will not allow us to meet this goal. Please do not lose sight of the need to uphold this promise that we have made to our students when making your decisions this evening and as you move forward.

Best,

Amy Benton

Team Black - English Content Leader

AMSB

From: [Desiree Parker](#)
To: [Pamela Pero](#)
Subject: BOE cuts
Date: Monday, February 8, 2021 4:24:47 AM

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

Good Morning,

As a parent with two current children in Amity Regional 5 school district and a 2017 graduate, I was very disappointed to learn that it is a possibility there will be cuts in our Physical Education program.

Physical Education should not be a part of the budget cuts for the upcoming academic year. Solving our budget cut crisis should not come at the expense of our children. We should do everything to protect the effectiveness and productivity of a robust program. Physical Education is more important than ever, especially for this generation. Generation Zs are less active due to their reliance on technology and social media. Covid-19 and all of the restrictions with sports and social distancing makes this potential cut more hazardous to our kids health. Quick BOE budget cuts in physical Ed are not the answer. Shrinking this department can damage the system in myriad ways.

Thank you,

Desiree Parker
Orange, CT Amity parent

Board of Education,

I am writing to express my disapproval and utter disappointment for the 2.8% increase budget proposal that will cut staff and programs at the middle schools. These program shifts will disrupt close to half of the faculty at each middle school building. The Board of Education has repeatedly told us that “We Are #1.” Was that sincere? It’s hard to believe when programs and teachers are being cut. Perhaps the BOE does not realize the implication of cutting these programs and positions. I do not oppose cutting the “extras” like new initiatives, new instruments, student planners, and reducing summer hours. But cutting staff is another story entirely. Eliminating PE/Health teachers removes a class that students love and need to succeed on State health requirements. It also has a ripple effect of making the Media Specialists teach classes which will then close the Media Center for half the day. This will also reduce student and staff technology support. Eliminating the Special Services Team Leader position will make that team the only one without a voice at BLT meetings in the school. That voice speaks mainly for the Special Education population. Eliminating Literacy Enrichment reduces the amount of Literacy Intervention students need to navigate complex text and perform well on state testing. Eliminating secretarial positions will put undo strain on the Media Specialist and Guidance staff. Yet Amity is still expected to function as #1 amidst all of these program and staff cuts??

Perhaps the most disturbing aspect of this proposal is its inequity. Why is the high school virtually untouched by these budget cuts? High school staff positions are not being cut nor are their programs. As a teacher at AMSO, I can speak for most of us when I say the middle school staff is not feeling valued. We are certainly not feeling like we are #1 in the eyes of the BOE. It saddens me. I can only hope that the BOE will reconsider these drastic cuts and prove that they value our current staff and programs.

Thank you for your time.

Jen Bshara

Dear Amity Board of Education Members,

I, along with my colleagues, are sincerely disturbed by Amity's proposed potential staff layoffs and program cuts/changes.

I ask you to please keep in mind that some of the factors driving Amity's budget increase are out of Amity's control. Additionally, I implore you to remember that the staff members you would cut are people, not just positions. They have lives and families to support. They are new homeowners, expectant mothers, nearly retired but can't yet retire people. They are so much more than one physical education position, one health position, one literacy position, one administrative assistant, etcetera.

Please, please, please, be reasonable. These cuts should not be shouldered by teachers. During these unprecedented times, teachers have risen to the occasion and have done everything you have asked and more. We are the lifeblood of your district; we are the ones who stay with you for our entire careers. Please don't abandon us now. Show support, compassion, and understanding and approve Amity's budget without staff or program cuts.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully, Kristin Yeakel

From: [Kristin Yeakel](#)
To: [Pamela Pero](#)
Subject: BOE Letter for Feb 8, 2021
Date: Sunday, February 7, 2021 9:21:36 PM
Attachments: [BOE Letter Feb 8 2021.docx](#)

Hi Pam,

Please include my attached letter to the BOE for Monday night's meeting.

Thank you, Kristin

From: [Nicole Guadagnoli](#)
To: [Pamela Pero](#)
Subject: BOE meeting comment 2/8
Date: Sunday, February 7, 2021 9:40:31 PM

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Dear Members of the Amity Board of Education,

I hope this email finds you well. I was made aware of some possible cuts in programs. During this uncertain time, our students need all educational advantages we can provide them with. As an Orange resident and Amity alum, I do not support a budget that calls for a reduction in force or cutting of programs in our high performing school district.

Sincerely,

Nicole Guadagnoli

From: [Morgan Guadagnoli](#)
To: [Pamela Pero](#)
Subject: Budget Cuts
Date: Sunday, February 7, 2021 9:00:40 PM

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Dear Amity Board of Education Members,
Hoping this email finds you well. We were made aware of some possible cuts in programs. As residents of Orange, we would like you to know that we do not support any program cuts from our high performing school district.

Sincerely,
Morgan Guadagnoli
785 Dennis Drive, Orange

From: [Claudia Abreu](#)
To: [Pamela Pero](#)
Subject: Budget cuts
Date: Sunday, February 7, 2021 9:32:02 PM

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Hello,

I was recently informed of possible cuts to programs at the high school. As the parent of an AHS student and a resident of Orange, I am firmly against any cuts to high school programs. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Claudia Abreu

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Steve Mazz](#)
To: [Pamela Pero](#)
Subject: Budget cuts
Date: Sunday, February 7, 2021 9:33:42 PM

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Dear Amity Board of Education Members,

I am hoping this email finds you well. We were made aware of some possible cuts in programs. As residents of Orange, we would like you to know that we do not support any program cuts from our high performing school district.

Sincerely,
Steven Mazzacco
660 Wheelers Farm Rd, Orange, CT 06477

From: [Elizabeth Brochin](#)
To: [Pamela Pero](#)
Subject: Budget cuts
Date: Sunday, February 7, 2021 11:05:45 PM

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To: The Members of the Amity Board of Education

Amity has long been known for its excellent reputation; it's the reason many of us were drawn to the area. In spite of best efforts, this pandemic has been disruptive to learning.

When it's safe to return to the normal routine, a great effort will have to be made to make up for lost time.

This is not the time for staff or program cuts!

Elizabeth Brochin
827 Orange Center Road

Sent from my iPad

From: [guadagnoli](#)
To: [Pamela Pero](#)
Subject: Budget cuts
Date: Sunday, February 7, 2021 9:24:16 PM

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 Board Members,

Hoping this email finds you well. We were made aware of some possible cuts in programs. As residents of Orange, we would like you to know that we do not support any program cuts from our high performing school district.

Sincerely,

Kathy Guadagnoli

785 Dennis Drive, Orange

From: lisros@aol.com
To: [Pamela Pero](#)
Subject: letter to the board of education
Date: Sunday, February 7, 2021 10:32:39 PM

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To the Members of the Amity Board of Education,

As a graduate of Amity High School, and someone who chose the BOW area to raise my children because of the reputation of its school system, I am concerned after hearing of possible cuts to the budget that would jeopardize that reputation. I support the superintendent's proposed budget without cuts to personnel or programs. Please don't compromise the quality education for all students that Amity has always been known for.

Sincerely,

Elisa Rosner
827 Orange Center Road
Orange, CT

From: [Tony Guadagnoli](#)
To: [Pamela Pero](#)
Date: Sunday, February 7, 2021 9:18:29 PM

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 Members,

Hoping this email finds you well. We were made aware of some possible cuts in programs. As residents of Orange, we would like you to know that we do not support any program cuts from our high performing school district.

Sincerely,
Anthony Guadagnoli
785 Dennis Drive
Orange, CT

--

Tony Guadagnoli
(203) 687-9011

From: [Kristen Lyons](#)
To: [Pamela Pero](#)
Date: Sunday, February 7, 2021 7:56:59 PM

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

Hi Ms. Pero,

I am a parent of a middle schooler and I vehemently oppose the budget cuts. We should be investing in our kids futures, not taking from them. I also believe that PE and health classes are not a luxury, but a necessity. Thank you for your consideration.

Kristen Lyons

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Jamie Thimineur](#)
To: [Pamela Pero](#)
Subject: No budget cuts
Date: Sunday, February 7, 2021 8:56:40 PM

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 Members,

Hoping this email finds you well. We were made aware of some possible cuts in programs. As residents of Orange, we would like you to know that we do not support any program cuts from our high performing school district.

Sincerely,
Jamie Thimineur
883 Robert Treat Ext

From: cassandra71195@gmail.com
To: [Pamela Pero](#)
Subject: Opposing budget cuts
Date: Sunday, February 7, 2021 9:16:48 PM

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 Members,

I am hoping this email finds you well. We were made aware of some possible cuts in programs. As residents of Orange, we would like you to know that we do not support any program cuts from our high performing school district.

Sincerely,
Cassandra Mazzacco
660 Wheelers Farm Rd
Orange, CT 06477

From: [Jordan Herskowitz](#)
To: [Pamela Pero](#)
Subject: PE & Health
Date: Sunday, February 7, 2021 9:14:49 PM

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 Members,

Hoping this email finds you well. We were made aware of some possible cuts in programs. As residents of Orange, and as alumni of Orange and Amity Public schools, we would like you to know that we do not support any program cuts from our high performing school district.

Sincerely,
Jordan Herskowitz
660 Cedar Grove Orange CT 06477

From: [Kathleen Shelnitz](#)
To: [Pamela Pero](#)
Subject: Possible Program Cuts/Teacher Lay-Offs
Date: Monday, February 8, 2021 1:05:34 AM

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Dear Board of Education Members,

I am hoping that this email finds you all well. I was made aware of some possible cuts in programs for the upcoming school year. As a resident of Orange and an educator myself, I would like you to know that I do not support any cuts from our high performing school district. This past year has been a difficult one for the students and teachers. However, the students and the teachers have risen to the challenge. As we look towards the future, we need to continue to grow and not cut teachers and/or programs.

Sincerely,
Kathleen Shelnitz

From: [Teresa Marchitto](#)
To: [Pamela Pero](#)
Subject: Potential Budget Cuts
Date: Sunday, February 7, 2021 9:06:39 PM

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 Members,

Hoping this email finds you well. I was made aware of some possible cuts in programs. As a resident of Orange, I would like you to know that I do not support any program cuts from our high performing school district.

Sincerely,
Teresa Marchitto
928 Racebrook Rd, Orange, CT

From: cmarchitto@sbcglobal.net
To: [Pamela Pero](#)
Subject: Potential Budget Cuts
Date: Sunday, February 7, 2021 9:11:28 PM

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 Members,

Hoping this email finds you well. I was made aware of some possible cuts in programs. As a resident of Orange, I would like you to know that I do not support any program cuts from our high performing school district.

Sincerely,
Carl Marchitto
928 Racebrook Rd, Orange, CT

From: [Carly Marchitto](#)
To: [Pamela Pero](#)
Subject: Potential Budget Cuts
Date: Sunday, February 7, 2021 9:22:56 PM

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 Members,

Hoping this email finds you well. I was made aware of some possible cuts in programs. As a resident of Orange, I would like you to know that I do not support any program cuts from our high performing school district.

Sincerely,
Carly Marchitto
928 Racebrook Rd, Orange, CT

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Mariana Marchitto](#)
To: [Pamela Pero](#)
Subject: Potential Budget Cuts
Date: Sunday, February 7, 2021 9:01:35 PM

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 Members,

Hoping this email finds you well. I was made aware of some possible cuts in programs. As a resident of Orange, I would like you to know that I do not support any program cuts from our high performing school district.

Sincerely,
Mariana Marchitto
928 Racebrook Rd, Orange, CT

From: estellemarchitto@sbcglobal.net
To: [Pamela Pero](#)
Subject: Potential Budget Cuts
Date: Sunday, February 7, 2021 9:08:33 PM

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Dear Amity Board of Education Members,

Hoping this email finds you well. I was made aware of some possible cuts in programs. As a resident of Orange, I would like you to know that I do not support any program cuts from our high performing school district.

Sincerely,
Estelle Marchitto
928 Racebrook Rd, Orange, CT

From: [Abigail Rosner](#)
To: [Pamela Pero](#)
Subject: Potential Budget Cuts
Date: Sunday, February 7, 2021 9:35:42 PM

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To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing to you as a concerned Orange resident and proud Amity alum. I have been made aware of potential budget cuts and reduced educator headcount in the Amity school district. I do not support any cuts to personnel or programs. I believe in funding quality education for all of our students. Please consider the heroic commitment our educators have made to our community this year.

Sincerely,
Abigail Weinzimmer
140 Buttonball Rd. Orange, CT

From: [Brianna Chiaraluce](#)
To: [Pamela Pero](#)
Subject: Program cuts
Date: Sunday, February 7, 2021 9:17:17 PM

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Dear Amity Board of Education Members,

I hope this email finds you well! I was made aware of some possible cuts in programs. As a resident of Orange, I would like you to know that I do not support any program cuts from our high performing school district. Thank you for your time.

Respectfully,
Brianna Chiaraluce
Amity alumni

From: [Ellen Villano](#)
To: [Pamela Pero](#)
Subject: Program Cuts
Date: Sunday, February 7, 2021 9:29:02 PM

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Dear Amity Board of Education Members,

I hope this email finds you well. I was just made aware of some possible cuts in programming at the high school. As an alumni and a parent of two graduating Amity students, I do not support any program cuts from our high performing district.

Sincerely,
Ellen Villano
Class of 1978
Orange, CT

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Pasquale Villano](#)
To: [Pamela Pero](#)
Subject: Program Cuts
Date: Sunday, February 7, 2021 9:33:36 PM

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 Members,

I hope this email finds you well. I was made aware of some possible cuts in programming. As a resident of Orange, and a former Amity student who participated in a variety of programs, I do not support any program cuts from our high performing district.

Sincerely,
Pasquale Villano
Orange, CT.

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Alessandra Villano](#)
To: [Pamela Pero](#)
Subject: Program Cuts
Date: Sunday, February 7, 2021 9:24:19 PM

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 Members,

Hoping this email finds you well. I was made aware of some possible cuts in programs. As a resident of Orange, and a former Amity student, who participated in many different programs, I do not support any program cuts from our high performing school district.

Sincerely,
Alessandra Villano
Class of 2013
Orange, CT

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone](#)

From: [kbarrett78](#)
To: [Pamela Pero](#)
Subject: PUBLIC COMMENT 2/8/2021
Date: Sunday, February 7, 2021 6:32:37 PM

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

I am writing to let you know I oppose the budget cuts for PE/Health in our schools. Our schools need investing and our students need pe. Please do not cut or reduce those teachers. We need them.

Sincerely,
Concerned parent of orange middle school,
Kellie Barrett

Sent from my Sprint Samsung Galaxy Note9.

From: [Edlira Mema](#)
To: [Pamela Pero](#)
Subject: Public comment 2-8-21
Date: Sunday, February 7, 2021 6:38:11 PM

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

To the Board of Ed - Orange,

As the parent of two middle school students and during these challenging times in particular, I would hope that the town of Orange will continue to prioritize kids and further invest in education instead of making cuts. Physical education is without doubt extremely important for our children's health, and for the health of the society.

Thank you.
Edlira Curis

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Chris Barrett](#)
To: [Pamela Pero](#)
Subject: public comment 2-8-2021
Date: Sunday, February 7, 2021 8:25:15 PM

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Good evening,

I am writing to oppose the cutting back of PE/Health in amity. Our children need pe and need to be active and learn how to be healthy. They sit too long in front of the computer due to COVID and need to be active.

Thank you

Chris

Thanks,
Chris Barrett
Barrett Electrical contracting llc
70 Sunset dr
Orange, CT 06477
Cjb1020@optonline.net

From: [Sean Mahon](#)
To: [Pamela Pero](#)
Subject: FW: Public Comment-Amity Board of Finance and Board of Education
Date: Sunday, February 7, 2021 9:10:00 PM

Hi Pam,
Can you please use the following email? I incorrectly addressed the Amity Finance Committee.
Thanks,
Sean

From: Sean Mahon <Sean.Mahon@amityregion5.org>
Sent: Sunday, February 7, 2021 9:06 PM
To: Pamela Pero <Pamela.Pero@amityregion5.org>
Cc: Sean Mahon <Sean.Mahon@amityregion5.org>
Subject: Public Comment-Amity Board of Finance and Board of Education

Dear members of the Amity Board of Education and Amity Finance Committee,

I have been a resident of Orange and an Amity teacher for the past 22 years. I am also the parent of two current Amity students who are lucky enough to have amazing educational opportunities due to our outstanding programming and educators. I am dismayed to learn of the possibility of cuts to programming and personnel due to arbitrary requests from some local town officials. I strongly urge you to demonstrate your support for our school district and our students by supporting the superintendent's proposed budget **without** any cuts to programming or personnel. I am in favor of the originally-proposed budget made by Superintendent Byars at the January Amity Board of Finance and Amity Board of Education meetings. Please do not rob our students of the quality education that they deserve simply to satisfy the requests of local politicians.

Sincerely,
Sean Mahon
Orange, CT

From: [Amanda Craig](#)
To: [Pamela Pero](#)
Subject: Re: Program Cuts
Date: Sunday, February 7, 2021 9:16:03 PM

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 Members,

I hope this email finds you all well. As a resident of Woodbridge and a Beecher, Amity Middle Bethany, and Amity High graduate, I appreciate all you do to keep our school one of the best and highest performing in the state. In being made aware of some possible cuts in programs, I would like to make it known that I do not support any program cuts. Each and every part of our education has allowed for students of the Amity Region to develop into well rounded and high performing members of society, and cutting any programs would be a detrimental loss.

Sincerely,

Amanda Craig, LMSW, MS
123 Pease Road, Woodbridge

From: [Jonathan Furst](#)
To: [Pamela Pero](#)
Subject: re: To the Amity BOE: Amity Budget
Date: Sunday, February 7, 2021 5:08:47 PM

To the Amity BOE,

I am writing to you to strongly oppose any budget cuts that will eliminate staff members and/or programs at the High School. As a Woodbridge resident and teacher at Amity since 1999, I know firsthand the high caliber of our staff and the importance of each program at the high school. The community of teachers at the high school collaborates on so many important levels to ensure that our students receive a truly exceptional education. The vast and diverse range of experience and knowledge that our faculty brings into the classroom every day is one reason that Amity consistently ranks as one of the best schools in the state. To cut members or programs is to risk diminishing the quality of our students' education. I urge you to maintain all our current teachers and programs.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Furst

From: [Kathryn Hoffman](#)
To: [Pamela Pero](#)
Subject: public comment 2-8-21
Date: Monday, February 8, 2021 10:54:16 AM

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

I want to express my concern over teacher or class cuts at the Middle School-Orange. After the unconventional year our students have had to endure, it is extremely important to invest in our schools. As an educator in the district, I know first hand it is not the time to make cuts of any kind.

From: [CHRIS DICKERSON](#)
To: [Pamela Pero](#)
Subject: Amity Board of Education budget
Date: Monday, February 8, 2021 10:23:59 AM

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

To the members of the Amity Board of Education,
I appreciate the hard work and countless hours of volunteer service that you devote to our community and thank you for your service.
As you are considering budget cuts, I urge you to reserve cutting educators as the very last resort - after all other possible reductions are reviewed.
Amity has an exemplary history as one of the best schools in Connecticut. It would be counterintuitive to cut the very people who directly educate our communities' children. Please use all the creativity necessary to accomplish the necessary budget adjustments without cutting the teachers that are essential to the task of educating the students.
In the past, the Amity Board of Education has found ways to save money without impacting educators.
I am hopeful that you will follow the same path and maintain the excellent teachers that makes the Amity school system one of the very best.
Thank you,
Chris

Chris Dickerson
Woodbridge Running Company
203-430-0034

From: [Sean Parker](#)
To: [Pamela Pero](#)
Subject: Amity BOE Budget Cuts Physical Education
Date: Monday, February 8, 2021 9:18:22 AM

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

Good Morning Amity BOE,

I am a parent whose two child attend Amity Middle School Orange and Amity High School. I would like the board to consider the negative impact cutting the physical education will have on our children. Physical Education programs have many benefits including physical activity, mental health benefits, increased concentration and mental stamina in the classroom, setting goals and increased attention span. I am sure the BOE can find other areas to cut during this already difficult time with kids spending less time doing physical activities and more time using electronics and social media.

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Best,
Sean Parker
Orange, CT
Amity parent

Sent from my iPhone

Leah Smith
491 Racebrook Road
Orange, CT 06477

February 8, 2021

Dear Members of the Orange Board of Selectmen and Orange Board of Finance Committees,

I am the proud parent of three children that attend Amity High School. I moved to Orange in 2002 because of the stellar reputation of the Orange and Amity school districts.

I am writing today to express my full support of the Amity Superintendent's proposed budget **without** program or personnel cuts. I trust the expertise of the administration when creating a budget for our children.

Please put our children and their education in the forefront of your minds when voting on this budget.

Thank you.

Sincerely,
Leah Smith

Dear Amity Board of Education,

February 8, 2021

I am writing this letter in support of the proposed budget for the 2021/2022 Amity School Year. My husband and I moved to the Town of Orange 21 years ago with the intention to raise a family in the Connecticut town we were drawn to for its charm and the superior educational system. We did our homework and the Orange and Amity Schools systems was where we would invest.

The investment in our Orange Elementary and Amity Regional High School has proven to pay off BIGTIME! Our oldest daughter is a senior at Amity Regional High School this year. She has been awarded acceptances to all of the Universities she applied to and received outstanding merit based scholarships at Universities such as Purdue, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, and Worcester Polytechnic Institute where she will study engineering and attend next fall. We would not be able to afford her this opportunity without these scholarships. We know that these Presidential, Leadership, Deans Merit Based Scholarships were earned because she took advantage of the superior educational opportunities that Amity Regional High School provided her. Her transcript clearly displayed to colleges a challenging core course workload at a highly ranked public school, along with her elective specialty courses such as 3D CAD Modeling, Intro to Technical Drafting, and Advanced Engineering Drafting that gave her a standout transcript. These amazing elective opportunities are what set our school district apart from other public schools. Reductions to the proposed budget will threaten these elective programs and the jobs of the amazing educators who are dedicated to our children's success.

These superior educators not only motivate students to become academic achievers, but promote them to becoming a valuable contributor in our community. My daughter has volunteered for the "Infinite Possibilities" Club over the past four years inspiring young elementary aged girls to pursue STEM studies. This path is not an exception at Amity Regional High School, but the standard. Specialty classes in other studies such as, Performing Arts, Foreign Languages, etc. continue to pay back our community and prove to give Amity students an advantage when applying to college or their first job after graduating from Amity Regional High School with skills learned on a path they chose to pursue because the opportunity was available.

Our school administration is well aware of what it takes to remain a top public school in Connecticut and give our children outstanding opportunity and bright futures. I believe the budget proposed is responsible and justified in order to maintain the high quality of education Amity currently provides and satisfy resident expectations that moved here for the superior education.

Please support their budget proposed so that my younger daughter and all children in our school system will be afforded these same outstanding opportunities in the years ahead.

Sincerely,

Melissa Carrington

Orange, CT

From: [Cerami, Donna](#)
To: [Pamela Pero](#)
Subject: Board of Education Meeting Comments - 2/8/2021
Date: Monday, February 8, 2021 10:25:24 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
Importance: High

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 members of the Amity Board of Education,

I am writing to you regarding the possibility of cuts to programming and personnel in the Amity school district. I have been a resident of Orange for 24 years and have had four (4) children go through the Amity school system.

Their entrance to college was met with positive comments about the Amity school system, its reputation is a student is well prepared for college. My oldest had an internship in Hartford in his senior year at Amity, which fostered his love of political science and he went on to attain a law degree from UCONN.

All of my children received outstanding educational experiences due to the exceptional programming and educators in our district. I strongly oppose any reductions in staff and programming in the Amity school district. I believe in funding quality education for all of our students.

Sincerely,
Donna Cerami
Orange, CT



Donna Cerami
Executive Assistant to the Vice President for Finance & Administration

Office of Finance and Administration
University of New Haven
300 Boston Post Rd. West Haven, CT 06516

T: [203-932-7266](tel:203-932-7266)
F: [203-931-6060](tel:203-931-6060)
E: DCerami@newhaven.edu
W: www.newhaven.edu

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From: [Dan Zaleski](#)
To: [Pamela Pero](#)
Subject: Board of education meeting
Date: Monday, February 8, 2021 1:41:48 PM

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To Whom It May Concern,

Being a Parent to four school aged children who attend Beecher Road and Bethany Middle school.

I am opposed to any program and staff cuts that would inevitably compromise the education system offered by the Amity Region 5 district.

Thanks, Dan Z.

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone](#)

From: [Lisa Zaleski](#)
To: [Pamela Pero](#)
Subject: BOE meeting
Date: Monday, February 8, 2021 1:19:04 PM

To Whom It May Concern,

Being both a Parent, to four school aged children who attend Beecher Road and Bethany Middle school, as well as a teacher in district at ARHS, I am opposed to any program and staff cuts that would inevitably compromise the superior education system offered by the Amity Region 5 district.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Lisa Zaleski
Social Studies Teacher
Amity Regional High School

"We must teach them how to think, not what to think."

From: [Brian Serapiglia](#)
To: [Pamela Pero](#)
Subject: BOE meeting
Date: Monday, February 8, 2021 1:03:25 PM

To: Amity Board of Education

As a resident of Woodbridge and a parent of two fifth graders, I am writing to inform you that I am in support of the Superintendent's budget proposal from January. In the school year 2022-2023 my children will enter the system as seventh graders and I want them to have the same opportunities that have been given to students in the Amity system for the past number of years. Removing Mandarin from the middle schools limits their opportunities for taking Advanced Placement classes as seniors. Removing the literacy classes from the middle schools may impact their development of reading comprehension skills that are taught in these classes. Removing health from the middle schools will not allow my children to be taught about the developmental changes that they and their peers are going through as adolescents. These program changes have lasting effects that will negatively impact students in the Amity system even beyond my own children's years in the district. Please continue to fund the programs that already exist at the middle schools.

Brian Serapiglia
210 Peck Hill Road
Woodbridge

Brian A. Serapiglia
Math & Computer Science Teacher
Amity Regional High School

“Attitude is Everything” – Mike Guinivan

From: [Judy Kaplan](#)
To: [Pamela Pero](#)
Subject: Budget cuts
Date: Monday, February 8, 2021 10:28:23 AM

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Dear Amity Board of Education Members,

Hoping this email finds you well. We were made aware of some possible cuts in programs. As residents of Orange, we would like you to know that we do not support any program cuts from our high performing school district.

Sincerely,
Judy Kaplan
340 Saybrook Road, Orange

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Lisa Silverman](#)
To: [Pamela Pero](#)
Subject: Budget cuts
Date: Monday, February 8, 2021 10:46:28 AM

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

To Whom it May Concern, BOE members:

We have been lifelong residents of Orange and went through the Amity School System. We moved back to Orange after college and raised our family in Orange due in fact to the wonderful school system.

I would be remiss to say that through all the changes that have occurred, the Amity school system has always remained strong, especially in its broad academic offerings, the arts, special ed and athletics.

We would strongly oppose any budget cuts or program changes even though our children are grown. It has always been a special place and am willing as a taxpayer to continue along the same path for the future students of Amity.

Sincerely
Lisa Kochiss
Orange resident

From: [Smith, Erica](#)
To: [Pamela Pero](#)
Subject: Budget Cuts
Date: Monday, February 8, 2021 10:01:11 AM

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

Good Morning,

I am writing to you in regards to the proposed budget cuts for the Amity school District.

I understand in these trying times change is necessary however, we need to look how this change can affect the students within the school. Cutting back on gym or specials throughout the day cuts back on the one time a day our children get to get out of their seats and move from the classroom that they now sit in the same seat all day everyday wearing a mask. It gives them something to look forward too, gym might not seem like the most important thing in school but during such a trying time it is what takes the stress away daily. I cannot speak for all schools or teachers however I know my daughter looks forward to Kate Hoffman and she has made an impact on my daughter transition into middle school.

Thank you for your time and consideration during this matter

Regards
Erica Smith



Erica Smith
Center Manager Fairfield
Advanced Radiology
1055 Post Road, Fairfield CT 06824
Office: 203.337.9793
Fax: 256.3258
erica.smith@adrad.com
www.adrad.com

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the sender immediately at 203-696-6125 and permanently delete this email and any attachments.

From: [Amy Tirollo](#)
To: [Pamela Pero](#)
Subject: Budget public comment
Date: Monday, February 8, 2021 11:04:07 AM

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

Hello,

I am writing this letter in support of the amity budget. It is crucial that it passes. Without the proper funding staff and programs that make Amity what it is will have to be cut.

I can't believe it's necessary to plead with the boards of selectmen and finance to fund the school system that is respected, successful, and the number one draw of families to our town.

The administration and board of education aren't asking for an exorbitant amount of money. They simply don't want to have to make cuts. They should be trusted enough to know what the needs of the school are and respected enough to have those needs met.

I am in support of education.

Thank you for your attention,
Amy Tirollo

Sent from my iPhone

Dear Board of Education Members,

I am the current Visual and Performing Arts Chair at the high school and an Orange town resident. I ask that you look at the budget proposal from January 2021 where it shows a realistic budget for our upcoming school year. The new proposal is a difficult cut to programs that are very important to overall student learning that will give them skills they can use in the future. Furthermore, any additional cuts will be devastating to the future graduates. Cutting teachers and programs is not the reason I moved into the district nor what we should be doing because towns are looking to save money. Amity is a great school district that strives to provide better, well-rounded education to our students, but with drastic cuts the towns need to understand that we will not be able to keep up with the performance they are used to. Last year we saved the towns money and gave them back large sums due to the widespread COVID19 virus and lack of needing funds as we were not in the building. This year we are asking for those funds back. It makes it look like a large budget increase, but if one looks at the areas where the increases are taking place it is a direct result of savings from last year. The towns need to be made aware of what these cuts mean. Are we a school district that cuts programs and teachers on the backside of a pandemic? Or do we push through and inform the towns of how these cuts will negatively affect the education the students will receive? Amity needs the January Budget proposed to continue to provide the quality of education in which we are known for.

Thank you for your time

Jessica Zamachaj

From: [Amy Rich](#)
To: [Pamela Pero](#)
Subject: Do Not Cut Amity Personnel or Programs
Date: Monday, February 8, 2021 9:22:04 AM

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

My husband and I moved to Orange 20 years ago as we started our family and wanted to be part of the outstanding Amity school system. Both of our sons went through the elementary, middle, and high schools here and received an excellent education, which enabled them to attend (and do well) in a top-tier university.

Even though our sons are grown, we still feel it is extremely important to maintain the excellence of the Amity school system, both to educate the next generation of children here and to represent the values of the three towns in supporting academic excellence.

To that end, it is vitally important that the Board of Education NOT cut any personnel or programs.

Sincerely,
Amy Rich

February 8, 2021

Amity Board of Education Members,

I am writing to express significant concern with next year's Amity BOE budget. In my twenty years in the District, I have never seen proposed cuts that will so adversely affect students. The proposed program shifts will have drastic and irreparable impact. Further, the complete set of effects on Amity students is more than initially meets the eye.

As a result of the programs in place at Amity, our students consistently score at the top of the DRG. And yet the proposed barrage of program changes will eliminate or alter numerous areas that directly and indirectly influence student success. The detrimental ripple effect of potential program change is astounding. In addition, drastic changes that alter student access to both PE and Health, two subjects middle schools need for their physical and emotional well-being, especially in the midst of an ongoing pandemic, are impossible to understand.

One of the reasons Amity is so successful is that there are processes in place that ensure the best possible programming for students. Various parts of the process involve Building Leadership Teams, teacher input, and District Steering Committee review and approval. In the case of many of the proposed program changes likely to be put forth tonight, those groups were not consulted and the process not utilized. That does not bode well for our students.

The proposed elimination of programs and positions negatively influence the Middle Schools most dramatically; further, the ripple effects of program and position changes are far-reaching; what meets the eye is only the tip of the iceberg.

I implore you to ask the right questions, to search for alternative solutions, and to preserve the programs and positions that continue to make Amity students so successful.

Sincerely,

Sarah Sharkey

Teacher - AMSO

From: [Kimberly Vigil](#)
To: [Pamela Pero](#)
Cc: kimberly.vigil@amityschools.org
Subject: For Public Comment-tonight's meeting
Date: Monday, February 8, 2021 8:33:57 AM

Good morning Pam,

I hope you are doing well. Below is a letter I would like to submit for public comment for tonight's BOE meeting. Thank you and take care.

Dear Amity Board Members,

I am writing to express my extreme concern over the proposed cuts in staff and programs for next year. It is saddening to think that in such a high achieving district with superior education, our students will have to do without programs and support that they deserve and need.

Teachers and staff were not involved in the decision-making process nor were the Steering Committee or Teacher Leadership teams involved. Staff, students, and the community members alike all deserve better.

Respectfully,
Kimberly Vigil-AMSO

Kim Vigil
Spanish Co-Content Leader
Amity Middle School-Orange

February 8, 2021

Dear Board of Education:

I am writing to express my concern about the proposed budget cuts. I am a math teacher at the Amity Middle School in Orange as well as a taxpayer in town. I have attended Amity and have taught at all three schools in the district.

Amity is a fine school district. This is why people move into the area. It would not be this fabulous if it were not for the programs Amity has to offer. The middle schools have a team set up which allows students to be part of a cohesive group. Classes are created to enhance the experience of the student. Teachers work with a group of students daily and meet as a team to discuss activities for the enrichment and growth of the adolescent. Losing these and opportunities will trickle down and can only hurt the students. The high schools offer a wide range of classes that fit tastes of all our students. Clearly we can make cuts in other areas rather than in education.

We have given our all to the students during this pandemic when it meant sacrificing time on our end. After all this is why we are teachers, we work for the good of the student. Let's do the same as three cohesive towns.

The town of Orange is purchasing Race brook Country Club. Clearly they can use some of the taxpayer dollar to continue to fund a wonderful education for their younger population, who will in turn be possible home owners in the area. They too will contribute to Amity in their own way as many Amity alumni are doing, whether it be a running a business in town or volunteer work for the BOW area.

Respectfully submitted,

Eleanor Valeriano-Stephens

Math Teacher/Team Leader

AMSO

Dear Bethany, Orange, and Woodbridge Community Members,

I am writing this letter to express my concerns over the planned budget cuts for next school year that will directly impact the program of studies at the middle school level. I am asking that the community considers the much larger impacts the planned cuts, reduction in force, and adjustments will have on our Amity students and staff.

To quote the Amity mission statement directly, our goal as educators is, “To enable every Amity student to become a lifelong learner and a literate, caring, creative, and effective world citizen.” The ideals embedded within our mission statement begin as soon as our students walk through the door on their first day of school at our middle schools. This is the moment our students become Spartans, and members of a much larger Amity community that prides itself on high achieving excellence. Parents, students, and staff members are proud to be a part of this community because of the legacy it upholds and because of who are students are when they leave us. Our students enter high school as well rounded, skilled learners. This preparation starts at the middle school. The interdisciplinary background students enter 9th grade with comes from the specialized middle school experience they receive prior to moving up. Any change to our middle school programs will have a direct impact on the level of preparation our students receive before high school. How can Amity uphold its excellence when we are cutting our middle school students short of the well-crafted program they deserve??

Our students learn how to be literate, caring, and effective world citizens in their core academic classes as well as their unified arts classes. A successful student is one who has been exposed to multiple disciplines, allowing them to create a diverse skill that will prepare them for their future. The foundation of this skill set cannot be laid without adequate staffing and a variety of classes for students to interact with in middle school. As a teacher and someone who is there with our students every day, the suggested reduction in force and changes to the middle school model for next year deeply concern me. I am concerned for the quality of education our students will receive if programs start to be taken from them; I am concerned for Amity’s excellence.

Best,

Kara Glezer

7th Grade Science- Amity Middle School Orange

From: [Eric Mills](#)
To: [Pamela Pero](#)
Subject: Letter regarding Budget\importance for students
Date: Monday, February 8, 2021 1:58:12 PM

February 8, 2021

To whom it may concern,

It is with passion and commitment as an educator that I write to you regarding the proposal to eliminate teaching positions within the district.

As a tenured educator, veteran athletic coach, and active member of Amity's school community, I implore you to reconsider any removal of teaching staff by finding other ways to reduce budget expenditures.

Students deserve the best education possible and that includes physical education, and health education in order to become well-rounded individuals – each of these disciplines give students the opportunity to explore talents they would not be able to highlight without our schools offering them the opportunity – both physical education and health give students the ability to express themselves in a safe and healthy environment.

School health education is a vitally important part of our students' growth during middle school, especially during these unprecedented times. We need to continue teaching physical, mental, emotional, and social dimensions of health education in our schools.

Additionally, school health education during a global health crisis can serve to reassure students that they can take the personal responsibility to keep themselves healthy – and what overall health risk behaviors to avoid and what behaviors will keep them healthy – both physically and mentally.

For many students' school health education is their first introduction to what healthy behaviors are – what resources and interventions are available to address mental health and physical health concerns. Health education can serve as the gateway to a lifetime of health benefits as well as informing our students that taking care of their overall health is as important as any other subject they are taught in the classroom.

We need to continue to put our students first – continue to be student centered and the way to do that is to continue to support programs and positions for the betterment of our students.

Eric Mills
Teacher – Orange Middle School

From: [D. Casperowitz](#)
To: [Pamela Pero](#)
Subject: Opposition to staff cuts
Date: Monday, February 8, 2021 9:15:58 AM

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

I just wanted to speak out that I oppose any staff cuts at this time. The pandemic is certainly not the time to be considering that sort of change. And I would not want any cuts made to health classes. These are extremely important.

Thank you for taking the time to read my email
Deb Casperowitz

[Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android](#)

From: [Jim Ratliff](#)
To: [Pamela Pero](#)
Subject: Potential Amity budget cuts
Date: Monday, February 8, 2021 9:02:57 AM

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

I am a long time resident of Orange and came here many years ago largely because of the school system. My kids enjoyed fine educations here and went on to excellent universities.

Like most residents, the fact that my kids are out of school does not change how strongly I feel about the school system. I would like to let the Board Of Education know that I am OPPOSED to cuts in personnel or programs. That is not the way to maintain the stature of these towns.

Sincerely,

James Ratliff

From: [Michael Blumenthal](#)
To: [Pamela Pero](#)
Subject: Public Comment 2-8-21
Date: Monday, February 8, 2021 8:17:24 AM

To the Amity Board of Education:

I have been a teacher at Amity Middle School in Orange for the past fifteen years. I have thoroughly come to understand the value and significance of our students receiving an education within this school district. Our educators and their programs offer an opportunity to be successful in a wide range of areas by challenging students to be their best and engaging them in higher-level thinking. The Amity School District is admired and respected for its accomplishments academically, athletically, and within the arts.

Any proposed educational budget supporting the reduction of staff, programs, and decreasing curricular hours in numerous subject areas should not be adopted. Approval of such measures will have a significant negative impact on our students and diminish their educational experience.

I am imploring the members of the Board of Education to consider the best interests of our students by not accepting any proposal advocating for the elimination of programs and teachers. Thank you.

Michael Blumenthal
Physical Education Teacher, AMSO

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10

From: [Elena Serapiglia](#)
To: [Pamela Pero](#)
Subject: public comment for 2/8 Board of education meeting
Date: Monday, February 8, 2021 11:42:11 AM

Dear Amity Board of Education members and Superintendent Byars,

Thank you so much for all of the work that you continue to do to ensure the safety, the well-being, and the high-quality education for all students in the Amity Regional School District.

I am in favor of the budget proposed by Dr. Byars at the ***January*** (1/11/21) Amity Board of Finance and Amity Board of Education meetings. My concerns with the newly reduced budget are related to my role as an educator, my role as a parent, and my role as a homeowner.

As an educator, I am concerned with any budget cuts to existing programs. I was made aware by colleagues of the proposal to reduce an FTE by eliminating the middle school Chinese program that feeds into the high school Chinese program. Aside from losing an amazing educator, this cut would lead to the immediate need to restructure the high school program. Any reductions of programs at the middle school level have major curricular implications in the high school sequence of courses. This proposed cut would create the need to write new curriculum, review and purchase new materials (such as textbooks), and may possibly drive the need for more FTEs at the high school level over time. In the long term, these cuts may not translate to a cost-savings to the district. More importantly, this proposed cut would also take educational opportunities away from students. Currently, the successful completion of the middle school program allows some students to bypass high school Chinese I. Without the middle school program, our non-heritage learners of Chinese language would lose the opportunity to take the AP/UConn ECE Chinese course.

As a parent, my choice to move to the BOW community was driven by the choice to offer my children the excellent curricular and extracurricular offerings available at Amity. When they enter 7th grade, I hope that my children are able to enjoy the programming that I have come to expect from this district. Cutting any existing programs robs them of educational opportunities.

As a property owner, I know that homes in the BOW community are in high demand because of the school systems. Home buyers know that our community values education and supports these values financially. I know that I can thank our school systems for my home's value. Please make the choice not to lower the value of my home through cutting educational funding.

In short, I appreciate all of the work that all of you are doing to help and support our students while also allocating public funds in a responsible manner. Please choose to fully fund our children's educations and their futures.

Sincerely,

Elena Serapiglia
Woodbridge resident and Amity educator

From: [Peter Downhour](#)
To: [Pamela Pero](#)
Subject: Public Comment for Amity Board of Education and Finance Feb 8 2021
Date: Monday, February 8, 2021 12:58:37 PM

Dear Mr. Belfonti and the Amity Board of Education and the Amity Board of Finance,

We are once again in what appears to be a difficult budget year. I want to voice support for the entirely reasonable budget proposal put to the Board in January by Dr. Byars. The slightly higher budget increase is, in part, a result of decisions the Board made last year. At this point, it is my understanding that the Board is going to cut programs, hastily rearrange programming, and reduce staff for the purpose of cutting the budget. These budget cuts are based on arbitrary numbers from outside people. This is being done without any discussion of the school leadership teams, the groups that drive and guide programming and curricular changes of this magnitude. You need only submit a reasonable budget to the people and they will approve it. Education is central to the overall success of any community.

In the past I have spoken to the Board that continued budget cuts would damage the performance of the district. Last year I observed your deliberations for this year's budget. At that time you recognized that you were making decisions, like the textbook line item, that would have impacts for the future budgets, ones that would still need to be funded. Now is that time and you should follow through with those promises.

I would also urge the members of the Board to do what's right for District 5 and not people whose concerns are not educationally-sound. It seems the budget narrative is being driven by a few who do not have the performance or success of the school district as their goals. Those goals may be more narrowly-focused and serve only a privileged few. Those few have convinced a few others. I ask you to stand up to the people who have differing agendas and put our schools ahead of their budget priorities.

Any significant changes to programs should be done thoughtfully and deliberately. There should be program evaluations, teacher input, district steering committee review and the input of teacher-leadership teams. Teacher-leaders have not participated in these discussions or decisions, decisions which will have a significant impact for many years. Part of what makes Amity so great is that the teachers are at the forefront of the positive changes in teaching and learning. These current decisions do not follow this known path of success.

I know that we have had serious challenges and disagreements during the pandemic. Though it all we have maintained a positive relationship and have kept moving forward and making progress. I ask that you do what's right for education and the Amity community. I urge the Board to support the Superintendent's budget presented in January.

Respectfully,
Peter Downhour
President, Amity Education Association

From: [Robert Rosner](#)
To: [Pamela Pero](#)
Subject: Public Comment-Amity Board of Education Meeting 2/8
Date: Monday, February 8, 2021 12:26:45 PM

Dear members of the Amity Board of Education,

I have been a resident of Orange for my entire life, and a member of the Amity School District Faculty for the last 5 years. My entire family attended Amity, and we were all lucky enough to have an amazing educational experience due to the outstanding programs and educators that Amity has to offer. I am saddened and concerned to hear of the possibility of cuts to programming and personnel in our school district. Teachers have been there for student support throughout the difficult times we went through, and are still going through. To hear of potentially eliminating these positions is disheartening. I strongly oppose any budget that results in cuts to any programming or personnel. I support the superintendent's proposed budget without any cuts to programming or personnel. I believe in funding quality education for all current, and future students of this fantastic school district.

Sincerely,
Robert Rosner
Orange, CT

From: [Marie Kantor](#)
To: [Pamela Pero](#)
Subject: Submitted for tonight's BOE Meeting
Date: Monday, February 8, 2021 1:58:20 PM

February 8, 2021

Dear Amity Board of Education,

I implore you to support the proposed 3.72% budget increase. A further reduction in budget will be a tremendous detriment to the students of Amity and the quality of programs of which our district is proud.

If the proposed budget is not supported, the middle schools will face disproportionate losses of staff and programs. Amity has made one of its primary focuses the social and emotional well-being of students. Now, more than ever, our students' mental health needs must be supported. Students look forward to classes like Health, PE, and various electives. Please do not consider depriving middle school students of these valuable programs.

Please encourage your administration to consult with teachers before cuts are proposed.

Thank you for your time.
Respectfully submitted,
Marie Kantor
Grade 7 English AMSO