

***AMITY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 5***

*Bethany Orange Woodbridge  
25 Newton Road, Woodbridge, Connecticut 06525*

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*Dr. Jennifer P. Byars  
Superintendent of Schools*

**AMITY REGIONAL BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING AGENDA**

**Monday, October 16, 2023, 6:30 pm  
25 Newton Road, Woodbridge, CT**

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT**

Christopher Browe, Paul Davis, Carla Eichler, Andrea Hubbard, Sean Hartshorn, Christina Levere-D’Addio, Dr. Carol Oladele, Patrick Reed, Amy Tirollo, Dr. Jennifer Turner and Dr. K. Sudhir, Donna Schuster (arrived at 7:04 p.m)

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT**

Shannan Carlson

**STUDENT BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT**

Sam Bae and Sophia Messina

**STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT**

Dr. Jennifer Byars, Theresa Lumas, Frank Purcaro

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairperson Davis called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

**2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

a. Board of Education Regular Meeting Minutes – September 11, 2023

*MOTION by Carla Eichler, SECOND by Dr. Oladele to approve September 11, 2023 minutes as submitted*

*VOTES IN FAVOR, 10 (Davis, Eichler, Hubbard, Hartshorn, Levere-D’Addio, Dr.Oladele, Reed,Tirollo, Dr. Turner and Dr. K. Sudhir)*

*ABSTAIN, 1 (Browe)*

*MOTION CARRIES*

**4. NATIONAL MERIT SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM – Introduction of Semifinalists and Commended Scholars**

Presented by Amity Regional High School Principal Andre Hauser

**Mr. Davis calls a brief recess at 6:41 p.m.**

**Mr. Davis calls the meeting back to session at 6:48 p.m.**

**5. 3 A’s (Academics, Arts, Athletics) AND POG (Portrait of the Graduate) FOCUS PRESENTATION**

a. Middle School Spanish Program – Elaine Hashemian

**6. PASS (E-Hall Pass) DEMONSTRATION – Michelle Shoop, Victoria Hulse, Andre Hauser, Shaun DeRosa**

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[Pass Presentation.pdf](#)

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**Chairman Davis invites the public to ask their (E- Hall) Pass questions now as opposed to during Public Comment.**

Q. What was the rollout to parents about pass?

A. No need to train parents on it due to the fact that they will not be using it.

Mr. Davis points out the public concern about the app being loaded onto student phones without prior notice and that in the future we could be more mindful of that public concern.

Q. Does the app allow for location services?

A. No, it is not built into the app at all.

Q. Does the app have the ability to “look into student phones”?

A. No. The app only allows for notifications and that's all. Students sign in using their school credentials

Q. Can students access a website?

A. Yes, there is a browser.

Q. Is the data saved for the students for any length of time?

A. History of pass use can be viewed only from the teacher end not the student side. At the end of the year or at any given time a parent, a student, or the school can request that data be deleted and PASS will have 24 hours to reply and comply. At no time does the company own the data.

Q. How did this all come about?

A. With Covid there was a motivation to move away from old style tangible passes. Swipe was used but was not as effective as hoped. E- Hall pass was piloted and picked as a solution to our needs at a cost savings.

## **7. STUDENT REPORT**

### **a. Monthly Report**

Presented by Sam Bae and Sophia Messina

## **8. PUBLIC COMMENT**

### **Chairman Davis:**

Mr. Davis opens Public Comment by noting that Amity school ranking was a significant topic of conversation at public comment last month. With particular attention to the data of #1 versus #39. Mr. Davis reads a number of publications that list a variety of rankings for Amity over the years. Mr. Davis notes that there is no consistency with the ranking amongst the various publications.

### **Woodbridge resident:**

Representative on behalf of the town of Woodbridge, specifically Woodbridge Like Me Day.

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Due to weather conditions the Woodbridge Like Me Day needed to find a new venue and ARHS was a gracious and inviting host. Event was a true success. The most successful to date and that would not have been possible if not for the support of Amity High School and the staff.

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**Woodbridge resident:**

Discussed CRT with particular attention to Boston University Professor Ibram Kendi. Speaker suggests that the “failure” of Professor Kendi is the ultimate vindication that CRT and by extension DEI is not a solution to America's problems. Speaker concludes by addressing school rankings over the past years.

**Orange Parent:**

DEI is important for our students, teachers and school system. The presentation from AMSB/ AMSO is proof of how important DEI is and its impact on students. Middle School teachers who presented this evening were applauded as Collaborators and Empathizers not criticized as individuals who are indoctrinating our kids.

**Orange Parent:**

Addressed a June 2022 article on DEI titled “Inclusion is not a zero sum proposition”. Speaker stated that the author of the article did a great job describing how DEI is used in the Amity district. Speaker states “I fully support DEI”. Speaker concludes by stating that the DEI framework is essential to establishing an effective foundation for academic success.

**Orange Parent:**

Thank Dr. Sudhir for the article that was published in the Milford Orange times. Moved to Orange recently and acknowledges that school ranking was an issue he considered when moving. Speaker states that cherry picking data is very dangerous, as evidenced by the points raised by Mr. Davis. Thanks the Board and district for their transparency and with their attention to issues raised in previous meetings, as evidenced by tonight's agenda.

**Orange Parent:**

Speaker proposes inviting local artistic talent into the schools to speak with students about what it means to be a professional artist. Speaker adds that he values the work being done with DEI.

**Orange Resident:**

Speaker states that he notices the frustration of the community and acknowledges the work of the board to respond to those frustrations. Urges the board to have empathy for the community. The speaker states that within the community there are different perspectives and opinions and that there is no right or wrong, just differences. Speaker concludes by stating that DEI should work both ways.

**9. SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT**

- a. Personnel Report
- b. Superintendent Report

Presented by Amity Region 5 Superintendent of School Dr. Jennifer Byars

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**10. CONNECTICUT STATE ASSESSMENT DATA PRESENTATION – Frank Purcaro**

Presented by Amity Region 5 Assistant Superintendent of School Frank Purcaro

[BOE State Assessment Data Review 2023-24 - Final \(1\).pdf](#)

**11. CORRESPONDENCE**

Presented by Amity Board of Education Secretary Mr. Sean Hartshorn

**12. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

- a. Committee Reports
  - 1. ACES
  - 2. CABE
  - 3. Communications
  - 4. Curriculum
  - 5. District Health and Safety
  - 6. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Executive Committee
  - 7. District Technology
    - a. Monthly Report
  - 8. Facilities
    - a. Monthly Report
    - b. Discussion and Possible Action on ARHS - Library Media Center Building Project Resolutions

*MOTION by Patrick Reed, SECOND by Dr. Turner to approve the Library Media Center Building Project Resolutions:*

***The Amity Board of Education approves these resolutions:***

**(1) BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Amity Board of Education authorizes the Superintendent to apply to the Commissioner of Administrative Services and to accept or reject a grant for the Library Media Center Renovation at Amity Regional High School.

**(2) BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Amity Regional School District Building Committee is hereby established as the building committee with regard to the Library Media Center Renovation at Amity Regional High School. These committee and staff members are appointed to the Amity Regional School District Building Committee: Amity Facilities Committee members, Superintendent, Director of Facilities, Director of Technology, Director of Finance & Administration, Principal ARHS, Associate Principal ARHS, Library Media-Specialist, ARHS

**(3) BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Amity Board of Education hereby authorizes at least the preparation of schematic drawings and outline specifications for the Library Media Center Renovation at the Amity Regional High School.

**(4) BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Amity Board of Education adopt the Educational Specification as stated here: Educational Specifications for Library Media Center Renovation at the Amity Regional High School.

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- a. **RATIONALE:** The Library Media Center has not been renovated in over 25 years. The needs of the students and instructional methods have changed significantly in this time frame. The Library Media Center may not meet the current New England Accreditation of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) standards. The current design of the library media center does not meet the demand for access nor is it conducive to modern learning spaces.
- b. **LONG-RANGE PLAN:** The District maintains a 5-year capital plan to identify all of the capital needs of the District.
- c. **THE PROJECT:** Renovate the Library Media Center Renovation at the Amity Regional High School. Develop a plan that addresses the learning and teaching styles of today and the future. Specifically add quiet study spaces, collaboration space, small group work, video communication space and an office. Enhanced lighting, new carpet, create small study areas, and upgrade technology available to students. Technology upgrades include digital media studios within the library space.
- d. **BUILDING SYSTEMS:** The District developed a long-range plan to address various building and grounds projects to replace, renovate or update. The HVAC system has had major upgrades in the past five years. The school technology infrastructure was upgraded four years ago.
- e. **INTERIOR BUILDING ENVIRONMENT:** Students were surveyed regarding the current status of the library. The students expressed frustration at the limited space and the type of space available in the library. The current capacity of the library is less than 5% of the student body. Student and staff will benefit from the repurposed space and greater access to the library media services.

*Further, The Amity Board of Education establishes the Amity Regional School District Building Committee with the following members:*

**Membership:** Amity Facilities Committee members, Superintendent, Director of Facilities, Director of Technology, Director of Finance & Administration, Principal ARHS, Associate Principal ARHS, Library Media-Specialist, ARHS

*Further, The Amity Board of Education approves the following charge to the Amity Regional School District Building Committee:*

**Responsibilities of the Amity Regional School District Building Committee:**

Amity Regional School District Building Committee is responsible for the budget, design, and construction of a major renovation and upgrade to the library media center at Amity Regional High School. The Amity Board of Education created the Building Committee in order to make the project eligible for potential State reimbursement.

The Building Committee's responsibilities shall include:

- a. Advertise through a Request for Qualification process for architect/engineering services;
- b. Recommend to the Amity Board of Education the retention of an architectural/engineering firm to assist the Committee in the design of the proposed project;
- c. Prepare a construction/design plan with the assistance of the architectural/engineering firm retained by the Amity Board of Education, after taking into account the budget, construction challenges, including hazardous materials abatement, and timing of construction during the school year.
- d. Apply best practices for sustainable design including the use of sustainable and energy efficient products and materials, LEED Certification (if applicable) and the possible use of "green" energy and other techniques and seek grant opportunities to fund or offset the additional potential cost of these initiatives;

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- e. Upon approval of the Amity Board of Education of the construction/design plan, seek bids with the possible assistance of a construction manager, on all aspects of the construction, in accordance with the Amity Board of Education Purchasing Policy and State requirements for potential reimbursement;
- f. Recommend to the Amity Board of Education the selection of one or more firms to perform the construction, after receipt and review of the bids;
- g. Oversee construction of the proposed project, with the possible assistance of a professional owner's representative;
- h. Seek reimbursement from the State Department of Education for all eligible costs of the proposed construction project.

**Funding:** All expenditures from the District's capital project budget concerning this project shall be incurred in accordance with the policies of the Amity Board of Education and this Charge.

*VOTES IN FAVOR, 12 (UNANIMOUS)*

*MOTION CARRIES*

9. Finance

- a. October 1 Enrollment Report
- b. Discussion and Possible Action on Student Parking Fee

*MOTION by Christopher Browe, SECOND by Dr. Sudhir to approve a student parking fee of \$120.00 annually for the 2024-2025 school year.*

*VOTES IN FAVOR, 2 (Browe, Sudhir)*

*VOTES OPPOSED, 10 (Davis, Eichler, Hubbard, Hartshorn, Levere-D'Addio, Dr.Oladele, Reed, Schuster, Tirollo, Dr. Turner)*

*MOTION FAILS*

- c. Discussion and Possible Actions on Contracts over \$35,000
  - 1. Transportation

*MOTION by Patrick Reed, SECOND by Dr. Oladele to waive the bid process and approve the award of a full run to B & B Transportation, INC at the current contract price of \$63,804.*

*VOTES IN FAVOR, 11 (Browe, Davis, Eichler, Hubbard, Hartshorn, Levere-D'Addio, Dr.Oladele, Reed, Schuster, Dr. Sudhir, Dr. Turner)*

*ABSTAINED, 1 (Tirollo)*

*MOTION CARRIES*

- d. Discussion of Monthly Financial Statements
  - 1. Special Education Update
- e. Director of Finance and Administration Approved Transfers Under \$3,000
- f. Discussion and Possible Action on Budget Transfers over \$3,000 and Change Orders

*MOTION by Sean Hartshorn, SECOND by Amy Tirollo to approve the following budget transfers:*

*To cover special education tuition costs in private school instead of a public school and the purchase of additional sound amplification systems.*

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<b>ACCOUNT NUMBER</b>	<b>ACCOUNT NAME</b>	<b>FROM</b>	<b>TO</b>
04-12-6110-5560	Tuition – Public Out	\$64,395	
04-12-6130-5560	Tuition – Private Out		\$64,395

<b>ACCOUNT NUMBER</b>	<b>ACCOUNT NAME</b>	<b>FROM</b>	<b>TO</b>
04-12-2151-5330	Professional Tech Svcs	\$9,296	
04-12-2151-5730	Equipment-New		\$9,296

To approve the following budget transfer to cover the cost of two repairs at Amity Middle School- Bethany.

<b>ACCOUNT NUMBER</b>	<b>ACCOUNT NAME</b>	<b>FROM</b>	<b>TO</b>
05-14-2600-5715	Facilities Contingency	\$18,206	
01-14-2600-5420	Repairs & Maintenance		\$18,206

VOTES IN FAVOR, 12 (UNANIMOUS)

- g. Other
  - 1. Quarterly Report – CNR
  - 2. Quarterly Report - Grants
- 10. Policy
- 11. Personnel

**13. NEW BUSINESS**

**14. ITEMS FOR THE NEXT AGENDA – Due to Chairperson by October 31, 2023**

**15. ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting was adjourned, without objection, at 9:39 p.m by Chairperson Davis.

Respectfully submitted,

*Lisa Zaleski*

Lisa Zaleski  
BOE Recording Secretary

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