

**AMESBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
TEACHING AND LEARNING SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES  
VIRTUAL MEETING**

February 22, 2021 at 5pm

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This meeting was conducted under the 'Executive Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law G.L. c.30A, §20', signed on March 12, 2020.

The public was able to dial into the meeting using their phones by calling  
+1 (872) 240-3412 Access Code: 540-473-629

Present at 5:00 p.m. were Maryann Welch (Chair), Peter Hoyt, Abigail Jurist Levy, Lyn Jacques, the Director of Teaching and Learning and the Acting Superintendent Elizabeth McAndrews.

Ms. Welch called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm.

**Approve minutes from January 11, 2021 meeting**

*Mr. Hoyt moved to approve the minutes, second by Dr. Jurist Levy. Approved by unanimous consent.*

During the meeting, Ms. Jacques talked the subcommittee through a memo she had development which was aligned to the meeting's agenda. Committee members asked questions and had a discussion pertaining to each topic. Below are the discussions, as well as, Ms. Jacques' memo.

**Tiered Focus Review**

Ms. Jacques and Ms. Welch agreed that after reviewing minutes, the School Committee had approved the student handbooks during their July 22, 2020 meeting. Ms. McAndrews stated that the state expects to return in about 5 years to re-evaluate. The state will want to see institutional self-evaluations like surveys. The state accepted last year's leadership learning walks, where the district administrators collected data on "best practice" observations, as the district's previous self-evaluation. Ms. McAndrews confirmed that the state was very complimentary of the district's collaborative nature. Ms. Jacques recommended that the district ensure they have all of the documentation needed for future reviews by housing the evidence in multiple areas for redundancy.

Ms. McAndrews and Ms. Jacques said the state recognized that the district's conversion to SchoolBrains had been difficult and had caused issues in uploading IEPs. Ms. McAndrews said that during the February vacation district leadership had a mini-retreat and created a list of feedback to be sent to SchoolBrains.

**Grants Update**

- ESSER I: Ms. Jacques has heard back from Sparhawk, who has 30 Amesbury students, and one other school that has one Amesbury student that may qualify for this money.
- Title I: Ms. Jacques shared that there is always a Title I mid-year adjustment.
- ESSER II: The district skipped the first round of ESSER II, which could have been used to pay off previously accrued expenses. Instead, they held off until the second round of ESSER II, which can be used next year. Ms. McAndrews said that about 60% of districts waited for the second round of ESSER II because they wanted to spend down the CVRF money first. Waiting for round

two did not make the district lose access to any money. Ms. Jacques said she and Joan had been working hard together to be fiscally responsible and Joan will report the fund uses.

### **State Reporting Update**

Ms. Jacques explained that staff member Susan Lang exports Aspen to SchoolBrains on top of maintaining state data. Annually the district receives a nominal number of errors on state data. This year, the district missed the deadline because there wasn't enough manpower to support the conversion and the errors were "huge" because of the inconsistencies between Aspen and SchoolBrains. Ms. Jacques has been helping Ms. Lang figure out the Aspen codes that align to the SchoolBrains tabs and adding missing information in various fields. Ms. Jacques explained that at one point she has resolved 400 errors but then another 100 popped up. The state is aware of the issues and offered to help; however, they can't do data entry. Ms. McAndrews said that during the February retreat, the leadership fixed the misalignment in staff hiring data and it should help in the future. Additionally, Ms. McAndrews and Tim McCue revamped the description of the open technology job, formerly Tim Costello's position, to support the district's current needs.

### **Proposed Budget Items for FY 2022**

Ms. Jacques shared that the Geodes will be partially paid for by ESSER and she hopes to move other department needs to various grants. Mr. Hoyt thanked Ms. Jacques for being so fiscally conservative. All third and fourth grade teachers volunteered to participate in one or two Project Lead the Way modules. The district's PLTW contact was excited to hear about the teacher's enthusiasm and is asking PLTW to help with some of the funding. Out of all of the teachers in grades 6-8 only one teacher wasn't sure about transitioning from Go Math to Desmos Math, so the district is moving forward in their transition. Desmos Math is anticipated to cost less than Go Math but the cost of workbooks has not been confirmed. Ms. Jacques believes that the district's curriculum review cycle should be revised to prioritize math because CoVid-19 has created the greatest gap in mathematics. Ms. Jacques is optimistic about AMS's new literacy committee, which is analyzing the district and aligning interventions. This committee will be a great start in completing a MTSS.

### **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Design Team**

Ms. Jacques shared that the team had planned to complete a training, so they would have common vocabulary, but they didn't have the funds for the training fee. Dr. Jurist Levy asked Ms. Jacques how the School Committee can support the design team's efforts. Ms. Jacques suggested possible district multicultural training and searching out diverse personnel. Ms. Jacques said the goal of the team is to establish objectives and find ways to measure them. Ms. McAndrews stated that during the March 15<sup>th</sup> School Committee meeting AHS students are planning to speak about changing the Indian mascot. Ms. Welch shared that she had recently attended a MASC training on changing mascots and could provide examples of processes Walpole and Medfield used. Mr. Hoyt was pleased that Ms. McAndrews will be involved with revisiting the school's identifier because she was present when it was reviewed several years ago.

### **Social Emotional Learning**

Ms. Jacques discussed how our population struggling with mental health is growing and the district will be addressing mental health in students and staff. Pettengill had collected data at AHS but the district is moving to collect data in the elementary schools. The district mental health staff are looking into needed supports and how to connect even further with the community and local organizations.

## Other

Ms. Jacques said the district staff will be receiving SchoolBrains training during their March 5<sup>th</sup> professional development, as well as, receiving their new teacher Chromebooks and docking stations. Ms. Welch shared a concern from the community that AMS staff may not be receiving as much professional development as other schools. Ms. McAndrews said they are receiving professional development but it may be perceived different from other schools because principals have flexibility in how they organize the planning time.

*At 6:06 Ms. Welch moved to adjourn the meeting, second by Mr. Hoyt. Approved by unanimous consent.*

Next Teaching and Learning Subcommittee meeting planned for end of March 2021.

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### Amesbury Teaching and Learning Subcommittee Goal

To serve as a conduit between the School Committee, School Personnel, and Community and ensure that student achievement is the schools' utmost priority. The subcommittee will...

- Regularly review the progress and products of the Teaching and Learning Department
  - Recommend spotlight presentations to share academic successes
  - Advocate for specific policy and budgetary needs that support curriculum, instruction, and accountability
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Ms. Jacques Memo:

To: Teaching & Learning Subcommittee  
Elizabeth McAndrews, Acting Superintendent

From: Lyn Jacques  
Director of Teaching & Learning

RE: Teaching & Learning Subcommittee Update February 22, 2021

Date: February 22, 2021

## Tiered Focus Review:

Feedback from state was predominantly positive, said the district “did a great job.” Under the Civil Right component of the review, the main area to address is the student handbooks. The links we provided on the webpage had dated copies of the handbook. In spite of the School Committee providing a very comprehensive review of the handbooks, there was confusion as to whether those were ever voted on. Additionally, there is some clarifying information the state would like to see in terms of protocols for in-school/Saturday suspensions which we need to add. Finally, they recommended we put our Ed Services Plan inside the handbook since that also needs to get communicated to parents on an annual basis.

The only other bit of advice they had for us was to make sure we are conducting some kind of institutional self- evaluation every year. They do not expect they are coming back to Amesbury for another review for a number of years.

#### Grants Update:

**ESSER I** – I submitted an amendment for ESSER I on 2/18/2021. The majority of that funding includes the following expenses:

Wit & Wisdom - \$92,484 (Textbooks)

Contractual Services (Wit & Wisdom PD) - \$10,000

Adjustment Counselor at AMS- \$49,374 + MTRS \$4,444

Stipends-\$8,000 (Academic support, nursing support, technology support)

Hotspots-\$27,600

Textbooks – GEODES (Wit & Wisdom Intervention-Tier II) - \$25, 632

Total - \$217,534

**Note:** *I have sent emails/certified letters to the private schools with Amesbury students attending. The schools are supposed to get back to me by March 15<sup>th</sup> to let me know if they have students who meet the low-income eligibility and the number of students from each school.*

**CvRF** – The majority of expenses for the CvRF grant are in Student/teacher chromebooks (contractual services fees related to computers) and applications. I am scheduled to meet with Joan at the end of this week to review the expenses and submit an amendment if we need one.  
Total- \$443,700

#### **RTLE** –

Funds support year 1 of a three year lease for the iPads.

Total - \$75,166

#### **Title I -**

Title I covers the costs of 2 FTE Reading Specialists and 2 FTE Reading tutors and a percentage of the Director of Teaching & Learning's salary. **Note:** The district just received an additional \$395 as its mid-year adjustment. The private school participation will also affect the entitlements should we have participation.

#### **Title II –**

Funds support .45 of AMS Math Coach salary and MTRS.

Total - \$ 51,237

## **Title IV –**

Funds support teacher stipends for curriculum alignment/implementation.

Total - \$ 19,261

## **ESSER II –**

The district will apply for these funds to support FY 2021-2022. Grant application is due July 30, 2021.

Total - \$835,787

## **State Reporting Update**

As the district continues its convergence to Schoolbrains, we've encountered some challenges with our state reporting (SES, EPIMS. SIMS etc.). As a result of missing information, we recently encountered 800 errors in our October 1<sup>st</sup> EPIMS report. As a result, I have been assisting Susan Lang in the resolution of errors and we hope to have this fully resolved by the end of this week. October 1<sup>st</sup> data will be certified and the district will move on to March 1<sup>st</sup> reporting.

## **Proposed Budget Items**

New items I am proposing as part of the Curriculum Budget for FY 2022 include:

Wit & Wisdom core materials - \$27,375 (Grades K-4)

Geodes (Intervention) - \$36,950 (Grades K-4)

Project Lead the Way - \$17,000 (AMS 5, 6, & 8), and elementary schools (grades 3 & 4)

Desmos Math (Grades 6-8)- \$21,000

ST Math – (Grades K-6) –\$10,500

MAP Growth/MAP Fluency – (Grades K-8) - \$19,962

Wit & Wisdom PD - \$5,000 (Grades K-4)

## **Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Design Team**

Our Design Team Goals are to develop an overall process for identifying systemic racism issues impacting the residents of Amesbury and to recommend a set of solutions to address those issues.

The process includes:

- Alignment on the overall goal of the project
- A list of key stakeholders, their stake in the outcomes, and how they will be engaged throughout the process
- The development of a vision, identification of key issues and their root causes, and possible solutions to rectify the issues identified

- Activities to accomplish the above and the person(s) responsible for each activity
- Timelines and benchmarks for all goals
- A mechanism to provide oversight to the process and keep it on track

In addition to identifying possible stakeholders, the Design Team has agreed to training for the Team to create common language and a broader understanding of systemic racism.

### **Social Emotional Learning/Mental Health Needs Staff and Students**

The district recognizes the need for a comprehensive analysis of the social emotional/mental health needs of both students and staff. Some schools have started the process of collecting data around staff needs and feedback, and this data needs to be collected from all schools. We will also be reconvening our Mental Health Committee to begin a careful analysis of student needs, especially as we plan for an eventual full return to school. This analysis will also help inform our MTSS plan for next year.