

Principal's Report

Amherst School District

School: Amherst Middle School

September 20, 2017

Porter Dodge, Principal

Elementary & Middle
School Excellence

- **Life Skills Lab and EBD Lab:** The new AMS Life Skills and EBD Programs are underway in our new facility. A few final touches will be complete for this School Board meeting and the tour will begin at 5:45pm accompanied by a brief presentation. Once again, I want to highlight the support from the Amherst School Board, as well as the work of the Director of Special Instructional Services, Meg Beauchamp, and Dean of Students Dr. Lisa Femia-Hou. As reported last month, Dr. Femia-Hou is the administrator directly overseeing both program's operation and her leadership skills are amazing. Student Support Counselor, Kim Wyborney lends her skills and expertise to coordinate with EBD Lab. It is a great team and I am so grateful for their work to make both a success. Coordinating the AMS Life Skills Lab is Special Educator Andrew Tighe and assisting him is BCBA, Tina Taylor. John Verity leads the EBD Lab. Several specially trained paraprofessionals work with our program students. Susan Casey, Ashley Conley, Michael Cochran, Gina Colby, Jodi Williams, Carrie Cote, Sheri Francoeur, Keith Lewis, Emily Boulton, and Danielle Goerlich, do an excellent job.
- **Parent Partnership Team Meeting,** On August 28 the AMS Parent Partnership Team met at 6pm in the cafeteria. Administration presented to parents and discussed the change in schedule for grades 5 and 6. The next PPT will be on Monday, September 18 in the cafeteria. This month's presentation is ***Back to School Stress? Successfully Navigating Transitions with Your Child.*** AMS administration is working closely with the Amherst PTA to team up on several of our monthly meetings this year to provide parenting information covering relevant topics. Below are the scheduled meeting dates and topics to date.

• Date	• Title
• September 18	• Back to School Stress? Successfully Navigating Transitions with Your Child
• November (11/6)	• Internet, Social Media, and Your Child: What You Need to Know
• January (1/22)	• Cyberbullying: What it Looks Like for Your Child
• March (3/19)	• Topic: Substance Abuse and Children (Title TBA by Presenter)
• May (5/21)	• End of the Year Stress? Starting a New School? A Follow-up to Navigating Transitions with Your Child

- **AMS Theater Club:** AMS theater club is celebrating an important anniversary! This year marks the Club's 15th year and we will be bringing back our very first show: **Willy Wonka Jr.** All students in grades 5-8 may participate in Amherst Theater Club as cast or crew. Information sessions will be on Sept. 19 and 26, and audition prep/Q&A sessions on October 3. Auditions will take place on October 17 for grades 7 & 8 and October 19 for grades 5 & 6.

Diligent Fiscal Oversight

- **Gymnasium Floor Update:** Superintendent Peter Warburton and Business Administrator Adam Steel have been working closely with administration and have decided to wait until the end of the year and assess the poly-ball problem before taking next steps. While an inconvenience, we believe it is solved by next summer.
- **Facilities:** We have been waiting on contractors to complete the recess area in the front of the school. It has been a long process to secure a reputable contractor to complete the work promised for the opening of school. A volleyball court and six swings will perfectly compliment the outdoor classroom and stage. Area. I would like to remind the public the outdoor classroom was constructed by AMS teachers and students, and the outdoor stage by teachers and the principal volunteering their skills and time.

Inspirational &
Effective
Teaching/Programs

- **Grade 6 Environmental School:** This week, students in grade 6 will attend Nature's Classroom at Camp Jewel in Colebrook, Connecticut. This four night, five-day excursion is one of the highlights of the grade 6 experience. The facilities are inviting and the program educational and fun.
- **Grade 8 Environmental School:** The weeks of September 18 and 25, grade 8 students attend The Ferry beach Ecology School in Maine. Similar in structure to the sixth grade experience, the eighth grade focuses on Oceanography the environment.
- **Veterans Walk-a-Thon:** Our annual school-wide walk to support the veterans outreach program at the Manchester VA will be on Friday, November 3. More information will be sent home on October.
- **PACE:** Teachers continue to work on performance assessments for this year. Dr. Bernasconi met with all grade levels last week, and refined assessments for the year. Friday Collaboration meetings will Bethany will begin in October
- **Grading and Reporting:** At our first meeting, the grading and reporting committee designed and presented an activity to staff. Teams of teachers reflected on work over the last 3 years and discussed how it connects to build a competency based grading system. The posters are displayed for our school community to view.

Innovative Technology
Integration

- **Engineering Practices:** Technology Integrators are introducing new integration practices to grade 5 to increase student awareness of engineering and design.

SAU #39 Strategic
Planning

- **Current Enrollment at AMS:** We are excited to announce our enrollment currently continues to grow, now at **637 students**. Our projection at budget time was to open with **596** students, an increase of **41** students. The breakdown by grade is as follows:
Grade 5- 136, grade 6-141, grade 7-174, and grade 8-186.
 - The interview process to fill the remaining AMS professional vacancies is complete. We continue to struggle to fill a long-term certified physical education substitute position.
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Upcoming Events

September 18: Parent Partnership Meeting, 6:30pm

September 18-22: Grade 6 Environmental School

September 19: Theater Club Information Sessions, 2:30pm or 4:30pm

September 19: Band Instrument Rental Night, 6:30pm

September 26: Theater Club Info Session, 2:30pm or 4:30pm

September 25-29: Fessenden Team at Ferry Beach Ecology School

September 25-29/Oct. 2-6: NWEA Testing, all grades

October 2-6: Kalenik Team at Ferry Beach Ecology School

October 3: Theater Club Audition Prep/Q&A Sessions 2:30pm or 4:30pm

October 10: Late Start day, school begins at 9:25

October 10: Open House, grades 5 and 6

October 18: Open House, grades 7 and 8
