



ARHS Parent Center Newsletter



Volume 7 Issue 5

February 2007

School Budget Concerns



By now you have surely all heard how bleak the FY2008* budget picture is looking. In order to eliminate the projected \$3,300,000 budget deficit for the FY2008 town budget, the Finance Committee asked the schools to limit their FY2008 budget to a 1% increase. Since the schools need a 4-6% increase to keep current levels of service, that means \$1,900,000 must be cut from the total school budget.

*FY2008 = 2007/2008 school year.

Amherst Regional High School's share of that cut amounts to \$800,000. This translates into approximately 10 teacher cuts, plus \$300,000 in other cuts. Those teacher cuts are approximately 10% of total teachers, which is on top of an 8% cut made this year (FY2007)!

If you are as concerned about this as we are, then make your voice heard! The people who need to hear your concerns are:

Amherst Select Board:

selectboard@amherstma.gov

Amherst Town Manager:

townmanager@amherstma.gov

Also, make sure to vote in the March 27 election as there may be very important ballot items to vote on that will effect the school budget.

The mission of the Parent Center is primarily to be a helpful link between parents and ARHS.

Please contact us with your questions or concerns:

www.arhsparentcenter.org/contact

Internet Safety Workshop February 8, 7:30pm



The ARHS Parent Center will be sponsoring a workshop for parents and guardians titled "Internet Safety and Savvy" teen's safety while surfing the Web, as well as posting to such sites as MySpace and UTube.

Topics covered will include: social networking sites, cyber bullying, Internet lingo, online gaming, instant messaging, chat rooms, and bash boards. Online safety tips and family contracts regarding Internet use will also be discussed as important tools for keeping our young people safe while online now and in the future.

For more:

www.arhsparentcenter.org/Internet_Safety_Workshop_2007

Next Parent Center Meeting Wednesday, February 14

The next meeting of the Amherst Regional High School Parent Center will be on Wednesday, February 14, 2007 in Room 13 at the High School.

7:00pm - 7:30pm | Business Meeting

In this portion of the meeting we will briefly review our list of activities and projects.

7:30pm - 8:30pm | General Meeting

In this portion of the meeting we will cover specific topics in depth.

For more see:

www.arhsparentcenter.org/node/96

Come to the Business Meeting also if you want to learn about all that ARHSPC is doing, and perhaps volunteer to work on one of the activities or projects.

Senior Party Planning

ATTENTION SENIOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS
Planning is underway for the 21st annual Senior Party, which takes place following graduation on Friday, June 8th from 10 pm to 6 am. The party is completely organized and hosted by senior parents and guardians, so your involvement is critical to the success of this endeavor! Look for information by mail soon about how to volunteer and support the party.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact either of the Senior Party coordinators, Jeanie Forray (jforray@comcast.net, 253-3313) or Anne Stanek (annestanek@hotmail.com 253-5051).

The next meeting of the coordinating committee is **Tuesday, February 13th at 7:30 pm** in Room 13 at the High School. All senior parents/guardians are welcome!

ATTENTION JUNIOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS

Plans are now underway for the 21st annual Senior Party, which takes place following graduation on Friday, June 8th from 10 pm to 6 am. Each year, we depend on parents and guardians of juniors for supporting activities on the day of graduation and during the graduation ceremonies. Please volunteer to help when you are contacted by the Junior Parent Volunteer coordinator!

Jeanie Forray & Anne Stanek, Senior Party Coordinators

Helping Your Child Find Help

Have you ever watched your child struggle to complete homework he or she didn't understand? Or been at a loss about how to assist your child when he or she received a poor grade on a test?

Help is available. Our dedicated teachers stay after school most days to work with students. Yet, there are many factors that deter our students from seeking this help. They may not recognize the benefits or may feel that it is "uncool," or may feel stupid or ashamed.

You can assist your child in getting the support he or she needs. A first step is to communicate with the teacher through email. Let your child's teacher know that you think your child could benefit from meeting with the teacher. You and your child's teacher can become a team to support your child. Teachers at our school appreciate and welcome your communication because they are dedicated to supporting every child in obtaining his or her full potential.

Encourage your child to stay after school. You may want to offer an incentive; for example, if possible, you can pick your child up after the session and stop at your child's favorite eatery. (Bribes are appropriate.) Possibly, you can talk to other parents and encourage your child to stay after school with a friend. If your child still resists going for help, try to find out why so that you can address his or her concerns. It is also appropriate to communicate with your child's guidance counselor. They have experience working with these issues.

The parent center in conjunction with the school staff is looking at other ways the school can encourage students to seek help. If you have any ideas or suggestions or would like to be involved with this work please contact Mary Jo Maffei at mimaf@aol.com or at 259-1263.

Amherst Pelham Special Education Parent Advisory Council (PAC)



If you are interested in receiving the E-Newsletter, *Highlights in Special*

Education, email

amherstpelhampedpac@comcast.net

Highlights gives updates on what is happening in our area for workshops and other events for special education.

Next RaDAR Group Meeting Wednesday, February 21

The next meeting of the RaDAR Group will be on Wednesday, February 21, 2007 in Room 13 at the High School, from 7pm – 8:30pm.

News From the RaDAR Group Recommended Reading for Multicultural Education

During the fall, members of RADAR read and discussed the multicultural education text *The Dreamkeepers: Successful teachers of African American Children*. This well-respected book shares specific insights about effective classroom teaching strategies. After reading the book, the RADAR Committee discussed the need to seek out additional literature to read as a group and to pass on to the broader ARHS community.

At about that same time, The National Association of Multicultural Education (NAME) released the results of a poll conducted among their national membership. About 100 educators responded to the poll asking them to rank order the books that had been most influential in their work. All submitted titles were ranked to create a list of the 25 top-rated books. The RADAR group was happy to see that *Dreamkeepers* was ranked number five on the list. The top ten books are listed below. You can access the entire list and read descriptions of all 25 books at the following online "bookshelf."
<http://www.powells.com/ppbs/29188.1.html> .

Beverly Tatum's book *Why are all the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria* was ranked number two on the list. Although it is now ten years old, Tatum's book is a great place to start if you are looking for an engaging foundational text. Tatum offers a clear and direct overview of contemporary racism as well as valuable insight into Black and White racial identity development. All ten books on the list come highly recommended. The RADAR committee encourages all ARHS parents to add one or more to your own reading list.

1. *Savage Inequalities: Children in America's Schools* by Jonathan Kozol
2. *Why are all the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria: And other Conversations about Race* by Beverly Daniel Tatum
3. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* by Paulo Freire
4. *Culturally Responsive Teaching: Theory, Research, and Practice* by Geneva Gay

5. *The Dreamkeepers: Successful Teachers of African American Children* by Gloria Ladson Billings
 6. *Other People's Children: Cultural Conflict in the Classroom* (2ND 07 Edition) by Lisa Delpit
 7. *A Different Mirror: A History of Multicultural America* by Ronald Takaki
 8. *Teaching To Transgress: Education As the Practice of Freedom* (94 Edition) by bell hooks
 9. *We Can't Teach What We Don't Know: White Teachers, Multiracial Schools* (2ND 06 Edition) by Gary R. Howard
 10. *Affirming Diversity: The Sociopolitical Context of Multicultural Education* by Sonia Nieto
- News From Study Circles

News From Study Circles

As many of you already know, Study Circles of Amherst has conducted dialogues on race(ism) and class(ism) in our community for the past five years. During that period, over one hundred-fifty adults-- parents, teachers and administrators participated in at least one dialogue group. As a result, valuable relationships formed, and actions ideas for the enrichment of our schools and community commenced. Our school administration also recognized this effort as advantageous to our students' learning experience.

Over the last two years small groups of students participated in dialogues on these social justice issues either after school or during one session of a directed study. For their efforts these students received ALPs credit.

Additionally, they learned valuable skills that give them an advantage at school, in the workplace and as they move through their college experience.

Last Spring, a small group of students participated in a training program designed to develop their dialogue leadership skills. As group leaders they can conduct dialogues circles with new student groups . Operating in teams, with an adult advisor, these students are preparing to conduct Cross Cultural Conversations during one directed study

session, once per week over second and third trimester.

Study Circles of Amherst on Racism and Classism is also launching adult dialogue groups scheduled to begin Wednesday, February 28, 2007. This group will be facilitated by Momodou Sarr, teacher at ARHS and community member Edith Allison. It will be held at Marks Meadow School. In addition at least one community wide group is forming. If you would like to be included in a Study Circle or want more information you may contact: Jackie Wolf at

549-2958 or Kathleen Anderson at 256-1583. You may also want to visit the Study Circles website at

<http://www.studycircles.org/en/index.aspx>

Amherst Education Foundation

The Amherst Education Foundation (formerly Amherst Area Education Alliance) has launched a new web site:

www.amhersteducationfoundation.org

If you have fundraising ideas for ARHS that might be appropriate to post on the AEF web site please contact us:

www.arhsparentcenter.org/contact

ARHS Information

Don't forget to check the ARHS school web site, which has lots of information on it, including announcements, directory and calendar:

www.arps.org/hs/

Link to daily announcements:

www.arps.org/hs/News/announcements.html

Amherst Regional High School
21 Mattoon Street
Amherst, MA 01002

Main: (413) 362-1700
Fax: (413) 549-9704
CEEB/ACT Code: 220-015
School Cancellation Line: 362-1898
Athletic Events Cancellation Line: 362-1798

Mark Your Calendar



Progress Reports Distributed
Friday, February 2

Athletics Roundtable
Thursday, February 7

Internet Safety Workshop
Thursday, February 8, 7:30pm

Late Arrival Day
Thursday, February 8

Comedy Show
Friday, February 9, 7pm

Parent Center Meeting
Wednesday, February 14, 7pm

RaDAR Meeting
Wednesday, February 21, 7pm

Winter Vacation
February 19 – February 23

Please check the ARHS online calendar for the latest information.

Link to the ARHS online calendar:

<http://www.arps.org/HS/Calendar/>