

# Amesbury Elementary School



Principal: Walter Helliesen  
Number of Years as Principal at Current School: 10  
Number of years employed with APS: 10  
Educational Background: Master's Degree in School Administration from the University of New Hampshire  
Bachelor's Degree in Special Education from Fitchburg State College



## FY 17

### Message from the Principal

At Amesbury Elementary School we strive to create a child-centered environment that promotes academic excellence, individual success, and social responsibility. We realize that providing exceptional academic instruction without exception is our primary goal. As a community of educators we engage in conversations about learners and learning on a regular basis. Our School Achievement Plan is a product of these conversations. During the process we examined both our strengths as well as our concerns, looking specifically at data to identify the deeper root causes of our concerns. These included:

1. The impact of class size on student achievement and our ability to effectively differentiate within the classroom.
2. The impact resulting from the nature and needs of our increasing high needs population.
3. The availability of Tier II academic, behavioral, and social interventions beyond those provided by Title I reading.
4. Balancing the increased demands of student assessment with a desire to maximize student instructional contact time.
5. Determining which existing instructional practices we can/should maintain in light of the changes to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks.
6. Strengthening the family/community partnership.
7. The amount of time available in the Early Childhood programs to meet the learning needs of all students.

As a result we identified three goals to help us move forward:

**GOAL 1** To increase student achievement in ELA and Math.

**MEASURABLE OBJECTIVE:** By June of 2016, we will increase the number of students meeting or exceeding benchmarks in ELA and Math by 5% over 2014 end-of-the-year levels.

**GOAL 2** To increase our professional capacity in the use of data for the purpose of strengthening our instructional programs.

**MEASURABLE OBJECTIVE:** By June of 2016, teachers will have demonstrated their ability to use data to refine instruction for their students.

**GOAL 3** To increase our institutional capacity to provide necessary Tier II academic, social, and behavioral interventions based on student data.

**MEASURABLE OBJECTIVE:** By June of 2016 we will evaluate the effectiveness of the Intervention Block as implemented during the 2015-16 school year.

In setting budget priorities we looked at our ability to deliver services using the three-tiered Response to Intervention model. Tier 1 intervention is targeted at the regular education classroom as a whole. Tier 2 and Tier 3 services focus on providing second and third doses of instruction for students who require something more than what they receive in their Tier 1 program. Title I Reading and Special Education small group instruction are examples of these levels. As a District we have reexamined the ways in which we deliver these services and have set a goal to have a special educator for each grade level. At AES this would require five grade level special educators (4.8 FTE) and we currently have four positions (3.5 FTE). *Budget consideration: I am requesting an additional special education teacher to provide for direct small group instruction as well as to support students within the classroom setting.*  
*Note: This item was the second priority for AES during the FY16 budget development process.*

Our second priority is based upon the nature and needs of our high needs population. We have several students who exhibit learning characteristics associated with students on the autism spectrum. They do not require the specialized instruction available within our ISN program, but they often need social and behavioral interventions that exceed the regular classroom. In the past we offered an "ISN Lite" program for these children. Additionally, we have students who are dealing with the effects of adverse childhood experiences (trauma) and even children exhibiting characteristics of mental illness. Our school counselor has a full

schedule between lunch groups, social skills instruction, and implementing our Second Steps anti-bullying curriculum. *Budget consideration: I am requesting the creation of a school adjustment counselor position at AES that would be both proactive (regularly scheduled counseling/therapy sessions, behavioral reinforcements driven by an IEP) as well as on demand (crisis counseling) for identified and at-risk students.*

Amesbury Elementary School is currently designated a Level 2 school by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) based upon the 2015 MCAS scores of our third and fourth graders. Our overall CPI score was three points shy of maintaining Level 1 status while our subgroup populations exceeded the target scores. According to the DESE, our special population percentages for the current school year are:

Low Income:	22 %
Students with Disabilities:	19 %
High Needs:	36 %

Our 2015 schoolwide mobility rates were:

Churn (total movement in and out)	10.3 %
Intake (students moving in)	7.0 %
Stability (students remaining all year)	94.9%

The students and staff at Amesbury Elementary School recognize all that the citizens of Amesbury provide for us. In return, we take pride in giving back to our city. Our Pack the Presents food drive in December, Memorial Day flags at the town's cemeteries, mini-Relay for Life spring fundraiser for the American Cancer Society, placemats for our seniors through the Meals on Wheels program, produce donations to Our Neighbor's Table from our vegetable garden, an active recycling program, Jump Rope for Heart for the American Heart Society, the Heart to Heart program for wounded soldiers, and our partnership with the Senior Center are just some of the ways we have to say thank you.

Amesbury Elementary School 2016-17 Enrollment Projections

	October 1, 2015 Enrollments	March 1, 2016 Enrollments	FY 17 with current staffing
Pre-K am		15	15
Pre - K pm		13	15
ISN Pre-K		5	6
<b>Pre-K total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>36</b>
ISN	<b>1*</b>		<b>1</b>
Kindergarten		17	20
Kindergarten		21	20
Kindergarten		19	20
Kindergarten		20	20
<b>Grade total</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>80</b>
Grade 1		20	20
Grade 1		21	19
Grade 1		20	19
Grade 1		20	19
<b>Grade total</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>77</b>
Grade 2		20	21
Grade 2		21	20
Grade 2		20	20
Grade 2		19	20
<b>Grade total</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>81</b>
Grade 3		24	20
Grade 3		24	20
Grade 3		25	20
Grade 3			20
<b>Grade total</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>80</b>
Grade 4		20	25
Grade 4		18	24
Grade 4		22	24
Grade 4		19	
<b>Grade total</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>73</b>
<b>School total</b>	<b>426</b>	<b>423</b>	<b>428</b>

March 1 Caseloads by grade	
Gr.	Active IEPs
PK	19
K	13
1	15
2	11
3	16
4	14
<b>Totals</b>	<b>88</b>

\*ISN caseload is 6. Five (5) students are listed in grade level numbers.

