ODEW Precaution Written Plan Narrative
Amherst Exempted Village School District

December 15, 2025

INTRODUCTION

On November 4, 2025, residents of the Amherst Exempted Village School District rejected a ballot issue for a 1.5% School District Earned Income Tax that was projected to provide the district with approximately $10 million in new operating revenue per year. This was the first request for new operating revenue since November 6, 2012, when residents approved a 4.9 mill current expense operating levy.

On October 14, 2025, the Amherst's Treasurer/CFO submitted the required forecast to the Ohio Department of Education & Workforce (ODEW) and the Lorain County Auditor's Office. October 23, 2025, ODEW reviewed the district's October forecast and identified a deficit of -$7,448,352 in FY2028.

In accordance with Ohio Revised Code 5705.391, ODEW notified the district that it considers Amherst to be in a "Precautionary" financial status. In accordance with Ohio Administrative Code 3301-92-04, ODEW requires Amherst to submit a written plan to eliminate the FY2028 deficit. The written plan must be approved by the Board of Education and submitted to the ODEW Office of Budget and School Funding by December 21, 2025.

In response to ODEW's request, the Amherst Board of Education developed the requested written plan (attached) and this accompanying narrative. Both were approved at the regularly scheduled Board Meeting on December 15, 2025, in order to meet the state's deadline.

CHANGES IN ASSUMPTIONS

Amherst's October Forecast was approved by the Board on October 6, 2025, with a deficit of -$7,448,352 in FY2028. On October 7, 2025, the Lorain County Commissioners approved a measure to increase the homestead exemption and owner-occupied property tax credit, thereby reducing our local funding by over $841,209 per year. As a result, the cumulative impact of $2,103,022 increased the deficit to -$9,551,374 in FY2028.

There are few changes in assumptions for the October forecast for revenue and expenditures:

With the December #1 foundation settlement, the district anticipates an additional $467,740 in FY2026 and FY2027, resulting from increases in base cost, special education, and targeted assistance funding. An additional $387,895 is expected in the current fiscal year and throughout the forecast period due to updated transportation allocations and the performance supplement tied to the Report Card. Line 1.040 (Restricted Funding) is projected to decline by $115,040 this fiscal year and next due to updated allocations for student wellness base cost, gifted, career-technical education, and related categories.

The school district income tax levy has been removed from line 13.010 of the forecast following its defeat in November 2025. No new levy has been incorporated into this plan. The Board of Education is currently evaluating levy options for May 2026 and anticipates considering a formal motion in January 2026.

There are three expenditure adjustments to the October forecast assumptions. First, savings associated with the four modeled retirements have been reinstated and offset by severance costs included in the October forecast, resulting in a net increase of $207,099 in FY2027 and $392,034 in FY2028–FY2029. Second, the previously modeled $26,000 for classified severance benefits has been restored to the forecast. Finally, the premium holiday from the Lake Erie Regional Council (LERC) insurance consortium is greater than originally projected, reducing current-year expenditures by $16,207.

REVENUE ENHANCEMENTS

The written plan incorporates a single revenue enhancement: the scheduled increase of grade-level fees at Powers Elementary School and Walter G. Nord School and secondary course fees at Amherst Junior High and Marion L. Steele High School. This measure is anticipated to yield approximately $50,000 per year in additional revenue for FY2027–FY2029.

WRITTEN PLAN TO ADDRESS THE PROJECTED DEFICIT BALANCE IN FY28

The Amherst Board of Education asked the Superintendent and Treasurer/CFO to follow two clear priorities. First, reduce as many non-staffing expenditures as possible before impacting staffing. This includes supplies, instructional materials, supplemental programs, professional development, technology, curriculum, and other operational spending.

Second, staffing reductions should be through attrition (retirements and resignations) and spread across all areas of the district. The resignations and retirements described in this reduction plan have been acknowledged by the district as of December 15, 2025. Any retirements or resignations received after December 15, 2025, will be used to reduce the number of staff members affected by the reduction-in-force (RIF) to the best of our ability. <u>All staffing reductions implemented in FY2027 are continued through all years of the forecast</u>.

EXPENDITURE REDUCTIONS

Below are the written plan expenditure reductions by fiscal year (see attached Table 1).

<u>**Fiscal Year 2026 Reductions**</u>

In Fiscal Year 2026, the Board will capitalize on one administrative retirement (Items 1-3 central office supervisor) and four classified resignations (Items 4-,15 part-time bus driver, custodian/cleaner, bus aide, and a monitor). By not replacing those positions, the district will reduce expenditures for personnel by $53,934. The Board is also reducing out-of-season athletic trip salaries and benefits by $3,441 (Items 16-17), purchased services by $11,000 (Items 19-20), and supplies and materials by $22,986 (Items 18, 21-22). The total expenditure reductions for FY2026 is projected to be $91,361.

Fiscal Year 2027 Reductions

In addition to the staffing reductions in FY2026, the Board will reduce:

- One central office coordinator - Item 141-143,
- Twenty-two certified staff positions, made up of eleven retirements and eleven reductions-in-force - Items 65-79, 87-98, 102-116, 123-140, 144-146 and 147-149
- Seven certified department chair and one National Honor Society supplemental contracts - Items 83-86
- Nineteen classified staff (one assistant mechanic, three bus aides, four bus drivers, six custodial cleaners, two secretaries, and three monitors) - Items 23-64, 80-82, 150-152, 99-101, and 117-122
- Total reduction of personnel expenditures: $2,705,190,
- Total purchased services reductions: $442,275 includes reductions in tuition expenses, elimination of gifted and ELL contracted services, professional development costs, school resource officer costs, a social worker, high school payments in lieu of transportation, and moving T3 Performance contract costs to athletic funds;
- Total supplies and materials reductions: $291,163 includes reductions to building budgets for discretionary instructional supplies and limiting commencement expenses, slowing the textbook adoption cycle, and eliminating specified list of instructional subscriptions; and
- The total expenditure reductions for FY2027 is projected to be $3,438,628.

Fiscal Year 2028 Reductions

No new reductions are contained within this plan for FY2028. The total expenditure reductions for FY2028 total $4,967,835.

Fiscal Year 2029 Reductions

No new reductions are contained within this plan for FY2029. The total expenditure reductions for FY2029 total $4,766,909.

FINANCIAL OVERSIGHT

Throughout the duration of this written plan, the Amherst Board of Education will monitor implementation of these actions and the results achieved with a goal to eliminate the projected deficits by FY2028. The Board will be informed of the district finances through the monthly financial report prepared by the Treasurer/CFO. The financial report will include:

General Fund Revenue and Expenditures - A month to-date and fiscal to-date report of both the revenue and expenses of the district compared to the previous two fiscal years.

General Fund Type - A month to-date and fiscal to-date report of both the revenue and expenses of the district by type (salaries, benefits, purchased services, supplies, etc.) compared to the previous two fiscal years.

General Fund Cash Balance - The monthly balance of the current fiscal year compared to the previous two fiscal years with a detail of approximate savings related to the implementation of the written plan.

CLOSING STATEMENT

The Amherst Board of Education acknowledges that the reductions required by ODEW and outlined in this written plan will affect students, programs, and services that our community cares about deeply. We will continue to identify areas for cost containment. We will continue to support one another, advocate for our students, and work every day to preserve the exceptional educational experience our families expect and deserve. We remain a district defined by care, pride, and our identity as ***A Community of Excellence***.

BOARD APPROVAL

The Amherst Board of Education certifies that it has reviewed and approved all pages of the written plan workbook including changes in assumptions, revenue enhancements, and expenditure reductions and the narrative.

This written plan workbook and narrative were approved by the Amherst Board of Education on December 15, 2025. A certified resolution is submitted along with the workbook and plan narrative:

Rex Engle

Board President Rex Engle

Amelia R Gioffredo

Treasurer/CFO Amelia Gioffredo

Superintendent Michael Molnar

Amherst Exempted Village Schools
ODEW Precaution Plan
Table 1. Expenditure Reductions by Year

Plan Reductions	Staff Count	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029	TOTAL
Admin Staff FY26	1 Retire	7,623				7,623
Certified Staff FY26						-
Classified Staff FY26	4 Resignations	46,311				46,311
Salary Reduction (Trips)		3,441				3,441
Purchased Services		11,000				11,000
Supplies & Materials		22,986				22,986
Total FY 2026 Reductions		91,361	-	-	-	**91,361**
Admin Staff FY27	1 Retire/1 RIF		269,519			269,519
Certified Staff FY27	11 Retirements / 14 RIFs		1,788,852			1,788,852
Classified Staff FY27	4 Resignations / 18 RIFs		639,938			639,938
Salary Reduction (Trips)			6,881			6,881
Purchased Services			442,275			442,275
Supplies & Materials			291,163			291,163
Total FY 2027 Reductions		-	3,438,628	-	-	**3,438,628**
Admin Staff FY28	1 Retire/1 RIF			291,854		291,854
Certified Staff FY28	11 Retirements / 14 RIFs			2,714,626		2,714,626
Classified Staff FY28	4 Resignations / 18 RIFs			740,930		740,930
Salary Reduction (Trips)				6,881		6,881
Purchased Services				472,167		472,167
Supplies & Materials			-	741,377		741,377
Total FY 2028 Reductions		-	-	4,967,835	-	**4,967,835**
Admin Staff FY29	1 Retire/1 RIF				296,909	296,909
Certified Staff FY29	11 Retirements / 14 RIFs				2,760,541	2,760,541
Classified Staff FY29	4 Resignations / 18 RIFs				763,297	763,297
Salary Reduction (Trips)					6,881	6,881
Purchased Services					479,159	479,159
Supplies & Materials			-		460,122	460,122
Total FY 2029 Reductions		-	-	-	4,766,909	**4,766,909**
					Grand Total	**$ 13,264,733**

Notes:
Reductions amounts for Admin, Certified and Classified staff include compensation and retirement/fringe benefits.
Salaries/benefits, purchased services and materals/supplies reductions are summarized.