

## MEETING MINUTES

### AMESBURY MIDDLE SCHOOL SCHOOL COUNCIL MEETING



Tuesday, December 10, 2024

5:00 p.m.

AMS Main Conference Room (“The Bubble”)

- Meeting came to order at 5:00 pm.
  - Present: Doug Nebel, Sean Toomey, Jim Queenan, Jim Sweeney, Pat Flaherty
  - Not Present: Olivia Anderson, Alicia Linsey
- Continuing the discussion on Family Engagement, we began talking about school communication through emails. It seems people tend to be in one of two camps: either they like the current method of email blasts from the school each week, or they are “tuned out” to the emails and perhaps would appreciate a more “colorful” approach. Jim S. prefers the S’Mores newsletters. Pat S. pulled up an example of the AHS monthly newsletter - S’Mores.
  - This ties into our goal of increased family engagement in that this is the main form of communication with families. If we are to institute new events/activities to bring families into the school, to help folks feel more welcome in the school, it will start with communication.
- Sean notes that loves the “Blurple” Team website/Google Doc - this is a simple doc that is shared with parents of the Team. Teachers update their section of the doc every day (so, Pat Flaherty, grade 6 Social Studies, updates his section for each day, listing assignments due and upcoming, along with any events on the horizon. He is able to view it on his phone very easily, and uses it to check in with his daughter’s current assignments to make sure she is getting her work done on time.
  - Sean has the doc linked in his Notes section on his phone, so he can access it quickly and easily.
- Not all of the Teacher Teams use the same system. Most have Google Classrooms set up to which parents can be added as Guardians. This offers more functionality as parents can check in on all past assignments, too.
- Jim Q notes that the District used to pay stipends to “Teacher Leaders” whose responsibilities included family communication, assignments, etc.
- Discussion on how great an “all-in-one” app would be, that combines the features of Google classroom, Aspen and a daily update from Teachers, but that also allows easy communication back-and-forth between families and the school. The key to communication is to keep it simple: easy to use for teachers; easy to use for families - this would carry its own intrinsic motivation for folks to utilize and communicate more often.
- A good compromise could be a simple Google Doc similar to the “Blurple” example, but that offers families links to “deeper-dive” information for those who are interested. This is actually the goal behind the District’s and School’s new website, currently in development and planned to launch in the spring.

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- Picking up on the School Committee participation we discussed in more detail at the previous meeting, Jim S will put together an explanation of ideas for Principals to participate on a regular basis at School Committee meetings (even if that regular basis is once per month). Included in this will be an outline of how the meetings could be run to garner more family interest and tuning in.
  - Front load the meeting agenda with important information/updates that parents care most about. School updates most vital to families shared next by Principals.
  - Make the agenda easy to find and clear with what topics will be covered and when, so families know when to tune in for topics they care about.
  - Save the administrative items (budget/warrants, long discussions on policy, etc.) for later in the agenda so folks can tune out if they are not interested.
- Doug will put out the Minutes, along with next steps/assignments for everyone:
  - Review and add thoughts/ideas to the Strategic Objective #4 on the School Improvement Plan. The goal will be for this to be completed and officially added to the SIP at the next meeting.
- Meeting adjourned at 6:05 pm.

**Next Meeting:** January 15, 2025, at 5:00 pm, at AMS.