

MEETING MINUTES

AMESBURY MIDDLE SCHOOL SCHOOL COUNCIL MEETING



Wednesday, March 12, 2025

5:00 p.m.

AMS Main Conference Room (“The Bubble”)

- Meeting came to order at 5:01 pm.
 - Present: Doug Nebel, Alicia Linsey, Pat Flaherty, Olivia Anderson, Jim Queenan, Jim Sweeney
 - Not Present: Sean Toomey
- Doug distributed the results from the School Engagement Parent Survey. As of this meeting, we had 144 responses - about 38%. Not bad, but hardly the 70-80% we’d really like.
- Before jumping in on the results, Doug provides an AMS update:
 - Roof work is all but complete. Metal trim and Gym windows (to be completed over April Break) are the last pieces. Back parking lot should be fully open in the next few weeks.
 - Renovations have begun in the Performance Center. All chairs have been pulled out and old electrical equipment is being stripped out. Hopeful for a fall re-opening, but hedging that with a message of January 2026.
 - We have been approved to use the Stadium for the grade 8 celebration at the end of the year. We will start planning for this event and the dance that follows at the next meeting.
- It is decided that the current wording in place for Strategic Objective #4 in the AMS School Improvement Plan is sufficient at this time. This will serve as a framework for official language in the next SIP, to be developed by the School Council in the fall (SIP for 25-26).
 - Discussion on engagement ideas from the last meeting. The idea of video blogs (“vlogs”) is unanimously supported, with added discussion of having these be “on-demand” so families and other stakeholders can view at their leisure. These should be quick and cover a variety of topics, allowing families to choose what interests them at any particular time. These could be archived on the new school/district website.
 - Doug reiterates that we hope to still be on schedule for the new website(s) to launch in April, although specific updates on this have not been discussed at recent Leadership Team meetings with Central Office.
 - Members also note that there seems to be a lot of families looking to get Parent-Teacher Conferences back on the yearly schedule.
- Jim revisits his thoughts on the APS principals being a regular presence at School Committee meetings. Frontloading the meeting agenda with principal updates and other topics of interest to families should improve viewership, but also allow families the ability to tune in for the subjects of interest, then tune out when the Committee gets into the “less than exciting” topics and discussions.

- o Jim asks if he should attend a School Committee meeting and ask the Superintendent to start having the principals at the meetings more often. Doug requested that he not, for now. Doug will broach the subject with Elizabeth.
- Discussion turns to the budget and frustrations are expressed regarding the School Committee's seeming reluctance to put forward a level-services budget to the City for approval. The School Committee Is tasked with supporting the schools and must be committed to providing the best educational programs and staffing. There has been a lot of positive momentum created at AMS, not to mention the rest of the District, and anything less than level-services threatens to derail that momentum.
- Review of the Family survey results. Each member notes which part speaks to them the most. Highlights include
 - o 98% of families feel well informed about school news, events and programs.
 - o 96.5% of respondents list email as their preferred method of communication, with texting coming in second at 44%.
 - o 98% of respondents feel comfortable reaching out to teachers and school staff with concern
 - o 75% of respondents rate the Celebration of Learning as the event they would most want to see in the spring. This was by far the number 1 choice.
 - We will discuss the Celebration of learning at the next meeting.
- Meeting adjourned at 6:01 pm.

Next Meeting: April 9, 2025, at 5:00 pm, at AMS.