

AMESBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

February 10, 2025

Present were Mayor Gove, Chair, Maryann Welch, Greg Noyes, Brock Omohundro, Kate Slater, and Elizabeth McAndrews.

A recording of this meeting can be viewed here: <https://imd0mxanj2.execute-api.us-west-2.amazonaws.com/ssr/watch/67ae1bd16d4867000872263d>

- I. Call to Order/Moment of Silence/Mission Statement/Pledge of Allegiance (0:12)
- II. Comments by Visitors & Delegations (1:30)
 - None
- III. Communications & Reports (3:30)
 - A. Educational Leadership
 1. Director of Facilities: Quarter 2 Facilities Update – Mr. McCarthy shared a facilities update with the committee covering ongoing items at each building including painting of the stage at AHS, the ongoing roof replacement and performance center repairs at AMS, waxing of floors and kitchen repairs at CES, washer/dryer installs and kiln installation at Shay, final removal of items from AES, and finally the planned asbestos inspections at all buildings. The committee discussed Mr. McCarthy’s report and asked questions relating to the items discussed.
 2. Superintendent’s Report – Superintendent McAndrews shared a staffing update with the committee including open positions and recent hires/departures. The Superintendent then shared an update on the two ongoing searches for a Director of Student Services and CES Principal.
 - B. Student Advisory Council – Ms. Snow provided an update to the committee on the ongoing menstrual product program, changes they would like to see in the cafeteria, and the upcoming Winter Carnival.
 - C. Liaisons
 1. Ms. Fraize and Mr. Lipsom delivered an update to the committee on recent SEPAC activities including their recent general meeting, a workshop on bullying intervention, and ongoing parent support groups. Finally, the SEPAC liaisons shared a calendar of upcoming workshops and events.
 2. Whittier Tech Report – Ms. Coppinger shared an update with the committee on recent progress with the new potential building project, approval of a capital plan, the wastewater treatment plan repair project. Ms. Coppinger also shared an overview of the planned budget process for FY26. The committee discussed the report and asked questions of Ms. Coppinger including the requirements of the MSBA for a potential building project.

D. Subcommittees

1. On behalf of Finance & Facilities Ms. Welch shared the work the subcommittee has been doing regarding the FY26 budget, concerns over revolving account balances, and vacation buybacks.
2. On behalf of the Curriculum and Inclusion subcommittee Dr. Slater shared updates concerning upcoming spotlight awards, the curriculum review cycle, ongoing UDL training, and the receipt of a playful learning grant.
3. On behalf of Policy & Personnel Mr. Omohundro shared an update on discussions surrounding graduation requirements, consistency surrounding the start date of the school year, and a student data privacy review.
4. On behalf of Long-Range Planning Mr. Noyes shared updates from recent meetings/actions of the subcommittee including solicitation of community input of strengths and weaknesses of the district, the potential creation of a 5-10 year plan looking at more focused content and increased rigor, and looking at ways to increase project-based learning.

IV. New Business (1:06:25)

Ms. Welch moved to take item IV-4 out of order, second by Mr. Noyes. Approved unanimously.

1. § 19 Disclosure from a Municipal Employee – Mr. Montanari spoke about his disclosure which concerned hiring a family member as a paraprofessional at Shay. The committee briefly discussed the disclosure and asked clarifying questions of Mr. Montanari.

Dr. Slater moved to confirm that the financial interest is not so substantial as to be deemed likely to affect the integrity of the services which the municipality may expect from the employee, being James Montanari. Seconded by Mr. Noyes. Vote: 4 Yes, 1 abstention (Omohundro). Passes.

2. Policies

- BDDH-E – Guidelines for Participation at School Committee Meetings – Mr. Omohundro summarized the policy which is before the committee for a second read. Edits have been made based on feedback from committee members.

Ms. Welch moved to approve the policy, seconded by Dr. Slater. Approved unanimously.

- IC/ICA – School Year/School Calendar – Mr. Omohundro next summarized the changes made to the policy specifically surrounding the start of the school year. Changes would be made to the policy based on the will of the members. The committee discussed the start of school and pros and cons of a before/after Labor Day start. The committee discussed the need for consistency in the policy surrounding the start date.

3. Approval of School Choice – Superintendent McAndrews summarized the plans for school choice for the coming school year including which grades would be open and the number of spaces in each grade. The district proposed not opening grades 3-5 or 12, specific number of seats would be determined with the building principals. The committee discussed the choice program including availability of spots for students of staff, the current enrollment numbers and availability of space in each grade including class sizes.

Dr. Slater moved to close school choice to grade 3-5 & 12, seconded by Ms. Welch.

Mr. Noyes moved to amend to close grades K-5 and 12, seconded by Mayor Gove.

The committee further discussed the motions and amendment in relation to the upcoming FY26 budget outlook.

On the amendment the vote was 1 Yes (Noyes) 4 No. Motion fails.

On the main motion the vote was 5 yes. Passes.

Ms. Welch moved to suspend policy BDD, second by Mr. Noyes. Passes unanimously.

4. Approval of 2025-2026 School Year Calendar – The Superintendent summarized the changes that had been made to the calendar based on feedback by the committee. The calendar as proposed is a pre-Labor Day start and PRT days remain as scheduled instead of moving to Fridays. The committee discussed the calendar as proposed and discussed alternates to scheduled days as proposed.

Mr. Omohundro moved to accept the calendar, seconded by Dr. Slater.

The committee further discussed the calendar including moving of PRT days, required attendance to have the school year count.

Mr. Noyes moved to amend the calendar in order to hold PRT days on Friday, seconded by Mayor Gove. Vote: 2 yes (Noyes, Gove) 3 No. Amendment fails.

On the main motion the vote was 2 Yes (Welch, Slater) 3 no. Motion fails.

The committee discussed next steps with regards to changes they would like to see made including changes to the elementary conferences, PRT days, and start of school.

V. Consent Agenda (2:17:10)

- A. Minutes: Jan 6 & 27 – *Mr. Omohundro moved to approve, second by Ms. Welch.*

Mr. Omohundro amended his motion to correct a recorded vote on page 2 of the Jan 27th minutes as stated by Mr. Noyes, seconded by Ms. Welch. Approved unanimously.

- B. Warrants: Dec 27 \$643,688.48 | Jan 9 \$272,598.08 | Jan 10 \$611,205.79 | Jan 23 \$931,745.90 | Jan 24 \$642,214.40.

Mr. Omohundro moved to accept the warrants as presented, seconded by Dr. Slater.

Ms. Welch asked about an expenditure in the Jan 21 warrant. The committee briefly discussed the expenditure as well as expenditures surrounding the payments made towards the AMS roof.

Motion passes unanimously.

Mr. Noyes moved to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Welch. Approved unanimously.