

Report of Faculty Representative to the Board of Trustees
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Faculty feedback this month reflects a continued commitment to strengthening the school's systems, communication structures, and support for both students and staff. While teachers remain deeply dedicated to AMSA's mission, several recurring themes highlight opportunities to improve clarity, consistency, and operational efficiency. The following summarizes the concerns most frequently raised.

Scheduling and Administrative Workload

Faculty expressed concern about the current approach to scheduling, particularly the extent to which the Principal and Vice-Principal are required to manage this time-intensive task. Teachers noted that scheduling demands appear to divert administrative attention from higher-level responsibilities such as instructional leadership, staff support, and student services.

Several faculty members also recalled that in previous years, a small group of teachers participated in the scheduling process. Their involvement helped ensure that the master schedule reflected the practical realities of classroom instruction, departmental needs, and student course pathways. Staff felt that this collaborative model not only distributed the workload more effectively but also resulted in a schedule that was more responsive to academic priorities.

There is a broader perception that efforts to reduce costs in certain operational areas may unintentionally create larger challenges later, especially when specialized tasks are assigned to individuals whose time is needed elsewhere. Faculty would welcome a review of how scheduling is staffed and whether reintroducing structured teacher involvement—or providing additional support—could improve both efficiency and outcomes.

Student Attendance and Truancy

One faculty member noted a concern about an apparent increase in habitual student truancy this year and felt unsure how attendance issues were being addressed. While chronic absenteeism is a nationwide challenge, teachers recalled that follow-through on AMSA's attendance policy felt more visible in past years.

Much of the work around attendance interventions is handled confidentially and may not be apparent to classroom teachers. Faculty may benefit from clearer communication about how truancy issues are being addressed, without compromising privacy, so they can better understand how their reporting fits into the broader intervention process.

Eligibility for Clubs and Afterschool Activities

There remains some confusion around the new procedures for determining student eligibility for extracurricular participation. Teachers understand their responsibility to communicate with

families about academic performance, especially when students are at risk of failing. However, several questions persist:

- **Club advisor responsibility** — Are club advisors and coaches responsible for monitoring eligibility?
- **Teacher communication** — Should teachers be the ones informing students?
- **Administrative oversight** — Should administrators oversee the process to ensure consistency?
- **Deadlines** — Clubs don't necessarily follow the calendar of academic quarters and this has left some advisors confused about how and when to calculate eligibility.
- **Regaining eligibility** — How and when can students become eligible again?

The new system has also been more time-consuming for advisors because, in the past, classroom teachers generally monitored grades and sent home warnings, etc. This shift added an unexpected layer of work for advisors and contributed to inconsistent practices across clubs and grade levels.

Teachers would appreciate a unified, written procedure outlining roles, timelines, communication expectations, and the systems advisors should use. Because this was the first year the process was fully implemented, some confusion is understandable. The necessary adjustments appear manageable, and faculty simply want to ensure that the “sticky points” are identified so the system can run more smoothly next year.

Stipends and Compensation Structures

Teachers raised concerns about the current stipend structure for Directed Study (DS) compared to spot-subbing. At present, a teacher can earn \$40 for covering a single class period, while the DS stipend amounts to less than \$25 per period despite requiring more planning, supervision, and ongoing student support. Middle School teachers often bear the brunt of covering DS classes within the schedule, resulting in a six-period teaching day rather than the five-period load typically carried by Upper School teachers.

The Directed Study model is foundational to AMSA's charter and student growth framework, and faculty worry that the current compensation structure may unintentionally discourage teachers from taking on DS roles. Staff believe that a review of stipend alignment would help ensure that compensation reflects workload and supports the school's academic priorities. Faculty are hopeful that this topic may be addressed during the next round of contract negotiations to ensure long-term clarity and equity. It is also worth noting that including stipend positions in the CBA has implications for teachers' retirement contributions and disbursement. Tracking data on the number of applicants for DS positions may further help identify trends and inform future decisions.

Academic Rigor and Grading Consistency

Teachers expressed concern about wide variations in grading practices and course rigor across the school. While faculty value professional autonomy, they also recognize that significant inconsistencies—such as some classes with nearly all A's and others with high failure rates—create confusion for students and families and raise questions about equity.

Faculty are seeking clearer expectations around baseline rigor in core classes, along with opportunities for collaborative calibration. This could include shared rubrics, department-level discussions, or periodic reviews to ensure that grading practices align with school-wide standards.

Collaborative Planning and Decision-Making

A recurring theme in faculty feedback is the sense that many decisions this year have been made through a top-down process rather than through the collaborative planning that characterized AMSA in the past. Teachers noted that, in previous years, faculty played a more active role in shaping school-wide initiatives and operational decisions. This shared ownership created a genuine partnership between teachers and administration, and many feel that this collaborative culture was one of the qualities that helped AMSA achieve its reputation as one of the top schools in the state.

While teachers understand that not all decisions can be made collectively, many feel that their professional perspectives are not being sought as consistently as they once were. This shift has affected morale and contributed to a perception that teacher expertise is underutilized, and that AMSA is at risk of losing one of the qualities that historically set it apart from traditional district models.

Faculty expressed that more structured opportunities for input, clearer explanations of decision-making rationales, and earlier involvement in planning would help restore the collaborative spirit that has long strengthened AMSA's programs and community.