

AMESBURY CASHMAN SCHOOL COUNCIL
SCHOOL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
[Date: January 29, 2026]

Attendees:

Dr. Amy Mitchell, Principal
Larissa Vincent, Special Education Teacher
Cara Ripley, Third Grade Teacher
Liam Davey, Paraprofessional
Alison Pruna, Parent
Heather Lull, Parent
Tiffany Purington, Parent
Maggie Begis, Parent

Agenda Item 1:

Welcome and approval of November 20, 2025 Meeting Minutes

Motioned to approve as written and will be shared with the City Clerk's office for posting.

Agenda Item 2:

Community voice

- Safe spaces- are they in use? They are therapeutic spaces where students choose to take a break. There are no doors and students will elect to go in on their own individual choice. Asked about mandates- new mandates coming

Space to relax with fidgets

Calm corners in every classroom for students who need a break within the classroom

Cozy corners and flexible seating in classrooms that provide options for students.

Chromebook- what happens when a chromebook breaks.

- School reaches out to IT first to repair
 - Depending on the degree of damage will impact cost
 - Insurance for chromebook is activated- IT tells school who has insurance
 - There are loaner chromebooks to use in the meantime while it is repaired or replaced
 - Family is notified regarding a broken computer
 - Insurance will also cover missing chargers- as an option

One parent shared that her daughter's play group continues to be happy. The question is how the school is going to function with the pending budget cuts.

Cuts are broken down by schools. Looking at options at what schools can do and where money can be saved. Conversations will be starting soon with more information at School Committee meetings. The city vote will be in June to finalize the budget which will finalize next steps. Conversations are active.

Agenda Item 3:

School Improvement Plan Draft Review and Feedback

Presented at the school committee meeting. Still in draft form.

Comment: Every year teachers are expected to do more with less. More staff are cut every year, but expectations continue to rise. We should still set high expectations, but point out to the school committee that we are down staff. Cashman is already barebones.

Shay and Cashman do not share common data- Shay used Dibels and Cashman uses MAP as data. Cashman uses both- Dibels and MAZE informs use of the reading fluency and the reading comprehension. MAP testing has been consistently tracked. It has helped us provide data projections for MCAS. Recently, there is a discrepancy between MAP score and MCAS score. Looking at that discrepancy is the writing score and the grammar. This helped us form the writing goal.

Teachers discussed writing growth they have seen with recent changes in instruction. Writing is a mix of hand writing and typing to prepare for standardized tests.

Comment about AI discussion at school committee- comment was there were limited questions.

When looking at 3rd grade writing for the beginning of the year - the zero on the rubric. To get a 0 is hard, it looks like these students did not know where to begin or wrote two sentences. Could be that some of those students did not know how to answer the prompt. Many summarized the text, but did not address the prompt.

Agenda Item 4:

Family School Climate and Culture Survey

40 responses- to find themes and trends we would need 300 responses

Can parents help promote the survey to boost responses- yes help spread the word

Make a QR code for parents at Celebration of Learning

The responses were very thoughtful and heartfelt.

Sent out to 622 recipients.

Will be sending out the survey again around Celebration of Learning at the end of May.

Agenda Item 5:

Updates on Playful Learning and Investigating History Grants

Teachers attended a PD in the beginning of January. This involved teachers who are actively experiencing playful learning at their schools. It showed we are right on track with where we are at bringing that to our classrooms. Teachers are visiting the Hannah School in Beverly in February. They are in year 3. They started with 2 classrooms in each grade level K-4. Now most classes are using the program. Another school includes grade 5 and the students love it. It is a different way of looking at the curriculum we already have. There are very specific criteria within their choices but creative freedom within those choices. Buddy classes work together between Shay and Cashman. Students are really enjoying it.

Investigating History- 5th grade is taking part in professional learning days as part of the grant. Grades 3 and 4 are in the pilot stage. The units are still in development. The grant for next year will include PD and a coach coming to the school to support teachers. 5th grade missed PD due to a storm and will attend the rescheduled event in February. They will be learning to teach and receive materials for a new module. Hands on learning and rich lessons with videos and materials. Grades 6 and 7 are also taking part which support grade level alignment. There is also crossover with Wit and Wisdom units in 5th grade. Waiting to hear back on the grant for next year. It was just submitted on 1/22/26. Amy has also reached out to the Carriage Museum to work with us to connect to the social studies units.

Agenda Item 6:

Other?

Is there health instruction?

6th grade health classes begin. Cashman has discussed how to make that happen at the school's level. Also, checking in with parents about their views.

Jen Slater, gym teacher, does include many of the health standards. Between PE and the SEL class most of the standards are being met.

The nurse is also a helpful resource for students

A lot for the 4th and 5th grade teachers to support those students who are going through puberty.

They come in as 2nd graders and leave as preteens. The change is large.

Conversations about self care, emotions, and substance abuse are important.

Discussion of substance use is important and there should be more discussions.

Next Meetings:

February 26, 2026