**AMESBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

**SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

**June 15, 2026**

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Present were Mayor Gove, Abigail Jurist Levy, Deb Manseau, Greg Noyes, and Brock Omohundro

A recording of this meeting can be viewed here:
https://cloud.castus.tv/vod/amesbury/video/6a341a24b385e80002b233e8?

I. Call to Order/Mission Statement/Pledge of Allegiance – Mr. Omohundro read the mission statement and led the committee in the pledge.

II. Comments by Visitors & Delegations (1:16) - *No Comments via Facebook or Email*

- Heather Lull, Macy Street - Read statement on behalf of Pam Morin, mother of a 10-year-old student at Cashman Elementary. The statement expressed concern about her student not receiving the support required by her IEP as well as receiving a school suspension and other disciplinary measures that her student has faced. Ms. Morin requests adoption of a policy that prevents harm.
- Hillary Fraize, Main Street - Clarified that a public comment that she made at the previous meeting on a parent's behalf was solely meant to present a parent's point of view and not intended to scare anyone.

III. Recognitions and Awards (7:31)

1. Athlete Recognition
   - Athletes were recognized by their coaches for outstanding effort and performance.
2. Spotlight Award
   - Mayor Gove and Mr. Noyes presented the spotlight award to Flatbread Pizza
3. Retiree Recognition
   - Proclamations and recognitions were presented to Joan Liporto and Elizabeth McAndrews.

IV. Communications & Reports (36:08)

A. Educational Leadership

1. Superintendent's Report -Superintendent McAndrews provided a staffing update of positions still waiting for hires and recent hires that have been made. Mr. Noyes asked if there will be any returning Spanish teachers to which Superintendent McAndrews clarified that there will be one returning. Superintendent McAndrews

provided an update on athletics and stated that other questions submitted by Mr. Noyes are being worked on now.

2. SEPAC/Special Education Presentation
    - SEPAC Secretary provided an overview of the organization, its purpose, role, and responsibilities as required by M.G.L.
    - Martha Robinson (Dir. of Student Services) and Heather Eigen (Asst. Dir. of Student Services) presented an end-of-the-year report including departments and students served, SEPAC collaboration, IMR process, and new regulations.

B. Student Advisory Council - Brooke Woodsom reported that the SAC has been focused on the cell phone policy and investigating the impact that it may have on students. Mayor Gove asked if this came about due to the proposed law in the state house and Brooke confirmed. Superintendent McAndrews stated that a grant has been submitted to help fund the implementation of this policy. Mr. Noyes asked if this would be district-wide and Superintendent McAndrews confirmed that yes, this School Committee policy would cover the entire district.

C. Whittier Tech Representative Report - An overview was provided of the Amesbury students' enrollment and representation across Whittier's programs, as well as their budget and upcoming capital projects planned. Mr. Noyes asked whether their co-ops occur during the school day. Dr. Jurist Levy asked what is the timeline for a feasibility study for a new building.

*Mr. Omohundro moved to suspend policy BDD, second by Dr. Jurist Levy. Approved unanimously.*

D. SEPAC Report - Presented a report of their survey findings regarding caregivers use and knowledge of SEPAC, what they believe has been working well, and the concern/requests of caregivers that were collected. Dr. Jurist Levy asked how many families receive services and 452 families was the answer given, however there could be more than one student per family receiving services. Dr. Manseau asked how they chose the questions to include in the survey and whether they asked if bullying incidents were reported. Mr. Omohundro asked what were their top 3 findings from the survey. Mayor Gove commended them on their ability to engage so many families in this survey and asked whether they told the participants that their data may be shared anonymously outside of SEPAC.

E. Subcommittees

1. Finance & Facilities - Mr. Omohundro summarized that the subcommittee's last meeting on May 18 was a review of transfers that were later approved at the June 1st meeting. Their next meeting will be in August and they will be having a group goals session during their break to set a forward-looking plan and a meeting cadence.

2. Curriculum, Inclusion, & Community Engagement - Last met on May 5 (no meeting in June) to go over the spotlight winners. Their next meeting will be in

August and they will be having a group goals session during their break to set a forward looking plan and a meeting cadence.

3. Policy, Personnel, & Strategy - Dr. Jurist Levy summarized their recent personnel work including negotiations with AFT. The next and last-scheduled negotiation session is June 23. The policy group has been focused on JKAA and has been pursuing options for the district's policy. They plan to hold a policy committee meeting of the whole to discuss the policy prior to voting on August 10. Mr. Noyes asked to clarify what JKAA is and it was clarified that it is about physical restraint and seclusion.

4. Joint Education - No update because the most recent meeting was held 3 months prior. Their next meeting is June 17 at 5:30pm to develop and agree upon goals, discuss transitioning of school leadership, discuss the implications of the budget, and identify topics for future meetings. Mr. Noyes asked which budget we usewhen building the upcoming years' budget and whether they can see the final budget after all transfers compared to the approved budget.

F. Requests of Committee - Dr. Jurist Levy asked to receive an update on the feasibility study regarding regionalization. Mr. Noyes requested to combine two presentations typically slated for the fall.

V. New Business (2:20:27)

1. SY 2026-2027 School Handbooks (First Read) - Superintendent McAndrews summarized the process of the handbook updates and outlined the priority areas. Plan to vote on these during the first meeting of August.

2. DESE Renewal Approval Process – Amesbury Innovation High School - Prior to voting on AIHS's 3-year renewal Principal Evan Melanson made a presentation that included the AIHS mission and vision, explanation of what an innovation school is, a comparison of AIHS to similar schools, stakeholder recommendations, and updates from previous stakeholder recommendations. Mr. Noyes asked if this constitutes the annual evaluation that gets sent to DESE and the School Committee, when that report will come out, and if the reported metrics would be consistent with what other innovation schools are measuring. Mr. Noyes asked if MTSS are only used within AIHS or if that is district-wide. Mr. Noyes asked what their cell phone policy is. Mr. Noyes asked if Mr. Melanson thought their emergency moves to AMS affected the chronic absenteeism this past year. Mr. Noyes asked if the school's foundation is a 501(c)3. Mr. Noyes asked if AIHS has music and art and clarified whether there is a music/art professional in the school. Mr. Noyes asked if, other than dogs, what types of animals could be used for therapeutic purposes. Dr. Jurist Levy wanted to clarify that there is a difference between a therapy dog and a service dog and that distinction is important to make. Dr. Jurist Levy expressed concern about a three-year commitment to staying in their current building due to the issues with the building that occurred. Mr. Omohundro asked about the students

who returned to AIHS from their out-of-district placements this year, and the reasons they gave for their decision. Mayor Gove asked what grades the returning students are going to be in. Mayor Gove expressed concern with their renewal term aligning with the lease term, which has 2 years remaining. Mayor Gove asked if they were all set up for the summer session this year. Mayor Gove expressed concern about voting on something relating to animals due to insurance details. Mr. Omohundro asked for more details on cost avoidance. Mr. Noyes asked if it is possible to amend this agreement at a later date regarding the liability concerns relating to therapy animals.
*Mr. Noyes moved to approve the plan absent the service animal section, seconded by Mr. Omohundro.* Discussion opened with Dr. Manseau who would prefer to reduce the timeline from 3 years to 2 years. Dr. Jurist Levy asked if the language relating to the location allows for AIHS to be moved to another school. Dr. Jurist Levy expressed concerns of what would happen if they were not able to fulfill the location aspect of the plan. Dr. Jurist Levy would like to reduce the timeline from 3 years to 2 years.
*Vote: 2 Yes (please note the student representative also voted Yes), 3 No (Gove, Jurist Levy, Manseau)*
*Dr. Jurist Levy moved to approve the plan with the following exceptions: add School Committee approval of co-habitation, reduce the timeline to 2 years, and remove the service animal section; seconded by Dr. Manseau.* Discussion occurred regarding the timeline.
*Vote: 3 Yes, 2 No (Omohundro, Noyes)*

3. Approval of Contract with the Interim Director of Finance & Operations - *Mr. Noyes motioned to approve the contract, seconded by Mr. Omohundro.* Brief discussion to clarify the specific language within the contract, a typo will be corrected.
*Vote: Yes, unanimous.*

VI. Consent Agenda

A. *Dr. Jurist Levy motioned to approve the following minutes: Feb 26, March 23, March 30, April 6; seconded by Mr. Omohundro. Vote: 5 Yes, 1 Abstention (Manseau).*
B. *Mr. Omohundro moved to approve the following warrants: April 17 $681,427.02, May 1 $642,314.28, May 14 $958,789.47, May 15 $657,499.11, May 30 $710,398.68, June 11 $419,110.03; seconded by Dr. Jurist Levy.* Brief discussion including a question from Mr. Noyes regarding the increase in the Amazon bill.
*Vote: Yes, unanimously.*

*Mr. Omohundro moved to adjourn, second by Dr. Jurist Levy. Passes unanimously.*

The next regular meeting of the School Committee will be held on Monday August 10, 2026.