
Minutes
Communications Committee

Communications Meeting
January 13, 2010, 3:00 pm
MINUTES

In attendance: *Debbie Butterworth, Gary Lanoie, Mary Page, Lisa Derman, Kate Williams-Hewitt, Mary Townsend*

Discussion of Wellness Collaboration with Communication

As a group we discussed how we as a Communication Committee could partner with the Wellness Committee to support teachers during the uncertain budgetary season. Committee members discussed the issue of low morale, particularly among teachers who have jobs that perceivable hang in the balance. Also, there is a common perception that there is no “fat” left to cut from the budget. The teachers discussed the importance of having solid and reliable information on the curtailment and budget readily available to them on a timely basis and a method for offering constructive feedback. A suggestion was made to have each school compile a “booklet” of responses from teachers to present to the board. Debbie and Lisa would compile teacher comments from Pond Cove; Terry White would be responsible for the middle school; and Mary would collect responses from high school staff. Responses could be systematically analyzed and tracked for common themes (___%age asked that schools not be asked to cut _____).

It was strongly suggested that any curtailment proposal be posted on the web ASAP for staff review.

Kate also spoke with the committee about trying to provide an online, anonymous weekly survey to track teacher morale, school climate, etc.

In addition, Lisa suggested employing new methods to dispel myths about school funding/teacher pay and benefits, etc. Perhaps articles in the “Courier” that review common misperceptions around school budget issues.

Mary P. wondered if the school might have a person who could immediately answer public questions online and provide a way for the public to track those responses.

Mary also suggested when posting budget information that we might include a section for “Frequently Asked Questions” to answer common questions and dispel myths. Also this would be a

good place to post financial findings of the curtailment committee, particularly in response to the suggested measures that have already been taken and the cost savings realized.

Coffees

The Pond Cove and Middle School coffees were successful, but not publicized among the staff as well as they could have been. Lisa made the suggestion that during the next round, the coffees should be purpose-driven (i.e. “Come talk with school board members about the curtailment over coffee.”) and the fact that food will be served should be publicized—will draw a larger crowd.

The high school coffee will be re-scheduled for the week after midterms.

While we had a brief discussion about having coffees during Monday afternoon work sessions, there was a sense that there would not be enough time for substantive interaction between board members and staff.

Goals

We went over the SB goals for 2010 and the committee agreed they were most interested in working on an annual report. Mary suggested that perhaps the production of the document could be funneled through the high school journalism class.

More Communication Efforts

- Lisa suggested we continue to utilize CETV by posting class videos for production. Even short clips might be of interest to the public.
- In addition, perhaps the Thomas Memorial Library might let the students post artwork one month.
- Mary suggested that the World History 2 Research Projects be posted in Town Hall (May/June).
- We agreed that we should meet monthly as a committee during budget season.

Meeting adjourned 4:30 p.m.

Next Communications Meeting: February 10, 3:15 p.m., location to be announced.

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