

BOARD OF EDUCATION
Ellington, Connecticut

Communications Committee Meeting Minutes

The Communications Committee of the Ellington Board of Education met on Tuesday, May 6, 2014 in the School Administration Building.

Attendees:

Administrative Team Members: Dr. Erin McGurk, Mr. Stephen Cullinan

Board of Education Committee Members: Ms. Kristen Picard-Wambolt, Ms. Tracey Kiff-Judson, Mr. David Pearson, Mr. Dan Keune (arrived at 1:50 PM)

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 1:00 PM by Ms. Kiff-Judson.

Agenda Items

- **Update on Activities Related to the Budget Process**
 - The committee discussed preparations for the annual town budget meeting on May 13. Mr. Cullinan agreed to provide the school fact sheet and the “Did you know?” document as handouts for the meeting.
 - Mr. Cullinan distributed the notice of the meeting to committee members, which includes resolutions for grants, and stated that it is important that we have sufficient attendance at the meeting. Ms. Kiff-Judson agreed to send reminders of the May 13 meeting to encourage board member participation.
 - Ms. Kiff-Judson reported that she has seen budget referendum announcements in the high school and middle school newsletters. Mr. Cullinan will ensure notices are posted in the schools as well.
 - The group discussed that articles have been submitted to the Journal Inquirer by Ms. Picard-Wambolt and Ms. Kiff-Judson. Ms. Kiff-Judson agreed to remind board members that if they want to submit articles, now is the appropriate time.
 - Committee Members agreed to add postings to Facebook on the day of the referendum to remind people to vote.
 - Ms. Picard-Wambolt is working on updating the signs and will deliver them to Mr. Keune.
 - The committee discussed the use of press releases relating to town meetings, and the sense was that there is no guarantee that press releases will be published.

- **Discussion/Review of Communications Framework for the Ellington Board**
 - **Friend of Education Award**
 - The committee discussed that the presentation at the April board meeting was very positive and well-received.
 - Mr. Cullinan drafted a news article which we will post on the Facebook page. The internal plaque has been posted in the administration building.
 - **Facebook**
 - Ms. Kiff-Judson deleted the Facebook *group* she had created and created a new “Friends of Ellington Public Schools” Facebook *page* at <http://www.facebook.com/FriendsOfEllingtonPublicSchools>. She discussed what some other towns have on their pages. Avon Board of Education has a Facebook page that lists board meeting dates, news articles, board members, photos, likes, etc. Simsbury High School has a page with “About” information. Trumbull has a page that lists each of the schools. Tolland Middle School has a page that just has “About” information.
 - The committee discussed how to go about adding content and members. Ms. Picard-Wambolt, Ms. Kiff-Judson, and Mr. Keune are the only people with authorization to edit the page. Others can “like” the page to get updates in their news feed.
 - Dr. McGurk suggested publishing the Facebook page address in school newsletters.

- **Old Business**

- **Review of the Annual Brainstorming Sessions**

- **Media Pitch:** Mr. Cullinan agreed to send the “Did you know?” flyer created by Dr. McGurk via SchoolMessenger within the next couple days.
- **Monthly Event Calendar:** The committee discussed what to post on the Facebook page and agreed to put two or three events each month to advertise in advance. Mr. Cullinan agreed to ask principals to send one picture per month with a caption as part of their monthly report. These can be posted on the Facebook page as news about what is happening in our schools.
- **Backdrop:** Mr. Cullinan is waiting for a response from the vendor on samples.

- **New Business**

- The committee discussed feedback from the parents who attended the April Board of Education meeting regarding the roll out of standards-based report cards. Mr. Pearson discussed the report cards at the orientation for incoming middle school parents. Dr. McGurk indicated that the question about differentiation on the “meets” rating can be obtained through parent conferences, but there is a school of thought that a “meets” rating is like a light switch (either you meet or you don’t). Mr. Pearson suggested that parents avoid trying to equate the standards to a letter grade. Mr. Pearson wants to encourage students to understand what they have mastered and what they need to do differently.
- The committee discussed what we do for enrichment and expanding offerings to all kids. Dr. McGurk indicated that we will be building off of the programs that were started this year, such as possibly expanding the Legos program into a robotics club. Mr. Pearson discussed customized enrichment programming using the Johns Hopkins model. Dr. McGurk reported that the curriculum specialists are beginning to tackle this.

Next Meeting and Adjournment

- The next committee meeting will take place at 1:00 PM on Tuesday, June 3, 2014. Regular committee meetings will be scheduled on the first Tuesday of each month at 1:00 PM in the administration building.
- A motion was made by Ms. Picard-Wambolt to adjourn. Mr. Keune seconded the motion. The motion passed, and the meeting adjourned at 2:20 PM.

Minutes submitted by: _____

Tracey Kiff-Judson, Communications Committee Chairperson