

# BOARD OF EDUCATION

## Ellington, Connecticut

### Communications Committee Meeting Minutes

The Communications Committee of the Ellington Board of Education met for a virtual meeting on Wednesday, April 8, 2020 at 4:00 p.m.

#### Attendees:

*Board of Education Members:* Ms. Jen Dzen, Ms. Marcia Kupferschmid, Ms. Jenn Mullin and Ms. Miriam Underwood.

*Administrative Team Members:* Dr. Scott Nicol, Superintendent of Schools and Mr. Brian Hendrickson, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction.

*Also in attendance:* Ms. Jennifer Brown, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent/Human Resources Coordinator.

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order by Ms. Mullin at 4:00 p.m.

#### Agenda Items:

1. *Communications Chair Update - Facebook Video*

Ms. Mullin reported on a video she made with Dr. Kristy LaPorte, Director of Special Services, on social isolation and wellness. It is currently in the process of being edited and will go out this week. They reached out to a few teachers to provide helpful clips to incorporate into the video.

The next video she would like to feature John Collins with a focus on Chromebook tutorials with helpful tips.

2. *Discussion on Ellington Friends of Education*

The Ellington Friends of Education annual review process that occurs in May. Dr. Nicol advises that we pause and revisit the process in June to acknowledge individuals that have helped throughout the school year.

The committee agreed and the process will resume at the end of the school year.

3. *Superintendent's Parent/Student Survey*

Dr. Nicol stated he wanted to send out a survey to parents and students for feedback. Currently we are not getting enough feedback with the surveys sent out by administration and it is important that we know the stress and anxiety level of our students and parents. We need more solid data from them in order to support and direct teachers on how to proceed with their lessons.

Ms. Underwood asked if there has been any survey given to the teaching staff in regards to their stress levels. Dr. Nicol stated that the teachers' union has been sending the teachers surveys on that topic and have been working collaboratively with the administration on the results and next steps. The latest survey showed that there has been some leveling off on their stress levels.

Ms. Dzen asked how we would be able to differentiate the different levels that parents and students represent as each age and grade groupings would vary greatly. Mr. Hendrickson stated that the survey results will reflect the grade of the student we would know where to focus the support.

Dr. Nicol also updated the committee on the grading decisions for Ellington High School. The third semester will remain as is and the 4th semester will not count towards the students GPA. Students will also have the option in the 4th semester to choose per class if they would like to receive a regular grade or opt for pass/fail. Mr. Guidry will be messaging this out to parents and students.

4. *Monthly Communications Template (Distance Learning Version)*

Committee Chair Mullin updated the committee members with upcoming communications that will be sent out from the Board. In April there will be a video with an interview with Dr. LaPorte and hopefully one with Mr. Collins soon after that.

Dr. Nicol reported that two upcoming communications will be going out from the Superintendent's office. The first will be in regards to grading and the second will be on the Superintendent survey. EPS communications will continue to include weekly Principal emails, Assistant Superintendent emails and the next episode of

One Room One Schoolhouse. We have currently sent out an excessive amount of communications, as a parent that would be frustrating and I would not read them. As we continue distance learning it is important that we be mindful that too much communication can add stress and we need to systemically improve our approach.

Ms. Mullin suggested that guidance staff could message out items to students that apply directly to them, for example scholarship and AP exam information, so not all families are getting emails that do not pertain to them.

Ms. Mullin would like to suggest that the district draft a written communications plan. When researching other districts it is a common practice to have one in place. That would help ease the transition of a Communications Specialist if we were to hire on in the future. Ms. Dzen agreed that would be beneficial for the district.

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 4:58 pm.

1st. M. Kupferschmid

2nd. J. Dzen

Respectfully submitted,

Ms. Jenn Mullin

Communications Committee, Chair