

Communication Committee

Minutes

Friday, January 16, 2015

Present: Joe Phelan, Stephen Jensen, Deirdre d'Albertis, Deirdre Burns, Laura Schulkind

Website Update:

Due to illness, the website was stalled for a short period. Steve continues to engage the staff regarding concerns about migrating information to the new platform. The week of 1/19 will see the first distribution of the new editing tools to the teacher and staff committees who consulted with Steve and Ed Schindler during development. They will be given time to work with the new tools and provide feedback for tweaking and/or enhancement.

The committee discussed ways the website should and can be used to project the RCSD perspective - what are the District's values, what are we concerned about. It should not be used as a simple "bulletin board" of information. It will be a tool to facilitate learning, and promote a more personalized vision of what Rhinebeck's schools are all about.

Technology Day - 2/13/15

Steve outlined the events scheduled for the upcoming February 13 Superintendent's Conference Day. The entire day will be dedicated to technology. Opening remarks will be made by Steve followed by a panel discussion with 5 technology trainers (4 of whom are teachers). He will be sending out a sample survey to a cross-section of parents and graduates about their experience of technology in their own lives as well as their experience while at RCSD. He is also hoping to engage the voices of current secondary students. The information gathered will be used by the trainers to discuss the ways in which technology has become part of the educational setting and focus on state-wide trends in technology in education. They will discuss best practices and strategies for technology inclusion in the classroom. However technology will be incorporated, it is a major component of students' every day lives, and it's time to engage with the tools.

After the opening panel discussions, teachers will break out into smaller sessions for which they will have signed up through the new website interface. CLS will have training sessions on the use of their new iPads and laptops. They will cover topics such as the logistics of device use, what tools are available and development of lesson plans based on current curricular work.

At BMS, teachers want to spend time looking at what the teachers at CLS are doing with technology to provide a continuum for students entering 6th grade. They will explore what Google Apps has to offer as well as look at where a diverse student body is in terms of skill sets.

At RHS, trainers will work with teachers on the use of Google Apps. They will guide the teachers in setting up their classrooms and what programs are most beneficial for their courses.

Non-common branch teachers are working with Steve to develop programs that appeal to their technology needs by presenting proposals that would assist them in their classes. Steve will work with the trainers to develop these courses.

BoE Goal #3:

The committee turned back to the discussion of BoE Goal #3: Celebration of Educational Progress. There was much discussion about the ways in which we could "publicly acknowledge and celebrate the achievements of students and staff." Should the new website be the primary location for these

acknowledgements? Should public presentations at BoE meetings be utilized more frequently? How can we leverage our relationship with local media to promote achievement through the District? To some degree, the amount of “classroom news” that Joe has been able to Tweet out might satisfy this goal, but the members continued to grapple with how to share the great work going on in our schools in a broader way.

The committee would like Board feedback on these possible strategies:

- * Board Meetings: each school will be given the opportunity to present to the Board once per year. These presentations can be student or staff driven. Principals will work within their buildings to identify “the best” of what’s happening.
- * Find some way to acknowledge staff who go above and beyond for their students - this has not been fleshed out yet, and we welcome input.
- * Publicize pieces of monthly Principal reports. Joe would like to confer with his Administrators about the form this would take. Principals are currently providing Mary Ann digital copy for the meeting minutes, so we should be able to use highlights on the front page of the website or via SchoolMessenger blast.
- * Board presence at school events in all buildings. The committee needs feedback from their colleagues on this strategy.

Rhinebeck Town and Village Collaboration

Joe reported that both the Village Mayor and Town Supervisor have shown interest in meeting to discuss potential collaborations between these 3 entities. He is waiting for a final date and will report out after their first meeting.

Graduation Banners

It’s time to begin the application process to hang the graduation banners. The committee will retrieve the information folder from Mark and get that process rolling.

Agenda for 2/3/15 meeting

- Brief website update with some finalized pages to review
- How can the committee assess or know if parent/teacher communication has improved (Board Goal #1)?
- Discussion re: re-convening the RTA and Communications group from Spring 2014

Submitted by: Laura Schulkind