

Communications Committee Meeting

August 19, 2015

Attendees: Deirdre Burns, Deirdre d'Albertis, Laura Schulkind, Joe Phelan, Steve Jensen

Website Re-launch

Over the summer, the website was rolled over to the new format and includes additional functionality.

- Google calendar runs in the background so teachers, parents and students can download specific information to their own digital calendars.
- Ask the District is a new feature that allows anyone to pose a question to the District. Questions can range from "Where can I find the school supply list?" to "What is the District's policy on X?" The hope is that our users will go directly to the sources of information and rely less on word of mouth or social media to learn about what's happening in the schools. Each question will remain private until curated by Joe or the proper Administrator. The goal is to respond to questions within 24 hours at which time all questions and answers will become public and be listed on the home page.
- An email button appears in the upper right corner to assist staff in sending email directly to the proper recipient. (After this discussion, it was determined that this should be removed as it was not helpful to the general public.)
- For teachers, 5-6 "how to" videos are being produced and archived on the site to assist in setting up dynamic pages.
- The Twitter feed is also present on the home page for viewers to "follow" or get updates.

The Committee discussed the possibility of hosting an open workshop in the computer lab for teachers needing assistance in setting up pages or navigating the new site. Steve will look into setting up times prior to the opening of school when teachers are organizing their classrooms and in the early days of the school year. Help desk is always available through webmaster@rhinebeckcsd.org. Queries will go directly to Steve Jensen and Ed Schindler, our webmaster and web designer, to respond to questions/concerns.

On the back end, there is a New Teacher Mentor page which archives all the digital resources available to staff and faculty. They will also have a central location for reserving computer carts and compiling photo release information.

Home page photo carousel

The committee spent a great deal of time brainstorming ideas for keeping the main page fresh. The goal will be to change the images and messages quarterly to address timely information. We will pilot 3 themes:

- This is what public education looks like (i.e. classroom happenings),
- Community (i.e. PTSO picnic),
- Extra-Curricular activities (i.e. HS Play news)

In order to make this work, sourcing quality images that reflect all segments of the school community is crucial. The committee discussed the possibility of offering community service to students who have an eye for photography and/or talking to the Yearbook advisors whose students are shooting events around the school throughout the year. More discussion around image sourcing is needed.

Public Roll-out

Prior to the start of the school year, an email blast will be sent out informing parents about the re-launched site and its new functionalities. We will also pilot the use of "targeted" information blasts which will allow the public to sign up for email blasts about Board-related activities. As new information is posted to the website, an email will be sent to those who opt-in informing them of updates. We will monitor the interest in this service and hopefully gain feedback from community members asking for additional types of updates.

Moving forward, the HS Guidance pages will be updated. Board members are asked to spend some time on the site and provide and feedback/corrections to webmaster@rhinebeckcsd.org.

2015-16 Communications Agenda

- continue to talk about ways to highlight the positive message of education in Rhinebeck
- liaise with School Start Time committee to provide information to our community
- continued review of website
- additional items as identified by Board Goals workshop

Next Meeting: September 17, 2015

Respectfully Submitted: Laura Schulkind