

Communications Committee Meeting

February 22, 2016

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

Transportation Update:

As we learned over the weekend, Allways East Transportation entered into an arrangement with Total Transportation Company (TTC) to take over their existing contract with 3 Dutchess County Schools: Rhinebeck, Spackenkill and DC BOCES. Because this arrangement was executed in such an abrupt fashion, State Education Department regulations allow schools to enter a 31 day emergency contract without going out to formal bid. Two other transportation companies were contacted to provide a quote for this 31 day period. Both declined as they were unable to provide service at this time.

By State regulation, we are required to put a bid out for the balance of the school year: March - June 2016. TTC has indicated that they would have an interest in participating in the bid for the balance of the year. This will all occur in conjunction with the multi-year transportation bid being developed for the start of the 2016-17 school year.

With the exception of different buses, there has been no change to service, bus routes, bus drivers or transportation personnel. TTC is continuing to use our drivers and is using the Allways East terminal in Wappingers for bus maintenance and storage. TTC has discussed the possibility of moving their buses to the former Durham terminal in Poughkeepsie if a longer term arrangement is in the future for them.

Because Allways East has broken our transportation contract, any additional expenses incurred by TTC in fulfilling the Allways East contract are the legal responsibility of Allways East.

Superintendent's Conference Day:

Steve Jensen shared some exciting news about the Superintendent's conference day held on March 12. The second half of the day was devoted to all things technology. Teachers were given two 1.5 hour blocks with a selection of 11 sessions to attend including:

- * Websites I & II with Ed Schindler (RCSD websmaster)
- * Google Apps for Education with Diane Linenbroker
- * Prezzi with Bill Morrissey
- * Garage Band with Matt Grande
- * iMovie with Henry Frischknecht
- * Canvas I & II with Brian McDonald and Canvas Representative
- * iPad evaluation with BOCES trainer
- * YouTube with Bill Blass
- * Mac Basics with Kristin Koegel and Jennifer Raymo

Teachers were asked to complete a session survey at the end of each class, and the findings were very positive about both the content and the instruction. Ed S. was able to determine, based on what teachers were doing and asking for, some enhancements that will make the site more useful.

The committee had a brief discussion about Canvas, a Learning Management System (LMS) currently being used in the GTT, PLTW and Social Studies 7 classrooms. There was great enthusiasm about Canvas after the sessions with teachers, and Steve will look more closely at adopting its use more broadly.

The question of student email addresses was raised. Can we assess how many students are using their accounts? Steve will look into the data and report back at our next meeting, but the feeling was that if teachers are not communicating with their students via email, very few students would use this tool as a communications device.

2016-17 Budget & Elections

The committee will be reaching out to our community support groups (PTSO & RSF) about decisions we'll have to make to close the budget gap. It is our hope that this will be the beginning of a longer dialogue, and that they will be willing to gather feedback about what the community could support in this budget cycle.

Our March 1 BoE meeting will provide more detail about the types of options we will explore. We're hopeful that the PTSO and RSF will be available to meet shortly after that (and before the budget workshop on March 12) to discuss some of these options.

Joe will also reach out to the RTA, RAA and ANIE units to set up a time for similar discussions.

We had a brief discussion about the open seat on the BOCES Board. Joe will reach out to Dr. Hooley to ask about their communication strategy with BOCES parents going forward. Perhaps he will have a better idea of potential candidates to fill the open seat and whether any of those candidates are from Rhinebeck.

We then turned to the uncontested seat in our own Board election. Personal outreach has historically been the best way to encourage Board service in our community. We should all encourage potential candidates and make ourselves available to dispel some of the concerns people may have about serving.

Joe has posted a "News" item on the website with a link to the packet of information for prospective Board Members. This link will also be included under the BoE tab along with budget development documents shortly.

March 4 Agenda

Meeting with PTSO & RSF representatives (tentative)

Respectfully Submitted by Laura Schulkind