Communications Committee Meeting
June 3, 2016
Minutes

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

1. Steve shared summer plans for website and technology development that will be addressed by he and/or Ed Schindler.

- Steve looked into the cost of an RCSD app. They are fairly costly. Work is being done on a mobile friendly version of the web site in lieu of an app.
- Teachers have asked for more templates for their web pages.
- Teachers want multiple calendars - for different classes, etc.
- On the theme of calendars, Laura asked Steve to look into how parents/students/end users can customize RCSD calendars, i.e., just RHS activities.
- One of our servers needs to be upgraded.
- Various modules need to be updated and some will be reconfigured so that staff can edit specific pages (i.e., reservation system)
- Steve will develop his Technology Department page. May include links for tips to addressing common issues, etc., also can make use of it to communicate districtwide technology issues (i.e. upgrades)

2. RCSD branding.

- Steve shared "branding guides" from a couple of public schools: Edina, Minnesota and Bloomfield Hills, MI. He and Joe are beginning to percolate ideas around this i.e, consistent use of logo, letterhead and other visual representations and images. It was noted that the guides he shared were very detailed!

3. Social Media Policy discussion.

- Steve will follow up with legal counsel on examples of school district policies.
- The School Start Time Committee met recently with student support services staff (nurse, psychologists, guidance, etc.). They noted the role of technology in the bigger picture of the growing incidence of anxiety among young people. What role might expectations from school play in this?
- Does it get logistically complicated for students to have to manage multiple methods of communications from teachers?
- Steve will do a brief survey of staff about what value they see in apps - perhaps increasing certain capabilities of the web site will meet their needs.
- Deirdre d'A shared the work of Sherry Turkle, whose book, *Reclaiming Conversation,* examines the impact of social media and technology on young people. Turkle is a professor at the MIT Media Lab and her book raises concerns about identity formation and the development of empathy in young people as relationships are mediated through technology. (see:http://www.nytimes.com/2015/10/04/books/review/jonathan-franzen-reviews-sherry-turkle-reclaiming-conversation.html)

- Steve noted that there is a time and a place for technology use and a policy should reflect that.
- Deirdre d'A asked if Joe could follow up with Paul Finch about their thinking in developing Red Hook's policy.
- At this time we will stick with district sanctioned venues while we continue to discuss.

3. School Start TIme communication.

- The SST Committee met and discussed that the change in start time is an opportunity to communicate to parents and students about related issues, for example, sleep hygiene, lateness, technology use. The committee is interested in producing a school start time newsletter. The first one could go out in late summer with reminders about the actual time changes. Brief discussion of where to find other content. They also need to decide the frequency of a newsletter. Deirdre B. expressed her enthusiastic support for this and noted appreciation for the terrific work of the members of that committee.

4. Convening of school related organizations on September 10, 2016.

- What do we call this gathering? Round Table on the Future of Our Schools is one idea that the committee likes.
- Will invite specific groups but have it open to the community.
- Need to formulate an agenda that will be share information and raise questions for meaningful discussion.
- Start with a presentation/snapshot of the school district - enrollment history, tax cap info and history, info on private school enrollment, etc. Here's "our story", share our pride in the schools.
- Also present the challenges, including enrollment.
- How do we address these challenges? What is our "preferred future" (to use a CDEP Comm term)? How do we move forward? Building an identity.
- Need to talk about the importance of vibrant schools to any community.
- Bring the community/our support organizations into the conversation of growing our future.
- More planning will happen over the summer.


Submitted by Deirdre Burns