

Communication Committee

Minutes

Friday, September 5, 2014

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

Upcoming Events:

The committee is eager to host our annual faculty and staff Breakfast with the Board early in the Fall. Joe will coordinate building schedules with the Principals and present potential dates for Board approval.

We would like to calendar four Coffee with the Board sessions for the coming year. We respectfully request that board members check their availability for either a morning or evening session (9am at CLS Community Room; 7pm at BMS/RHS Library) on the following days:

October 7 or October 9

December 16

March 11 or March 12

May 6 or May 13

There was some consideration of including discussion topics for these events. However, the committee is wary of setting a strict agenda as we don't want to hinder open conversation. This should remain an opportunity for parents and the community to share their thoughts with the Board.

Yearlong Agenda:

1. Analysis of students who leave the district only to return later. When do they leave? Why do they return? Steve will have preliminary conversations with BMS/RHS Guidance offices before meeting with the committee.
2. Continuing discussion of improving Teacher/Parent communications
3. Communications Survey
4. Website redesign/relaunch
5. District use of Social Media - What are security protocols? RIC runs classes on school use of social platforms.
6. PTSO Collaboration

Website Update:

Steve Jensen unveiled the beta site for the District's new website: rcsdicts.org We encourage the Board to spend time on the site, searching, viewing, etc., and provide feedback about their experience.

The site is built using Wordpress - a free service - thus saving the annual dues paid to School World in coming years. As it has been imagined to date, the Home page will include a Q&A section for visitors to post questions to the District. Questions will remain private until moderated and answered by District personnel. We will likely include rolling images of campus life with captions. The committee discussed the possibility of "crowd sourcing" images from students and parents who attend activities throughout the year thus creating a dynamic visual experience. We will also have live links to our Community Partners' websites at the bottom of the page.

Google calendar will run on the site providing updates for all District meetings and events. Steve will research the possibility of using Google Translate for ESL families.

Transition plan:

Steve will work on converting pages "in the background" while new information continues to be included on the current site. During that time, he will encourage teacher participation in deciding on appropriate templates for classroom information. He hopes to set up focus group discussions to solicit feedback.

Parent feedback will also be sought to determine usability of the site. It is possible that the October “Coffee with the Board” will share a “sneak peek” of the new site so parents can share their thoughts.

Once further along, Steve is considering linking to the beta site from our current site so visitors can share their impressions during a “soft launch” in November. The goal is to present the full conversion by January.

Once the site is fully populated, an App will be created for smartphone/mobile use.

October Agenda:

- Parent/Teacher Communications
- District use of Social Media
- PTSO Collaboration
- Website update

Submitted by: Laura Schulkind