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## **External and Stakeholder Relations Committee Meeting**

October 1, 2020

**Attendees: Megan Barbera, Albert Cousins, Jacqueline Raccuia, Matthew Van Wormer**

### **Communications Committee Materials**

The Committee further reviewed, discussed and updated the work done by the former Communications Committee. Specifically, Albert provided each committee member with copies of the following documents:

1. Communications Committee Minutes (January 9, 2020 and May 14, 2020 meetings);
2. Communications Plan 2020;
3. RCSD Brochure;
4. RCSD Website Guide to *Communicating with Professional Staff – Guidelines and Answers to Frequently Asked Questions*.

### **Communications Plan**

This document was most recently discussed at the January 2020 Communication Committee meeting with the goal of finalizing its content in February 2020. To build upon that goal, we reviewed the purpose and content of this plan and agreed that many of the goals listed had been or are in the process of being accomplished. We identified the target audience of this plan as being District stakeholders and agreed that we would further review and condense its content.

The Committee will circle back to this document at our next meeting on November 5, 2020.

### **RCSD Brochure**

The Committee clarified the purpose of this brochure: to attract new families to the District. We then made the decision to update and digitize its content on an “About Us” webpage on the District website.

### **RCSD Website Guide to *Communicating with Professional Staff – Guidelines and Answers to Frequently Asked Questions***

The Committee reviewed protocols for communicating with staff and edited this guide in attempt to update and simplify its message.

## **Budget Newsletter**

The Committee discussed the format and content of this newsletter and identified potential ways to modify and condense its format and mode of delivery. We further discussed the importance of providing community education around the school budget, and the Board's purpose and mission.

## **Coffee with the Board**

The Committee discussed the evolution of this topic and clarified its purpose. We agreed that the most recent event was held in September 2019. We discussed how best to structure this in the future and agreed that we would like to resume this on a regular basis once schools are fully open to the public and serving food/meeting in closer proximity with parents is safe and feasible. We request the Board's input on how best to format these events in the future.

## **School Board Meetings & Agenda-Setting Process**

The Committee continued our discussion around ways to encourage community attendance at Board meetings. Albert confirmed that the building principals are scheduled to present their updates on school re-opening at our Board meeting on October 13, 2020. The Committee discussed the following ideas related to increasing public presence and participation at this and future meetings:

- a clear and concise email invitation from Albert to parents and District stakeholders;
- extending Board meeting invitations to leaders and members of Culture Connect, Rhinebeck Science Foundation, PTO and Rhinebeck Alumni Association, indicating that the District and Board of Education values them as partners and would like to further develop our partnerships;
- providing opportunities for these stakeholders to speak at Board meetings;
- scheduling and announcing formal acknowledgments of thanks to key members of our school community (ex. Sheldon Tieder and facilities/operations staff, BOE, students, staff)
- including student participation in Board meetings and encouraging their involvement in planning events, etc.;
- marking off auditorium seats for members of the public to welcome and comply with safe social distancing guidelines.

## **Website & Rhinebeck Returns**

The Committee discussed how to further develop and consolidate the design of our District website. We reviewed and commented on the helpfulness of graphics, photos, video content and layout in the Rhinebeck Returns portion of our website. We discussed the feasibility of partnering with stakeholders or potential student interns to contribute attractive visual content to our site. We agreed that it would be helpful to devote space on our website to identifying the roles and details of District stakeholders and community partners.

We agreed to individually review the content and usability of our current website prior to our next meeting on November 5, 2020.

### **Back-to-School Night**

Albert indicated that plans are in the works and parameters are being set for virtual building and classroom walkthroughs. This will include teacher presentations to welcome parents and students back to the new school year.

### **Town Halls**

The Committee discussed the overwhelmingly positive community response to prior Town Hall events and suggested a series of follow-up Town Halls. It was suggested that the first Town Hall be led by Albert to address high level district topics, with a follow-up series of Building Town Halls led by each building principal. We discussed the format of a Q&A period following each presentation.

### **Community Service**

The Committee discussed clarifying the goal of high school student community service and identified three key areas of importance: creativity, action and service. We made suggestions on how the District could partner with the community to promote safe and meaningful student engagement during the current school year. One key idea raised was to bolster our existing peer tutoring program through virtual means. This will be further discussed under the guidance and input of RHS principal, Ed Davenport.

**Next meeting:** Thursday, November 5, 2020. The Committee plans to invite RCSD Technology Director, Steve Jensen, to collaborate on further development of the District website with the goal of streamlining content and making it as user-friendly as possible. The Committee also plans to discuss the October 13<sup>th</sup> principal presentations and build upon this new proposed format of increasing staff, stakeholder and community attendance and participation at our Board of Education meetings.

Respectfully submitted: Megan Barbera