

Present: Laura Schulkind, Diane Lyons, Deirdre d'Albertis; Joe Phelan, Tom Burnell.

Members of the newly formed LRP sub-committee met for the first time to discuss its charge and to consider how best to organize its work and community outreach efforts. Clearly, the work of the LRP subcommittee or steering committee will interface with multiple groups and BOE committee. LRP needs to take into account a multi-year financial plan, enrollment projections, and the documents being produced by CDEP (curricular vision and design). All of the standing committees of the RCSD Board of Education should expect to connect over the coming year with LRP, so finding an organizational structure that allows for dissemination of questions as well as input from colleagues with deep knowledge about our district is crucial. So too, our administrators are attending county-wide meetings to explore the value of shared services between municipalities and schools.

For now, we plan to move forward with the initial "steering committee" of five (named above). Then we will coordinate with other committees (Finance, Audit, Facilities, Personnel, and Communications). We discussed the merits of inviting participation from district stakeholders in a Task Force (as we did with the Capital Project) that meets for a specific period of time with specific goals. So too, it will be important to invite participation via e-mail/website for those members of our community unable to attend even a small number of scheduled meetings.

Tom will be attending ASBO (Association of School Business Officials) in the coming weeks: he expects to collect timely information on behalf of the group about a range of approaches to long-range planning and to speak with colleagues at ASBO about possible referrals for our work.

While he has been using the "cohort survival" method of projecting enrollments, for instance, there are other approaches he would like to investigate. We recognize that numbers become ever more imprecise the further into the distance we project. Communication throughout this process is necessary. Creating a special section on the website/front page for updates on LRP progress seems an important first step. Members of the Communications Committee will be asked to coordinate their efforts next year with members of LRP.

For our next meeting, we would like to **focus during this fact-finding phase** on a few key questions.

1) Enrollment Picture. What can we expect in terms of enrollment trends over 3-5-10 years? Let's identify topics for further study under this general theme. Can we forecast any trends in terms of Special Education? How might our financial plan be crafted in tandem with forecasting such numbers—for instance by seeking to replenish our fund balance or create special reserves? How do enrollments align with CDEP and the emerging educational plan for our district?

2) Staffing. We want to understand how departments are currently organized and why. Rather than contemplate reorganization at budget time, we aim to consider carefully—with plenty of time and contextual understanding—how the District functions in all of its component parts. The group plans to

meet with heads of units/departments over the coming months to arrive at such a holistic understanding.

3) Who are our “statistical neighbors”? What can we learn from the experiences of similarly sized districts in New York State—what best practices might we chose to emulate? Is there anything to be learned, for instance, from the Rural Schools Association of New York State? Tom will identify a cohort for comparison purposes.

4) Planning in the Context of Rhinebeck Values: What works for one district may be completely inappropriate for another. The LRP group seeks to gather information and to invite participation in a thoroughly consultative process that honors what makes our schools strong, unique, and truly successful. The group plans to begin its interviews first by inviting Principal Brett King to comment on a set of common questions and concerns: explaining our current organization of staff, articulating challenges to be anticipated in the face of declining enrollment, and identifying a vision of the future—say five years from now—should we work towards attaining in each part of the district?

Respectfully submitted,

Deirdre d’Albertis