

MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC/COMMUNITY RELATIONS COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Region 14 Public/Community Relations Committee was held on Monday, November 18, 2014 at the Region 14 Central Office, 5 Minortown Road, Woodbury, CT.

The following members were present: Committee Chair Carol Ann Brown, committee members Maryanne Van Aken, Janet Morgan, and Pam Zmek (6:45 pm); also, Superintendent Anna Cutaia-Leonard, Board members Mike Devine and John Chapman (7:05 pm), community member Patti Knowlton, and clerk Deb Carlton.

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm and concluded at 7:20 pm

The committee discussed vision and goals for the school year. Better communication with the community and getting the community to see Region 14 as #1 were identified by Ms. Brown as her vision. Goals, likewise, are to build relationships with the community that are positive and upbeat, and to sell the good points of the district. Communicating information about programs and what's going on in the schools, and maybe roundtable discussions like last year. It needs to be people to people; face to face.

There also needs to be recognition that more than 70% of residents have no children in the district. Many residents have no connection at all with the schools. Additionally, people who do have children in the schools also need to be brought in. Informational programs like anti-bullying and on mental health topics could be done, and it was also seen as important to go to the groups and not ask them to come to us.

Ms. Morgan thought it important to first determine what it is we are trying to promote, and then decide what we want to get out, knowing who to target.

Ms. Van Aken reiterated the desire to bring in the PTO leadership, give a consistent message to all, determine what to promote with a clear, consistent message. She felt the school administrators need to decide what they want the committee to promote.

Dr. Cutaia-Leonard, when asked, said she felt the Board of Education needs to first determine how it will communicate its key message before this committee can tackle it. The PR committee, she felt, should start with the 3 stated BoE goals and emphasize to the community what the schools are doing to support those goals. We need to know what our own story is first, she said, before we can promote it.

Ms. Brown spoke about the need to have more pictures on the website and NEAT TV; she had hoped for more on Veterans' Day, for instance.

Dr. Cutaia-Leonard explained it is not the purview of this committee to manage who puts pictures up and so on. The committee needs to concentrate on the overarching message the district wants to get out. She emphasized building bridges to businesses, seniors, the arts community, and not to worry about pictures up on NEAT TV.

There was discussion of a well-produced school calendar from another district. The committee will consider a similar one for the 2015-16 school year.

Respectfully Submitted,

Carol Ann Brown

Carol Ann Brown, Chair
Public/Community Relations Committee