

LYME-OLD LYME SCHOOLS

Regional School District #18

A Private School Experience



in a Public School Setting

Policy and Communications Committee Meeting September 14, 2022

Committee Members Present: Jason Kemp, Policy Committee Chair; Anna James; Martha Shoemaker; Steven Wilson

Administration Present: Ian Neviaser, Superintendent of Schools

Others Present: Bridget Compagno, Director of Communications and Marketing

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

Mr. Neviaser reviewed three documents related to communication of and usage of public funds for a referendum.

1. Email from Attorney Kyle McClain which indicated that “public funds cannot be used to influence anyone to vote either for or against a pending referendum question.” Only factual data can be publicized. Also, the district’s electronic notification system cannot be used to communicate the referendum as it is not considered a “community notification system” as the board of education’s system “would only reach a limited subset of a municipality’s voters (e.g., parents of school children).”
2. Connecticut General Statute §9-369b relative to the preparation, printing and dissemination of explanatory texts and other materials related to a referendum.
3. *A Guide to Financing a Referendum Question*. Mr. Neviaser reviewed pages 30-33 of this document which addressed the types of activities that are prohibited; what is considered advocacy; how a public official informs the public; and acceptable use of public funds to inform through communications.

The committee discussed various ways to communicate the November 8 referendum for the PreK-8 Facilities Project including non-advocacy material in print and online format and public forums. Important information to include would be the history behind this project, FAQs, contingency and escalation inclusion in the \$57M price, a definition page, state reimbursement, the cost to taxpayers, Building Committee oversight, etc.

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Mrs. Compagno, Director of Communications and Marketing, updated the committee on some ideas she had for communicating the PreK-8 Facilities Project and November 8 referendum including public meetings (Q and A), mailing of fact sheets, the district's social media outlets, the *Focus on Education* newsletter and the district's website. The committee discussed the information to be housed on the website and the importance of providing links to more detail should the viewer want more information. They also discussed the importance of a strategic output of information so the community is not getting everything at once.

There was consensus amongst the committee members to move these meetings to Tuesdays as it was more convenient for many of the members. The next meeting of this committee will be on September 20, 2022.

There being no further discussion, the meeting adjourned at 7:08 p.m.