

AGENDA



**Addison Central School District
Communications and Engagement Committee
Committee Meeting
Thursday, November 17, 2022, 9:00 am - 10:00 am
49 Charles Avenue, Middlebury, VT & Virtual Connection**

Please click the link below to join the webinar:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84433095195>

- A. Call to Order Upon Reaching a Quorum
- B. Introductions - Board Members, Administrators and Staff
- C. Approve the Agenda
- D. Public Comment
- E. Recommendation to Approve Minutes of November 3, 2022
- F. Committee Discussion:
 - 1. Update: Community Engagement for Strategic Plan
 - 2. Board Voicemail Messages
 - 3. Engagement with ACSD School Parent Groups
- G. Other
- H. Adjournment
- I. Next Committee Meeting: Thursday December 1, 2022, 9:00-10:00 AM

***Public Comment Guidelines:**

Public comments are encouraged and welcome at each regular board meeting during the period designated for public comment. Comments are limited to three minutes per person. Citizens will be called to make their statement by the board chair. Public comments regarding personnel, students or legal matters will not be heard by the Board.

MINUTES



**Addison Central School District
Communications and Engagement Committee
Committee Meeting
Thursday, November 3, 2022, 9:00 am - 10:00 am
208 Charles Avenue, Middlebury VT & Virtual Connection**

In-Person Attendance

Brian Bauer; Joanna Doria; Mary Heather Noble

Remote Attendance

Lindsey Hescocock; Mary Gill

Please click the link below to join the webinar:

Link to join Webinar

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88251691790>

A. Call to Order Upon Reaching a Quorum

Meeting called to order at 9:05 a.m.

B. Introductions - Board Members, Administrators and Staff

Also present: Emily Blistein, ACSD Director of Communications and Engagement

C. Approve the Agenda

Motion to approve the agenda.

Move: Mary Gill Second: Brian Bauer Status: Passed

D. Public Comment

No public comment.

E. Recommendation to Approve Minutes of September 15, 2022 and October 6, 2022

Minutes for September 15, 2022 were approved by participants Mary Heather Noble, Joanna Doria, and Brian Bauer. Motion to approve made by Joanna Doria, seconded by Brian Bauer. Passed. Mary Gill and Lindsey Hescocock abstained.

Motion to approve minutes for October 6, 2022.

Move: Joanna Doria Second: Mary Gill Status: Passed

F. Committee Discussion

1. Board Voicemail Messages

Mary Heather Noble reported that she last checked the school board voicemail on

Wednesday, November 2 -- and that there have been no new voice mail messages since the last meeting,

2. Community Engagement for Strategic Plan

Mary Heather Noble thanked the committee for their flexibility with her needing to cancel the last meeting at the last minute. She asked Emily Blistein to provide an update to the group on thoughts re: community engagement around strategic planning, so the committee could mobilize for public outreach efforts.

Emily met with Emma Mulvaney-Stanak on Nov 2nd to discuss how we best engage with the public to move the Board's approved strategic planning goals forward. They will be finalizing selection of a Strategic Planning Team this month, which will be doing the work of translating the goals into strategies and tactics for implementation. The team will include members from the ACSD leadership team (since they will be doing most of the implementation work), students, parents, and other community members. The main question they are focusing on is how to authentically engage with the public to get public sentiment infused into the work. They are thinking about organizing smaller conversations at each school community during the next few months to foster back-and-forth dialogue for development of strategies, and then take that work to a larger group meeting in February. Emily said they are also thinking about inviting experts from certain topic areas (e.g., CSAC, other referral agencies) to help with discussions around student needs that are coming up.

Mary Heather asked if the community engagement was going to involve getting feedback on the strategic planning goals themselves -- she was under the impression that the Board would be taking its goals to the community and beginning engagement on that first. Joanna Doria and Brian Bauer had a similar understanding. Joanna brought up the Strategic Planning timeline and confirmed this as the process that had been presented to the Board. She also noted that the Board had not yet received the final edited goals -- they had just voted on them with the caveat that they be edited to reflect the changes requested in the last strategic planning session. Joanna also asked about circling back with the original strategic planning advisory committee to see if they agree with the Board's goals.

Mary Gill noted that the Strategic Planning team that is put together should have teachers, and also said that the Board should be kept apprised of what kinds of strategies are being considered by the Leadership Team.

Brian Bauer shared 3 points: 1) There should be a common understanding about what is meant by "engagement." He believes it should be a two-sided conversation with back-and-forth exchange, with suggestions offered and consensus on the outcome. It should not be simply inviting the community in to make a statement and then leave. 2) He also did not feel settled about the Board goals -- he recalled some discussion around the wording, and did not think that had yet been finalized. 3) What is missing from the process is monitoring from the Board to make sure implementation of the goals is being done effectively and to determine whether the strategies serve the goals. Mary Heather asked to focus the discussion on the engagement portion of the strategic plan -- since that is what this committee is responsible for.

Emily said that she would circle back with Peter Burrows and Emma about the misunderstanding re: the strategic planning goals, so we can make sure all Board members are comfortable with them. She noted that more community engagement is good, but also reminded the committee that the goals are based on the priorities that were generated by the advisory committee -- which was a months-long very intentional community engagement process that functioned just like Brian's understanding of engagement. She also said it's

important for the Board to be clear in what it wants out of engagement -- the expectation of making everybody happy may not be possible. And there are differences between just opening participation to anyone/everyone (where the loudest voices prevail) versus being intentional about seeking out voices that are always omitted from the conversation (those who do not self select to participate in community engagement). One possibility is for the Board to literally ask the community: What does engagement look like to you?

Mary Heather suggested that the Committee provide access to the Board's strategic planning work on the website -- so the public can easily find links to the Board's definition of equity, strategic planning goals, etc. The district has a lot of information about the process on the ACSD website -- it is just not accessible from the Board's page. Lindsey Hescocock agreed -- people shouldn't have to comb through meeting minutes to find those artifacts of our work.

Mary Gill asked about how many people have read the Board's most recent update. Emily said that she can look at "open rates" -- but again, this is communication, not engagement. All agreed. Mary Heather said that work is still important -- we should be sticking to a pattern of communication so folks know what to expect and when. The Board's work is public and needs to be regularly reported out. Joanna Doria again brought up the idea of forming leadership councils within each community to help the Board connect with ACSD stakeholders within each school.

The committee briefly discussed the regular updates that Board members have been receiving from each school -- many Board members complained about the volume, so Emily paused it. Lindsey, Mary Heather, and Joanna all liked receiving the information from each school. Mary Heather will send a message to the full Board asking them to either opt in or opt out of those school communications.

Mary Heather also brought up the prior idea the committee had about making appearances at regular parent group meetings at each school -- this is an easy opportunity for folks to engage with Board members and for us to provide a conduit from the community to the Board. She asked for a volunteer to gather contact names for each group so we can extend the offer to them. Emily said that she would ask principals to fill in a google spreadsheet with that information for us.

3. Ongoing Communication/Engagement Work

This topic covered by agenda item F.2 above.

G. Other Business

Mary Heather Noble asked the group if there was other business to discuss prior to ending the meeting.

Emily Blistein said that she still intends to get a District account with Front Porch Forum so that we can post District newsletters and regular Board updates. The group considered whether to have individual board members post the committee's communications to their respective FPF communities in the meantime. The concern has been having Board members perceived as representing only their home community.

Brian Bauer revisited his previously expressed feelings that it may not be enough for the Board to simply provide access. The Board should consider doing something to get people to participate.

Lindsey Hescock brought up the emails the Board has recently received around the Charter change issue. She expressed the importance of process and hopes that the Board doesn't rush through decision-making. She wants to make sure the public can see how the Board works through this -- as a member of this committee, she feels that the wording on the agenda and of the motions are critical, and would like the Board to be proactive and take care with its approach.

Brian Bauer agreed with Lindsey, and suggested that the Board did not spend ample time on the Charter change discussion before considering a motion to vote. He thinks the person who put the motion on the table should remove it. He will abstain from voting if it proceeds to a vote.

Mary Heather thanked everyone and mentioned the next meeting is proposed for November 17th at 9:00 a.m. to follow the first and third Thursday of every month. Lindsey said that she has a prior commitment at Mary Hogan School that morning. Mary Heather will reach out to everyone to see if we can find an alternative time.

H. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 10:20 a.m.

Motion to adjourn.

Move: Joanna Doria Second: Mary Heather Noble Status: Passed

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