

AGENDA



**Addison Central School District
Communications and Engagement Committee
Committee Meeting
Thursday, September 15, 2022, 9:00 am - 10:00 am
208 Charles Avenue, Middlebury, VT & Virtual Connection**

Please click the link below to join the webinar: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89483706972>

- A. Call to Order Upon Reaching A Quorum
 - 1. Introductions - Board Members, Administrators and Staff
- B. Approve the Agenda
- C. Public Comment
- D. Recommendation to Approve Minutes of June 27, 2022 and Sept. 8, 2022
- E. Committee Discussion:
 - 1. Board Voicemail Messages
 - 2. Upcoming Board Communications
 - 3. Community Engagement Opportunities
- F. Other Business
- G. Adjournment
- H. Next Committee Meeting: Thursday, September 29, 2022, 9:00-10:00AM

***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
Monday, June 27, 2022, 5:00 pm - 6:15 pm
208 Charles Avenue, Middlebury, VT & Virtual Connection**

In-Person Attendance

Brian Bauer; Mary Heather Noble

Remote Attendance

Joanna Doria

Not In Attendance

Lindsey Hescocock

Link to join Webinar

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86036665561>

A. Call to Order Upon Reaching A Quorum

Meeting called to order at 5:00 p.m.

1. Introductions - Board Members, Administrators and Staff

Emily Blistein, Director of Communications joined late via zoom.

B. Approve the Agenda

Motion to approve the agenda.

Move: Brian Bauer Second: Joanna Doria Status: Passed

1. Public Comment

No public comment.

C. Recommendation to Approve Minutes of May 25, 2022

Motion to approve the minutes of May 25, 2022.

Move: Brian Bauer Second: Joanna Doria Status: Passed

D. Committee Discussion:

1. Board Voicemail Messages

Mary Heather Noble said that she added this to the agenda to make checking the Board voicemail messages a formal part of the Communication and Engagement Committee's discussion, so that the chair is accountable on this task. She reported that she has been checking on a weekly basis, and that there have been no messages (as of today, 6/27/22). She also played the outgoing message for the group so that they could hear what callers hear when they get the voicemail greeting.

2. Board Update Newsletter

Mary Heather Noble introduced a draft of the quarterly Board Update for July 2022. She noted that Victoria Jette will be providing her with the Board Chairperson's introduction tomorrow morning, and that she has checked in with Committee Chairs on the summary of committee work since the last April 2022 Board Update.

The group reviewed the first bulleted paragraph about Policy Committee updates. Mary Heather noted that she included policy D-22 Selection of Library Materials in the list of policies adopted and updated by the Board, as she expects the policy will pass at tonight's Board meeting. Brian Bauer asked a question about whether the Board or District has a policy prohibiting teachers or staff from physically touching students -- he had heard or read that such a policy or regulation existed, perhaps at the state level, and feels that having such a rule makes it difficult to respond to extremely disruptive or dangerous students. Joanna Doria checked and could not find an ACSD policy that stated such a restriction. Mary Heather suggested asking Peter Burrows or Mary Gill about specific rules around the issue -- it may be an incorrect assumption. Joanna noted that as a paraprofessional, she had been trained on student restraint, so there are more likely rules about the circumstances under which a student can be physically restrained, and how that is done.

The group continued to review the content of the draft Board Update. Neither Joanna nor Brian had any specific edits at the time. Much of the language about the release of the Facilities Master Plan report came from the press release. Mary Heather provided an update on the status of the press release for the Facilities Report -- it has been posted in the Addison Independent and she would like to post in Front Porch Forum. She can post in Middlebury, Weybridge, and Cornwall, but will need Board members to help post in their member town forums. Joanna volunteered to post for Ripton and Salisbury. Mary Heather has asked Barb Wilson and/or Suzanne Buck to post for Bridport and Shoreham. All the printed copies of the report have been distributed to the schools, town offices, libraries, and pre-K facilities.

Emily Blistein later informed the group that the District Newsletter went out today, and that the content announcing release of the FMP report was included.

3. Best Practices for Community Engagement

Mary Heather Noble invited discussion about resources for the Committee to consider in researching best practices for community engagement. Brian Bauer had given Mary Heather a printed article on the topic -- she will make copies to distribute to other committee members. Brian feels that good community engagement requires ownership of the dialogue by both the Board and the community.

Joanna Doria said that she had looked into public participation practices at the Burlington School District prior to running for the ACSD Board, but had focused primarily on participation during Board meetings. Her hope is to strengthen the connections between school principals and the community, much like what exists with a Supervisory Union governance structure. The ACSD's current Supervisory District structure has everything directed through Central Office, which creates a distance/disconnect between the District and the community. Are there ways to reinforce the connection between the principals and the communities they serve? Mary Heather agreed that it would benefit both the community and the District to utilize the structures that are already in place for communication and engagement.

Brian suggested looking into the Tarrant Organization with UVM for additional information on effective engagement. Joanna mentioned the book *Slow Democracy* by Susan Clark, and

also suggested the use of local advisory groups to assist with community engagement in Board decisions (this was a recommendation made by the Ripton School District Board). Mary Heather shared that several in the committee had liked that idea, and that we should perhaps flesh it out a bit to describe what it might look like, so it can be suggested to the full Board for future engagement work. Mary Heather also wondered about research centers or nonprofits that specialize in community work or conflict resolution, as they likely follow/recommend tried-and-tested communication strategies. Mary Heather and Joanna will research other Districts and bring to August meeting.

E. Other Business

Brian Bauer took the opportunity to talk about his interest in bringing outdoor education back to MUMS. He has spoken with Peter Burrows about this, and is doing some research to identify specific opportunities. Finding chaperones will be a critical component of creating the opportunity. He has identified Silver Towers in Ripton as a possible site for outdoor education excursions -- and has reached out to the Vermont Elks about it. There are opportunities for students to work there as well -- which Brian feels ties back to the theme of "doing good." He closed by reading a passage from the book Life is Messy by Matthew Kelly.

F. Next Committee Meeting Date/Time

August 2022 -- Mary Heather will reach out and schedule after the first August Board meeting.

G. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 5:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Heather Noble, recorder

Motion to adjourn.

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

MINUTES



**Addison Central School District
Communications and Engagement Committee
Committee Meeting
Thursday, September 8, 2022, 9:00 am - 10:00 am
208 Charles Avenue, Middlebury, VT & Virtual Connection**

In-Person Attendance

Brian Bauer; Joanna Doria; Lindsey Hescocock; Mary Heather Noble

Remote Attendance

Mary Gill

Please click the link below to join the webinar: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88515722131>

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A. Call to Order Upon Reaching a Quorum

Meeting called to order at 9:07 a.m.

B. Introductions: Board Members, Administrators and Staff

Also present: Emily Blistein, ACSD Director of Communications

C. Approve the Agenda

Motion to approve the agenda

Move: Joanna Doria Second: Mary Gill Status: Passed

D. Public Comment

None.

E. Recommendation to Approve the Minutes of June 27, 2022

Tabled for later when all present at the June 27, 2022 committee meeting are present to vote.

F. Committee Discussion:

1. Board Voicemail Messages

Mary Heather Noble reported that there have been no Board Voicemail messages as of this morning, Sept. 8, 2022.

2. Upcoming Board Communications

Mary Heather Noble told the group that the committee is due for its quarterly Board update in October 2022. She anticipates including a few bullet points from the Board's Strategic Planning for Equity work, regular committee updates, and information about the Ad Hoc Committee for Charter Research.

Emily Blistein mentioned that she plans to do monthly ACSD newsletters, with the exception that Nov/Dec may be combined. She also shared feedback that she has been hearing from

community about Board Updates: they are too long and too dense. She volunteered to help the group condense the material to make it more user friendly. She agreed that a Board update schedule of October, February, April, and June makes sense.

Joanna Doria agreed with the feedback that Emily shared; as did Lindsey Hescok. We really need to make the communications easy for people to comprehend. People are also saturated with information from ACSD -- multiple emails from Principals, Central Office, and teachers. Mary Gill noted that not everyone in the ACSD Community has kids in school, so it's still important to provide thorough information to those households that aren't receiving multiple communications from ACSD schools. She wondered if we have been posting any Board Communications on Front Porch Forum.

Emily mentioned that she is looking into getting an ACSD account with FPF so that we can post equally to all ACSD member towns, but the account limits postings to just 2/month and posts end up at the bottom of the newsfeed. The group still agreed that it is an important way to reach the broader ACSD community.

To do: begin gathering content for next update, keeping info streamlined. Aim for mid-late October release.

3. Community Engagement Opportunities

Emily Blistein asked the committee how ACSD can plug into existing community events/gathering places to both disseminate information and receive feedback in an informal way -- how do we take advantage of existing spaces for conversations? Brian Bauer emphasized the importance of receiving information and not just disseminating information. Lindsey Hescok underscored the importance of reciprocal communication.

The group discussed ways to connect with parent groups at schools to identify the information the Board is seeking from the community, as well as other opportunities (farmer's markets, seasonal festivals, sporting events, etc.). Joanna Doria suggested cultivating opportunities to foster positive involvement, such as volunteering in the schools -- what if we did volunteer fair, where we provided assistance in completing the background check process and used that as an opportunity to have conversations?

Brian Bauer also mentioned going to general stores and other community hubs to ask folks the best way to reach residents in each town. Other ideas included: Shoreham Apple Festival, TAM Trek, Ripton Ridge Run, Back-to-School nights, Football games and other sporting events; Friends-of/Parent Group meetings -- these are all opportunities for Board members to be visible & present to receive comments, questions & suggestions.

Emily Blistein offered to include C&E Committee members on the email distribution lists for all ACSD schools -- we can also ask the rest of the Board if they would like to receive all ACSD school communications so they can attend different school events. The group agreed that having a table at the Shoreham Apple Festival and Football games (and other broad community events) would be a good way to distribute volunteer application packets and receive feedback from the community. One question to consider asking folks: Where do you go to get information about what's happening in ACSD? or How do you prefer to receive information about our schools?

The group agreed to bring this up at the 9/12/22 Board retreat, to see if the full Board supports having one or two members of the C&E Committee present at community events for

informal engagement. Upcoming target events: 9/18 Shoreham Apple Festival, and home MUHS football games on 9/17, 9/23, and/or 9/30.

G. Other Business

None.

H. Next Committee Meeting: Thursday, September 22, 2022, 9:00 - 10:00 a.m

Committee members agreed to meet next week, Sept 15, 2022 from 9:00 - 10:00 am to help Emily Blistein plan for ACSD presence at upcoming Shoreham Apple Festival.

I. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 10:25 a.m.

Motion to adjourn

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

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