

AGENDA



**Addison Central School District
Communications and Engagement Committee
Committee Meeting
Tuesday, November 16, 2021, 4:00 pm - 5:00 pm
208 Charles Avenue, Middlebury, VT & Virtual Connection**

Please click the link below to join the webinar:

<https://zoom.us/j/99278301884>

Or One tap mobile:

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- A. Call to Order Upon Reaching a Quorum
- B. Approve the Agenda
- C. Public Comment
- D. Recommendation to Approve Minutes of October 29, 2021
- E. Committee Discussion:
 - 1. Communications for Facilities Master Plan Update
 - 2. Board Member Contact Information on ACSD Website
 - 3. Other Website Updates
- F. Other Business
- G. Next Committee Meeting: December 3, 2021, 12:00-1:00 PM
- H. Adjournment

MINUTES



**Addison Central School District
Communications and Engagement Committee
Committee Meeting
Friday, October 29, 2021, 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm
ACSD CO, 49 Charles Avenue, Middlebury, VT**

In-Person Attendance

Betty Kafumbe; Lindsey Hescok; Mary Heather Noble

Remote Attendance

Jennifer Nueder

Please click the link below to join the webinar:

<https://zoom.us/j/93814016937>

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Webinar ID: 938 1401 6937

International numbers available: <https://zoom.us/u/abAJ6DNs65>

A. Call to Order Upon Reaching a Quorum

Meeting called to order at 12:10 PM.

Staff attending: Emily Blistein, ACSD Director of Communications

B. Approve the Agenda

Betty Kafumbe abstained.

Motion To approve the agenda.

Move: Lindsey Hescok Second: Betty Kafumbe Status: Passed

C. Approve the Minutes of October 12, 2021

Motion to approve the minutes with the amendment to change the recorder to Jennifer Nueder. Betty Kafumbe abstained

Move: Lindsey Hescok Second: Jennifer Nueder Status: Passed

D. Committee Discussion:

1. Review Draft Recommendations for Communication & Engagement

The committee reviewed the "ACSD Communication & Engagement Planning" Draft dated 10/18/2021, including the "Draft Procedure Document for Responding to Public Comments" dated May 28, 2021.

Mary Heather Noble updated the committee about the Policy Committee's review of the Draft

Procedure Document for Responding to Public Comments -- Mary Gill confirmed today that the document looks good for presentation to the full Board, but that Suzanne Buck may still have some detail comments.

Mary Heather Noble noted that the draft recommendations do not include the committee's wish to add a short Q&A session to board meetings on a monthly basis -- she will revise the document to include this.

Mary Heather Noble and Emily Blistein reported some details from their meeting with Christy Lynn at the Addison Independent re: including the newspaper in the Board's communication planning:

- The distinction between news and marketing -- they will cover education and Board action news, but then ACSD does not control the specific language or timing of content. If the Board wants control over wording, then it should submit as Opinion Column or Announcement Ad. The non-profit cost is \$9/column-inch. We can also print in the Public Notice section at \$7.75/column inch, which has less layout/design flexibility.

- The Addison Independent calendar is intended for specific community events, but not ongoing board meetings, etc. We should post there only for specific one-time public engagement events.

- Bottom line: We can use this to reach expanded audience, but it will cost money.

Betty Kafumbe expressed interest in issuing a monthly notice/ad to update the community on Board activities and provide notice for upcoming meetings. Jennifer Nuceder asked whether there is a PR budget for such expenses and if so, she expressed her preference for utilizing smaller, simpler, more regular notices to inform people about ACSD meetings and how to engage with us. Emily Blistein said she would look into the budget question.

Mary Heather Noble asked the committee about item #3 of the recommendations -- the Community Engagement part, and whether additional activities should be included on the "menu." Betty Kafumbe suggested adding the "E-chat" videos, or perhaps Q&A interviews on MCTV with questions from the community. Jennifer Nuceder also suggested adding school-specific media, such as TIGER-TV.

Jennifer Nuceder also asked whether the draft recommendations should include information about board member expectations regarding internal communications, such as making sure folks RSVP in Boardpaq for meeting planning, and reminders to be mindful of quorums in group emails. Also, perhaps include reminders about not using personal emails, etc. Lindsey Hescocock acknowledged Jennifer Nuceder's point as an important issue, but wondered whether it's a broader Board Member training & initiation issue. Mary Heather Noble suggested revising the draft recommendations to include

A) Internal Communications and B) External Communications with ACSD Stakeholders -- and the full Board can determine whether the issue should be addressed elsewhere.

Mary Heather Noble will make the revisions as discussed, and ask the Executive Committee to add this to the next Board meeting agenda.

2. Communications for Facilities Master Plan

Mary Heather Noble updated the committee about the work that the Facilities Committee is doing to wrap up the Facilities Master Plan by the end of the year -- and that she and Victoria Jette (Chair of the Facilities Committee) will draft an update/summary letter to inform the

community about the status of the FMP and what is coming next. She asked the group 1) if there are specific pieces of information that should be included in this update, 2) how the committee thinks the Board should share/distribute the update, and 3) whether the Board should do any community engagement around this.

The basics:

- What is the status of the Facilities Master Plan and why?
- Putting the community on notice that the Facilities Master Plan will be wrapping up and that a report is forthcoming toward the end of December,
- Explaining what the report will be (e.g., a supporting document for Board decision-making about facilities and creating its long-term educational footprint),
- Explaining what the report won't be (e.g., a document that prescribes a specific scenario for school configuration or consolidation).

Lindsey Hescock noted the importance of being transparent in this update, and being forthcoming about any preferences the Board may have. There have been too many rumors. Jennifer Nuceder emphasized that the update letter cannot provide granular details because the Board has not yet determined them. Mary Heather Noble agreed, but indicated that the plan should convey the Board's priorities with respect to consolidation if needed. Betty Kafumbe cautioned that the Board needs to be careful not to trap itself into a particular scenario or promise. All agreed. Mary Heather Noble will work with Victoria Jette on drafting an update and bring it to the Committee for further refinement.

E. Other Business

Mary Heather Noble and Emily Blistein brought up communications around flying the Black Lives Matter flag. We will be sending the Board's statement to the Addison Independent with the intention of having it appear as a Letter to the Editor. We can work with Emily Blistein on putting the Statement in other ACSD communications (Facebook page, Principal's updates, the weekly newsletter, etc.).

Betty asked about the status of website updates. Emily Blistein reported that the page has been developed but she is trying to identify the best place to put it -- likely just linked or attached to the "About the Board" page.

Lindsey Hescock wondered if the Board should issue communications around the District's responses to concerns about MUMS. Mary Heather Noble and Jennifer Nuceder clarified that those communications should come from the District since those are operational changes for which the Board is not directly responsible.

Jennifer Nuceder requested that the next meeting's agenda include discussion about whether Board Member telephone numbers should be publicly available, and other ways the public can access Board members via telephone.

F. Next Committee Meeting Date and Time

Mary Heather Noble will send Doodle Poll for the next meeting date.

G. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 1:24 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Heather Noble, Recorder

Move: Betty Kafumbe Second: Mary Heather Noble Status: Passed

**ACSD BOARD COMMUNICATION & ENGAGEMENT PLANNING
COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS
DRAFT -- 11/1/2021**

INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS:

1. Adopt practice of using ACSD email accounts for all Board-related communications, being mindful of inadvertently establishing full Board and/or Committee quorums in group emails and email chains.
2. Set Board member expectations re: checking ACSD email and responding to Boardpaq invitations so Committee Chairs can determine quorums for meeting planning.
3. Avoid group work on shared Google documents that might conflict with Vermont's Open Meeting Law.

EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDER COMMUNICATIONS:

1. Adopt practice of offering a ~10 minute Q&A session during board meetings on a monthly basis, or as needed for high-interest agenda items (separate from Public Comment Period).
2. Adopt System for Responding to Public Comments -- (see attached draft Procedure Document).
3. Communicate Routine Board News to establish positive & predictable contact with *all* ACSD Stakeholders.
 - a. Modes:
 - i. Electronic: post on ACSD Board website, use existing ACSD outlets (district newsletters & social media), Front Porch Forum, library & other member town e-newsletters, other civic group e-newsletters (?)
 - ii. Paper copies: Central Office & school offices, libraries, member town offices
 - iii. Consider providing some copies in Spanish/other languages
 - iv. Consider regular column/update ad in Addison Independent (additional expense)
 - b. Frequency: monthly or quarterly
 - c. Content: Brief committee updates, upcoming meetings & events, opportunities for input, links & references to contacts and additional information

4. Conduct Topic-Specific Community Engagement Activities to Foster Two-Way Conversations Around Board Issues.
 - a. Topics may range from community-building efforts to high-profile issues and important Board decisions (e.g., Budget & Facilities Master Planning)
 - b. The Communications & Engagement Committee can create a topic-specific engagement strategy, using a variety of methods to engage target audiences. Examples:
 - i. Community forums with formal presentations & facilitated conversations
 - ii. Informal Q&A sessions at PTO meetings, libraries, & other civic group meetings (in-person or virtual)
 - iii. Virtual Town Halls
 - iv. Porch conversations
 - v. Q&A booth/table at other community events
 - vi. MCTV interviews or E-chat videos to address FAQs
 - vii. School-specific media -- e.g., Tiger TV

Draft Procedure Document for Responding to Public Comments

Last updated May 28, 2021

* Note: outstanding questions are in red

Intent:

As expressed in its Governance Commitment (Policy A1), the ACSD School Board Vision requires the Board to engage with each other, administrators, teachers and staff, parents, students, and community members in ways that promote its mission of supporting all students to reach their full academic potential and be prepared for success as engaged citizens.

The purpose of this Procedure Document is to establish a system to enable consistent ACSD Board responses to questions, comments, and complaints raised from any member of the ACSD community.

General Procedure:

Board members will observe and honor the distinction between the role of the Board and that of the Superintendent, and will refer questions, comments, and concerns to appropriate staff members of the ACSD, in accordance with Policy A2 -- Key Responsibilities of Board Members, which states in part:

“The Board’s responsibility is to ensure leadership success without micromanaging. School board member interactions with school personnel shall respect appropriate reporting relationships. It is the responsibility of the Superintendent, not members of the Board, to direct the administration and coordination of educational programs in the district. When presented with citizen concerns, board members [shall] refer them to appropriate levels of authority in accordance with our policies and procedures for complaints.”

Individual members of the Board are welcome to respond to questions and concerns as needed, with the understanding and acknowledgment that they are not speaking on behalf of the full Board unless they have been specifically authorized to do so, per Policy A5 -- Code of Conduct, which states in part:

“...Board members’ interaction with public, press, or other entities shall recognize the inability of any individual board member to speak for the Board except as explicitly stated in board decisions.”

Board members must also respect and keep confidential all personnel issues and all issues of a sensitive nature, in accordance with Policy A5.

Comments Received Via Email:

[Do we want to include language about maintaining a centralized email or contact form, and how that incoming dialogue will be handled?]

Incoming emails from ACSD stakeholders may be acknowledged by the Board Chair (or Superintendent, if pertaining to ACSD operations and under the purview of the ACSD administration), and then distributed to appropriate members of the Board or ACSD staff for additional action or response as needed.

When appropriate, board members responding to email communications from ACSD stakeholders about the work of the Board are encouraged to copy their responses to committee chairs and/or Board and District leadership as needed, to keep them apprised of communications concerning relevant topics under their purview.

Board members who independently receive email communications requiring the attention of the full Board shall forward the email to the [Board Chair? Executive Committee? Full Board?] for consideration as an agenda item for a future Board meeting.

Comments Received During Public Comment Period of Board and Committee Meetings:

Comments and questions presented by stakeholders during the public comment period of Committee meetings and Board meetings will be recorded in the meeting minutes, and will be actively taken into consideration by the Committee and full Board, respectively. Comments and questions expressed in the “chat” feature of remote Zoom meetings are considered to fall beyond the scope of official public comment, and will not be included in meeting minutes.

Comments Received During Other ACSD Public Engagement Events:

Comments and questions presented by stakeholders during other topic-specific, Board-sponsored public engagement events such as community forums, porch conversations, etc. will be compiled by the Communications & Engagement Committee and reported to the full Board for its consideration in a subsequent Board meeting. Responses to questions may also be summarized and addressed in follow-up public communications, including Board updates and newsletters, as well as FAQs documents available on the ACSD website.

Complaints:

Board members receiving a complaint from a stakeholder pertaining to the conduct of an ACSD student or staff member shall forward such communications to the appropriate ACSD school leadership in accordance with ACSD policies and procedures. If the complaint involves school

personnel, Board members should encourage the complainant to address the matter directly with the individual concerned. If the complainant has already exhausted efforts to resolve the issue directly, Board members should advise them to bring the issue to the attention of the school Principal, and then Superintendent if the matter remains unresolved.

If the complainant has followed the ACSD's process, and is dissatisfied with the Superintendent's decision regarding their concern, they may appeal the decision to the Board. Board members who receive complaints falling under this category shall forward the concern to the Board Chair and Executive Committee for their review and consideration as a full board matter.

If the complaint involves the conduct of the Superintendent, the matter shall be referred to the Board Chair and Executive Committee for their review and consideration as a full Board matter.