

LYME-OLD LYME SCHOOLS

Regional School District #18

A Private School Experience



in a Public School Setting

Policy and Communications Committee Meeting

June 13, 2023

Committee Members Present: Jason Kemp, Policy Committee Chair; Suzanne Thompson, Communications Committee Chair; Laura Dean-Frazier; 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.

Communications Update

Bridget Compagno, Director of Communications and Marketing, gave an update on the summer edition of the *Focus on Education* newsletter which will be published during the first week of July. The majority of the stories/photos will be centered on the high school graduation; the valedictorian, salutatorian, and honor essayist; and the staff who retired in June. Mrs. Compagno did note that she is considering a new design of the newsletter to keep it fresh looking. Mrs. Shoemaker asked if a photo of the Town Old Lyme banner congratulating the Class of 2023 could be included in this edition.

Mrs. Compagno reported on upcoming social media posts which will focus on the end of year events that took place at the schools. Mrs. Compagno will continue to post to the district's social media platforms during the summer months as well.

Mrs. Compagno discussed the need to change the distribution of the *Focus on Education* newsletter starting with the fall edition due to advertising changes at *The Day*. Currently, *The Day* includes the newsletter with the *Lyme Times* which is changing to a more regional publication. The committee discussed the expense of mailing the newsletter vs. other means of electronic distribution. Mrs. Compagno reported that she has found a freelance designer to do the layout and design as well as a printer, but the distribution is still an unknown as mailing will be expensive.

Ian Neviaser, Superintendent of Schools

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The committee discussed the distribution of the newsletter with ideas shared on the importance of getting it into all households for better communication from the district and possibly moving it to a digital platform and having community members opt in for the mailer.

Mrs. Compagno ended her report with her ideas for communication of the PK-8 Building Project.

Policy Update

Due to recent parental concerns over a voluntary student survey that was given by the Lymes' Youth Service Bureau at the LOLHS field day, the Board of Education, at their meeting on June 7, recommended that the Policy Committee draft a policy that would provide guidance on student surveys and their review by district administration prior to being given to students. Parental concern focused mainly on the demographic data asked on the survey. According to Mary Seidner, Executive Director of LYSB, in a statement read to the Board on June 7, *LYSB is fully aware of Region 18's policy regarding surveys and the need to get surveys approved in advance. This was a mistake on our part to skip this step. We did not realize the program evaluation could be considered a survey, and we certainly would have asked for approval had we known.*

Mr. Neviasser presented current Board Policy 1600 *Relationships Between Other Schools and Educational Organizations and Regional District #18 Schools*. He noted that this policy, which is very brief, did not address student survey guidance. Furthermore, when requesting sample policies from the Connecticut Association of Schools, legal counsel, and other school districts, they were informed that no sample policy existed; thus, they would have to start from scratch on the development of this policy.

The committee discussed the structure of the policy and whether to include guidance to guest speakers; the difference between a survey (find information about students) and third party evaluation (find information on ways to improve program); and whether to create a handout with guidelines to provide to presenter/speakers or a group wanting to survey students. Mr. Neviasser noted the practicality of having a policy in place vs. a handout due to the number of visitors to the schools each year.

It was noted that the LYSB survey was a very isolated incident with no ill intent and that LYSB is a very important community partner to the school district.

Mr. Wilson read a draft of a policy he put together on survey guidance. Mr. Neviasser will use this draft and the committee's input to develop a policy for review at this committee's next meeting in the fall.

There being no further discussion, the meeting adjourned at 6:55 p.m.