

Community Engagement Team Meeting #1 Minutes

Thursday, October 7, 2021

6:30 p.m. – TMC

Committee Attendees Present: Alex Tomes, Annie Roseberry, Bob Miller, Chad Crooks, Chad Higdon, Colette Cox, Courtney Cruz, Dave Hinde, Dennis Rosonke, DJ Brooks, Don Crabtree, Jacob McMillian, Jenny Goss, Joanne Snapp, LaTonya Williams, Linda Bahrke, Eric Simmons, Mackenzie Norton, Mark Korell, Mia Murray, Rebecca Lobina, Reid Barnett, Rick Gilmore, Steve Hofferber, Teresa Simmons

Staff: Doug Van Zyl, Eileen Houston-Stewart, Marlie Williams

Board Members: Tami Pasley, Lori Witham

Community Members: Tama Wagner, Amanda Kritikos

Facilitator: Rod Wright, Creative Entourage

Introduction: Doug Van Zyl

SJSD Superintendent, Dr. Doug Van Zyl welcomed the community members to the first Facilitating Team meeting and thanked them for attending to learn more about the process and the role they will play if they choose to serve on the committee.

Dr. Van Zyl explained that this is a blank slate, no perceived notion about the outcome. The purpose is to determine how best to engage the community. What does the community want from its school district? It will be important to have a listening ear, be transparent and open and hear from people in our community.

All committee members introduced themselves with name, occupation, and connection with the school district.

Charge: Rod Wright

The facilitator, Rod Wright, reviewed with the committee the purpose and goal of the Facilitating Team. The Team will be charged with organizing the larger community engagement meetings that are open to the public. The Facilitating Team is about process. It will not make huge decisions about the district. The community engagement meetings will be where that work is done. Those meetings are about product, the team's work is process.

There is no timeline, but the process is expected to take 12-to-18 months with the following approach:

- 1) Fact finding based on best practices
- 2) Community engagement for priorities and goal setting
- 3) Development of first draft of Strategic Plan
- 4) Second round of engagement
- 5) Final draft of a plan presented to SJSD Board of Education for implementation by the administration.

Critical Elements:

- 1) Citizen-led with active community involvement
- 2) Focused, data-driven internally supported process
- 3) Well organized, well-documented work sessions
- 4) True Dialogue amongst a large group of people resulting in collective agreement

The community engagement meetings will have 4-6 people working in groups responding to a presentation they have heard from the Facilitating Team. The goal is to get as many people as possible in the community to attend and participate. The first community meeting will take place after the first of the year, in January 2022.

Branding Name & Logo:

It was discussed that branding and a logo is an important part of sharing the messages to the broader community. Mr. Wright asked the members to think about some names and ideas for a logo and a tagline. He showed some examples of other school districts/organizations he has worked with in the past.

The following words/phrases were suggested by committee members:

- Excel – Make Better
- Connect, Collaborate, Communicate
- Engage
- Togetherness
- Common Vision – Common Voice
- Unity – Together
- Children – Future
- Kids at the Forefront
- Growth – community/schools/learning
- St. Joe Forward
- Growing Together as a Community
- Unite
- Keeping Traditions/Moving Forward
- Collaboration
- Trust
- Inclusive

It was discussed that heritage is important, especially to people in the south end of St. Joseph. It was also suggested that the words students and academics be included in the name.

Co-Chairs:

Mr. Wright discussed the importance of having co-chairs, anywhere from 2-5 people who will serve as master of ceremonies, review the agenda, introduce speakers. The time commitment is minimal, maybe getting together 15 minutes prior to the meetings or by Zoom.

There should be a balance of age, gender, etc. It was suggested that school district employees should not serve as a co-chair as it could be perceived a conflict of interest.

Community Engagement Meeting Locations:

The group discussed location ideas for the Community Engagement meetings that will begin in January 2022. Locations should be centrally located, parking, easy access (ADA compliant), have audio visual equipment, good acoustics.

The following places were suggested:

- Word of Life Church
- Civic Arena
- MWSU – Fulkerson Center
- St. Jo Frontier Casino
- Stoney Creek Hotel ballroom
- Remington Nature Center
- School buildings – gyms/cafeterias

Communicating with the Public:

Committee members questioned how the process would be communicated to the public. Role of the committee, work accomplished, promotion of meeting dates/times/locations. Should there be a designated website? Press releases? Media interviews? No decisions were reached.

Committee Name:

Some members thought the name Facilitating Team would be confusing to the public and that it may be misconstrued that the committee will only discuss school facilities/buildings during the process. It was agreed that the name would be changed to **Community Engagement Team** and the call the large group meetings **Community Input Sessions**.

Important Dates/Times:

The committee members agreed that the meetings should be held from 6pm-8pm on Tuesdays. The next two meetings will be held November 2nd and 30th at TMC – Troester Media Center from 6-8 p.m. There will be no meetings of the committee or the community in December.

Homework Assignment for the November 2 meeting:

- 1) Continue to think about a name, tag line and logo ideas – Next meeting group will reach consensus on a name.
- 2) Email names to Dr. Van Zyl dougvanzyl@sjsd.k12.mo.us of people to serve as co-chairs of the team. Could be 2-4 co-chairs.
- 3) Location ideas for large community engagement sessions.

Resource:

Mahomet-Seymour Community Schools – Bulldog Blueprint (link)

<https://www.ms.k12.il.us/browse/204530>