

MINUTES



**Addison Central School District
Communications and Engagement Committee
Committee Meeting
Tuesday, April 30, 2024, 4:30 pm - 5:30 pm
208 Charles Avenue, Middlebury VT & Virtual Connection**

ACSD District Vision and Mission

OUR VISION

Our vision is for all ACSD students to reach their full learning potential, have a sense of belonging in our schools, and enrich our community and the communities where they live in the future.

OUR MISSION

Our mission is to provide high-quality, equitable, and varied learning environments that inspire a passion for learning and growth among our students.

In-Person Attendance

Laura Harthan; Tricia Allen

Remote Attendance

Ellie Romp; Joanna Doria; Mary Heather Noble

A. Call to Order Upon Reaching a Quorum

Meeting called to order at 4:34 p.m.

B. Introductions: Board Members, Administrators and Staff

Emily Blistein, ACSD Director of Communications also present as a committee member.

C. Public Comment - Agenda Items

No public comment.

D. Recommendation to Approve Minutes of April 9, 2024

Laura Harthan abstained from voting.

Motion to approve the minutes of April 9, 2024.

Move: Laura Harthan Second: Ellie Romp Status: Passed

E. Committee Discussion

1. Board Opportunities for Teacher Appreciation Week

Emily Blistein shared some ideas for Board involvement in Teacher Appreciation week, May 6-10. She explained that since she has been in her position, she has tried to include staff in the teacher appreciation efforts, and has worked to make it coincide with the Teacher & Staff of the Year nominations. She usually solicits appreciations from the ACSD community during this time, so that: 1) she can share it with teachers/staff and their supervisors, and 2) use the frequencies of expressed appreciations to help identify individuals to nominate for the

Teacher & Staff of the Year awards. Last year Emily received 220 teacher/staff appreciations, and she was able to identify the top 7-10 people who have been authentically identified by the ACSD community as making a difference.

Different ACSD schools also have parent groups who organize teacher & staff appreciation efforts, but some school's efforts are more organized & robust than others. She thought it would be good for the admin and school board to offer some gestures of appreciation as well. Some ideas:

- Expressing gratitude with food: delivery of breakfast treats or desserts
- Thank you cards with handwritten notes of gratitude
- Ad in the newspaper with expression of gratitude

The Committee discussed the different options. Everyone liked the ideas, but the Committee would need to get full board agreement about spending money on an advertisement or catered food gift. The Committee also agrees that the gestures should be uniformly expressed across the District and include all 9 schools (and if food is included, make sure the amount of food is appropriate for the number of teachers/staff). The group discussed having board members contribute their own funds toward food treats (or donating baked goods), and the process for seeking approval/agreement on the other options.

To do:

Tricia Allen will reach out to PAHCC Glass Onion cafe to see how much it would cost to create simple goodie platters for each school. Mary Heather Noble will email Barb Wilson about whether/how to get Board approval & feedback on the ideas in a timely manner. The goal would be to have an ad ready for the 5/9 issue of the Addison Independent. If the tasks can't be completed in time for the May 6-10 Teacher Appreciation Week, the Committee agreed to request adding teacher appreciation to the agenda for the 5/13 Board meeting so it can consider doing something later in the month.

Emily Blistein also added that Board members can also help share ACSD's teacher appreciation posts on their social media. Joanna Doria also suggested incorporating Emily's collected teacher appreciations into a future Board meeting so that they can be publicly acknowledged there as well. Laura Harthan added that it would be nice to see teacher appreciations be a regular part of Board meetings.

2. Board Update letter for Spring 2024

Tricia Allen turned the Committee's attention to the draft Board Update letter that Mary Heather Noble prepared for Spring 2024. Mary Heather explained that she followed the same format as the last letter sent in December 2023, and asked committee members to let her or Tricia know if there is information that she forgot to include. She explained the process she has followed in the past to get Board review/approval before distribution.

Tricia asked members to provide any edits/comments to her. She will make revisions as needed and will check in with Committee Chairs to make sure their respective summaries are accurate. She will then have Barb Wilson review before asking Emily Blistein to distribute.

3. Superintendent Transition

The committee discussed the recent change to the Superintendent Transition plan, and the Board's decision to move Dr. Baker's start date from July 1 to June 1, 2024. Emily Blistein

said that the information has been updated on the Superintendent page of the website, and that she is including it in the District newsletter to be sent later today. She noted that Dr. Williams has also shared his internal communication with all staff.

Mary Heather Noble mentioned the article in the Addison Independent (digital issue, not yet in print) and wondered if there were any other places that the information should be posted or shared. Front Porch Forum? Emily explained that the District Newsletter will also be posted on FPF, so the announcement will be included there as well.

The committee agreed that no further communications seemed necessary.

4. Committee Work Plan

Tricia Allen reviewed the basic work plan for the Committee over the course of the year, noting the regular cyclical communications associated with quarterly board updates, budget planning, etc. She emphasized the work of improving the Board's Communications & Engagement efforts, including both how public comment is received during regular board meetings and other two-way engagement efforts. She asked if public comment procedures would be on the agenda for the June 1 Board retreat.

Mary Heather Noble responded that the retreat will have much time devoted to Strategic Plan Implementation and board work to support that, as well as Board efforts to comply with the new Board Governance Standards that were presented at the last Board meeting. She said that the Board's self-survey will help refine which specific things the Board chooses to work on, but would not be surprised to see communication/public engagement on that list. Mary Heather also noted that it is totally appropriate for this committee to examine/investigate recommendations for this even if the full Board doesn't get to it at the retreat. It could always be requested as an agenda item for a full Board meeting.

Tricia Allen directed committee members to provide their ideas & opportunities for improvement to current communication & engagement efforts so she can compile and develop a comprehensive document to share with the full Board at the retreat when asked. Mary Heather suggested having committee members also look at a few other districts to see how they handle public comment and other engagement efforts. Laura Harthan expressed her desire to see the current public comment procedure changed -- she believes it should be handled similarly to how the Middlebury Selectboard handles public comment, in that the public is offered an opportunity to speak at the end of each agenda item.

F. Public Comment - Any Topic

No public comment.

G. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 5:33 p.m.

Motion to adjourn.

Move: Laura Harthan Second: Mary Heather Noble Status: Passed

*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.

