

GROTON BOARD OF EDUCATION
COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, JUNE 24, 2024 @ 5:00 P.M.
~~TOWN HALL ANNEX, CR-2~~ CENTRAL OFFICE, ROOM 11/HYBRID

Members Present: Jay Weitlauf-Chairperson, Adrian Johnson, Jennifer White

Also Present: Phil Piazza (remote), Rebecca Beyus, Denise Doolittle

1. Call to Order at 5:03 PM by Chairperson J. Weitlauf
 - J. Weitlauf provided an introduction and overview of the formation of the Communications Committee.
2. Review Committee's Work to Date
 - P. Piazza and R. Beyus provided background on developing the Board of Education Strategic Communications Plan. The plan's development was the primary focus of the committee's work and provides a five-year framework for improving communication and bringing community connections back, particularly in the post-COVID environment. The plan was approved summer of 2023 to direct the work of district administrators and staff.
3. Updates from the Communications Specialist
 - R. Beyus highlighted the ongoing evolution of our district and school communications and communications as an essential element of family engagement and the importance of equity and access to information.
 - Showcasing staff and student accomplishments, and school and district programs (Strategy 2 in the communication plan), will be an area of focus in the coming year.
 - The website redesign and ParentSquare launch over the past year were discussed. Continually improving the user experience on the website and ParentSquare and hosting workshops/training sessions with administrators, staff, and families were discussed.
 - The last parent communications survey was in 2022 and the district is looking to conduct a communications survey in the Fall, particularly to understand social media trends within our community.
 - Additional topics discussed included community partnerships, connecting beyond digital platforms (i.e. the importance of in-person connections), and expanding communications with students.
 - A. Johnson asked about the engagement of parents on ParentSquare. R. Beyus reported the district has nearly 100% contact with all student families and will provide more detailed analytics at a future meeting.
 - The Committee discussed communications support for the new language tool in collaboration with the Director of Literacy.
4. Discussion on Ideas for Family Engagement
 - D. Doolittle shared an overview of how the district communicates with families, including those with special needs students. She spoke to instilling independence in high school students, while keeping parents informed and understanding barriers for students with developmental delays.
 - Data from the Culture and Climate survey linked to communications was highlighted.

- Specific topics discussed by the committee included:
 - i. School and extracurricular calendars
 - ii. Access to staff directories
 - iii. One-on-one parent/teacher messaging options
 - iv. Expanding the district's social media presence beyond Facebook
 - v. Staff and parent training on communication tools and resources
 - vi. Targeted communications to specific groups and timelines
- A. Johnson shared specific questions about parent access to a comprehensive calendar of school events for parents and students to access. R. Beyus will be speaking with the schools about implementing this for the new school year.
- J. White shared thoughts regarding collaboration between elementary and secondary schools.

5. Adjournment at 6:23 PM