

AGENDA



**Addison Central School District
Communications and Engagement Committee
Committee Meeting
Tuesday, September 17, 2024, 4:30 pm - 5:30 pm
ACSD District Office
49 Charles Ave**

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.

Please click the link below to join the webinar: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85486284669>

- A. Call to Order Upon Reaching a Quorum
 - 1. Introductions: Board Members, Administrators and Staff
- B. Public Comment - Agenda Items
- C. Recommendation to Approve the Minutes from 9-18-24
- D. Committee Discussion:
 - 1. Ideas for Public Engagement
 - 2. Board Update Letter for Fall 2024
 - 3. Review Procedure for A21
 - 4. Discuss Work Plan for ACSD Board Communication & Engagement Committee Communication Plan
- E. Public Comment - Any Topic
- F. Adjournment

***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.

MINUTES

**Addison Central School District
Communications and Engagement Committee
Committee Meeting
Tuesday, June 18, 2024, 4:30 pm - 5:30 pm
208 Charles Avenue, Middlebury VT & Virtual Connection**

ACSD District Vision and Mission

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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; Mary Heather Noble; Tricia Allen

Remote Attendance

Ellie Romp; Joanna Doria

A. Call to Order Upon Reaching a Quorum

Meeting called to order at 4:37 pm.

B. Introductions: Board Members, Administrators and Staff

C. Public Comment

No public comment.

D. Recommendation to Approve the Minutes from May 21, 2024

Motion to approve the minutes of May 21, 2024.

Move: Mary Heather Noble Second: Joanna Doria Status: Passed

E. Committee Discussion:

1. Draft Public Comment Procedure

The committee reviewed the proposed additions that Joanna Doria made to the draft Procedure Document for handling public comments, concerns and complaints. See meeting materials. Tricia stated that the intent is to have agreement on the Procedure document, then run it by the Policy Committee and eventually bring it to the full Board for approval.

Mary Heather Noble asked about the scope of the procedure document -- the title implies that it accompanies Policy A-21, which focuses on Public Participation in Board Meetings, but the actual procedure document was originally drafted as more of a how-to for handling/processing & responding to public input in a variety of settings (board meetings, other engagement events, emails, etc.). The group discussed whether the procedure

document should be a broader instructional document to cover several aspects of communication & engagement responsibilities and clarify the 'how' for Board policies that require or reference public engagement/participation. Mary Heather and Joanna both wondered whether other policies should be referenced in the Procedure document (e.g., A-2, A-23, etc.).

Laura Harthan advocated for having a comprehensive procedure document concerning communication & engagement activities, so that everything is contained in one place and can be easily reviewed/updated.

Tricia Allen asked the group whether it felt ready to focus on the Public Comment in Board meeting portion of the Procedure document, given the Board's current contemplation of this process and recent requests for simplifying it. All agreed that the procedure document itself should encompass more than just the Public Comment procedure, but everyone also wanted to address that first as the immediate question. The group focused on Joanna's proposed edits with the understanding that the Committee will continue to work on the broader communications & engagement procedures to provide clarity around both existing policies and new AOE board governance rules. Laura Harthan will review Board policies to identify which ones need mentioning in the procedure document, and Mary Heather will identify the new AOE rules that also inform this work.

Discussion on the proposed edits to Public Comment Procedure.

Ideas included creating a process to ensure close feedback on public comments shared during board meetings so stakeholders feel like their comments have "landed." Some suggestions:

- adding an agenda item to the agenda template for board responses to public comment from prior meetings.
- having the board chair or Comm committee circle back with commenters to assure them their comments were heard.

The group contemplated these and other ideas, noting the challenge of sustaining the effort and not adding too much time to board meetings.

Other ideas:

- removing the restriction on public comment topics, yet maintaining two public comment periods.
- making sure public comment period is consistently upheld.
- adding a "board reflection" agenda item to the meeting agenda to allow Board members to discuss issues brought up during public comment (not to respond, but to discuss). This could replace what used to appear on the agenda as "Other."
- inviting questions from the public after presentations to the board. Note: some members felt this suggestion fell outside the scope of establishing a public comment procedure, so it will be removed from the draft that is shared with the full board.
- regularly including a glossary of definitions/acronyms with meeting materials to make education jargon clearer in presentations.

TO DO:

Joanna will revise the Public Comment portion of the procedure document so Tricia can include with meeting materials for the next Board meeting.

2. Format for Travelling Board Meetings

Tricia Allen asked committee members about their thoughts on the format for traveling board meetings. The full Board did not vote on whether to return to holding every other Board meeting at an ACSD school, but thought the Committee might want to bring it up again to come to a clear conclusion on this.

Mary Heather Noble recalled that most Board members seemed supportive of doing it, but had some reservations in how it would be done (e.g., making sure technical concerns re: remote participation and recording could be resolved and that clearer parameters around the school presentations were established). She was not sure the Board needed to officially vote on it or not, but the impression was that this was the direction we would be moving. There was some discussion around making sure the move toward having meetings in schools was for the community's benefit, and creating a better opportunity for engagement.

Tricia brought up the idea of having informal coffee/cookie gathering a half-hour before traveling board meetings. All committee members were in favor of trying it out, with the recognition that several board members will need to make the effort to attend. Tricia will bring up the idea again at the Committee Update portion of the next Board meeting.

3. Engagement Brainstorming

Postponed for a future meeting.

F. Public Comment - Any Topic

No public comment.

G. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 6:05 p.m.

Motion to adjourn.

Move: Laura Harthan Second: Ellie Romp Status: Passed

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Procedure for Policy A21:

As expressed in its Public Participation at Board Meetings (Policy A21), the ACSD Board encourages public participation at its meetings and wants to carry out its business with the benefit of public input and expertise. 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.

To ensure that meetings are conducted in an orderly fashion and that the business at hand is completed in a timely manner, the Board Chair will grant a 3-minute time limit to each speaker and make best efforts to guarantee fairness, i.e. appointing a timekeeper, creating a speakers’ list, etc.

In an attempt to mitigate barriers to public comment, the agenda will be easily accessible to the attending public either with printed hard copies or electronically displayed. Additionally, two public comment periods will be offered; one at the beginning and one at the end of each meeting. Topics of those periods will not be limited. Board meeting agendas will also include an opportunity for Board Reflection at the end of the meeting, during which time Board members may briefly discuss and consider issues raised and/or comments shared during the public comment period(s). Public comment matters requiring further discussion or action will be scheduled and warned for a future Board meeting, as required by Vermont Open Meeting Law.

**ACSD BOARD COMMUNICATION & ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE
COMMUNICATION PLAN
WORKING DRAFT -- 1/19/22**

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 System for Responding to Public Comments -- (see attached draft Procedure Document).
2. 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: quarterly
 - c. Content: Brief committee updates, upcoming meetings & events, opportunities for input, links & references to contacts and additional information
3. 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 January 19, 2022

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:

Incoming emails from ACSD stakeholders may be acknowledged by the Board Chair (or their designee) and then distributed to appropriate members of the Board for additional action or response as needed. Incoming emails with questions or comments pertaining to ACSD operations and under the purview of the ACSD administration shall be forwarded to the ACSD Superintendent.

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 receive email communications they believe require the attention of the full Board shall forward the email to other Board members for further consideration (e.g., public comments on a matter before the full Board).

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.

Because the Board functions as a quasi-judicial body, Board members should not involve themselves in responding to, or addressing the complaint.