

**Board of Education
Communications Subcommittee
Newtown, Connecticut
Wed, Jan 25, 2012 7:00 p.m.**

Minutes of meeting in the Board offices at 3 Primrose Street.

Present: L. Roche, Chair J. Robinson
 D. Leidlein
 K. Alexander

Item 1 – Call to Order

Mrs. Roche called the meeting to order at 7:10 a.m.

Item 2 – Public Participation - none

Item 3 – New Business

a. Election of a secretary

MOTION: Mrs. Leidlein nominated Mr. Alexander for Secretary.

Mrs. Roche seconded. Vote: 2 ayes, 1 nay (Mr. Alexander)

b. Review Communications Section of Strategic Plan

Previously there was no communications committee. Strategic plan includes questions about website. Action items from spring 09 included discussing ongoing communications council.

Strategy 2, plan 3.2.a.

Prioritize other items: 1) leadership, 2) interpersonal communications strand, 3) 21st century practices

c. Discussion and possible action regarding district emails for BOE

The board will be asked to approve a single group address (boe@newtown.k12.ct.us) to allow the community to send email to all members without keeping track of individual addresses. The board member's email addresses will still be available on the website so email can still be sent to individual board members. Keith will present this to the board.

d. Discussion and possible action regarding procedures for presentations to the BOE accompanied by a PDF file

A guideline (and policy if one does not exist) will be worked on in the policy committee.

e. Review of BOE page on website

We don't currently have guidelines for what is on the website or who administers it. There has been a new website up on new software as of last June. We need to decide what we want on the website to show off our district. The website would be better if there was a more clear plan. Consistency between schools needs improvement. Each website is managed by each school mostly independently.

Since the website is still new, it would be good to get the people assigned to manage the school websites together to organize and improve consistency.

One suggestion was an RSS feed for page updates. Links to teacher websites are hard to manage and are not always easy to find.

Keeping websites up to date is in the teacher contracts. Principals should discuss what are the qualities of an effective webpage. Promoting the positives, including a brag page. Calendar should be consistent and linked between schools.

Coffee with the board on website doesn't have a date identified. Coffee with board ought to be at cafetorium with culinary students providing food (cost of materials to be verified).

The current plan from this point, is to get consistency of the websites first and then get feedback from community. Follow through with action steps.

f. Discussion and possible action regarding procedures for audio and video recordings posted to the district website

Community feedback is good on recording of meetings at this point. A policy and guidelines will be worked out for posting and retention of audio/video of meetings. Current suggestion is to post only regular board meetings and use minutes for other meetings. Complete minutes and attachments should be posted already by policy.

We also need the presentations and other documents provided before meetings wherever possible and should at least be left at the meeting so that the electronic versions of these documents can get posted along with meeting recordings and minutes. These items are also referred to the Policy Committee. Broad policy could be that copies of anything brought to a meeting should be provided to the board. Guidelines then could be to ensure that the presentations should be provided ahead of time as .pdf files.

g. Action steps assigned

Mrs. Leidlein created list--attached

h. Establish a schedule of meetings

The third Wednesday of each month at 7:30pm was suggested but February meeting is planned for the 27th at 4:30pm (for 1 hour) at Reed to meet with the website coordinators from each school and the district.

Student email, which is currently being rolled out, was also discussed.

A staff policy on acceptable use, had to go through teacher's union as well. District student email will be rolled out so that teachers can start to push documents to kids.

The board members section of the website was also discussed as potentially being reworked to be more convenient for parents.

Item 4 – Public Participation - none

Item 5 – Adjournment

MOTION: Mrs. Leidlein moved to adjourn. Mr. Alexander seconded. Vote: 3 ayes
The meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Keith Alexander
Secretary

Board of Education - Communication Subcommittee

Action steps to evaluate and improve school district websites

Need guidelines to communicate for district websites.

Action step: Principals and Board Members define qualities of an effective school district web presence before meeting to evaluate school and district websites. (February)

Note: could have brag board on district webpage.

Action step: Evaluate school and district websites with principals and Carmela and JoAnne. (Monday, at 4:30 on February 27th)

Action step: Principals go back to schools and update website for re-launching. (Beginning of March)

Action step: Announce re-launch of website (mid to end of March)

Action step: Ask for parent feedback through survey. (Simultaneous to re-launch)

Action step: Evaluate parent feedback. (April)