COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT  November 17, 2021

Attendees:  BOE – Allison Silverstein, Eric Scherzer
            District – Nina DeRosa (Dr. Ponds was unable to attend)
            PTAC – Tessie Thomas, Courtney Redfern

PTAC Update:  Their communication committee is working on some specific recommendations for communications.

Survey:

a.  The response level was low (only 10%).

b.  Weekly updates are appreciated but could use some work on being more concise.
   - Nina noted that District is moving away from weekly messaging and just sticking to notifications of important issues with occasional community messaging.

c.  Lack of reporting out on BOE agendas and meetings. Community members feel that there is too much reliance on Facebook for updates.
   - This is concerning as those outside the board are controlling the messaging with no input from the BOE. There are also concern that this will cause misinformation.

d.  Desire for transparency and clarity.

e.  Weekly communications not always addressing specific parent concerns.
   - There was a discussion about something like top 5 issues on an intermittent basis. I note that the more recent Superintendent communications have been doing this to some extent.

f.  Clarity between what is district communication and what is building based and making sure everyone is on the same page.

g.  Some folks want more information, some want less.
- How do we address this? Perhaps links leading to the website where the longer explanations are.

- Website – we got into a long discussion about the District website. We all agreed that we needed to include those who are in charge of the website as a part of the conversation.

- We agreed to ask Chris Graber and/or members of his staff to attend an upcoming meeting.

Three main points: Concise – Transparency – Structure

Additional Notes

1. I did not get to discuss at length some interesting information from a meeting I had attended where the Director of Technology and Communication for Pascack Valley Regional High School District, Paul Zeller, spoke. Two things he shared that may be helpful.

   a. He suggested that if you District does not have someone who is a member of the New Jersey Public Relations Association, it sounds worthwhile.

   b. They have a communications plan that is on their website. He gave full permission to use it to create your own. Crisis communication plan exists but not public for safety reasons. He says these are the things that are shared between members of the NJPRA which is why membership is helpful. There was mention a while back about creating an updated Communications Plan for Montclair. Here is the link if anyone is interested in looking into it and perhaps discussing further at a later date.

   Communication Plan - Pascack Valley Regional High School District

2. Facebook

   • We saw a few comments in response to the survey that many people get information from Facebook. Nina advised that the District is involved in social media with Twitter. It does not seem that there is interest at this time to create a Facebook page.

     o Concern was noted about having this active forum with no District voice.
2. BOE Meetings

- Feedback from PTAC (and other parents, residents, staff, etc.) on format changes would be helpful
- Switching to hybrid public comment
  - Process has been started since our meeting. Some things still need to be ironed out.
- Pre-Meeting communication - coming up with ideas as to how to inform public regarding agenda.
  - Maybe working with PTAC/PTAs to send out notice of meetings with agenda highlights. Especially where presentations will occur.
- Post-Meeting communications. PTAC does updates after meetings. Maybe BOE can do important highlights on those days where significant items are discussed/voted on.