



Board of Education COMMITTEE REPORTS

FEBRUARY 25, 2016

Fiscal Planning and Operations Committee

The Fiscal Planning and Operation Committee (FPO) met on Wednesday, February 10 and discussed the following:

2016 - 2017 Budget Preparation:

Meetings were held with administrators and building principals to determine District priorities and staffing needs.

Capital Reserve Appropriation:

After reviewing funds in Capital Reserve, the Committee determined that we are within state guidelines for our anticipated facilities projects.

Schools Development Authority (SDA) Regular Operating District (ROD) Grant Local Share Projects:

The District identified funds for all 12 projects approved by the Board, and filed execution packages to guarantee the SDA will fund the State portion. Current projects underway include PHS Chillers and HVAC upgrades. Bidding opens next week for replacing the Administration Building roof. Seven HVAC projects at Eisenhower, Grandview, Knollwood, King, and Randolphville will be reported on at next meeting

Solar Renewable Energy Certificates (SRECs):

SRECs (June 2012 to May 2013) determined by Generate Attributes Tracking (GAT) will be up for sale from Feb. 18 to Feb 25.

Transportation:

Bus Driver availability is an issue therefore the District seeks to hire more drivers. Applications for transportation from private school students who reside within the District are being filed, so we can determine our overall bussing needs for the coming school year.

State Accountability Regulations:

The District is working with New Jersey School Boards Association (NJSBA) and New Jersey Association of School Business Officials (NJABSO) to address fiscal issues and advocate for statute and regulatory changes to eliminate unnecessary administrative workload.

Community Relations Committee

The Community Relations Committee met on Wednesday, February 1 and had a lively discussion that included an update on two pending projects, social media and other communications vehicles, and the Committee's purpose and goals for the coming year:

The Our Piscataway Heroes Initiative and the Conackamack Fitness Trail, begun in 2015, should be launched in 2016.

District social media engagement strategies include using these platforms as a "snapshot" into what is happening in our schools, and should be fully implemented in the coming months.

Ideas to increase visibility in the Community by attendance at Township events such as the annual Street Fair as well as the re-establishment of the "Know Your Schools" newsletter were discussed.

The meeting concluded with a discussion of the Committee's Statement of Purpose and annual goals for 2016. The Committee agreed to revise the current Statement of Purpose to read as follows:

"The Community Relations Committee works with the District Administration to facilitate communication between the District and the Piscataway Community, and to raise awareness of, and encourage Community participation in, District initiatives and events."

2016 Goal Setting

The Committee agreed upon the following goals for 2016:

1. Bring the current pending projects of the Conackamack Fitness Trail and the Our Piscataway Heroes initiative to completion in 2016.
2. Promote District initiatives, events, achievements and volunteer opportunities through the development of social media strategies and the re-establishment of the "Know Your Schools" newsletter
3. Ensure the timely production and dissemination of Committee Reports from all Committees.

Culture and Climate Committee

The Culture & Climate Committee met on Tuesday, February 16, for a passionate and collaborative discussion on programming to inspire a positive culture and climate. Beautification projects were deemed a priority, with potential roadblocks discussed.

New Member Focus:

Dr. Ranelli and Committee Chair Mr. Johnson met previously to redefine committee purpose, and concluded inviting different stakeholders to meetings for input and buy-in was essential toward establishing, improving, and creating a more positive culture and climate within our district. To that end, tonight's attendance included middle school building principal, three teachers, and three board members.

Beautification Discussion - Roadblocks:

The committee discussed roadblocks for implementation of events/programs (who is involved, how the work gets done, how is it funded, is it sustainable, etc.) and developed scenarios and FAQs to address future projects.

Celebrating School Stakeholders:

It was determined that staff members would embrace positive initiatives if driven by student excitement and buy-in, easy for staff to distribute, and incentives and/or rewards were valid and valued. Mr. Johnson shared the "Happiness Advantage" book as example of the board's dedication to a positive working and learning environment. The committee discussed the process of ideas coming to fruition. Sample programs such as Student/Staff of the Month, People's Choice Award, Incentive Tickets, etc., were discussed.

Student/School Program:

The Committee discussed who our students go to in time of need. Who is the adult that they trust? Dr. Ranelli drove home the fact that students must identify these adults, who might not be the building administrator or school counselor.

Action Items

1. Committee meetings shall return to monthly schedule
2. Ted Talk videos shall be distributed to each member
3. Principals shall resubmit their # 1 – 5 beautification wish list
4. Principals will share programming for positive recognition
5. The District will develop a toolbox/booklet of successful schoolwide programs.

Policy and Legislative Committee

The Policy and Legislative Committee met Tuesday, February 9, and discussed a number of existing policies for update, as well as policies new for the district:

1. Nepotism Policy: Board discussed an updated version of Policies 4112.8/4212.8, Nepotism, to reflect more recent decisions and advisory opinions of the School Ethics Commission.
2. Drones Over School Airspace Policy: A new policy prohibiting flying of drones over school grounds was approved, with an additional clause extending the prohibition to any other property that is used by the District for official school functions.
3. Wall of Heroes: Discussed a new policy establishing an online "Wall of Heroes," as recommended by the Community Relations Committee. Fully agreed with CR Committee proposal with the exception of the 3-year waiting period, and will bring this up at the Board meeting.
4. School Activity Funds Policy: Awaiting a proposal from District BA on the disposition of leftover funds.
5. Cooperation with Municipal Government: Existing policy to remain the same. Committee seeks to reaffirm our current commitment to pursuing cooperation.
6. Legislation on security, homeless students, electronic fund transfers, and the superintendent salary cap was discussed.

Middlesex Regional Education Services Commission

The MRESC Committee met on Friday, February 19, for a general business meeting.

The Commission asks for school districts to return the School District Special Education Student Placements Survey.

A non-public Vendor's Day is scheduled for April 13, 2016, that could provide additional cost savings and upgraded services to the district.

Two teachers from Bright Beginnings Learning Center gave a presentation of the benefits of Yoga in schools.