

**Tolland Board of Education
Communication and Outreach Committee**

Minutes – October 15, 2014

Members Present: Karen Moran (Chair), Kathy Gorsky, Colleen Yudichak

Administrators and Staff Present: Dr. Thomas Y. McDowell, Interim Superintendent, Carolyn Tyl, Interim Director of Curriculum

Others Present: Diane Clokey

The meeting was called to order at 12:03pm.

New Superintendent Communication – The press release was used for the Journal Inquirer’s announcement of our new superintendent. Dr. McDowell will have it featured on the district website. Preliminary plans will be put in place for a “Welcome Reception” for Dr. Willett and will include students and involvement from the PTO’s.

Fall Newsletter – The draft of the newsletter was reviewed by the group. The focus is on the many changes happening with curriculum in our schools. Other suggestions from the group were: featuring our Teacher and Paraprofessional of the Year, and a focus on the variety of student accomplishments at THS. Ms. Tyl will be handling the edits.

Website Task Force Update – Dr. McDowell will be meeting with Ms. Moran and Ms. Vallo from the task force to prepare a recommendation to the board at their 10/22 meeting.

Community Conversation – Ms. Clokey updated us on her thoughts regarding possible topics for the community conversation. Based on the guidelines, the topic should involve the whole community, but Ms. Clokey’s opinion is that it is difficult to come up with a topic to discuss and engage parents and others in the process, when as a district we have concerns to address at the building level. Ms. Gorsky suggested a discussion of the Common Core State Standards and how they are being implemented in our district as many parents and members of the community do not understand this change in education. Dr. McDowell also reminded the group that Dr. Willett will be involved and may have suggestions of his own as planning progresses regarding the community conversation.

Outreach Opportunities – Ms. Moran discussed reaching out to the Town Manager’s office to possibly utilize the town e-blast to inform the community about events in the schools that are open to the public i.e. THS Culinary menus, athletic schedules, Spring musical, band/chorus concerts. Possibly using the THS graphics department to create a banner or wooden sign to advertise events and making them generic enough to get lasting use out of them, or make them changeable. Dr. McDowell would look into this possibility. Ms. Moran also discussed making the dress rehearsal of our Spring musical more of a “special event” for our senior residents who attend. We can enlist the help of the director, culinary students, and other student groups to assist with ideas for planning. We can also utilize the Senior Center newsletter to advertise this new special event.

Next meeting: TBD

Meeting adjourned at 1:12pm