

SUBJECT: Community Support Goal Team Meeting Minutes

DATE: January 26, 2007

TIME: 4:00 PM

PLACE: Wayland School Committee Room

PRESENT: Allan Chasen, Ellen Chasen, Jane Ezbicki, Barb Fletcher, Peg Ingolia, Jean Tower

I. BACKGROUND:

- a. The Committee Members (“Members”) introduced themselves by explaining why they volunteered to be a member of this group, their relationship with the schools and any other relevant background information.
- b. Barb reviewed the history of how the Community Support Goal Team was formed.
 - i. Last February, several residents asked the School Committee (“SC”) about the long range strategic planning efforts of the district.
 - ii. This dialogue continued for a number of months and in June, the SC discussed long range planning at its annual retreat.
 - iii. Steve Goldstein, a strategic planning consultant and a Wayland resident, generously volunteered to assist the SC in this effort to develop a long range strategic plan.
 - iv. Based on interviews with various stakeholders and information gathered from other communities, he made recommendations to the SC in October, at which time the SC agreed to move forward and use his model of establishing goal teams to work on various goals.
 - v. Concurrent with the SC efforts, the Administrators have been working with Irwin Blumer to develop districtwide core values.
 - vi. From a list of 70 goals compiled by the SC and Superintendent, 8 prioritized goals were selected for initial consideration.
 - vii. Goal Teams were established for each of these 8 prioritized goals. Each team would include an administrator, a SC rep, a staff member and community members. In certain cases, goal teams have already been established, such as for the High School facility.
 - viii. The other Goal Teams that have been recently formed include Strategic Planning, Goals and Priorities, Metrics Relative to Mission, Alternative Funding Sources and Community Support.
 - ix. As these are priorities for the school district, there will be overlap among these goal teams.

II. DISCUSSION:

- a. As it reviewed the charge of this Goal Team, the group discussed the concepts of engaging the community versus communicating key messages to the community. Here are some of the comments shared:
 - i. Given the recent tone of the conversations in town, there is a real need to build bridges versus always trying to win the game.
 - ii. We need to “make connections” with the various groups in the community. For example, provide incentives to the community (e.g. tax breaks) to help the students perform community service.
 - iii. There needs to be a personal touch in our communication.
 - iv. We need to reach out to the community rather than expecting the community to reach out to the schools (e.g. providing a phone number for volunteer opportunities in the schools).
 - v. No information is given to community members about the schools if you don’t have a child in the school system.
 - vi. The community is not aware of what is being done in the classroom and how high the bar is set. Consider video taping the day in the life of a student.
 - vii. It is important to engage the community in order to get additional funding so that the town is less dependent on state aid.
 - viii. A question was raised as to how the long range strategic plan of the schools fits in with the bigger picture, or the priorities of the town.

- b. The group then discussed the pros and cons of conducting focus groups versus a survey in order to gather information about the various groups within the community. Here are some of the comments shared:
 - i. Typical focus groups would most likely only attract the people who are knowledgeable or involved in the schools.
 - ii. The neighborhood gatherings conducted with the last override were very effective. These grassroots type of gatherings could serve as an effective form of focus group if done frequently and consistently, particularly when there is no crisis to be addressed.
 - iii. A phone survey of randomly selected voting town residents was conducted for the town pool and worked well.
 - iv. A phone survey would provide that personal touch in reaching out to the community.
 - v. A phone survey could be used to determine the needs and concerns of the various groups within the community, as well as how they want to be communicated with and how they want the schools to be a part of their lives.
 - vi. High school students could possibly conduct a phone survey as part of their senior projects or through one of the business courses.
 - vii. A phone-a-thon that includes various members of the community (e.g. seniors, high school students for community service) could be held to gather this information.

III. CONCLUSIONS:

- a. We would like to build bridges with the community, by reaching out to them with a personal touch.

IV. NEXT STEPS:

- a. The group agreed to gather information from other communities regarding their communication plans.
 - i. Barb would first distribute to the group the list of peer communities that the School Committee has agreed upon and randomly assign each Member two towns.
 - ii. Each Member would then contact their assigned peer communities before our next meeting and ask questions, such as:
 - 1. Do you have a strategic communications plan?
 - 2. If so, how was it developed?
 - 3. What channels do you use (e.g. mail, phone, email etc)?
 - 4. What messages do you communicate (e.g. what's going in the schools, particular issues only etc.)?
 - 5. Do you find your communications strategy effective?
 - iii. If possible, any information gathered by each Member should be forwarded to Barb to be compiled into a central document.
- b. The Members would send to Barb suggested questions for the phone survey that would then be circulated to the group in advance of our next meeting.
- c. Barb would discuss with the other Goal Teams the idea of a phone survey.

V. NEXT MEETINGS:

- a. Friday, February 9th, 4PM-6PM
- b. Friday, March 9th, 4PM-6PM

VI. ADJOURNMENT:

- a. The meeting was adjourned at 5:45PM.

Respectively Submitted,

Barb Fletcher