

Communications Committee Minutes

October 9, 2023

7:45pm via Zoom

In attendance: Dr. Jonathan Ponds, Christina Hunt, Allison Silverstein, Brian Fleischer, Phaedra Dunn, Charlene Peterson (NJSBA)

Strategic Planning

The Committee discussed that the Strategic Planning process, in alignment with NJSBA's identified best practice, would include three community forums of approximately 90-120 minutes. Administration suggested a timeline to complete a strategic plan by February, with community forums in November, December and January. The Committee wanted to assess the possibility of completing all three Strategic Planning sessions prior to the end of the calendar year and the BOE Reorganization Meeting, given the possibility of a change in Board members.

Community Forum 1 is "Where are we now?" and would begin with a State of the District presentation by the Superintendent, followed by small group (8 to 10 people) breakout sessions with stakeholders. We would hope for the stakeholders across all breakout groups to include a mix of BOE members, parents, students, staff, and other community members. Each breakout group would look to identify the district's top strengths and top opportunities for improvement. After the breakout sessions, we'd ideally return to the main room and have a representative from each breakout group share out, but we might have to adjust if the number of attendees and breakout groups are too large. We also discussed posting the input received from each breakout group to a Strategic Planning page on the website prior to the second Community Forum.

Community Forum 2 is "Where do we want to be five years from now?" It is a "visioning" exercise, and we want to encourage participants to dream big.

Community Forum 3 is "What is our roadmap to reach the vision?" and entails the actual drafting of the Strategic Plan and the goal and objectives statements. To engage in practical goal setting and wordsmithing, we may need to identify representatives from the larger group of participants to create a writing group of manageable size. NJSBA recommends that a Strategic Plan include no more than around 4 or 5 key goal areas. Some examples of key goal areas used in other districts are:

- Student achievement and success
- Staff success
- Operations/Finance/Facilities
- Communicating with the community
- Culture, Climate and Social Emotional Wellness.

In Community Forum 3, we would probably want to create working groups by goal area, and those groups would be tasked with leveraging all of the inputs and insights from the first two forums to clarify the goal and identify 3 or 4 objectives within each goal area. The goals and objectives ultimately should

focus on the “what”, and would then be turned back over to the administration to develop and present the “how”.

Looking at calendars, the Committee decided to schedule the three Community Forums for November 13, November 29, and December 11. We discussed that we can work with the Board to determine which members would attend which of the forums so that we avoid a quorum, as a quorum would necessitate a lot of “public meeting” requirements that would take time away from the intent and purpose of an open community forum for exchange of ideas. We might want to advertise and structure the third forum as an open public meeting, however, so that all BOE members could support goal and objective development.

Ms. DeRosa will draft and share out a proposed notice for the Strategic Planning Community Forums for review and feedback so that we can get the notice out to the community as soon as possible. We will encourage people to register to attend so that we can plan around the expected group size.

The meeting concluded at approximately 8:45pm.