

Community Relations Committee Meeting Notes

Friday, October 2, 2009, 10:00 AM

Attending: Board Members – Garrity, Hartnett and Liu; Administrator – Duncan. Absent: Collins.

Back to School Night & Community Day Activities/ E-Alert:

The committee's sense was that these events went well. Thanks to the efforts of Gerilyn Kessler and Board members, E-Alert sign-ups now exceed 600, roughly double their previous level. There were no specific suggestions for improvement.

Budget Election/GOTV/ "State-of-the-District" Event:

The committee discussed the challenges of the upcoming budget election – limited volunteers (also an issue among the various parent groups), and information sharing issues (should negotiations still be in process) – as well as our desire to take a fresh look at the entire budget presentation process.

Research presented at the 2008 NJSBA workshops suggests Boards of Education can play a significant role in enhancing student achievement. They do this by not only sharing good news about local education, but also the challenges that lie ahead.

After discussion, the committee recommends holding a "State of the District" event at which standing committee chairpersons would share the prior year's accomplishments, and the challenges and plans on which the district is currently working. Woven into the reports would be information about grants received and efficiencies realized. It might also be a good time to clarify areas about which there may be misunderstanding, e.g., the portion of the special education budget funded by grants vs. general tax revenue. We envision each committee producing a brief (1 page or so) written report. These plus an executive summary would be the handout. We believe that laying out what we are doing to promote student achievement is a natural precursor for requesting the voters' support for the budget.

Our preliminary thought is to hold the event in the HHS auditorium and video it for viewing via the website. Those unable to attend and ask questions from the floor would be able to submit questions via the website. In addition to parents and the general public, we would invite the Township Committee to attend. We look forward to discussing this with the full BOE.

Other Matters:

The committee briefly discussed the advisability of becoming a flu inoculation site. Mrs. Duncan noted that the district is working closely with the Department of Health. If they would like us to be a site for flu shots, we will do so.

Chiung-Yin Liu will be our BOE liaison to the Township's Census 2010 committee.

Next Meeting: Friday, October 23, 2009 at 10 AM, Central Office

Respectfully submitted,
Barbara Garrity