

December 13, 2023

**COMMUNICATIONS & COMMUNITY RELATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE**

**Virtual Communications & Community Relations Subcommittee  
Wednesday, December 13, 2023, at 6:00 p.m.  
Broadcast from the Media Arts Studio  
454 Broadway, Cambridge, MA 02138**

Called for the purpose of reviewing the Strategic Communications Plan and for a website update from Information, Communication & Technology Services (ICTS).

Subcommittee Members Present: David Weinstein (Co-Chair); Fred Fantini (Co-Chair); Ayesha Wilson

Other School Committee Members present: Caroline Hunter, Rachel Weinstein

Also Present: Sujata Wycoff, Director of Communications; Monica Leon, ICTS Project Manager; Lisa Waters, Digital & Creative Services Manager

**Co-Chair Weinstein** began the meeting at 6:01 p.m. by welcoming the group and reading the call of the meeting.

**Co-Chair Weinstein** shared the agenda and goals for the meeting and the following agreements.

**Agreements**

- Speak and listen from the heart (respect)
- Step up/step back (watch air time)
- Progressive Stacking approach to conversation
- Expect and accept non-closure (work in progress)
- Bike rack (list of things that are important but should be addressed another time)

**Public comment**

- People will have three minutes to present their comments, after which time they will be muted by the Executive Secretary. (If need be, time will be limited to two minutes per person to ensure everyone can participate.)
- If people want to speak again, they will need the chair to call on them and be unmuted.
- The aim is to foster greater back-and-forth, which is valuable for subcommittee meetings

•

**Co-Chair Weinstein** introduced the participants and passed the floor to Ms. Wycoff who presented the Strategic communications plan and shared the following presentation found on the [website](#). **Chair Weinstein** opened the floor to questions. Marc Levy, editor and publisher of the *Cambridge Day* website, shared his challenges regarding receiving communications from the district's central office, as well as receiving meaningful responses from the individual Committee members. **Member Hunter** shared her personal experiences and **Chair Weinstein** suggested that the issue could be a topic for an upcoming subcommittee meeting. Ms. Wycoff shared her thoughts as it relates to her role as CPSD's Director of Communications.

The conversation pivoted to the Strategic Communications plan. Ms. Wycoff highlighted that it is a living document and not yet available to the public. She hopes to get feedback from the School Committee and then publish the plan. She has worked with various stakeholders to develop the plan including school leaders, liaisons, and clerks. In the future, she hopes to conduct workshops with colleagues. On a related note, she is hopeful that the Senior Communications Specialists will be hired by the end of the month.

**Chair Weinstein** highlighted the importance of crisis communications in the current climate. He asked about community feedback on the Strategic Communication plan and Ms. Wycoff will discuss this issue with Dr. Greer and follow up with the subcommittee.

December 13, 2023

## COMMUNICATIONS &amp; COMMUNITY RELATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE

**Member Hunter** shared her feedback on ParentSquare and the importance of scheduling user trainings that is convenient for working caregivers. Ms. Leon will research the issue and get back to Member Hunter. Ms. Wycoff has conducted a “listening tour” with parent liaisons and shared that school staff might need additional support, but highlighted that the second year with ParentSquare has seen improvement. She hopes that the Climate Survey will provide additional feedback. **Member Wilson** believes that CPSD should be leveraging other communications tools as well. **Member Fantini** highlighted the importance of teachers communicating directly with parents. He suggested coordination with the city’s communications team. Ms. Wycoff shared that she works closely with the city. **Vice-Chair Rachel** noted that too many messages from the district may dilute other important communications. She shared that the outreach regarding the new CPSD motto is an example of receiving too much outreach.

Ms. Waters continued with her portion of the presentation found on the [website](#). Following Ms. Waters’ remarks, the group discussed the challenges of content management for the CPSD website, as well as keeping individual school sites updated. Ms. Waters highlighted CPSD’s Google calendar which curates the district’s events.

At the conclusion of the meeting, **Chair Weinstein** acknowledged the valuable contributions of Members Fantini and Wilson who are both leaving the School Committee. **Member Fantini** shared his sentiments regarding his subcommittee work.

**Co-Chair Weinstein** thanked the participants and closed the meeting at 7:34 p.m.