

## **ADVOCACY AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH COMMITTEE MINUTES**

Date: February 13, 2019 from 10 am to 12 pm, Carew Room, City Hall

### **Attendance**

**Julia Ochs, BOE co-chair**

**Dr. Magda Parvey, interim superintendent**

**Elissa Glickman, member**

**Stacy Sutherland, member**

**Ken Valenti CSDNR**

**Mike Bieger FOCUS MEDIA**

**Rachel Relkin, BOE**

### **Non members in attendance**

**Michelle Balachandran, PTAC president**

**Myriam Decime, Community member**

**Laraine Karl Community member (PTAC)**

**Dinorah Pezzotti, Community member**

**Stephanie Tomei, Community Services**

**Jin Whang, community member**

### **AGENDA ITEMS**

- Ken Valenti public information update
  - Transition to high school website page – this designated as a priority for this year
  - Newcomers website page – Table; will be constructed once transition page is complete
  - Community member request for permalinks on website for web stories – Site is limited with BOCES structure. To look into building archive of e-newsletter stories
  - Repository for unanswered/follow-up questions from public comments and town halls – Created and resides on website under About Us, where there is a Questions & Answers pulldown. Once it gets larger, will build subcategories as pulldowns.
  - Community request to list upcoming town halls as soon as firmed up on homepage – Ken said district already puts them on website home page, sends out information on them via social media, emails community.
  - Created Home Access app story and using in e-newsletter occasionally
  - Grade Book – in training now, will be operational in September
  
- Julia and Paul Warhit attended the National School Boards Association Advocacy Institute.
  - Organization outlined priorities for current legislative session. Big push for upcoming fiscal year, fully funding Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Goal was to get 40% funding federally. District is currently only getting 15%. Creation of

NSBA Advocacy Institute resolution for senators and representatives to fully fund IDEA. NSBA Advocacy Institute advocates against Public Charge. People not intending to fill out Census form because of citizenry question and is intertwined with Public Charge.

- Would like advocacy efforts regarding these issues, will discuss more at next meeting
  - Local Complete Count Committee - Would like city, school district, community organizations, faith-based organizations coordinated local effort to facilitate the completion of accurate Census information and answer questions to ensure everyone is counted. District needs everyone counted or risk losing funding because of inaccurate representation. Approx 10-20 members, possibly 10 from city and 10 from school district. Will need to use standardized, vetted materials.
  - Board President will be asked to reach out to Mayor Bramson to determine City's position before further discussion.
  - Everyone on committee to email [advocacy@nredlearn.org](mailto:advocacy@nredlearn.org) with questions regarding the Complete County Committee and share with Jeffrey Hastie, Paul Warhit and have follow up discussion for next meeting.
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- Michelle Balachandran PTAC president-update on PTA legislative conference in Albany – Westchester Putnam group of PTA advocates saw 11 legislators. Asked for increase in \$2.2 billion increase in aid including \$1.3 billion increase in foundation aid in a three-year phase of aid, 3-point harness on buses, increase in fines for passing school buses, oppose legislation against marijuana, among other points.
  - Mike explained Voter Voice Advocacy Tool app – Goes on website, we will renew once money is located in budget and will start once it is needed (it is a yearly subscription, so we want to be efficient with starting it to make best use of investment – will only take a few days to launch). Click on button on website where you can submit your individual letter to legislators. Committee to determine topics – maybe SALT tax deduction or state budget – and communications can develop bullets to guide community partners and PTA to publicize.
  - Rachel Relkin – Board has passed resolutions supporting district advocacy positions and offered Board as opportunity. Advocacy issues can be found on New York State School Boards Association and Westchester Putnam School Boards Association and committee could look at these issues and make recommendations to Board of Education. Perhaps new state aid formula as a topic. Suggested having letters as good visual at legislature, in addition to emails. Julia suggested committee members going to public gatherings and using a “greatest hits” of advocacy issues.
  - Providing comprehensive Spanish translation. We currently contract out to a pay service but can find out board meetings, documents, subtitling of video meetings, town halls, newsletters, PTA materials, district calendar, teachers' comments on

report cards. Dr. Parvey to look into putting in request to Westchester-Putnam BOCES or proposing full-time translator or both. Both seemed to be the agreed on solution.

- Town hall discussion – next one is Feb. 25 at IEYMS, 7-9pm – Altaris, a K-12 safety and security consultant hired through BOCES so it is state aid-able. Discussion of what to name it as there will be no love questions. Possibly identify as forum. World Languages town hall on 3/12, 7-9 pm at Jefferson. Other town hall topic recommendations: school transitions; no presentations in June; email ideas to Julia.
- Protocols for communicating half-day schedules and detailed impact on busing. Dr. Parvey to work with Ken on posting schedules in advance. Ken gathering information from transportation RE posting of schedules. Security does not want them up online but we do not want to take down something that parents are relying on. Will need to transition to system of log-in system. Have bell schedule posted for half days, etc.. Consider hyperlink to each school's schedule.
- Protocols for responses to inquiries from citizens to teachers, administrators, & staff. Dr. Parvey asked how specific this should be. Will be discussion with unions as for setting up a protocol to have standardized response times.

#### **NEXT MEETING DISCUSSION ITEMS**

Discuss transition page for website

Strategize next steps for advocacy efforts – where does City stand on topics and where the local politicians stand to determine what it might look like for Westchester. Jeffrey Hastie to discuss with Mayor Bramson.

Discuss questions from A&O committee members regarding Complete Count Committee.

Discuss protocols for responses to inquiries from citizens to teachers, administrators, & staff

Discuss Spanish translation of Town Halls, & BOE meetings for non-attendees and comprehensive translation services.

#### **NEXT MEETING**

March 13th 10 am to 12 pm, Carew Room, City Hall