

ANWSD Community Engagement Committee

Tuesday September 25, 2016

6:00-7:06 p.m.

In attendance: Laurie Gutowski, Chris Cousineau, Diana Raphael, Kristina MacKulin, Finn Yarbrough, Laurie Childers, Megan Tarte, Scott Grant, Kaci Pierce.

1. Discussion of student and teacher committee membership protocol. Diana poses the questions of how we ensure equitable representation across communities and how we determine how many students to include. Will students and teacher members be voting or ex-officio? Board-member consensus leans towards ex-officio, since a large number of voting members will make it hard to establish quorum, among other things. Megan T. weighs in on the question of whether student reps should be in pairs or not (that it would be helpful for support but not necessary), and tells us what she knows of some other candidates—their year of study, extracurricular activities, and unique interests.

Finn Y. asks what our selection criteria are, and what we expect from our ex-officio members. Kristina M. lays out ideal hopes from teacher/admin representation from each school, student representation from each school, and at-large community representation. Finn Y. wonders what the functional difference is between ex-officio members and broader public, in this case. Scott G. voices that he likes the idea of the CEC coming up with non-binding recommendations, by way of consensus, for the ANWSD board to vote on. Diana seconds the word-choice “recommendations” to describe the nature of CEC consensus-items presented to the ANWSD board.

Laurie G. moves that for the time being, the student reps be set at 2, one towards 12th grade, one towards 9th grade, with a priority to include multi-school representation. Kristina M. seconds. Motion carries.

2. Kristina M. moves to accept CEC minutes from August 25, 2016, and seconds. Laurie C. wishes these minutes to reflect that her sentiment against following Robert’s Rules expressed during that meeting was in error. Motion carries.
3. Recap of plan for community engagement during upcoming open-houses. Finn Y. and Laurie G. both have extenuating circumstances interfering with their duties: Laurie C. will replace Finn Y. at Addison, and Finn Y. will replace Laurie G. in Vergennes. Kristina M. will find out if Tom Borchert can replace Finn Y. after all.
4. Brief discussion of how vision-statement community home-based focus-group might look. This is seen as a method that might help increase transparency and community engagement.
5. Laurie G. informs us that communications around contract negotiations will not be handled by the CEC, especially in light of our student and teacher membership. These communications seem too sensitive for a combined CEC to be able to handle in a productive way.

6. Discussion about how to process the data from the open-house vision-statement activity. The CEC will gather the community input, code and sort into emergent categories, compare against the vision generated by the board during our workshop, and report to the ANWSD board.
7. Focus groups with faculty members—how to make effective? Staff time is at a premium: Diana wants to know what is a realistic expectation of how much time we could expect from a staff meeting. Kaci P. thinks that some time is feasible with prior arrangement. Scott G. suggests that we introduce the focus group concept at a meeting, and leave materials for faculty input in teacher lounge for a week.
8. Some discussion on what kind of vision-statement information to solicit from staff. Is it a different question for them versus parents, versus broader community? Such as “What do you expect from a unified board, what support, etc.” Kaci P. wants to know if CEC has a role in communicating curricular decisions to broader public (i.e. common core). Consensus is yes, we have a role. Diana R. wants to know what we should ask students vis-à-vis ANWSD vision. Megan T. says that she wants to be more involved in community and in student voice amplification at board level. She says the question we have formulated for parents is a bad one to ask students. She thinks that not just school, but also community is important, and that they are separate but related. A lot of experiences in school go beyond school, she says, and she proceeds to give positive examples of applied and service-oriented experiences, with common emphasis on school/community integration and getting out of the “four white walls.” Finn Y. thinks this connects more broadly to the challenges of a new educational paradigm—away from the Industrial Revolution model, and towards something more organically formulated with optimal student/community experience as a top priority, rather than ease of evaluation.

Kaci P. suggests: “What makes you feel proud and engaged within the school and community?”
Wide-ranging discussion on possible follow-up questions.

Megan T. will try to find Stephanie Taylor to decide on the best way to solicit vision-statement feedback from the students.

9. Next CEC meeting is Tuesday, October 18th. Meeting adjourned 7:06 p.m.