

Evaluation/AIP Subcommittee

Tuesday, December 2, 2014
6:00 PM

School Administration Building
417 Rock Street
Fall River, MA 02720

AGENDA

- Discussion regarding stakeholder surveys
- Initial discussion of Superintendent's goals for 2014-2015

MINUTES

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 PM. A roll call for attendance showed that Mr. Andrade, Mr. Hart, and Mr. Maynard were present.

Also present were Superintendent Mayo-Brown and Mr. Mike Goodman from the Public Policy Center at UMass Dartmouth.

1. Discussion regarding stakeholder surveys

Mr. Andrade passed out the Proposed School Committee Goals to Mr. Goodman that were given at the last meeting and started to explain how the goals came to be.

Mr. Hart and Mr. Maynard did not have copies. A short recess was called at 6:04 PM so that copies could be made.

The meeting resumed at 6:06 PM and copies were given to the other subcommittee members. Mr. Andrade continued by reading over the goals noting that they involve a survey being done. He also noted that the Superintendent also needs to draw up goals for herself for the school year. The vision would be more general and the Superintendent's goals would be more specific but would need to be relevant to the vision.

Mr. Goodman asked if the vision was being developed currently.

Mr. Andrade said it was something they still needed to do. He thought they would want to survey the rest of the Committee to see what their thoughts were as well as the Superintendent's thoughts, because it is a collaborative effort. Afterward, they could incorporate that question along with the other two items for the survey.

Mr. Maynard asked what the time table for completion would be.

Mr. Andrade said somewhere around the mid-year they have to make a presentation of their findings to the School Committee.

Mr. Goodman asked if that was mid-academic year.

Mr. Andrade said that was correct and thought February might be a good time to try to have something to present to the full Committee. From that point on they would revisit it at the end of the school year and do the self-evaluation once again.

Mr. Goodman asked if what inspired this were concerns that the state had about the behavior and collaboration of the Committee.

Mr. Andrade responded that there was great deal of criticism of how the Committee operated and they were under quite a bit of scrutiny up until a month ago. They required certain things and the self-evaluation was one of them which he did not see as a bad thing.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown added that these were the three areas out of the self-evaluation that rose to the top.

Mr. Goodman asked if they were looking for feedback from various stakeholder groups on how they are doing on the three items recognizing that this would be a baseline. The questions would potentially be asked in the future to see if they were making progress and altering the perception of the stakeholders.

Mr. Andrade agreed.

Mr. Goodman asked if these were the only three issues that they would want to canvas the stakeholders about.

Mr. Andrade said at this point these were the ones that stuck out.

Mr. Goodman asked whose opinion they were seeking noting that some of it requires the stakeholders to be aware of what the Committee is doing. He explained that the administration, staff, and faculty would have that experience as people who are focused professionally on what is happening and they can be easily canvased because they are part of the system's e-mail. The survey of the public becomes more labor intensive and costly because there is no ready way to canvas them electronically and they would have to do a mass mailing or telephone survey which includes a lot of labor and time.

Mr. Goodman asked if the public was an appropriate audience to be canvasing at this point and if so, they could talk about how to do that practically. He imagined if they asked people if the meetings were respectful that most would not know or if they knew it might be from what they read in the newspaper. He is not suggesting that should not be a target group but thought it involved more time, energy, and expense and was not sure what it would yield. He said it would ultimately be their call. He added that an electronic survey could be done at very little cost. The Public Policy Center at UMass Dartmouth is grant and contract funded so they need to support themselves but they could work with them on an electronic survey essentially on a pro-bono basis to design the survey to be sure it was objectively administered by a third party and then summarize and present the results. If they factored in the public - which he acknowledged is an important stakeholder group - then they would have to figure out how they would resource that and how the survey would be structured so that it would be meaningful for their stakeholders.

Mr. Andrade thought they could survey parents.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown said they could survey parents; however, they have done so in the past and have gotten a very low response rate both online and on paper.

Mr. Goodman said in urban communities in particular if they were going to survey the public he would recommend doing it by telephone where they are scientifically sampling from both land lines and cell phones and getting enough respondents to make some valid conclusions. He noted that involves a lot of effort and time.

Mr. Maynard asked if there was going to be a cost.

Mr. Goodman said if they do it electronically he thinks the answer is no. If they have to get their call center going and hire people to make telephone calls then they will have to cover those expenses. He added that there may be a third party in the community that is particularly interested in this that may want to underwrite it.

Mr. Hart asked what would be collected in terms of information and data.

Mr. Goodman explained that they would set a target of who they were looking for and would look to get 400-500 successful telephone interviews representative of the target groups. They would then look to summarize within some statistical precision what that population's positions on those questions were in a valid way.

Mr. Maynard asked how many calls they would make and who they would target.

Mr. Goodman said it depends on how many answer the phone. They would want to make sure that everyone in the community who is eligible had an equal chance of being called. They should have a large enough number where each neighborhood would be represented. He said it is difficult now because telephone numbers do not necessarily track back to an address. He asked if there was reason to believe that people in different neighborhoods of Fall River would have different opinions.

Mr. Maynard believed so and Superintendent Mayo-Brown thought it was an interesting question.

Mr. Goodman said if they were going to do a neighborhood level public opinion survey then they want to make sure the neighborhoods are proportionately represented so that they do not over sample one end of the community and under sample the other. If they wanted to draw conclusions at the level of the neighborhoods then they have to get a much higher number of responses from each neighborhood which raises the number of calls and number of completions they need. No matter what they did they would want to make sure it was geographically broad enough to represent Fall River. When the numbers are large enough and the procedure is implemented properly they will get meaningful results.

Mr. Andrade thought at that point they needed to make a decision as to whether they wanted to go with the expanded survey or target a smaller group. He thought if they were going to scale it back, it would be worthwhile to get the parents' perceptions.

Mr. Goodman said if the administration is in the position to distribute and collect those forms and get them back to him then they can do that. He thought the hand completed surveys were tricky because they have to find someone to enter them but he can think that through and continue the conversation on how to do that. He thought it would be important for the data entry and analysis to be done by his

office so that there were no questions or concerns with the survey. They would need to rely on Superintendent Mayo-Brown's team to get the surveys out.

Mr. Hart asked if they were making a decision that night; he thought it was just informational.

Mr. Andrade said for the most part it is.

Mr. Goodman said he knows that the Superintendent has guidelines in place on how research is conducted in the school environment. They have not talked about surveying students so they are not dealing with minors or ethical issues and responding is voluntary. He said he knew it was a public meeting but if it was appropriate for some of them to talk offline regarding some of the particulars he is available to do that.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown said she knew this was his first glance at it but questioned the second goal regarding vision setting.

Mr. Goodman said when he interprets the goals off the top of his head; he thought they would have to translate the goals to a series of questions. He said he would want to think about them more but gave some examples. He thought the second goal was really about the extent to which the Committee is collaborating with the Superintendent to develop a vision and the question would be if that was happening or not.

Mr. Andrade thought they would want to have some idea from different groups as to what the vision should be.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown agreed and said the last goal says "seeking input from staff and parents".

Mr. Goodman said it sounded like there were two complimentary functions. One asking how the School Committee is doing on the three goals according to administration, staff, faculty and maybe parents and the second is seeking input towards the vision process. He thought they would need to spell out some parameters of what the vision would include. He thought it would be helpful to have a better outline of what the vision was that they were considering and/or providing options as to what the vision should be for input.

Mr. Hart suggested the Committee developing a vision and meeting with the Superintendent with her vision to collaborate and then they could introduce it to the stakeholders. The stakeholders in the meantime would interpret the vision in the collaborative and give their input. He asked if that made sense.

Mr. Goodman said it did and he is sure there are a number of ways community stakeholders weigh in on things and this would potentially be an additional systematic gathering of input.

Mr. Hart said they had discussed the stakeholder group at the previous meeting and that it would consist of business and community leaders as well as parents and staff. He thought the stakeholder group would not be large and the Superintendent could possibly select the group.

Mr. Goodman said he is seeing two projects there. One, the School Committee evaluation and a survey that solicits input on their specific goals and the other would be much more strategic around gathering input from various internal and external stakeholders within the community and school

department on what the vision for the schools should be. He thought the second project would need to be more comprehensive and targeted toward everyone in the community and not just employees of the school department.

Mr. Hart agreed that everyone has a stake in education.

Mr. Goodman said they would have to make a decision about whose input they are seeking and once that is presented to the Committee they would have to decide how they want to weigh it and craft a vision for the district. He thought that was a much more involved and labor intensive activity and they would have to find some way to resource it but that there might be stakeholders in the community who would be willing to underwrite it so that it is done correctly. He said they stand ready to help in any way they can and mentioned they have the capacity to write grants and work with the Superintendent's team to do things collaboratively if there is a desire to do that.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown asked Mr. Goodman if he had a sense as to what works best, having the Committee come up with a vision and put it out for feedback or start with a blank slate and collect feedback from stakeholders and then go work on a vision.

Mr. Goodman thought the Committee had to consider if they have a strong vision around where it wants the district to be. If so, he thought it might make more sense for them to test it. If the sense of the Committee is that they know where they want to go but want input before they go further, then taking the temperature of the relevant stakeholders and using that to form a retreat for discussion would be important. He suspected no matter which they choose there will be things that they think are important that are not on the radar screen of some of the stakeholders and maybe should be. He added that he thought it was more of a philosophical choice than a technical choice.

Mr. Andrade thought they should have something to show and asked if it made sense for them to start small initially and come up with something. If they indicated that the vision was a dynamic thing and does change they could test what people feel in the community and branch out as they feel comfortable. Initially, they would get the information sooner, would cost less and they could go from there. He noted that this is not something that would be done this year only but would be part of what they will be doing into the future.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown asked if he was suggesting having the Committee draft a vision and putting it out there for input.

Mr. Andrade said yes and noted that the Superintendent would need something to work with soon as well. He thought it was important to keep in mind that they had a lot to do this past year with the self-evaluation and the new Superintendent's evaluation. He did not see this being quite as heavy a workload moving forward because it would be much more routine.

Mr. Goodman said if some of the issues that the State was concerned about are still concerns then it might make more sense over time to inform the discussion of the vision with the public's input first otherwise, if trust and collaboration are problems, starting from scratch may be harder than starting with some relative information. He said it was ultimately their call.

Mr. Andrade said he is guessing they will report to the full Committee at the next School Committee meeting and asked how they felt about the recommendations on how to approach the survey.

Mr. Hart thought they should get support and information from the other members for goal one. He thought there needed to be a little more discussion about goal two.

Mr. Andrade thought they see if other members out could come back to the subcommittee with some more information on what they are thinking. If they came up with specifics the subcommittee could translate it into a broader vision. He thought they should see what they might be able to come back with over the next couple of weeks and maybe incorporate the different items into a vision.

Mr. Maynard thought that made sense.

Mr. Goodman said he thought that was right and that ideally the vision is laying out what they want to achieve and then the means towards that end and how they get there.

Mr. Andrade said at the same time they could recommend doing the survey of people's perceptions of how they are doing on Goals 1 and 3 and limit it to the school community including parents. He said Mr. Hart had mentioned the business community and he wonders whether or not that might be an easy group to get.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown thought it would be.

Mr. Andrade asked if that made sense given that they are not reaching out to anyone else.

Mr. Goodman thought if they could develop comprehensive, electronic contact information then it could work and not be a budget buster. If they were to recommend that the Superintendent work with the center to work this out then they could move forward on the practical steps to that happening.

Mr. Hart asked what the time frame was for the vision. They could introduce it to the full body on December 8th and they would come back with their responses and the subcommittee could meet again.

Mr. Andrade thought January so they could have something to discuss with the Superintendent in terms of her developing her goals because sometime in February she has to go to the full Committee with her goals for her evaluation.

Mr. Goodman said if all goes well (noting that a specific time is hard to predict) when the first phase is done, they would have the feedback from stakeholders on the Committee goals. He asked if they know how other School Committee's do this in terms of self-evaluation.

Mr. Andrade said no but when he did this on another committee years ago they had used a form the MASC had developed but it is much different now.

Mr. Maynard asked that every member get a copy of the handout of the goals Mr. Andrade provided prior to the next meeting.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown agreed to send it out and noted the goals were approved so now it is just determining how they will evaluate the progress on each of the goals in terms of the survey method.

Mr. Goodman said the first version of the survey/the one they would be administering in the near future, since there hasn't been much change, will essentially be a starting point before the changes needed are made. They would not have a sense of progress until the future.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown confirmed that Mr. Goodman's group could develop a survey on goals 1 and 3.

Mr. Goodman said that was correct and noted there is some overlap in the goals and a series of questions could be developed around those goals.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown said goals 1 and 3 would be most immediately and they would figure out goal 2 with the Committee.

Mr. Andrade asked if he could piece it together and outlined the motion.

MOTION: Mr. Maynard – Mr. Hart: To present to the Committee to authorize the Public Policy Center at UMass Dartmouth to prepare a survey to assess goals one and three of our School Committee goals. Additionally, we would be asking the Committee as a Whole to forward any thoughts on a vision statement to us for preparation to be presented at a following meeting.

Discussion

Mr. Hart added that was realizing that they have to come back to the subcommittee and talk to Mr. Goodman more in terms of the questions, survey, and how it would be administered.

Mr. Goodman said if it is appropriate, he thinks it would be easier to work with the smaller body.

The subcommittee agreed.

All were in favor	None were opposed	Motion Passed
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Mr. Andrade asked if there was anything further.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown said there was just a brief discussion around her goal setting.

Mr. Goodman handed out his business card.

Mr. Andrade realized he had forgotten to read the Open Meeting Law at the start of the meeting and did so at this time.

Mr. Goodman left the meeting immediately after at 6:49 PM.

2. Initial discussion of Superintendent's goals for 2014-2015.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown asked for clarification on the goal setting process for her evaluation. Based on feedback from the Committee she believed that they are now going to run on an October to October cycle rather than the July to June cycle.

Mr. Andrade asked if she was comfortable with that.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown said yes; whatever the Committee would like. If they do October to October, she would need to have her goals prepared and ready for School Committee discussion and approval in the very near future. She has started to draft the goals but before getting to far into the process wanted feedback from the subcommittee.

The Superintendent continued by explaining that she was drafting a goal around PPI as she did last year. The other goals she was pulling out of the Accelerated Improvement Plan that was adopted by the School Committee as their plan for continued district improvement. Outside of that, she questioned if there was anything else they wanted her to consider in terms of writing goals. When they went through the first evaluation cycle, different members place greater emphasis in approaching the evaluation tool. She gave examples. She asked about the emphasis and weight on what they really wanted her to be working on this year/highlight in her evaluation as areas of importance to the Committee. She said she did not have that sense yet. It was not something that needed to be decided on that night but was the feedback she was looking for from the subcommittee as she continues to develop the goals.

Mr. Maynard said one of the goals he would like to see is class size reduction.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown agreed and said she could incorporate that and class size has started to be addressed with the School Committee approval of additional paraprofessionals. She noted they are out of space and cannot open up more classrooms but they can reduce the adult to student ratio in the classrooms.

Mr. Andrade wondered if it made sense for her to get an impression from the full committee individually to see what they think is important.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown agreed and was not sure of the best way to do that. She questioned if it should be through one-on-one meetings. She thought that is what occurred through the evaluation process with having seven different opinions around what was most important. She wondered how they could help her narrow those or get some consensus.

Mr. Andrade suggested looking at what came up most frequently and hash it out.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown asked what process they saw her using in terms of getting that information.

Mr. Hart thought the one-on-one meetings were a good idea.

Mr. Andrade agreed and suggested the subcommittee meeting with the Superintendent sometime after that.

Mr. Hart thought that once they took a survey of what goals were the top five, they could discuss it in the subcommittee in an open forum. He suggested adding it to the agenda with Mr. Goodman in February. He asked the Superintendent if that would work or if it would need to be earlier.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown said it would have to be earlier than February. Her mid-year review would be scheduled for March with an October to October cycle. She would like to have her goals approved at the January meeting.

Mr. Hart asked when the next meeting was and asked if they could meet the first week in January.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown said that would give her time to meet with individual members to get a sense of what they want. She could draft goals based on those meetings and then they could have another subcommittee meeting the first full week of January to discuss it again.

There was discussion about when members would be contacted/scheduled.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown asked their suggestion in phrasing her request for that information from members.

Mr. Andrade suggested she ask what their priority goals were for the district for the remainder of this academic year.

Mr. Maynard brought up absenteeism and asked how the Red Chair initiative was working.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown said they had a meeting with principals that afternoon and reviewed attendance data which is improving but they are having trouble getting traction with Durfee with chronic absenteeism.

Mr. Andrade said hopefully that the improvements at the lower grade levels will show the improvement once those students reach high school.

Superintendent Mayo-Brown said she would set up individual meetings with Committee members and pose the question "what are your priorities for the school year" and then see if there is a consensus coming out of that to report back to the subcommittee.

MOTION: Mr. Hart – Mr. Maynard: To adjourn.

All were in favor

None were opposed

Meeting adjourned at 7:01 PM

Respectfully submitted,



Administrative Assistant for
School Committee Services