

June 12, 2024

**COMMUNICATIONS & COMMUNITY RELATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE**

**Virtual Communications & Community Relations Subcommittee  
Thursday, June 12, 2024 at 5:30 p.m.  
Broadcast from the Media Arts Studio  
454 Broadway, Cambridge, MA 02138**

Called for the purpose of reviewing the Communications and Content Survey responses, discussing the district's website and reviewing recent examples for improvement.

**Subcommittee Members Present:** Elizabeth Hudson (Chair); Richard Harding; David Weinstein

**Other School Committee Members:** Vice Chair Caroline Hunter

**Also Present:** Monica Leon, Project Manager; Lily Rivera, Senior Communications Specialist; Lisa Waters, Digital & Creative Services Manager; Sujata Wycoff, Director of Communications;

**Chair Hudson** started the meeting at 5:34 p.m. She welcomed the group and the Confidential Secretary read the call of the meeting. **Chair Hudson** made introductory remarks and turned the meeting over to Ms. Wycoff. Ms. Wycoff and her CPSD colleagues gave the following presentation which can be found on this [website](#).

Ms. Wycoff shared that the survey goal was to collect quantitative and qualitative data from at least 40% of families who represent the family and student demographic makeup of the district. She noted that the response rate of 33% was below goals which may have been attributed to survey fatigue as their survey came on the heels of the district survey. The survey was open for four weeks. There was a greater response rate from elementary parents and Caucasian families.

The group discussed several topics related to the presentation slides:

#### **ParentSquare/Communications Outreach**

- 86% of families have one caregiver registered for ParentSquare, and 65% have two caregivers registered.
- Emphasized the importance of engaging all families.
- ParentSquare can communicate via email, app, and text, with some caregivers registering for all three.
- Addressed the challenges faced during the first year of ParentSquare implementation.
- Registrants can choose their preferred method of receiving information.
- Discussed the differences between district platforms and CPSD communication platforms.
- Highlighted the availability of interpretive services.
- Evaluated the ROI considering the volume of information parents receive.

#### **Plain Language and Accessibility**

- Stressed the importance of addressing accessibility issues for caregivers.
- Underlined the need for using plain language in communications.
- Noted the training of CPSD colleagues on using plain language.
- Currently, 50-60% of district communications use plain language.
- Identified plain language as a key area for improvement.

**Website**

- Emphasized the importance of building consistency among educators.
- Highlighted the necessity of staff training.
- A project plan has been outlined.
- The current CMS does not allow for a comprehensive overview of the thousands of pages.
- The new CMS will offer increased functionality.
- Initial steps involve content evaluation and coordination with department leaders.
- Fall 2024 will include stakeholder meetings and demonstrations.
- Commitment to partnering with the new Chief Information Officer.
- Selecting a new CMS could take several months, followed by two months for content transfer and an additional two months for final review.
- The team is reviewing the current site to identify unpopular pages.
- Mayor interns are assisting with the project this summer.
- Emphasized the importance of involving caretakers, students, educators, and staff in the process.

In the closing minutes, the group discussed the effectiveness of paper communications to augment to digital efforts. Ms. Wycoff noted that postcards are effective outreach tools. **Member Weinstein** suggested coordinating with the City's communications outreach. Ms. Wycoff urged Committee members to encourage CPSD families to read the Monday newsletter.

**Chair Hudson** adjourned the meeting at 7:00 p.m.