



STRATEGIC PLANNING: COMMUNICATIONS/MARKETING

**MEETING NOTES
JANUARY 16, 2018
6:00 - 7:30 P.M.**

Dawn Demick welcomed the committee members and provided a short history of the recent strategic planning process in East China. The District was assisted by the Michigan Association of School Boards. As part of this process, four committees were formed: Communications/Marketing, Comprehensive Building Plan, Multi-Tier Systems of Support (MTSS), and Professional Learning Communities (PLC's).

The committee members introduced themselves. While the committee is made-up of a good variety of community and staff members, additional community involvement is always welcomed. Each committee member received a green folder containing an agenda along with documents of additional information. Enrollment information showed the District's enrollment is declining. Of special note is the number of graduating seniors vs. incoming kindergartners. Enrollment numbers appear to level off at this year's K-3rd grade level.

The overall goal of the Communications/Marketing Committee is to implement a systematic marketing plan to promote positive, clear, concise information to be communicated throughout the community and surrounding districts. This could be done through newsletters, editorials, grants, social media, and correcting misinformation.

The Strategic Planning group had specifically requested that the Communications/Marketing Committee look at ways to:

1. Make use of all media depending on audience receiving communication
2. Consider a Pro Bono PR person to create a strategy for communication
3. Provide proactive public positive feedback for community support

The committee members had extensive conversation regarding the various ways that the district could better communicate with its students, parents, and the community. Currently, the District uses several different means of communication including District and school newsletters, website, Facebook, Twitter, Remind, principal's blogs, and Skyward. Although the District's website is the main source of communication, the committee discussed the positive aspects of social media, especially Facebook. Remind is also a good source for short, quick reminders to students, parents, and staff. It was noted that Facebook has the ability to provide information that allows for public comment only after approval from a page administrator.

The committee agreed that a more proactive communications plan is needed to combat negative perceptions in the community. The District needs to celebrate its successes and share this information to the greater St. Clair County community. Positive communications is essential for future bond proposals, attracting new residents to the area, as well as drawing new schools of choice students to the District.

A committee member suggested that in addition to developing a Communications/Marketing plan, the committee also consider "rebranding" the District similar to what the Port Huron School District did last year. This would include a new, fresh logo and "catchy" short motto similar to the "Great Staff. Great Students. Great Parents. Great Community" slogan that is used on the website.

The committee held discussions about the true cost of educating a student vs. the reality of our current state funding. School funding is a significant and complex issue in the State of Michigan. It was noted that the per pupil funding allowance provided by the State to the local school districts is not enough to truly educate that child.

The Committee set the following goals which will be further developed at the next meeting:

1. To define specific ways to communicate information to all demographic groups within the community including senior citizens, parents, students, and the community at large.
2. To consider rebranding options, including a fresh new logo and tagline, which will ultimately contribute to the district's long-term success.
3. To inform the community of the true cost of educating a child and the financial impact that must be considered when doing what is in the best interest of the students.

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 30 from 4:30 - 6:00 p.m.

Meeting adjourned at 7:28 p.m.