

## COMMUNICATIONS TASKFORCE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BOARD

### **Create Clear Marketing Message**

Define the "main message or brand" that the administration ad hoc committee will use for all communication (print, electronic, merchandise, etc.) to promote the school. Engage marketing specialists within the PCCS community to assist in this process.

### **Streamlined Communications**

1. Ensure accurate, thorough and timely communication of board related information by appointing Board President or other appropriate person to be "Communication Representative" and to be responsible for the following:
  - a) Board area on website including: frequently asked questions, explanations of board policies, how meetings work, differences between types of meetings and types of committees, OMA, how to get an item on the agenda, closed session. (See Woodland's and other schools' websites for examples.)

Once the administration has put in place blogs and RSS feeds:

- b) Streamline official meeting notices, agendas, minutes etc. by creating section of website using blog software so that committee chairs and board members can input information in directly. RSS feeds to these blogs would allow parents to pick and choose the information they would like to subscribe to. Would require set-up and brief training as well as password protection.  
OR  
Board Information in Friday newsletter with FAQs, meeting dates, upcoming events, links to website.
2. Make board meetings transparent.  
Board meeting ground rules, including those for public comment, posted at front of room during meetings.
3. Clearly define roles.
  - a) Clearly define the roles of the Director, Principal, Teachers, and Board.
  - b) Honor "escalation" flow chart (to be created by administration).

## **Healing Communities**

1. Model respectful communication practices and an attitude of “the Golden Rule”.
  - a) Give others the “benefit of the doubt” when a problem occurs. (When we have a question about another’s behavior, first speak directly with that person and work to understand rather than gossiping or bringing up accusatory issues at board meetings until they have been addressed one-on-one.)
  - b) State positions as proposals.
  - c) Follow Tribes Principals of Attentive Listening, Appreciations, Mutual Respect.
  - d) Use “I statements”.
  - e) Use empathic listening skills.
  - f) Express appreciation to others for participation, whether or not you agree with them.
  - g) Diffuse conflict with civility and “turning the other cheek.”
  - h) Take breaks at meetings when participants do not follow these rules.
2. Invite Peggy Wingo, parent, psychologist, and Communications Taskforce member to speak with the board about how we could better accomplish a culture of civility.
3. Ask a staff member who is well versed in Tribes to educate us on how to better use its principles.
4. Invite a board member or outside facilitator to attend board meetings and hold us accountable to #1 above.
5. Have posters at board meetings which site the rules in #1.

## **Issues management**

1. Develop a plan for communicating on hot button issues that fall under board’s roles and responsibilities such as contract negotiations with key administrators. Plan might include: anticipating hot button issues, keeping community informed of the process and writing and distributing a 1 page paper describing the issue’s history, board vote and rationale.
2. Develop a plan for crisis communications.

### ***Communication practices which have already been put in place and are recommended to continue:***

- *Continue to offer one board e-mail address for board questions. This is consistent with Woodland and Fremont and gives parents a conduit for their questions. Board President will refer non-board questions to their appropriate source, answer questions*

*which are appropriately board related and share answers with other board members. (This recommendation needs to be reinforced often via communications with parent body.)*

---REITERATE NO INDIVIDUAL BOARD E-MAIL ADDRESSES

- *Continue board highlights of monthly board meetings to be written by Director as a way to emphasize leadership chain at school.*
- *Continue to explain the context for agenda items. This can be done via clear cover sheets (with an eye toward conserving paper) which explain the issues, context and history of agenda items.*
- *Anticipate questions by audience in response to board decisions. And, have President provide explanations when possible.*
- *The position of Board Liaison is unclear and might complicate communications. Do away with that position and strike it from any documents which refer to it (e.g. in the "Board Meeting Procedures #4").*
- *Continue to follow our media communications plan which outlines who is responsible for communication with press, etc.*