

Communications Committee

Minutes

Thurs. July 30, 2020, 9 am

Zoom video conference

link: <https://us04web.zoom.us/j/78113836165?pwd=Y3IlZjFJR0NmNmZ5R05sSVZDQWFnUT09>

Present (underlined): Tammy B., Maggie B., Shannon F., John G. Justin G., Carrie H., Jen H., Jessie H., Cheri H., Girish J., Heather K., Joell P., Amanda S., Teresa W.; Michelle K.

I. 2020-21 MSA School Planning

A. Update on MDE School plan, and Sports/Activity plan

1. Board will review and approve MSA's fall school opening plan on Aug. 6 after the Gov's announcement today. John will send an email to parents (no survey), and present to the BOD that he recommends school start in the Distance Learning scenario.
2. Joell will focus on DL rather than hybrid, but clarified that we will continue to plan for future hybrid at some point this year.
3. Concern about parents having information about school supplies (Carrie updated lists on website), also NHS is doing school supply drive; fall sports: Shannon met with coaches, MSHSL meeting on Aug. 4 for decisions; info about student schedules, fundraising, events, etc.
 - a. John will put info in announcements, that will start going out on Fridays starting July 31
 - b. teachers can also communicate with families via announcements if needed
4. Joell - need to check to make sure that all families receive announcements; Justin will make updates to verify; some parents don't have logins yet, so important announcements could be sent via Skyward; John recommended that all email addresses be imported into the email system - Justin to work on right away
5. Joell and Justin will work on communication re: students attending vs. students DL if that question needs to be added, and this will be added to school registration which will go out Aug. 10/11 to new families with response requested by possibly Aug 21(TBD).
6. Joell will send John an updated schedule to include in his communication that we are following a synchronous learning schedule.
7. MDE asks schools to survey parents and teachers about their needs after schools have chosen the scenario they are opening with. Cheri will work with Justin and Joell on the parent survey; Cheri and Jessie work on the teacher survey to go out after Aug. 6.

B. Preplanning survey process and parent focus groups

1. What groups received how many surveys sent out by John? Parents (2 surveys-satisfaction of spring DL, and concerns going forward), staff (1 survey, students (1 survey) - reviewed at July 27 BOD meeting, except student survey data was not in pkt, but sent to BOD after meeting.
2. What other surveys need to go out?
 - a) Parents (1 after Gov. announcement, and 1 early Sept. to check in how things are going [also to students]) - Will survey every other month (parents will give John input for questions to ask)
 - b) it was expressed that needs for SpEd students and EA support should also be included in survey(s)
3. What groups are analyzing the data? John, Justin, Joelle, Shannon and Tom
4. How is the survey/parent focus groups information being used?
 - a) parents will need to choose if their student will learn from home, if hybrid or in person, and will need to commit to that (Joell will ask that right away)- will revisit that

question for each semester; MSA will be reassessing as we go (some districts [ie-Farmington] have already asked for commitments to learning scenario preferences); John reminded us that disclaimers will have to be made re: restrictions and office clearance.

- C. **Information document for specific parent guidelines/expectations** specifics need to be added and forms created - who is creating and communicating this? (brought up in School Planning group, but not assigned)

Parent Expectations Document

1. Health guidelines need to be included as to when to/not to send your child to school; Amy Block, school nurse, sent a screening list to Amanda for parents that can be used; Michelle added that CDC has screening information with checkboxes available as PDF.
2. Cheri and Heather will work on this beginning next week - things to include how to support parents as they support, not homeschool, their students (recommendations of setting up a place to study, how to access Google calendars, how to use Google Classroom, communicating with teachers, etc. Three focus areas: academic, health, supporting students at home. How can parents help/support each other?

Google Classroom Training for Parents/Teachers

3. Jessie and Heather are interested in a Google Classroom training for parents; Michelle has two generic handouts she will show Aug. 3 at Google for Education training for interested teachers, they can be tweaked and included in the parent communication; Justin also has some ideas about creating classrooms for teachers and will look into this; virtual training tech night for parents/families on how to use it - Justin researching on this before (8/3) tech training day (MORE discussion under A.II.2)

Additional Discussion on MSA Fall School Opening Plan

4. The question was raised as to whether groups are finished working on the planning document
5. Teresa clarified that EL documentation needs to be included in the plan; Michelle also has concerns re: non-English speaking families and notification; should have information translated to parents' primary language; Joell looking through surveys if there are non-english speaking families (Teresa will help) and look at any TransAct Parent Notices that might be available; Cheri mentioned *Talking Points* might be helpful for translating emails into different languages - will look into this more deeply (passed info to Tom who is also looking into it). Michelle says Gmail can also do this using Google Translate.

- D. **Process and assigned responsibilities to communicate information to families teachers and community**

1. John says announcements will be sent out daily (during school year - main source of communication). Skyward info alerts will still be used. Staff and teachers will be updated re: email, staff meetings; monthly newsletter
2. Maggie and Heather suggest that there be a Google Classroom for staff to access all information such as documents needed and announcements/communication; Michelle could make template for John
3. Justin can help us sort out email addresses and Google Classroom vs Google Groups as a platform for staff communication.

- E. **Website Needs** - take down Spring DL, start 2020-21 school year version

1. Justin recommends that we pull down the current form and update/revamp it for the needs as they are now re: COVID-19 and 2020-21. He suggests that those responsible for communication to parents and students should submit their updates to Justin and Carrie as

- soon as possible; John further recommends that once the decision re: school this fall is posted, everything gets updated ASAP; Justin will begin on clearing it now as he can.
2. Cheri recommends that things be archived and an update re: the August 6th board meeting be posted. Cheri will send a draft to Justin after the Gov's announcement later today; any communication that parents need to know needs to get out as soon as possible (ie-laptop pick up via Justin); What a one-stop shop for COVID info for families.
 3. Heather questions that in light of parent engagement in board meetings, can board packets/information be made digitally available for board meeting attendees since meetings are virtual? Parents would like to be able to see what items are being referred to because they have input and feedback that might be valuable; Tammy has concerns re: survey confidentiality if sharing information publicly; Maggie will take care of filtering the information and making it available to the public attendees; Justin has assured that the agenda will be updated to the BOD tab and that the calendar link to the meeting will not disappear as soon as the event begins.
 4. If John sends out anything via daily announcement or Skyward, then that info can be automatically updated to this page by Justin and Carrie

II. Learning Management System/Hybrid and Remote Concerns

A. Google Learning Management System (LMS):

1. What parts of Google LMS is the school community going to use other than Google Classroom?
 - a. Justin just learned that Google Classroom is the schoolwide LMS; Justin asks whether GSuite Enterprise (cheaper than Zoom but not as feature rich as Zoom, which also has breakout rooms and centralized management)
 - b. should be purchased (and move to Google Meet) or if purchase license for ZOOM; Jessie confirmed that Shannon spoke with Justin re: software and hardware needed; Justin asked to whom he should present our options and the pros and cons of each; Cheri feels that teachers should be included in the decision making re: tech tools and technology being considered.
 - c. Justin also questions the need for GoGuardian.
 - d. Heather asks if we can solicit an optional technology donation; Justin says if it is technology needed for education, no, but he says we can probably brainstorm with AFC for ideas (ie-ask parents to donate \$\$ to tech needs on the fee form)
 - e. . He warns against impeding on Parent Team's (PTO?) time to collect donations. Also, fees are not resolved with Ken as of yet since we are unclear on what is happening re: school opening.
 - f. Justin is not concerned with having enough money in the tech budget. He plans to compile the teacher tech surveys and go from there. He will try to pull together some type of meeting to make some decisions once he looks at the surveys (working with Adam Bartz working to get this rolling but waiting on timing)
 - g. If in Hybrid scenario will need to spend a lot of money to increase bandwidth for teachers all doing synchronous learning from the school buildings
2. Who is responsible for creating and conducting training (for families, students, and staff), and when will that happen?
 - a. Justin is working on training videos for staff; Michelle K leading optional Aug. 3 teacher training and will produce videos for staff.
 - b. Justin asks about training for parents and is willing to make videos for parents. He states that some students will need some training but that generally teachers will

need to teach their students what they need them to know since all teachers approach things differently.

- c. Michelle asks about training for new students with accessing their class codes for Google classrooms. Justin says he could set up Google Classrooms for all teachers and load with their students (though some teachers may want to set up their own classrooms)

3. How are activities/Rschool/other external communications going to be integrated into Google LMS - brought up at last meeting, but has not been discussed by Justin, Shannon, Carrie, Amanda yet

B. Communication with non-staff advisors -how will they have access to zoom or other platforms to conduct activities online and how does that work? - Shannon informs that she will meet with advisors the week of Aug. 10th to create a plan/see what needs are. Justin will be invited for tech support;

C. Video Conference Best Practices Needs - tabled for now and address later. Justin suggests that perhaps we go over this at our next meeting.

III. Old Business

A. Email communication expectations - Comments from teachers, staff and parents they are having issues with communication from the administrators to the MSA community

1. Reminder that at last year's Aug. mtg, we reviewed survey results and responded to family and teacher concerns about a lack of email responsiveness by establishing a procedure to improve communications. That procedure called for:
 - administrators to respond to teachers/staff/parents, and staff/teachers to respond to administrators/parents in 1-2 school days. If there is no time for a full response within the 1-2 day timeframe, then we would respond back 'I received your email and will get back to you,' then followup.
 - At the beginning of the school year, staff and families were notified of the email timeline expectations
2. There is a need to keep each other in the loop, especially with the changing nature of our schooling and procedures. Recommend reminding staff of this commitment once we're back to work.

B. Activities webpage descriptions update process

1. Activities description pages: Survey went out in May and again to get info to update Activities webpage. Shannon and Carrie still waiting to hear from some advisors and will reach out to any missing activities once school starts)
2. R-school does not have any games/dates on it because we don't know anything; Heather asked question re: the continued use of R-school for student; Shannon says students like R-school once they understand how to use it and plans to continue to use it; Tammy recommends we continue to work on improving website updates. Shannon, Carrie, Justin, etc.(the webpage/activity group) are continuing to meet and work together toward this.

C. Weekend Update-teacher alert system - bugs worked out? - We still plan to use this. Justin will make sure it is ready.

D. Calendar - Important Religious Holidays

- Michelle is working on this but has not heard back from some religious groups(e.g., Greek Orthodox). She has shared what she has and will solicit more information.
- It is stated that Carrie was asked by John to hold off on publishing (John had to leave meeting) - Cheri will check with John.

E. Website Content Management Task Force - update - Justin will get the technology committee going, which will likely influence this task force. He hopes to have the task force moving by mid-September, but he is willing to make quick, straightforward changes as needed.

F. Calendar and Website Task Force - update - they met, but missing notes in transition between note takers; will update again next meeting

IV. Committee membership 2020-21 School Year

A. Parent signup - Back to School Day - don't know what this looks like yet, hope parents who are on Committee will stay for next year term

B. Teacher signup - Back to School week - hope teachers on Committee will stay for next year term

C. Committee chair - Heather Krisko is willing to chair for at least the first semester. Cheri and Heather will co-chair the next meeting, then Heather will chair starting Sept.

V. Next meeting: (2nd Wed of each month) **Weds., Aug. 12, 8 am, remote** (Zoom link sent with calendar invite)

- Global external communications guideline plan
- review committee's final report (last school year)