

Walton Central School District
Shared Decision Making Committee

April 26, 2017

1. Update Shared Decision Making (SDM) Plan
 - a. The committee will work on updating the SDM plan at its June meeting.

2. Parent Engagement/Involvement
 - a. Robert Knuschke reported that the high school was trying to combine activities with events. For instance, serving meals and having bands play on Open House nights.
 - b. Michael Snider said there was more parent involvement at the elementary level in general. He was using school messenger and letters home to communicate with parents.
 - c. Roger Clough pointed out that the district was using its web page, facebook, Instagram and newsletters to communicate with parents.
 - d. Mary Phraner indicated that the communication is good, but residents do not pay attention to what is communicated. She also indicated that sometimes the district over communicates.
 - e. Domenick Piccinich said the morale is high at the middle school.
 - f. Chad Hall indicated that the district should have a “sync calendar” app that allowed parents to sync their calendars with the school calendar.
 - g. Jennifer Wright wanted better notice of high school awards. Mr. Knuschke indicated that the students did not want to notify the parents.
 - h. Chad Hall asked about a survey, Roger Clough indicated that there was one in the works.

3. Community School Model
 - a. Robert Knuschke stated this requires that we open campus to the community, not advisable in this age of security concerns.
 - b. Lori Connolly indicated that she was more concerned about the school working with outside agencies, such as was described in the governor’s budget proposal for “community schools” last year.
 - c. Greg Dale indicated that the “community schools” that the governor talked about last year did not have a very good definition, so it was difficult to implement any concrete programs.
 - d. Robert Knuschke pointed out several ways that in which the schools are currently partnered with the community.

4. Economic Concerns
 - a. The number of families in economic distress in Walton is most likely higher than our numbers suggest.

- b. Programs to help: free breakfast, orange/black boutiques, backpack program, free breakfast and lunch in the summer, and summer school programs throughout the district.
- 5. FOCUS Update/Middle School Review
 - a. Distance Technical Assistance Review (DTAR) is a voluntary review. Recommended increased leadership at the middle school, a separate identity for the middle school, more work on curriculum/lesson plans, and increasing the frequency of higher level questions like “why is that so?” and “how did you get that answer?”
 - b. Lori Connolly inquired about the School Comprehensive Education Plan (SCEP). Roger Clough replied that we did not have any details yet.
 - c. Lori Cetta inquired about whether student interviews occurred at the review. Michelle Reed indicated that the reviewers did not end up meeting with students.
- 6. Budget Update.
 - a. Greg Dale indicated that the district is proposing a \$ 20, 530,797 budget proposal with a 1.37 % tax levy increase. The budget would take an additional \$ 50,500 out of fund balance to balance the budget. The vote is on May 16, 2017.
- 7. Community Questions
 - a. Chad Hall asked about whether the district could bring in special education children from other districts. The answer was that we have done this in the past, and that this depended on whether we had the extra space in classrooms and whether the needs of the incoming children matched the spaces that we had.
 - b. Lori Connolly asked about the role of Roger Clough, Greg Dale, and the Board of Education in the budget. The answer was that Roger Clough and Greg Dale provided information and proposals to the Board of Education, and the Board of Education provided direction to Roger Clough and Greg Dale and ultimately passed the budget.
 - c. Chad Hall asked about negativity in the community. A long discussion then ensued about how to combat negativity, and how people often preferred to accept rumors over facts. No solutions at how to change this dynamic was offered.
- 8. A handout on the district initiatives for the 2016-2017 school year was given to the members of the committee.