

**THE GLOUCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

*Our mission is for all students to be successful, engaged, lifelong learners.*

**Program Sub-Committee Meeting Minutes**

Friday, June 24, 2011

Superintendent's Conference Room – District Office

8:30 a.m.

**Members**

Roger Garberg, Chairman  
Michelle Sweet  
Val Gilman

**Administration Present**

Dr. Richard Safier, Superintendent  
Assistant Superintendent Shayne Trubisz

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**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Garberg called the meeting to order at 8:40 a.m. and noted that he was recording the meeting.

**II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- A. Program Sub-Committee Minutes of May 13, 2011 and June 3, 2011** – Chairman Garberg indicated that the May 13<sup>th</sup> minutes have already been approved by the full School Committee. Mr. Garberg asked why the approval of minutes had been placed on the agenda. Mrs. Gilman indicated that she will speak with Stephanie Delisi about this matter.

**III. REPORTS/DELIBERATIONS/DISCUSSION**

- A. Strategy Development** – Chairman Garberg characterized today's meeting as reacting to the Community Satisfaction Survey data presented at the last meeting, hearing any administration comments on the results collected, and exploring any Superintendent goals that might result from the survey. Dr. Safier expressed his reluctance about communicating the results to the public because only 10% of parents responded.

Chairman Garberg pointed out that there is a difference between the size of a sample and whether a sample is representative and stated that the survey is representative of engaged parents. He stated that the sample size was adequate, but the representativeness needed to be carefully explained. He pointed out that we made an agreement with parents to communicate the results of the survey. Dr. Safier responded that he has not yet reviewed the results of the survey with his staff and that once the results are published, he wants to be in a position to defend anything that is put forward and not be put on the defensive.

Mrs. Gilman agreed with Mr. Garberg that there has to be some type of closure, which will increase the amount of responses to future surveys. She would like to express the strong points and the areas of concern while at the same time emphasizing that there was a very low response from the high school and the pool of responses is small or not clearly representative of the high school.

Chairman Garberg asked Dr. Safier what statements he would feel comfortable making. Dr. Safier expressed his concern that the more we use the survey to address negative issues, the greater the challenge will be to indicate where the facts are coming from. He stated that highlighting negative issues with low sample sizes makes him nervous.

Chairman Garberg agreed that the response fraction from the high school was poor and possibly unrepresentative of high school parents. He suggested that Dr. Safier's statements focus on the strong satisfaction with many dimensions of the elementary schools, the strong feeling about World Language at the middle school, and our commitment to finding ways to improve communication and to further engage parents and volunteers.

Mrs. Gilman stated that, in her opinion, Dr. Safier's entry plan is a key part of the strategic plan. She would like to see him communicate more about the scope of his entry plan and include a couple of things that he learned as a result of the survey. For each level, the two biggest things we learned, two positive things, and one or two initiatives that are being worked on should be highlighted to show that there is momentum in addressing the issues.

Mrs. Gilman believes that if we do nothing with the data, it will hurt the future response rate. We should make it clear that it was not as good a sample as we hoped for but that it will be used in Dr. Safier's entry plan. Dr. Safier stated that he is comfortable using the data internally as the basis for conversation. He is looking for a way to prevent any criticism that we are working from data that is not representative.

Chairman Garberg believes that statements can be made from the survey based on the areas where we have adequate data, and a discussion followed about the adequacy of the sample. Mrs. Sweet suggested making a general statement about the survey, stating that Dr. Safier is reviewing the data with his staff and figuring out where to go from here.

Mrs. Gilman related her past experience with surveys in high tech companies and how the results were shared. She also indicated that the results of our survey reflect many of the same issues she has been hearing from parents. She recommended that Chairman Garberg draft a short "My View" column to be reviewed by the subcommittee. She also recommended that Dr. Safier talk to his staff about whether they believe the results of the survey match their perceptions.

Mrs. Gilman suggested that Dr. Safier's "My View" should be a continuation of his entry plan and contain a reference to the survey, stating that he is looking at the results. The data could also be posted on the website to show that there has been integrity in the process. Mrs. Gilman would also like Chairman Garberg to summarize the data in four slides to share the results with the full School Committee.

Mrs. Sweet did not believe that Chairman Garberg should be coming up with analysis of the data. She stated that Dr. Safier was capable of coming up with an analysis that he wants to discuss with his staff and that it should not come from a School Committee member. Mrs. Gilman agreed that Dr. Safier should be the spokesperson for the data and that there needs to be sensitivity to the fact that it is really about improvement and parent involvement. She suggested that Chairman Garberg could draft a document summarizing the data linked to Dr. Safier's entry plan that can be distributed in backpacks in the fall.

Chairman Garberg stated that he will redraft the report to deemphasize results from the high school, where the data are sparse. However, he believes that the results from the elementary and middle schools are strongly warranted by the data.

Shayne Trubisz stated that she appreciates the work that Chairman Garberg has done on the survey. She agrees that we need to respond to the people who took the survey but that we would like to have a greater response next time. Chairman Garberg agreed that the presentation of the results should indicate that it is not a survey of all district parents but represents a sample of relatively engaged parents. The data suggests that we have parents who are strong advocates for our schools and that feel very strongly about the value of the academics in their schools.

Mrs. Gilman suggested having one more Program Subcommittee meeting this summer to discuss possible Superintendent goals to recommend to the full School Committee and to review Chairman Garberg's modified report. She requested that Dr. Safier come prepared with a draft of high points and areas of concern for the subcommittee's review. That meeting was scheduled for Friday, July 15, 2011 at 8:30 a.m. in the Superintendent's Conference Room.

Mrs. Gilman also advised Chairman Garberg that the data needs to be shared with the full School Committee on Wednesday night. Dr. Safier pointed out some small corrections that should be made to the report.

Finally, Dr. Safier informed the subcommittee that he will be meeting with principals between June 20 to 22 to get a sense of priorities and expectations and how they will be met.

**IV. ADJOURNMENT**

On a motion by Mrs. Gilman, seconded by Mrs. Sweet, it was unanimously

**VOTED:** To adjourn the Program Sub-Committee Meeting of June 24, 2011 at 10:00 a.m.

*Maria Puglisi, Recording Secretary*