

Student Achievement Committee
February 23, 2021
Meeting Minutes

Laura Errington
John Kilcoyne
Colleen Duggan
Linda Dansa

Focus: Social-Emotional Health, Communication

Guests:

Amy Pecoraro (FMS Counselor, Standards Leader)
Michael Sullivan (Technology & Data Privacy Officer)

Colleen opened the meeting by identifying the focus of our meeting (social-emotional health & communication).

She introduced Mike Sullivan and noted how we recently launched Blackboard as our communication tool. Mike stated that Blackboard links to social media and offers the option of pushing out communication via text or email, in addition to offering a Robo Call feature.

John asked if this would be replacing Bloomz, and Mike stated that this was a decision that had not yet been made by the district.

Blackboard allows up to 140 characters in a text message. He described the delivery of messages electronically, as well as the Robo Call feature. Mike added that a message will be going out today at 4:00 regarding student athletics.

John asked how this goes out, and Mike described how our information in School Tool is integrated into Blackboard. John also asked about secondary contacts, and Mike stated that secondary primary contacts have not yet been added but will be in the future. Amy Pecoraro noted that she has received a great deal of positive information from parents regarding the communication they have received through Blackboard.

Mike stated that the robo call feature in Bloomz did not work effectively, and Blackboard fills that gap in our communication.

John asked if there is a reason to keep Bloomz down the road. Mike stated that Bloomz is similar to a classroom management feature found in applications such as Class Dojo. He added that if Blackboard works for our district, we may decide to step away from Bloomz. Laura stated that whatever the district chooses as our tool for communication, it will be important to educate our parents. The variety of new applications such as Bloomz have proven to be challenging for some parents.

John asked about the financial impact, and Mike noted that Blackboard is not free. If we remove Bloomz from our resource listing, it would offset the cost of adding Blackboard. Mike repeated that Blackboard is supported by BOCES. He also described the secure file transfer between Blackboard, School Tool and enVision.

John agreed that the robo call feature has filled a gap that existed when we lost our robo call capabilities earlier this year. Mike added that once we knew the data integration was secure, we were able to add this communication tool.

Laura asked if this is the same tool that colleges use, and Mike verified that it is used by schools and organizations.

Colleen reinforced the importance of this new tool in improving our district communication to families.

Amy Pecoraro and Linda presented an overview of the district's comprehensive developmental school counseling plan. Specifically, they shared highlights from the recent advisory council meeting and described next steps.

Following the presentation, Laura suggested that we emphasize the community resources we integrate into our support of students, including WNY United Against Drugs & Alcohol, Inc. Amy added that one positive of the COVID closure is that we have had to deliver our information through multiple forums (website, mailings, etc.). This has pushed us to recognize the importance of communication. Laura agreed and expressed how important effective communication is to all stakeholders in the district.

John suggested that during their BOE presentation, Amy and Brendan should emphasize how we are communicating with our parents. John also stressed the importance of featuring the great positive support we are able to provide for both students and their families.

**Next Meeting: February 23, 2021
3:30-4:30**