

Regional School District 12
Agriscience Steering Committee Meeting Minutes
August 24, 2015

Attendees:

Committee: Anthony Amato, Chair; Greg Cava, Michelle Gorra, Mike Sinatra.

Staff: Dr. Pat Cosentino, Superintendent; Karen Fildes, Director of Technology Integration, Communication & Community Outreach; Kim Gallo, Principal, SVS.

Public: Tony Bedini, Dan Sherr, Ed Wainright.

Meeting began at 6pm.

Discussion on Agriscience STEM program:

- Committee objectives
- Committee assignments
- Review of major work streams

Agriscience Steering Committee purpose - To develop comprehensive oversight, coordinate various work streams and advise the Board of Education.

Agriscience Steering Committee Assignments

Anthony – Business Case

Greg – Facilities

Michelle – Marketing

Mike – Agriscience Program

Work Streams

Economics – understand minimal enrollment rates to cover required cost profile including bonding costs; building a reasonable model of expectations

Risk Mitigation – identify actions to achieve required enrollment numbers

Value Proposition – articulate 3 reasons why this program makes sense

1. Career Path from local to international
2. Enhance Core HS experience
3. Provide a healthy learning and social environment
4. Enhance the community

Questions from the Region (why voters are apprehensive, uncertain, unconvinced...):

1. Can we maintain required enrollment facing demographic headwinds
2. Does this program increase the budget/taxes
3. Why invest in a “Vo-Ag” program for local farmers

Response (why voters should support):

1. Solid marketing plan to leverage 1. Proximity; 2. State-of-art program and 3. Significant pool of prospective students
2. Low-risk, accretive business case
3. "Think outside of the barn"

Other items discussed:

1. The objective of the promotional video. Should be multipurpose to address "thinking outside of the barn", Agriscience program at CT state level, benefits/attributes of the program.
 - a. Dan explained "thinking outside the barn" as a phrase to describe voter concerns with such a large investment in local farming. His recommendation to gain their support is to change their paradigm about what this program is and isn't.
 - b. Dan agreed to help Karen edit video
2. Seek support of SOS group from Bridgewater. Michelle will follow-up with SOS.
3. Absentee voter out reach. There is a large portion of voters who fall into this category. Suggestions were discussed about how to engage.

Meeting End Time: 7pm