

## **BEST Communication Subcommittee Final Summary**

### **December 1, 2016**

**Members of the Communication Subcommittee:** Karen Blom, Chair; Glenn Cardinal; Mick Comstock; Sue Mitchell; John Payne; Sarah Reynolds; Leslie Rule; Willow Cohen (to July 2016)

#### **Purpose of the Subcommittee**

In an effort to reduce the \$1.25 million per year the Mohawk District spends to send local students to charter and “choice” alternatives, The BEST Communication subcommittee has worked with principals and administrators to begin systematically gathering and analyzing information from students and their parents about why they choose to leave the District. A school “climate” survey was done to identify potential issues and opportunities. The next step is to use this data to refine curriculum choices and school practices. BEST also has developed and distributed materials for more effective “marketing” of District schools to new residents as well as existing students and parents.

#### **Materials Created**

February — Created BEST vision statement, set up of subcommittees, established long-term and short-term goals.

March — Created outreach and marketing plan, planned for special town meetings prior to spring annual town meetings in each town. Created master list of all kids in district for use in surveys and to create dialogue with families. Established need for principals to do exit interviews when students leave district.

April — Created specialized marketing brochures for [BSE](#), [Sanderson](#), [Colrain](#), [Heath](#) and Mohawk [Middle/High School](#) outlining the qualities of each school; Created Facebook pages for each school with each principal.

May — Found corporate sponsor to fund printing of 600 brochures which were distributed to key locations in West County where interested parents and students frequent (banks, town offices, POs, real estate offices, visitor centers) and at each school. Created and distributed 100 [posters](#) for wider distribution in Franklin County.

June — Discussed Mohawk website changes to be more inviting to perspective families

July — Established marketing budget line item to be funded by business donations; used feedback from June parent meeting to analyze draft scenarios; finished distribution of posters. Led discussion on needed changes to the website to entice parents to consider Mohawk when evaluating educational options.

August — Met with co-principals of Mohawk to discuss ways to involve students in marketing the district and email communications with parents. Met with senior capstone advisor, Bobby Story to explore ways students could create a photo archive and video on why students love Mohawk for the website. Met with district web tech, Virginia Wiswell to discuss how to change the website with an “apply here” button or link to take people to page the sells Mohawk.

September — Found business sponsors to reprint 200 Mohawk and 100 more BSE brochures

October— Analyzed staff feedback from Sept meetings. Met with district attorney to assess building use by towns. Continued to assess the scenarios with the wider BEST committee.

November — Disseminated information on BEST proposal and developed communication outreach plan in preparation for district and town meetings in Dec and Jan.

### **Next steps**

Work that still needs to be completed includes:

- Outreach to staff, families and community as BEST proposal moves forward
- Changes to the district and school websites or new pages that are more user friendly and welcoming to families deciding where to educate their children.
- Develop a student-produced marketing video to go on new web pages that depicts the attributes of going to school in the district - Why come to Mohawk, what sets the district apart from other local educational options?
- Have students create an image database to be used on the websites.
- Continue to edit and distribute brochures and posters in the area, especially at spring school open houses.
- Follow up on principal exit interviews to determine why students leave the district.
- Provide communication with key constituents as BEST recommendations are phased in over time.
- Edit marketing materials as changes in the district occur.