

Dennis T. Ducharme

From: Megan Turnbull [mmshea@chicagogsb.edu]
Sent: Wednesday, October 05, 2011 4:38 PM
To: Dennis T. Ducharme
Subject: Fwd: Background info including letter from Oyster River Student Senate



SKMBT_C45211052 ATT447316.txt
014440.pdf

Background I sent Rhoades about our district after the call. Rhoades indicated he would be willing to help with a letter to the students regarding graduation (separate issue).

Megan

Begin forwarded message:

> From: Megan Turnbull <mmshea@chicagogsb.edu>
> Date: May 27, 2011 4:34:23 PM EDT
> To: ralderson@nharbor.com
> Cc: Jocelyn O'Quinn <joceoquinn@yahoo.com>, Henry Brackett <hfb4444@comcast.net>
> Subject: Background info including letter from Oyster River Student Senate
>
> Rhoades,
>
> I am copying both Jocelyn and our board chair, Henry Brackett, on this correspondence.
>
> Thank you for the call today. We feel much better after talking to you. We are setting up a tentative non-meeting with our lawyer to approve working with you via NESSC on Tuesday afternoon. Please forward your proposal document to me prior to Tuesday afternoon, so that we can move forward with this approval.
>
> By Sunday, you should receive the letter draft responding to the students from Jocelyn who will also be reviewing details of our call with Henry soon. Again, we would need this ready for Henry to read to the board at our 7PM Wednesday, June 1 board meeting.
>
> Below is the original e-mail I sent Skip including the student letter.
>
> Have a great weekend!
>
> Megan
>
> ***
> Hello Skip,
>
> My name is Megan Turnbull. I am a member of the Oyster River School Board. I believe Ben Hilyard contacted you about possibly helping our board with crisis management/PR work.
>
> I would ask that you maintain confidentiality with what I am sharing with you below.
>
> Several board members and I have come to the realization that the board needs professional help. Over the past few months, multiple situations ensued as a result of our board not accepting a nominated high school principal candidate in a split vote:
>
> * Student walk-out at the high school
> * Threats against board members
> * Petition against the school board and questioning our ethics
> * Dozens of letters to the board and Foster's newspaper criticizing and questioning the board
> * Letter from the high school senate telling the board to NOT participate in the upcoming graduation (see attached)

> * Extensive public comments at our meetings (lasting hours) and inhibiting our ability to finish all board business at times
> * Individual e-mail campaigns besmirching individual board members' character
> * Critical blog postings (<http://oysterrivercommunity.blogspot.com>)
>
> The list goes on...
>
> Right now we are in the midst of trying to resume our principal search and have hired Art Bettencourt with NESDEC to help. The new principal search is also under intense, public scrutiny as you can imagine. Additionally, we will be hiring a new superintendent in the upcoming school year as our current superintendent is not renewing his contract.
>
> Also, Ben Hillyard pointed out something that is at the heart of the matter - this situation has been brewing for almost a decade. The recent outcry comes only after years of build up in our district.
>
> With this, I believe we need professional crisis management/PR help in the following areas:
>
> * Crafting press releases on sensitive matters including hirings/personnel - in the past the board has done this alone
> * Developing a sense of trust and faith in the board and working better within the district
> * Improved / constructive dialogue with the community and district staff on education in Oyster River moving forward - we think this may require a series of community engagement nights
>
> I anticipate the bulk of this work would be carried out over the next few months and may need to resume again as we start our superintendent search.
>
> I would like very much to talk to you about the possibility of you and your colleague working with us. Of course, I would need to obtain a board approval to move forward, but I feel the full board will welcome help. The good news, too, is that this board does get along and has an earnest wish to improve public sentiment. Additionally, we do have funds allocated to "work on improving trust" in our 2011-2012 budget.
>
> I will try to call you today to discuss this matter in greater detail. Thank you for your willingness to consider helping.
>
> Best Regards,
>
> Megan
>