

ChangeGreenfield.com Update

Contributed by Michael Phillips
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Hello everyone!

Things have been very busy since our first large group ChangeGreenfield meeting. The response from the community has been slightly overwhelming and it is now our challenge to organize all of this information and get the working groups on their feet so that we can keep the momentum going. We also need to do a better job including more of you in the everyday activities of the group. There is so much going on, sometimes it's difficult to find the time to communicate what's happening and what we need help with.

If you'd like to receive these updates via email please sign up today at <http://www.changegreenfield.com>

April 17th Meeting Agenda:

The next large group meeting for CHANGEGREENFIELD will be April 17th at the Federal Street School library. Please come to this meeting and bring a friend or neighbor if you can!

Here's our agenda so far:

6PM: Arrive and get to work in one of the 8 groups outlined below.

7PM: Presentation on how the town of Greenfield is run and how we can plug into processes and influence the direction of our schools.

7:20PM: Presentation regarding ways that property values are effected by a negative public perception of the school system.

7:40PM: 20 minute planning session for ongoing and more frequent working group meetings.

Working Groups:

Here are our suggestions for working groups that evolved out of our discussions in the first meeting. We've organized them into 7 themes:

1. School Promotion and Marketing Group

- Celebration of Education Rally / Parade through Greenfield

- 7 point marketing plan

1. Waves of letters to the editor with the theme "I choose Greenfield Schools because..." or highlighting appreciation of a specific program or teacher.

2. Working towards an open house in every school in April

3. Trifold flyer promoting the schools

4. Mini-ads in recorder

5. Radio PSA's

6. Radio talk show

7. Posters around town

2. Community building and participation in and around our schools Group.

- School Choice Challenge

- Childcare during School Committee meetings to increase participation

- Radio show

3. Research and self / community education Group

- The April 17th meeting at Federal Street school will feature several speakers familiar with our town governing processes and the impact of public perception of our schools on property values. This group would be in charge of coordinating future speakers for this meeting and for events.

4. Developing a 5+ year Strategic Plan for our schools to succeed.

- Restructuring our schools

- Establishing a long term working relationship with the School Committee, the Superintendent and other groups influencing the direction of our schools.

• Achieving more efficiency in the district

5. The "Big Think": Research and Brainstorming of Big Ideas

6. Establishing a Foundation for the Greenfield Public Schools

- Establishing a Board of Directors
- Incorporating
- Fundraising
- Grant writing

7. System-wide advocacy

8. Drafting a Perception Survey for the Superintendent targeting parent in the district. Several excellent examples have already been pulled together to build from.

If you are interested in participating in (or leading) one of these groups, or in a single activity within a group should come to the April 17th meeting at the Federal Street School... or contact Christin Glodek via e-mail: christin@changegreenfield.com if you'd like to get started before that. We know that, like us, you are all busy with lives and jobs and children, so any level of participation is welcome. Many small actions can make a huge impact.

Some MORE good things that are happening:

- The Marketing group has developed "The Big Push" a 90-Day marketing campaign that will include rolling letters to the editor, print advertising and radio spots to minimize the effects of the school budget crisis on next year's incoming public school class.
- Several people are helping to organize a rally for education in mid-May to publicly show our support and appreciation for the teachers and schools who serve our children. Mike has been in discussion with Energy Park officials who are excited and willing to work with us on a date for the space.
- Susan Gonsales has contacted the Girl Scout Council about recruiting Girl Scouts to provide childcare during our meetings and possibly School Committee meetings.
- We will be turning over the results of the ChangeGreenfield.com School choice surveys to the School Committee (after making them anonymous) Action Needed !
- We need volunteers to write letters to the editor to the Recorder and the Republican newspapers as part of our 90-day marketing campaign. The purpose of the letters is to highlight a positive experience you have had with a Greenfield teacher, principal, school program, etc..

Solutions Based Community Movement

Commentary from Mike Phillips....

The most recent School Committee meeting made it more clear to me how broken the school governing processes are and how we are likely to continue stumbling year after year until we have an intelligent, exciting and inclusive strategic plan. If you assume that every person involved with directing the course of our public schools (from the Mayor to the Superintendent to the Committee members and the Principals) is 100% competent and acting in the best interest of our children and our community. If you strip away the personalities and the history you might have with each person. What do you have remaining that could be the culprit? First, the system of managing and developing the schools is broken. There is no effective forum for communication between Committee members or other groups. There are no working sessions of the School Committee as far as I can tell. The Committee gets together to make decisions but not to "work out" better solutions. The most obvious current example is that the process for developing and approving a budget for the schools is nothing short of a disaster. In fact it's just not right to call it a process. Second, the community is not as intensely involved as it must be. The community can make the difference between a school system that gets by and a system that thrives. The community can work to support committee efforts and to share the workload. There are clear actions to take to resolve the second issue, but what about the first? How do we promote a more functional and productive operational structure to move the schools forward quickly and intelligently? Any ideas?

Thanks for all of the good ideas that are rolling in! We are continuing to refine our methods for communicating and organizing the activities being generated—so please stay tuned!

Remember: APRIL 17th is the next meeting at the Federal Street School ... Keep checking the www.changegreenfield.com and the Greenfield Optimist websites for updates: <http://www.greenfieldoptimist.com>

Thank you!
The ChangeGreenfield.com Crew