



Glenbrook High School District 225 increases public participation and engagement with Diligent Community

Glenbrook High School District 225 offers public education to over 5,000 students in three suburban Illinois areas, 25 miles north of Chicago. In addition to two high schools, the district also offers a therapeutic day school experience at Glenbrook Off Campus, all with a reputation for offering students an excellent, high-quality, well-rounded educational experience.

The 7-member elected board of education for Glenbrook High School District 225 is charged with developing and maintaining policies that serve the interests of the students, parents and staff.



Company: Glenbrook High School District 225

Industry: Education

Location: Illinois, Chicago

The challenge: Lack of transparency about policies and decisions

The district's policy development cycle was complex and sometimes lacked overt transparency. With multiple changes and additions taking place during policy committee meetings, the changes were very difficult to track and make clear when presented to the board of education as an agenda action item.

"What was a challenge was understanding what a policy looked like beforehand, what edits were made and what the final policy would look like," says Dr. R.J. Gravel, Deputy Superintendent of Glenbrook High School District 225.

In addition, the district had been grappling with livestreaming their meetings through platforms such as YouTube and Zoom, which they found complex and time consuming to set up. Families in the community also struggled with online meetings that lacked closed captioning, and without agendas or supporting documents to help them understand those conversations taking place during board meetings.

Members of the community complained they weren't able to find past information easily, particularly if they didn't know what meeting it had been in. For example, they might want to know what the school had planned with regards to physical education or what the annual budget was or what the results of an external audit had been. Not knowing which meeting had included that information on the agenda made searching for this information laborious for both community members and staff.

The district was looking for a board management solution to help streamline policy management, improve public transparency allowing the public to see how decisions were made, as well as offer livestreaming capabilities to help families attend meetings and follow along.

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Deputy Superintendent
of Glenbrook High School
District 225



The solution: A board management tool that prioritizes transparency

Glenbrook High School District 225 chose Diligent Community for its features, including Policy Publisher and Livestream Manager, which are both integrated with its public-facing transparency website, as a solution that best fit their needs.

Equipped with Diligent Community, District 225 was able to open its policy cycle to all stakeholders through:

- Comprehensive documentation of every step in the policy cycle
- A dynamic search engine that allows access to all supporting documentation
- A single platform that captures all inputs in the policymaking process

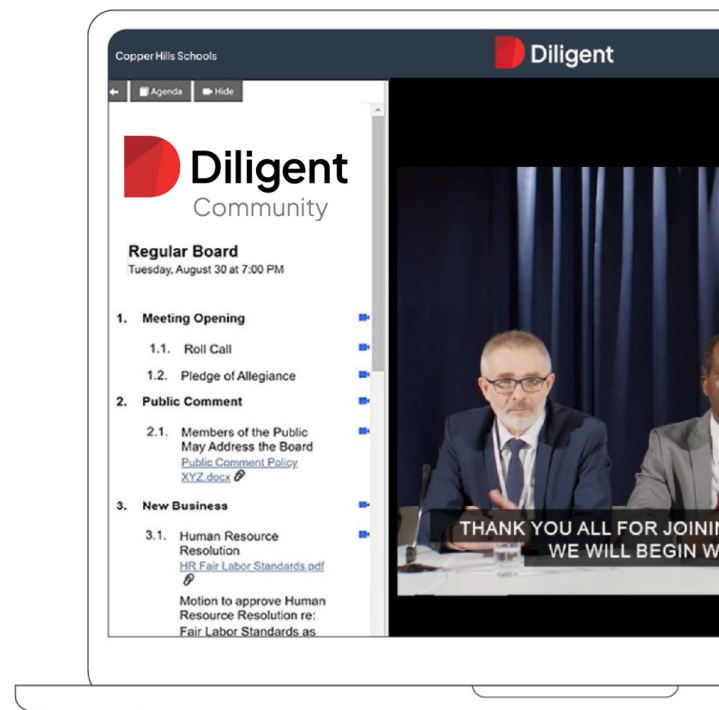
“Directly within a single tool, we’re able to pass a policy through the collaboration and editing process, routing process and have digital documentation ... all with one click,” says Dr. Gravel.

The district now uses Livestream Manager to offer high-quality streaming, with direct integration into the board’s meeting room providing multi-camera views and quality audio — all without any additional capital expenditure.

The board secretary can set up the agenda and meeting broadcast directly in Diligent Community, with automatic transfer of recordings into YouTube — providing a limitless archive of Board of Education recordings. Close captioning and translation services enable all community members to participate in the meetings. The district has also implemented a workflow that enables the community to access an archive of recordings for those unable to join the meeting during the scheduled meeting time.

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The results: Participation and engagement in the community has grown

The biggest impact has been an increase of engagement and participation from community members.

Dr. Gravel explains, “What Diligent Community allows us to do, it allows us to very clearly open the doors to how we are making decisions. While that creates some apprehension, the reality is, by allowing the doors to be open, we ultimately are able to refine our decisions and make them even better. Diligent Community provides that single pane of glass we have in one screen, we have our video, we have our agenda, and we have our supporting information all in one package.”

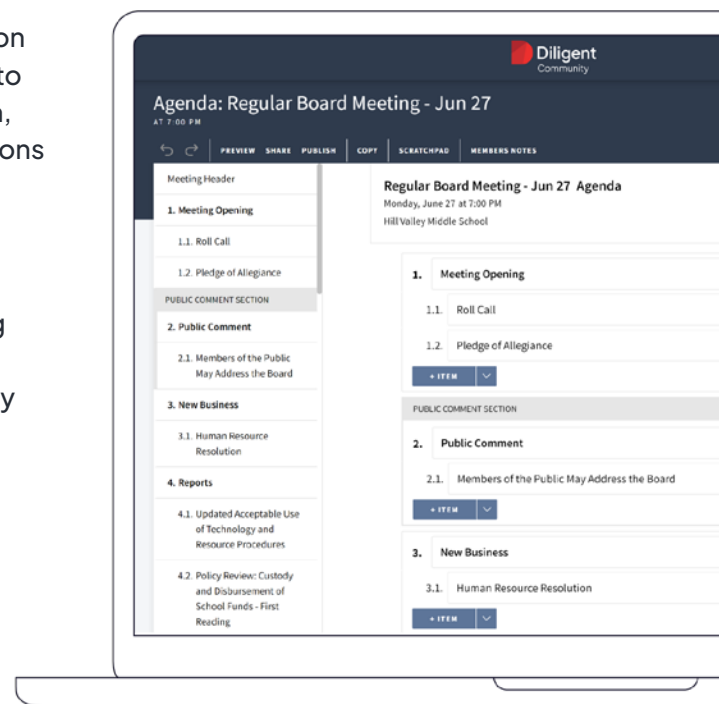
Searching for past information has become simple and easy with the dynamic and intuitive search engine built into the public transparency website. Community members can see years of responses when they search along with direct access to the links of the agenda, supporting documents and access to the videos, where they can learn more about what was presented and discussed at the meeting.

Policy management has become streamlined with collaboration in the editing and routing, and full digital documentation prior to it getting to the board for a vote on adoption. Before adoption, community members and staff, can see the original modifications and revisions, all in one place.

Livestream Manager for Diligent Community has allowed the district to give community stakeholders a window into the actions of the governing board, reducing barriers to accessing information “from the source”. Structured meeting agendas are now organized in a manner that makes sense for community members by using templates and naming conventions, which save time and make it easy for all stakeholders.

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The split screen view for livestreamed meetings provides the public with the ability to listen, watch, and actively review resources that support the conversation. Dr. Gravel explains, “Some of our family members like not only to watch and see what's going on, they like to follow the guide, they like to see the agenda and understand what were the conversations that took place as we're making decisions.”

The district has also benefited from the Livestream Manager “clip” feature, providing administrators with the ability to capture a portion of the meeting and share it directly with their teams, to improve understanding and awareness of a topic's discussion at the board table.

Diligent Community's goal feature is also being leveraged to help report on, track and complete action items for Glenbrook's 10-year strategic plan. Goals are published for the community for full transparency allowing them to track what is happening. Internal goals are also tracked for the board, with every item presented before the board linked to a goal in the strategic plan, where applicable. This gives a framework that aligns the organization's mission, vision and values with actionable strategies to address challenges and take advantage of opportunities.

Dr. Gravel's final thoughts, “What we love about Community is that it is much more than a meeting solution — it is a tool enabling our board to govern more effectively through rich community engagement.”



Increased community transparency around decision-making and policies



Streamlined management of policy lifecycle from start to end



Increased public participation and engagement with school board meetings



Simplified search for stakeholders to find the information they are looking for

About Diligent Community

Diligent Community is the next-generation governance solution designed to enhance effectiveness and efficiency for public boards and leadership teams. Tailored to cater to the unique needs of diverse public organizations, Diligent Community empowers streamlined decision-making, ensuring transparent and effective governance. As a trusted offering from Diligent, a leader serving over 14,000 mission-driven organizations globally, Diligent Community is your essential tool for driving impactful governance, fostering better communication, and achieving shared success.

Learn more

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