



Clayton High School PTO

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CLAYTON HIGH SCHOOL PTO

Wednesday, November 12, 2025, 12:00 pm

This Meeting was held on Zoom and in person at the Center of Clayton, Room C.

The following board members were present in person: Co-President Joanna Dinsmore, Co-President Priya Bazzani, Communications Kelly Karandjeff, and Secretary Amber Kempf.

The following CHS Staff, PTO Members, and PTO Committee/Event Chairs were present:

Rob Bertman – PTO Treasurer
Dan Gutchewsky – CHS Principal
T-Shon Young – Coordinator of Sports and Activities for the School District of Clayton
Kami Waldman – Faculty Special Projects Awards
Amy Wilson – Staff Appreciation
Emily Whitney – Staff Appreciation
Phil Kilbridge – Funds For Excellence
Lori Hausladen – Freshman Parent Connections
Melissa Rideout
Drew Larson
Mary Johnson

The following members and Committee//Event Chairs were present via Zoom:

Emily Zhao – Senior Parent Connections
Tahnee Jackson
Erin Linnenbringer
Michelle Cissna
Alexandra E. Johnson, Esq.

- **Welcome and Introductions – Co-Presidents Joanna Dinsmore and Priya Bazzani**
- **President's Report – Co-Presidents Joanna Dinsmore and Priya Bazzani**
 - The Co-Presidents took a moment to thank all the volunteers and PTO members who come to meetings to support the PTO. Times are challenging, and the Executive Board appreciates and is grateful for the community support the PTO receives.
 - The meeting minutes from the October 8, 2025, meeting have been approved by the Executive Board and are posted to the PTO Dashboard for review. Please

contact Secretary, Amber Kempf at: amberlkempf@outlook.com with any questions or concerns.

- The PTO sponsored snack table in the library on the night of in person Parent/Teacher Conferences was a success. The PTO plans to have it again and offer more snacks next time.
- The Freshman Parent Connections Event at Flight Club in downtown Clayton on 11/3 was a huge success despite some bumps in organizing it. Everyone enjoyed it and had a good time. The games were fun, easy and there are some shorter dart games folks enjoyed playing. We will follow up with them to see if they would be willing to host other events in the future.
- The Clayton High School District PTO Council Meeting is next week, November 20, 2025.
- The CHS PTO Executive Board has decided to not hold a December PTO meeting. The January meeting will be a closed meeting just for Executive Board and Committee Volunteers to plan for the rest of the school year. There will be a CHS PTO Newsletter that will go out in December or January to all members with updates. The full PTO will meet again on February 11, 2026, at Noon at the Center of Clayton, Meeting Room C.
- With SNAP benefits paused due to the government shutdown, the CHS PTO wanted to highlight for the CHS community ways they can help feed and support their neighbors. The PTO Dashboard has links to Clayton School District and wider community opportunities to help. The linked resources are on the CHS PTO Dashboard under the heading “Giving Back” here:
<https://www.claytonschools.net/chspto>
- The CHS PTO highlighted the work of staff and students to support the cleanup and rebuilding from the May tornado in the Academy Neighborhood in the City of St. Louis. CHS has both students and staff that call this great neighborhood home. The effort has been led by Teacher and resident of the Academy Neighborhood, Carol Lehnhoff Bell who is part of the Academy Neighborhood Coalition - a grassroots effort led by neighbors and volunteers to directly help residents in the neighborhood impacted by the May 2025 tornado clean up and rebuild their homes. City residents have yet to receive any rebuilding help from the City of St. Louis for tornado clean-up efforts and are currently relying upon their neighbors, volunteers and donations to rebuild their homes. Clayton students have volunteered to help the effort. More volunteers are always needed and welcome. A video showing the work this group of neighbors and volunteers has accomplished and a link to donate to their worthy efforts is here:
<https://www.claytonschools.net/Page/23880>
- A heartfelt thank you note from Teacher Allie Connolly was shared with those at the meeting. Her daughter is doing well and recovering from surgery due to a cancer diagnosis. Her daughter’s prognosis is as good as it can be, and Allie was very grateful for the DoorDash Gift Card from the PTO that helped provide some meals while her daughter was recovering from surgery.

- **Treasurer’s Report – Rob Bertman**

- The CHS PTO has Approximately \$73,000 in the bank.

- The Fundraising Committee has raised approximately \$20,000 so far which is well above what we raised at this time last year. Thanks to the committee for all their work so far!
 - The PTO Care Fund is at around \$1,000
 - All committees have stayed on budget this year and things are going well.
 - Fundraising will continue until we meet our goal of raising around \$30,000 which is our budget for the 2025-2026 School Year.
- **Administrative Reports – Principal Dr. Gutchewsky; Coordinator of Athletics and Activities T'Shon Young**
 - **CHS Principal, Dr. Gutchewsky**
 - Thanks to PTO for dinner during Parent Teacher Conferences. This year the in-person option was slightly preferred for parent teacher conferences so CHS will continue to offer it.
 - Dr. Gutchewsky has been traveling a lot the last semester representing CHS.
 - About 3 weeks ago he attended an event sponsored by the Hunt Institute. Educators and about 40 state legislators met to discuss education issues facing the state of Missouri. Dr. Gutchewsky was invited by Senator Brian Williams to attend. At the event, Dr. Gutchewsky presented information and networked with other educators. He was also able to meet with over 40 Missouri Senators to discuss state education issues that directly impact our students.
 - A week later he attended the Missouri State School Boards Conference in Kansas City where Jen McKeown did a presentation about Clayton High School's Wellness Center. Our wellness center is a model for other schools in the state and all present at the conference were very interested in learning more about it.
 - Then Dr. Gutchewsky attended the annual College Board Forum in New York. The College Board is the governing body for college testing such as the AP, SAT and PSAT tests that are tied to college admissions and credit. There was a lot of discussion at the Forum about a recent survey they conducted that parents are concerned that college degrees are becoming less valuable for their students' future success. This is due to negative attention about highly selective schools' current admissions processes and concerns about how the push for AI will impact the job market for college graduates. The College Board shared it is also working to become a credentialing agency in addition to a college testing agency. They want to help students get certifications in trades and other post high school employment opportunities in addition to helping students with college testing. They have launched a Computer Science Credential which is recognized by industry and can be used to get a job. They are also planning to launch a Personal Finance Certificate that credentials students for start-ups and entrepreneurship opportunities. They are also planning to launch a Health Sciences/Pre-Nursing Certification. The education field is undergoing rapid change right now. Dr. Gutchewsky wants to make sure that CHS is staying on top of these changes and making these kinds of opportunities are more available to Clayton High School Student. CHS is

already good at college prep, and he would like the school to also work toward improving in the area of technical education.

- There was a comment made that the bond issue being promoted by the Clayton School District to build the new proposed space at Clayton High School will allow more support and space to allow students to access these kinds of technical and certificate opportunities the College Board is and will be offering in the future.
- In two weeks, Dr. Gutchewsky will attend the Blue-Ribbon Schools Conference in Orlando. This is a Conference we were invited to as we are a Blue Ribbon School. CHS will share ideas to improve their schools and work with other Blue Ribbon Schools in attendance to learn together.
- CHS had 2 Fall plays that were a success. Auditions are taking place this week for *Pajama Game* which will be in the Spring.
- A Second Principal's Coffee will take place on December 12, 2025, at 9:00 a.m. Jenny Todd, the CHS Director of Counseling will also be there to answer parents' questions about CHS's Social Emotional Learning Model.
- The Clayton High School Robohounds are having their Robotics Chili Cookoff on 11/14/25 from 6:00 to 8:30 pm in the CHS commons. This is their main fundraiser so come join the fun, pick your favorite chili and support the Team 4500 – The Clayton Robohounds.
- Finals will be Dec 17-19. Students that end up with three finals on one day will be allowed to move one to another day if they wish. Children who receive extended time due to an IEP or 504 Plan will get double time for each block to stay with their regular teacher to complete all finals. Student attendance is mandatory during finals week.

- **Coordinator of Athletics and Activities T'Shon Young**

- All Fall Sports are finished except Swim and Dive who are competing this next couple of weeks in the State Championships.
- The Girls Tennis Team are State Champions!
- Boys and Girls Cross Country finished strong with the Boys finishing 8th in the State and Girls 14th. Lots of students on the Cross Country Team qualified for State this year.
- Freshmen students will again be offered the “Hot Sips and Study Tips” program for finals. Senior Students will support Freshmen by meeting with them to see if they have any questions about the finals process. An e-mail for parents to provide hot chocolate and snacks to Freshman for their first week of finals will be going out soon.

- **Committee Chair Reports**

- **Staff Appreciation – Emily Whitney and Amy Wilson**
 - The staff enjoyed dinner at the Parent Teacher Conferences from Tres Reyes. The next Staff Appreciation Event will be the Holiday Luncheon on Dec 19

which is the last day before winter break. It will come from Charlie Gitto's On the Hill. An e-mail will be going out to the CHS community soon asking for donations of cookies and fruit for dessert for this Holiday Luncheon.

- **CHS PTO Book Club – Cara Downs**
 - The next Book Club is 11/12. The book is *Stone Yard Devotional* by Charlotte Wood and will be hosted by CHS English Teacher Ben Murphy. 1/22/26 and 4/14/26 will be the next Book Club dates. The January Book Club Book is *Radium Girls* by Kate Moore. Details will be shared in the next PTO Newsletter.
- **Parent Connections**
 - **Junior Class Parent Connections - Jane Cai, Sophie Lieberman, and Tammy Wagner**
 - The Junior Parent Connections event will be at C.J. Muggs 11/13/25 at 6 pm.
 - **Freshman Parent Connections, Lori Haslauden, Jackie Stavro, and Michele Henke**
 - The Freshman Parent Connections Event was a success and was held at The Flight Club in Clayton on November 3rd.
 - **Faculty/Staff Special Projects Awards – Bridget McAndrew, and Kami Waldman**
 - Members will be meeting next Monday to start working on creating and sharing out information and videos what awards were given this year.
- **Funds for Excellence – Laura Deutsch and Phil Kilbridge**
 - Funds for Excellence has 65 donors and raised \$20,000 so far. The goal is to raise \$30,000. There is a \$5,000 donation which will be coming in soon. The committee is thinking of using it as a challenge or incentive as a matching donation to increase the number of overall donors. They would like to double the amount of CHS community members that donated this year.
 - If you donated or donate before December 31st, you will be entered in a CHS PTO Raffle to win prizes including spring musical tickets, close parking for graduation, or a front row seat for Clayton/Ladue Girls BB game.
- **Upcoming Events/Other Business**
 - There will be no PTO Meeting in December 2025.
 - The Executive Board and Committee Chairs only will attend a closed meeting to plan for the second half of the year, on January 14, 2025, in the Center of Clayton, Meeting Room C.

The next Full PTO Meeting will be held Wednesday, 2/11/26 at 12 pm in Center of Clayton, Meeting Room C

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Amber Kempf, Secretary