MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CLAYTON HIGH SCHOOL PTO

Wednesday, March 6, 2024

A meeting of the PTO of Clayton High School was held as scheduled pursuant to due notice on March 6, 2024, 12:00 pm CST, at Meeting Room C of the Center of Clayton and via Zoom conference.

The following members of the Board were present at the meeting: Suzy Oge, Co-President; Jena Schaumburg, Co-President; Joanna Dinsmore, Communications; John Holmes, Treasurer; Robin Leonard, Secretary, Dr. Dan Gutchewsky, Principal

The following ex officio advisors and members were present: T’Shon Young, Jen McKeown, Jenny Abeles, Jane Cai, Cara Downs, Elyse Feinstein, Tanya Hayden, Bridget McAndrew, Sabrina Robb, Basak Sarer, Deanna Simanowitz, Emily Whitney, Amy Wilson

Present on Zoom: Angela Flotken, Karol Kuo, Erin Linnebringer, Elizabeth Macanufo, Phil Pusateri, Kristine Yoon, Jing Zhao, Darcys, leeegg, Olga, Shunan

**I. Welcome & Introductions**

Jena Schaumburg welcomed everyone to the meeting. She said we would hear from our special guests, the School Board candidates first, then dive into the rest of the meeting.

**II. Special Guests: School Board Candidates**

We welcomed the three candidates for the Clayton School Board Election to take place on Tuesday, April 2, 2024. The candidates are Leo Human, Pam Lyss-Lerman and Jason Wilson. Each candidate had an opportunity to introduce themselves and briefly present their platform. Details about each candidate can be found on the [Voters Guide](https://sites.google.com/claytonschools.net/clayton-pto-voters-guide/home) presented by the Clayton PTO Council website.

Leo Human and Jason Wilson’s names will appear on the ballot. Pam Lyss-Lerman has registered as an official write-in candidate on the ballot. Jenny Abeles explained that this is considered a contested election so an election will be held. Since an election is being held, the Clayton PTO Council has created the Voters Guide as well as will sponsor a Candidate Forum. Postcard have been mailed inviting the Clayton community.

The Candidate Forum will be held on Tuesday, March 26 at 7p in the CHS auditorium. The forum will give each candidate an opportunity to introduce themselves to the community followed up open questions from the audience. The forum will be recorded and available for viewing along with the Voters Guide. Jena Schaumburg encouraged everyone to attend.

**III. Presidents’ Report**

Approval of previous meeting minutes: Amy Wilson motioned/Robin Leonard seconded.

The next meeting of the Parent/Teach Book Club will be held on April 24 at 6:30p. The book will *Midnight’s Children* by Salman Rushdie. The book is available in hardback as well as audible formats. We are hoping to move the location of the book club to a participating parent’s home. Location will be announced at a later date.

**Treasurer’s report:** We are still behind on our fundraising goal by close to $6,000. We are planning to integrate the donation request into PowerSchool so when parents complete the forms for the 2024-25 school year, they can donate at that time. We also plan to focus next year on increasing the percentage of families participating rather than the amount raised.

**IV. Principal’s Report: Dr. Gutchewsky**

This is an extremely busy time of the year particularly as we wrap up a very successful Winter Sports season, prepare for the end of the quarter and get geared up for the 4th quarter.

Our Winter Sports teams had outstanding seasons. In particular, the Girls’ Swimming and Diving team with a 2nd place finish in the state meet. The Boys’ Basketball team also finished at Suburban Conference Champions. Our Boys Club Hockey team also won the Wickenheiser Cup in an exciting win over Ladue. Congratulations to all our teams for their outstanding performances.

Teachers are getting ready for the 3rd Quarter Parent Teacher conferences to be held next week. Sign up will close tomorrow, March 7th at 12p so sign up now. Conferences will be held Monday – Friday. In person conferences will be held only on Wednesday. The remaining conferences will be held via video conference. As is typical, the number of parents signing up for conferences is lower in the 3rd quarter compared to the 1st quarter conferences.

Immediately after conferences, we head into spring break. As soon as we are back, we head into a heavy testing schedule for the students. On April 3, the Freshman will take the PSAT9, the Sophomores will take the PSAT10 and the Juniors will take the SAT. More details will be coming with students soon although students will need to bring their district Chromebooks to school that day. On this day, the Seniors will participate in the Senior Day of Service. T’Shon Young will speak more to this in moment.

Other important upcoming dates are April 13 is Prom and April 30 with the CHS Awards Ceremony. There were several questions regarding the Awards Ceremony. Dr. Gutchewsky explained that this is an annual event designed to recognize outstanding achievement the academic and athletic departments. Most of the recipients are Seniors however not all. Parents are notified behand if their student is going to win an individual award. They are not told what award their student will be receiving but are encouraged to attend if possible.

**V. Activities Report: T’Shon Young**

Congratulations to the DECA team who had an outstanding showing in the District Competition. Clayton had numerous participants qualifying for the Regional and the International competition in April.

T’Shon shared she participated again this year in a program designed to expose students to Historical Black Colleges (HBC). Along with faculty and staff sponsors, 15 CHS students visited numerous HBCs around the region. Once again, the program was deemed a success with students excited and energized by the opportunities ahead.

On April 3 while the other grades are taking tests, the Seniors will participate in the Annual Senior Day of Service. Students receive a list of 13 locations in which they choose their top 3. Students are then assigned a location to spend 2.5 hours on April 3 giving back to the community.

Prom is coming up on April 13 with tickets going on sale after spring break. The ticketing process will work like it works for Homecoming with the tickets are available for purchase online. Doors open at 6:45p and close at 7:30p. A plated dinner will be serviced.

One issue that has arisen this year is funding for the Prom. To keep the cost of Prom tickets at a reasonable level, the Junior class typically underwrites a portion of the expenses. The Junior Class raises money two ways. The first is with traditional fundraising activities. The second source is a gift from a previous CHS class. Each year, the outgoing Senior class gives the balance of their money to the incoming Freshman class’s Prom fund. Unfortunately, this year’s Junior class did not receive much because of Prom being canceled to the Pandemic. This is why the Junior class has tried new fundraising techniques including the Trivia Night.

**VI. Committee Chair Updates:**

Parent Connections: Robin Leonard shared that Carolyn Blair is holding “Listening Sessions” with senior parents to better understand the needs and desires of parents regarding the college selection process. An email is being sent out today to all senior parents. Robin shared a QR code for any senior parents who want to participate.

Robin also shared that the Freshman class will be holding their initial College Selection Process Q&A with the Counseling department in mid-April. We are looking to hold a joint social hour at the Clayton Winehouse sometime in Q4. Wydown PTO did something similar that was successful so looking to that model.

The Staff Appreciation committee is ready to provide food for teachers during Parent Teacher conferences.

**VII. Wellness Center Update**

Jen McKeown joined us to give an update on the brand-new Wellness Center that opened on February 20. The center has been very well received by the students with over 380 student visits with the introductory week. The space is unique within a high school setting, and she has received many inquired from other schools interested in the concept. This is very exciting for CHS to be proving this to our students as we look to the whole student.

The main goal is to provide students with a protected space with the building where they can go to focus on their well-being. This is a space designed with significant input from the students and is a “student only” zone. The Center will be open for visits during the in-person Parent Conference evening. She encourages everyone to attending in person to stop by. It is located at the end of the English hallway, center of campus; it’s the old book storage facility.

The next PTO meeting will be held on April 3, 2024, at 12:00 pm. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Robin Leonard, Secretary