

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CLAYTON HIGH SCHOOL PTO  
Wednesday, April 3, 2024

A meeting of the PTO of Clayton High School was held as scheduled pursuant to due notice on April 3, 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, Jane Cai, Bridget McAndrew, Susan Yang, Basak Sarer, Deanna Simanowitz, Emily Whitney, Amy Wilson, David McClendon

Present on Zoom: Carol Kuo, Elizabeth Macanufo, Jing Zhao, Alan Wolf, unnamed

### **I. Welcome & Introductions**

Suzy Oge welcomed everyone to the meeting.

### **II. Presidents' Report**

Approval of previous meeting minutes: Emily Whitney motioned/Bridget McAndrew seconded.

Suzy indicated planning for the '24-'25 school year has been happening with the slate for next year's PTO officers and budget to be presented at the May meeting. Anyone interested in volunteering with the PTO next year should contact Suzy or Jena. Everyone is welcome and encouraged to participate.

The next meeting of the Parent Teacher Book Club will be held on Wednesday, April 24<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm. The book up for discussion is *Midnight's Children* by Salman Rushdie. Meeting location will be announced closer to the meeting date. The plan is to have the meeting at the home of a parent.

**III. Treasurer's report:** John Holmes shared the good news that we are bridging the gap in our fundraising efforts with some generous donations made in the past month. We are only \$695.72 behind our projected income for the year. This is good news as we move into planning the budget for next year. If anyone has questions on the budget, please see John.

### **IV. Principal's Report: Dr. Gutchewsky**

Dr. Gutchewsky shared we are moving into an extremely busy time of the year with only two months left until our Seniors graduate. It's been a great year, and we are looking to finish with strong.

Thank you to the PTO for the pizza and goodies provided to the faculty and staff during Parent Teacher Conference week. It is greatly appreciated by all.

Today is a big day at school while we have the Freshman, Sophomore and Junior classes taking the SAT suite of tests, the PSAT9, PSAT10 and the SAT. This is the first year that the SAT tests have been administered electronically. It is a big undertaking, but the school was well prepared thanks to Asst. Principal Drew Spiegel and the counseling department.

Meanwhile, the Senior class had their Senior Day of service. We were extremely pleased to have 95% participation from our Seniors.

We are also preparing for the Junior-Senior Prom in two weeks. It will be held at the Motorcycle Museum and will include a plated dinner. That same night is Clayton Foundation's Gala and the induction of new members of the CHS Hall of Fame. Dr. Gutchewsky said it will be busy night as he splits time between the two events.

Some of the other big events coming include the Eclipse (school will provide glasses to the students and staff), the school musical *Illegally Blonde*, the CHS Awards Ceremony and AP Testing. We then move into Graduation Events including Senior Sendoff and Graduation on May 23 at the Chavitz Center.

There has also been a good deal of work on completely the Master Schedule for the '24-'25 school year. This has typically been completed in late spring, but we moved it up to early April this year to better accommodate schedule changes before the end of this year. Meetings will begin this week with students to iron out any changes and adjustments that need to be made. This will start with the current Junior (incoming Senior class) to ensure all graduation requirements are being met. The plan is to have all schedules in place by the end of April.

## **VI. Committee Chair Updates:**

**Funds for Excellence:** Bridget McAndrew reported that the final awards of the year have recently been distributed. There has been terrific support for this program. Bridget is considering how to get more input from students as well on what they would like to see implemented.

**Parent Connections:** Freshman Parent Q&A session with College Counselors will be held on April 25 from 6-7p in the Center of Clayton. There will also be a Sophomore Parent College Q&A session with the date being announced in the coming week.

Carolyn Blair is holding "Listening Sessions" with junior parents to better understand the needs and desires of parents regarding the college selection process. An email is being sent out shortly to all junior parents. Carolyn is in the process of finalizing the dates.

## **VII. Speak Guest:**

Craig Sucher attended the meeting as the guest speaker on the topic of CHS Grading Policy. He is a CHS Science Teacher and serves as the Academic and School Improvement Chair, Grading Task Force and District professional learning committee and leads the professional learning at the high school. He indicated that the work began in 2019 with an eye towards the book Grading for Equity by Joe Feldman. The goal was to ensure that grading at the CHS was accurate and equitable.

This work continued in 22-23 with a broader book study. Staff self-selected a title from the list linked [here](#) and participated in a book study to continue to gather information on the latest thinking regarding grading systems. The goal of this process was to make grading accurate, reliable, and consistent by implementing best practices and measure across the entire school.

Q: What are some of the good things that have come out of the new Grading Policy?

One of the biggest was the standardization of retakes for assessments. This promotes a growth in learning mindset and gives more accountability to the students. Retakes were happening in some classrooms previously but now are formalized.

Q: Why is there still variation in homework policies?

There is structure around homework within a subject area so there is not significant variation between different teachers teaching the same class. Teachers still have some discretion around homework and how to make sure it is true reflection of learning in their classroom.

Q: Why do we not have weighted grades?

Weighted grades are a tricky subject. They help some kids and harm others. And during the college admissions process, every college handles it a different way. We believe that a non-weighted grading system is the most accurate reflection of learning for our students.

Q: How is the new system equitable?

Prior to 5 years ago, each teacher had their own grading scales. This did not promote an equitable and predictable grading system for students. A decision was made to put into place a universal grading scale to rectify this. That's when the committee was formed to research the best of class systems and make recommendations.

Now that the CHS Grading Policy is in place, faculty routinely meet in Professional Learning Communities (PLC's) to discuss consistency and equity across their respective subject areas. This is a priority within the CHS community so there is dedicated time set aside to ensure the PLC's meet regularly.

Q: What's the escalation policy if there is an issue?

Students should work with their grade-level counselor or administrator if necessary.

Q: How can students provide about teachers?

This happens during the routine teacher assessment process. But students are always able to provide feedback to their grade-level counselor or administrator.

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

T'Shon provided a brief update on the activities coming up. For Prom, it will be held from 7 – 10p at a cost of \$65 per person. Students will be admitted only from 30 minutes after the doors open. Students are encouraged to stay the entire time, but they are free to leave if they desire. Once a student leaves however, they will not be admitted back in. As a safety precaution, there will be police providing extra security in the parking lot.

The next PTO meeting will be held on May 1, 2024, at 12:00 pm. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,  
Robin Leonard, Secretary