



Clayton High School PTO

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CLAYTON HIGH SCHOOL PTO

Wednesday, December 6, 2023

A meeting of the PTO of Clayton High School was held as scheduled pursuant to due notice on December 6, 2023, 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; John Holmes, Treasurer; Joanna Dinsmore, Communications; Dr. Dan Gutchewsky, Principal

The following ex officio advisors and members were present: T'Shon Young, Tanya Hayden, Shunan Li, Amy Rubin, Deanna Siminowitz, Stacy Siwak, Amy Wilson, Emily Whitney, Heather Wohl

Present on Zoom: Michele Cissna, Carol Kuo, Grace Lee, Alan Wolf, Kristal S

I. Welcome & Introductions

II. Principal's Report: Dr. Gutchewsky

Exams will be December 18-20; there is a special schedule: 3 periods per day (2 on Wed), with Grayhound time in between for a break. Leading up to it is Wellness Week with self-care and stress-reduction activities including the Duo Dogs, tea, etc.

Wellness Center construction is proceeding; early second semester opening. Jessica Colvin, consultant came and spent the day, meeting with stakeholders and giving feedback.

Registration is coming up soon. Final approval of new course proposals is going on; will be live by end of winter break. January 10 is 8th grade curriculum night, 6:30 pm meet/greet with clubs then a presentation in auditorium. The scheduling timeline has been moved up, with registration during January and 1st week of February; finalized schedules by 4/1. Counselor 10-minute meetings with students will now be held after students' draft schedules have been built, April into May, to resolve any conflicts. Students will still get course recommendations.

Coaches vs. Cancer basketball series vs Ladue was a success. Spirit Week is going on next week, coinciding with Wellness Week.

National Merit semifinalist scholars: 25 honored altogether at board meeting.

CHS book club will be on 12/11, in the library at 3:30.

CHS is hiring new teachers: there is great competition and fewer new teachers, plus it's harder to lure away tenured teachers. Early retirement notification incentive being offered this year, by 12/1, to enable early recruiting for those open spots; six have chosen that option thus far.

III. Activities Report: T'Shon Young

Hot Sips/Study Tips: for ninth graders; they will have an all-class meeting on Monday with counselor on how to juggle finals schedules and how to prepare for exams and cope with anxiety. Upperclassmen, staff will be available to answer questions during Greyhound Time.

January 9: Eighth grade visit to introduce to clubs/sports instead of at freshman orientation in August

Juniors: 2/9 Trivia Night (for both students and parents): This used to be a big pre-Covid event for prom ticket fundraising. Laura Chisholm, Anna Hornberg are sponsors, Katie Cooper organized in past and will help.



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IV. Guest Speaker, Stacey Siwak, Board of Education member, along with Amy Rubin, President of the BOE

Filing for school board spots opened 12/5 and is open for a three-week period. Election is in April.

Overview of what they do: 7 total members; 2 open spots this year. Three-year terms; no term limits in MO. Board works as a unit; all support each approved initiative even if one person voted against it. Varying perspectives are valuable -- current members represent business owner, attorney, educator. They review high-level district policy, which can come via state laws (often no choice, if laws). Responsibilities include hiring, evaluating superintendent, Dr. Patel; keeping eye on finances; review curriculum (in public). Also hold closed sessions for legal or personnel issues. Meet twice/month. Members also serve on committees within the community or district: e.g., parks/rec; Center of Clayton; PTO council meetings, CEF, financial advisory community committee.

Social emotional needs of kids is a big goal; community engagement is being highlighted.

Question: What is the time commitment: Meetings are about 2 hours; 1-2 hours reading time beforehand to plan/prepare; plus committee meetings. Summer break unless things come up. The board recently hosted a coffee at Starbucks as part of more community involvement, maybe do this jointly with Clayton wards in future.

Question: Are there any gaps in terms of background needed to be filled? The board is pretty diverse right now, including racially/ethnically diverse. Arguably missing someone who doesn't have children in the district. Historically everyone is a parent, but it's not required; the only requirement is you live in district. It's been a very rewarding experience.

V. Approval of minutes from last meeting

VI. Treasurer's Report: John Holmes

Lots of progress in cleaning up the budget, thanks to Suzy and Tanya Harding! Transition to MoneyMinder and CheddarUp has been completed, and the Simmons account reconciled for the July-November period. Budget line items were streamlined to make things simple. (This will be posted on CHS PTO website.) One annual donation "bucket" this year instead of various categories to simplify donating, plus the Clayton Cares fund (distributed by our social workers). Categories of Program Services, Teacher Appreciation, Events. We added to the TA budget since costs have gone up, just over \$7,000.

Although we are not fully funded (and are quite behind on donations compared to past years) donations are coming in -- over \$14,000; \$3,000 in the last couple of hours. Email last week brought in donations as well. Dr. Gutchewsky will mention FFE in next week's principal's newsletter. Close to halfway to fundraising goal. We are within budget on events thus far.

Question: Open house at beginning of year: can PTO solicit donations there? Yes, PTO has a table there. Dues used to be tied to paper copies of the buzz book. Suzy: We should include a checkbox of beginning of year options in PowerSchool for "have donated to the PTO," including a link to our fundraising page, to help automate this process.



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An estimated 10% of families might have a hardship paying—but only 10% have donated so far (and those donors are greatly appreciated!). Dues would be only about \$40 if everyone participated (i.e., that amount would fully fund the PTO for the year).

It's hard to ask the already few number of people already actively involved in PTO to try to round up more donations. The process has to be as convenient as possible. Do people know the source of the PTO budget -- that it's **only** parent donations? Emphasize that in future communications.

Direct communications re. fundraising are getting results. A percent participation goal instead of focusing on dollar amounts might help. Pass out flyers to carpool line? Sandwich boards held by the mascot! Could pass out flyers at sporting events, too. Now we have analytics from the Postcard newsletter, e.g., xxx people have opened the newsletter.

We have some very generous donors who we greatly appreciate, and hope to be able to use those big donations for special extra things like helping families in real need.

V. Committee Reports

Staff appreciation coordinators: Amy Wilson/Emily Whitney: Will host a holiday luncheon on 12/20, retired teachers join too. Pastaria will supply meals; they gave us a great deal for lunch -- thank you! Will send email asking volunteers to bring desserts via Sign Up Genius. Have also gotten teachers donuts, with gluten-free options.

Parent Connections: 12th grade social event was a success with 40-some attendees. Daytime college counselors event was not as well attended. Would have been better for sophomore/junior parents -- that will be happening in the spring.

Book club next Monday; still time to read the book!

Sensory needs accommodations update at next meeting; February meeting may include a peek at the new wellness center.

The next PTO meeting will be held on January 10, 2023 (note date postponed one week) at 12:00 pm.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:04 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Joanna Dinsmore, Communications