PTO Council Meeting: February 9, 2021

Attendees: Dr. Sean Doherty, Chris Tennill, David Gulick, Celeste Gillette, Jenny Abeles, Susan Kronemer, Jessica Graetz, Kim Whittle, Diana Hopper, Joanna Dinsmore, Leslie Christian-Wilson, Karen Gulick, Alison Hoette, Liz Florek and Alison Yee

Welcome and Introductions: Celeste Gillette

The meeting begins with Celeste welcoming everyone and thanking them for their time. She reads PTO Council’s mission statement.

Individual PTO Presidents report on upcoming and past events.

District Update: Dr. Sean Doherty

Dr. Doherty communicates his appreciation for the PTO efforts in continuing to build community during this unprecedented time. Currently, Clayton High School and Wydown Middle School are continuing with the hybrid responsive learning model. All three elementary schools are continuing full day learning. The district is continuing to evaluate the trends of the pandemic to determine the safest and best course of action for the upcoming 4th quarter for the middle school. There is no immediate plan for Clayton teachers and staff to receive the Covid-19 vaccination; however, the district nurse will continue to advocate for the staff to get their vaccinations. Once the staff is vaccinated, the district will continue to implement current risk mitigating efforts. The district is continuing its work with equity as well as its strategic plan. There will also be some time to help the incoming superintendent, Dr. Patel, transition to her new role in the Clayton School District. And lastly, everyone should take some time to view the black history videos produced by the district including staff and students.

Board of Education Update: David Gulick

The BOE focused greatly on hiring the new superintendent, Dr. Nisha Patel. In the hiring process, the role of the BOE is to define the core criteria and work with a recruiting firm as well as the Clayton community to determine which applicants would continue through the hiring process. Also, the BOE has been working diligently with the district committees (such as the finance committee) and focusing on executing the district’s strategic plan.

District Communications Update: Chris Tennill

Mr. Tennill provides updates on the district’s Black History Month video series initiative. Please take time to visit the videos on the district’s website.

Buzz Book Update: The district has altered, in Powerschool, how information is collected and families who have yet to complete all the necessary forms have been contacted via email with instructions on how to complete the necessary forms. The district website also features an instructional video for completing forms and setting up your online buzz book account. Once these forms are completed families will be updated in the district buzz book. The building principals have been instructed to include in their newsletters links for families to access updating their information in Powerschool.

Lipic Update: Lipic has moved to an “ordering window” model in an effort to avoid excess inventory. In an effort to maximize fundraising efforts the district is looking into creating frequent ordering windows where in stock items can be purchased. If a school wants to sell spirit wear outside the designated ordering window, the spirit wear representative should contact Lipics to arrange inventory for their event. Chris Tennill will report back to Celeste Gillette and Jenny Abeles by next Wednesday on the inventory, so individual schools know what is in inventory. PTO Council will then share the information with the individual schools.

Treasurer’s Report and Update: Kim Whittle

PTO Council treasurer presents the statement of activity. Some schools would like to use the Amazon Smiles program as fundraising opportunity. Currently the PTO Council absorbs the funds raised through the program. The PTO Council will investigate if there is a way to distribute Amazon Smiles funds to individual schools. Kim Whittle reminds individual PTOs to complete their tax paperwork and submit them to the district CFO. She also reminds PTOs to pay their Council dues (dues are used to pay for Quickbooks, our online accounting software).

District Updates:

Food Drive: Jenny Abeles thanks everyone who participated in the district food drive; many families benefited from the community’s generosity. The Food Drive, which raised almost $10,000 will be renamed the Food and Essentials Drive.

PTO Communications: Jessica Graetz reminds all PTO presidents to keep individual school PTO websites updated. This is a primary method of communication for our families this year due to Covid restrictions. School PTOs also need to reach out to school administration to connect with new families and welcome them to their respective school (either via a zoom meet and greet or setting up host families to welcome the new families). All generic emails (schoolpresident@claytonschools.net) have been completed by the communications department and appear to be in working order. Please let Chris Tennill aware of any issues with your PTO issued email.

The district is continuing its Parent Speaker Series via zoom. The next discussion, titled *Tools for Resilient,* is Thursday, February 11 from 7-8:15pm. Dr. Tim Bono will share new tools from his research about what helps families stay resilient and grow through the turbulent times we are living in. This event is free but does require registration through Jani Hoylan.

Grab ‘n Go Meals: Celeste Gillette reminded everyone about the Grab and Go meals offered to families in need. Please reach out to your individual communications chairs to spread the word.

Voter's Guide and Voter’s Forum: Susan Kronemer

Susan Kronemer reports one of the many purposes of the PTO Council is to host the Voter’s Forum and to create and publish the Voter’s Guide. This year is an uncontested year and therefore the PTO Council will not distribute a voter’s guide and there won’t be a forum for the upcoming school board election.

PTO Best Practices: Celeste Gillette

Celeste Gillette reminded everyone of best practice protocols for individual school PTOs. The Best Practices are below:

* It is the responsibility of the PTO president to ensure all committee members and event planners communicate through the co-presidents and the co-presidents communicate to the school principal. The committee members and presidents should not be communicating with the staff of the school without first communicating ideas or plans to the principal.
* If you need copies or flyers, they can be sent directly to the District print shop. The District print shop will bill the PTO ASN. The office staff at each school is not obligated to run copies or submit them for the PTOs events. Ask your committee leads to email you flyers, then ask principal, then submit to Print Shop. This is to keep the lines of communication open with everyone involved. Print shop manager is Krystal O’Day printshop@claytonschools.net or call 854-6075 Located behind CHS.
* If your school principal grants permission to contact a staff member, then go ahead, but wait for that connection.

New Business: Susan Kronemer

The PTO Council is looking for three members to join the board. Below you will find the requirements for joining the PTO Board for next year –

* The PTO Council invites all eligible individuals who are interested in sitting on the Executive Council to declare their interest. Eligibility - you must have served at least two years on an executive board on a PTO board.
* Individuals must declare their intent no later than Thursday April 1, 2021 at 5pm.  If there are more than four individuals interested in serving on the Executive Council we will ask that all interested individuals submit a brief background and statement of why this opportunity is of interest to them.  This information would be required no later than Friday April 9th, 2021 if there are multiple candidates.
* Once the statements have been received they will be routed electronically to all voting members. At the final Council meeting of the school year (May 4th 2021), a vote will be taken by all voting members.  For questions of eligibility or voting procedures please refer to the PTO council Handbook or contact a current Council exec board member.

Upcoming Jumpstart Meeting May 4th, Jenny Abeles

PTOs please have your executive boards and committee chairs established for the upcoming school year.

Meeting Adjourns at 8:45pm

*Thank you for all you do for the students and parents*

*of the School District of Clayton!*