

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CLAYTON HIGH SCHOOL PTO
Wednesday, September 4, 2024, 12:00 pm

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

The following board members were present in person: Co-Presidents Jena Schaumburg and Joanna Dinsmore, Communications Director Priya Bazzani, Secretary Amber Kempf, and Treasurer John Holmes.

The following CHS Staff, PTO members, and PTO committee/event chairs were present:

CHS Principal - Dan Gutchewsky

T'Shon Young – Coordinator of Sports and Activities for the School District of Clayton

Nisha Patel – Superintendent for the Clayton School District

Jenny Abeles.- Freshman Parent Connections/Homecoming Bonfire

Allie Rossini – Clayton Care Funds Committee and Parent Connections

Amy Wilson – Staff Appreciation

Marni Dillard

Emily Milchanowski

The following members and committee/event chairs were present via Zoom:

Emily Zou – Junior Parent Connections

Anna ?

Kelley Karandjeff – Senior Parent Connections/Hot Sips and Study Tips

Bridget McAndrew

Andrew Ulrich,

Michelle Cissna

Chia ?

Erin Pauladeoye

Lucinda Maddock

Tori Sombright

Elizabeth Macanufo

Kathi Leichester

Kristine Yoon

Jane Koster

I. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Jena Schaumburg and Joanna Dinsmore opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.

All were reminded that meeting agendas are available on the website, and links were placed in the chat for Zoom participants.

II. GUEST SPEAKER – DR. NISHA PATEL

a. Clayton School District Long Range Facilities Master Plan

Superintendent Patel shared that the process for the Clayton Long Range Facilities Master Plan has begun. The Steering and Building Subcommittees have formed and started meeting. Community forums will be held at each District School Building to get input. The District also hopes to engage the wider Clayton community in planning. This process will create detailed budgets for a long-term vision for Facilities for the District for the next 10-15 years. The District is committed to working with the community to develop a facilities plan that matches our outstanding curriculum. All aspects of staff, student, and community use of the facilities are being looked at, including concerns about supporting activities, athletics, and innovative learning practices. The overall Mission Statement and Strategic Plan for student Core Competencies is also a part of developing a new Facilities Master Plan. This planning and information-gathering stage will continue for the next six months. In January 2025, the architectural firm will have a proposed plan and start presenting the plan for consideration by the community as a whole.

b. CHS Building Updates

Over the Summer, several improvements were made to CHS, including a new Gym floor, updates to the commons area, and AC in the athletic locker rooms. The work is complete and being enjoyed by the staff and students.

c. Clayton School District Cell Phone Policy

The District sent out a questionnaire about the District's existing cell phone policy. The questionnaire closes on 9/5/24. The District will consider all input from the questionnaire and any other information and feedback from the community about the recent focus on increased enforcement of the existing cell phone policy. The District will continue conversing with parents/caregivers, students, and staff about the cell phone policy.

d. New Centegix Badges for all District Staff

Recently, the District began providing all staff members (including substitute teachers) with a Centegix badge. These badges have an emergency button to activate First Responders for immediate help. If needed, these badges will work at all District Buildings and within the greater Clayton area. The staff appreciated having access to this extra layer of safety for themselves and students.

III. PTO OVERVIEW

a. Presidents' Report

i. Purpose of the PTO

Jena Shaumburg shared that now that everyone has refreshed their minds about the CHS PTO's mission statement, we are focusing on fulfilling it. For any

issues involving policy and procedures that are not part of the PTO's purpose and mission, we are happy to refer those concerns to someone within the District who can assist. Please contact us if you need help connecting to the right source to answer your questions or concerns.

Joanna Dinsmore shared the PTO Mission Statement again:

"The PTO is organized for the purpose of supporting and enhancing the education of students at Clayton High School through volunteer service, fundraising and fostering relationships among members of the school community. The PTO helps to further educate, inspire, and empower the School's students and to reinforce the mission, vision, and core values of the School District of Clayton by modeling and promoting excellence, trust, inclusiveness, innovation, and accountability in all we do."

The goal of the CHS PTO this year is to remain faithful to the mission statement as we work to support parents/caregivers, students, and staff.

ii. September [NOTE: Now October] Funds for Excellence Fundraising Campaign

Jena and Joanna encouraged all who still need to donate to Funds for Excellence to do so. The FFE Postcard for parents/caregivers has already gone out, and it contains information about all the Faculty Special Projects, supports, and events the PTO provides to the CHS community. Plans are in place to share more information about projects, events, and supports the PTO will fund this year as they happen to further inform the community on what their donations are being used for.

The CHS PTO is hopeful it will only need to fundraise for September [**now October**].

iii. The Parent and Faculty Book Club,

Learning to Disagree, John Inazu, October 7, 2024, at 7 pm in the CHS Library. (Note: it was discovered after the meeting that this date will need to change. More information to follow.) [**NEW DATE: October 28, 7 pm**]

b. Treasurer's Report: Treasurer John Holmes shared the Treasurer's Report.

i. 2024-25 Budget.

A copy of the 2024-25 Budget was shared. It remains the same as last year. Most of what the CHS PTO does comes out of donations to Funds for Excellence (FFE). Our proposed budget for the 2024–2025 school year is \$27,500.

Thirty-two folks have donated to FFE, totaling \$4500. Funds for Excellence supports multiple things, including Special Faculty Projects (previously called CHS Funds for Excellence awards), plans and funds for teacher/staff appreciation meals, and plans and funds for various social events for the CHS community.

\$725 has been donated to the Clayton Cares Fund. The Clayton Cares Fund assists community members needing financial support for essentials, school-related supplies, testing fees, participation fees, or other unplanned expenses. The CHS Principal, social workers, and councilors determine the allocations of these funds.

Folks are welcome to give split gifts and designate money into each fund.

It was proposed that the CHS PTO provide a suggested donation amount to guide donors. It was agreed that this was a good idea, and the CHS Board would include a suggested amount for guidance in fundraising information going forward. There will also be a focus on ensuring folks know all donations of any amount are helpful.

As of today, we have raised about \$5000 total. This is 17% of what we need to raise for the year and well ahead of giving this time last year.

As of today, CHS PTO has approximately \$60,000 in the bank. The PTO must keep one year's operating expenses in reserve, but plans are underway to spend any excess funds.

It was asked if the Student Council had enough money to pay for Homecoming Events this year and if the CHS PTO could support Student Council in covering those expenses. Dr. Gutchewsky and T'Shon Young explained that StuCo did have less money this year for Homecoming Events than last year. This is due to higher spending on events last year and the decision to donate some fundraising money from an event to support the American Cancer Society. However, StuCo has plenty of money to fund the events they want to hold for Homecoming and does not need further funds from the PTO.

c. Principal's Update:

Dr. Gutchewsky gave the Principal's Update. Dr. Gutchewsky indicated that the start of school at CHS was going smoothly, with students and staff settling into routines quickly. First-year students are adjusting well.

i. Clayton District cell phone policy and enforcement at CHS

Dr. Gutchewsky indicated that although the District's cell phone policy has not changed, the administration and staff are working to enforce it uniformly and consistently this year. Only three phones have been removed from the classroom, and there have not been any repeat policy violations by any students. Dr. Gutchewsky indicated that scientific studies have indicated that cell phones being used during instructional time disrupts learning and creates a lot of distractions for students and staff. However, always contact your grade-level principal with questions or concerns about the cell phone policy, as feedback is always welcome.

ii. The new School Attendance Policy at CHS

Dr. Gutchewsky indicated that CHS is still receiving feedback and questions about the new attendance policy. Dr. Gutchewsky again shared the science that shows that students who are present at school regularly show more overall learning and success in the classroom. He understands that COVID and the slow transition back from how schools needed to operate during the Pandemic to keep everyone safe put the importance of in-person attendance on the back burner for a bit. The next Principal's Newsletter will contain more information detailing how the policy will work. It is applied to each class taken by a student separately. There will also be options to make up time if it fits the situation, and of course, you should always keep your children home when sick. He is working to develop a Frequently Asked Questions list for the attendance policy based on the feedback and questions he has already received and will share it with the community to answer questions.

The Attendance Policy will only impact a small part of the CHS population who misses more than eight days a semester. Dr. Gutchewsky noted that when a student misses eight days of the 45 days of instructional time a student receives each semester in each class, they will have already missed 20% of the class even if they are in compliance with the new policy.

Please share information with the staff about illness, sports activities, or other things your child will have to miss school for. There is an appeals process for absences given and ways for your child to make up the time if they wish. CHS will continue conversing with students and families about the new policy.

The new attendance policy arose from conversations Carolyn Blair and other administrative staff were having with colleges, asking for more data points to consider regarding college admissions and looking to combat their problems with college students not regularly attending class. Attendance will be a part of student's transcripts from now on. It will only be one metric the college's admissions team will consider, and families can share information in the application for the reasons their child missed more than

eight days a semester. Your college councilor will help you navigate the new attendance metric in the colleges your student applies for.

Contact your Grade Level Principal for more information about the attendance policy if you need it.

iii. **Open House.**

There was an excellent turnout for the CHS Open House.

iv. **Long-Term Facilities Planning**

Dr. Gutchewsky has already attended the first subcommittee on this and is excited about the possibility of obtaining new spaces to support new learning and our outstanding student programs like the Clayton Robotics Team and the Athletic Teams.

- v. Dr. Gutchewsky shared with those present information about the recent loss of CHS student Tate Kest, who lost his battle with leukemia last weekend. Information about events celebrating Tate's life will be forthcoming and shared with the community via e-mail. At this challenging time, the CHS Community's thoughts and prayers are with Tate's family and friends.

d. **Activities Update:** T'shon Young shared the Activities Update.

i. **Homecoming**

Homecoming will be the weekend of September 29 – October 5, 2024. StuCo is already planning. Much of their budget for Homecoming events will be bolstered by sales of tickets to the Homecoming Dance. During the week of Homecoming, there will be many daily events for the students to participate in, and more information will be shared about those events. The Bonfire will be that Friday night, and the Football Game and Dance will also be happening that weekend. The dance tickets will cost \$10.00 and will be sold the week before the Dance. They will be sold electronically only.

ii. **Athletic Booster Club Funding**

In response to a question, T'shon Jones shared that CHS PTO funds do not pay for the Athletic Teams Booster Clubs. They are funded and run separately from the CHS PTO. They fundraise separately and receive grants and some budget money from the District. The Boosters pay for the end-of-year sports banquets and other events for student-athletes. The Boosters also

have a yearly golf tournament fundraiser that raises money for the Booster Clubs.

iii. CHS Sports Team Reports

The Sports teams at CHS have started well. The Football team won its first game, and the volleyball team placed second in a recent tournament.

iv. CHS Clubs

Students can contact T'Shon Jones with ideas for additional clubs at CHS they want to start, and she can assist them. Students are already contacting her about starting new clubs. Clubs are excellent for student connections.

In response to a question, T'Shon Jones indicated that the number of clubs each child should belong to depends on the child's schedule and interests. There is no recommended number of clubs a student should belong to.

In response to another question, T'Shon Jones also indicated that having a "date" is unnecessary for the Homecoming Dance. Many students just come with friends. High school students from other districts or CHS alums under 20 are also welcome to attend with a student. However, paperwork must be completed for that to happen, including forms that must be signed by parents, students, and representatives from the guest student's home school. Please get in touch with T'Shon to complete those forms. They must be done before the Homecoming Dance for the non-CHS student guests to attend. Guests are the responsibility of the students who bring them.

It was asked what the dress code is for the Homecoming Dance. The kids who attend the dance wear all kinds of attire. Dresses and nicer clothes are mostly worn, but the students all have a unique style, so there is no strict dress code. About 550 kids usually attend the Homecoming Dance.

e. Committee Chair Updates

i. Homecoming Committee —Jenny Abeles and Emily Balestra

Jenny Abeles shared that the District Back to School Event has been rescheduled for the morning of the Homecoming Parade. Parents can have coffee, smoothies, or donuts on the Neuman Green. If it is successful, it can become a regular event for Homecoming Weekend.

ii. Staff Appreciation—Amy Wilson

Amy shared that the teachers enjoyed Dewey's Pizza and Salad the night of the Open House for the first Staff Appreciation Event. This coming Friday, the next event will be donuts and coffee for the teachers. The next meal for staff will occur on October 15 during Parent/Caregiver Conferences.

iii. **Parent Connections** – Several events are coming up for Parent Connections.

1. **The Senior Parent Kickoff** is on Thursday, September 26, from 5 to 7 p.m. at the Clayton Winehouse. Snacks and a cash bar will be provided.
2. **The Juniors Parent Kickoff** will be Sept 30, 2024, from 6 to 7 p.m., and refreshments will be provided in the CHS Library.

iv. **Clayton Education Foundation—Allie Rossini, VP of Clayton Education Foundation**

CEF reminded everyone of the upcoming Azdick Field Movie Night on Saturday, September 14. Please bring a blanket. Chairs are not allowed, as they damage the baseball field. Please don't bring popcorn or sunflower seeds and clean up after yourself. The movie will be "The Sandlot."

CEF is also working on more Clayton Alumni Events, including a celebration of the 40th Anniversary of the start of the Clayton Boys Soccer Program. There will be an Alumni game on September 21, 2024, at Gay Field, with a follow-up gathering at OB Clarks after the game.

There are also plans for an event to honor the 40th Anniversary of the Clayton Football Team winning the State Championship, with former players from the team in attendance.

The Clayton Flags are still on sale. They are \$55.00 each and include the flag and a pole to hang it from.

Tickets for the Alumni Lunch for Homecoming Weekend will go on sale this coming Monday, September 9, 2024.

The next PTO Meeting will be held on 10/2/24 from 12 to 1 p.m. on Zoom and in person at the Center of Clayton, Meeting Room C.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Amber Kempf, Secretary