

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CLAYTON HIGH SCHOOL PTO**  
**Wednesday, October 2, 12:00 p.m.**

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, 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  
Marni Dillard  
Tahnee Jackson Whitlock  
Cara Downs  
Emily Whitney – Staff Appreciation  
Bridget McAndrew – Faculty Special Projects Awards  
Soleta Lee  
Suzy Oge – Faculty Special Projects Awards

The following members and Committee//Event Chairs were present via Zoom:

Priya Bazzani - CHS PTO Communications Director  
Jenny Abeles – Homecoming Committee and Freshman Parent Connections  
Elizabeth Macanufo  
Kris Yoon  
Erin Linnenbringer  
Melissa Rideout  
Pallavi Chhabra  
Michela Henke-Cilenti  
iphone (attendee did not have a screen name listed on Zoom)

**I. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

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

**II. PRESIDENTS REPORT - Jena Schaumburg and Joanna Dinsmore**

1. Jena shared that the PTO had added a new webcam and speaker to help use Zoom during the monthly PTO meetings. Please let Jena or Joanna know if you are still having trouble hearing the meetings on Zoom so they can troubleshoot.
2. Jena shared that the CHS PTO's mission statement was included in the recent Postcards to Parents. It gives an overview of what the CHS PTO's purpose is. If the CHS PTO

Board cannot resolve concerns brought to its attention, it will make sure to connect parents with district staff at whatever level is needed to resolve any needs or concerns.

3. The October Funds for Excellence Fundraising Campaign is off and going. QR codes will be posted at the school during Parent-Teacher Conferences, Parent Connection Social Events, and Homecoming Events to make it easy for parents to donate. The PTO will share more feedback on what all Funds for Excellence donations have funded for CHS students, staff, and parents at future meetings and the monthly Postcard to Parents.
4. The Book Club will meet on October 28<sup>th</sup>, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. in the CHS Library to discuss Paul Inazu's book *Learning to Disagree*. Suzy Oge shared that Dr. Inazu is a local author and Wash U Professor. This is the final date!

### **III. TREASURER'S REPORT- John Holmes**

1. Approximately \$8200 has been raised for Funds for Excellence. That is 27% of the amount needed to fund the CHS PTO's 2024-25 Budget.
2. \$1,232.37 was spent in support of the Senior Parent Connections Events. Half of that amount was a reimbursement for the event last year due to a receipt being turned in late.
3. \$1,235 has been raised for CARE Funds. This is about 50% of the total budget.
4. We have some surplus funds in the CHS PTO account that the Board will be working closely with the CHS Administration and Staff to spend on Faculty Special Projects Awards for the 2024-25 school year. The money in the budget set aside for those awards will be spent until it is gone.
5. Faculty Special Projects Award Applications will be accepted from CHS staff starting this month and reviewed until the end of October. Decisions on awarding funds will be made in November. The goal is to spend all available funds during this academic year. Applications will be accepted until all funds are spent or all applications that meet the necessary criteria have been granted.
6. It was suggested that the Board offer an incentive to encourage folks to donate to CHS PTO. Wydown offered a free Wydown Blanket to all who donated \$125 or more to Wydown before the deadline. The board decided to consider this option and come up with a similar incentive plan for CHS donations. It was suggested and agreed that any incentive offered should be given to all parents who donate. A raffle was suggested as a more equitable way to offer the incentive rather than offering it for a specific donation amount and excluding donors who could not donate that amount.

### **IV. PRINCIPAL'S UPDATE – Dr. Dan Gutchewsky**

1. Principal Gutchewsky discussed the recent threats of school violence being directed at Clayton and dozens of other local school districts. There was one threat made with a social media post. A second separate bomb threat occurred during the last Staff Development Day. The bomb threat was called in through 911. The Clayton Police and Fire Departments responded to the High School less than 2 minutes after the bomb threat call came in and immediately began evacuating the school. Nobody was injured. Within 20 minutes, there were eight bomb dogs on site from Clayton PD, as well as other Police Departments and Federal Organizations sweeping the building.

- The building was cleared within 3 hours. The staff and the first responders did a great job.
2. Parent-teacher conference sign-ups started this past week. Everyone should have received an e-mail and voicemail. As of today, 42% of the conference times have been booked. Sign-ups will be closed on October 10, 2024, at noon. In-person conferences will take place only on Tuesday, October 15, 2024; the rest of the sign-up days will be virtual conferences via Zoom. This year, CHS made sure that in-person conferences did not overlap with Wydown Middle School.
  3. The CHS Fall Play of 12 Angry Jurors will be performed the week of November 2, 2024. More information will follow.
  4. Juniors registered for the PSAT this week and all grades are taking the Panorama Social Emotional Learning Survey.
  5. Meetings for the Long-Term Facilities Planning process have continued. Community forums will be held in November and January. Details will be shared in the Principals Newsletter.

**V. ACTIVITIES UPDATE – T'Shon Young**

1. Homecoming Activities are in full swing. Last Sunday, the Junior Class won the Powderpuff Football game. The Seniors won the Brawleyball game. The Seniors won for best class hallway decorations. The staff won the staff vs. students' volleyball game. Codes to get tickets for the Homecoming Dance must be obtained in Room 8 at CHS before the end of school on Friday, October 4, 2024. The online link to purchase Dance Tickets closed at 10 p.m. on October 4, 2024. This coming Friday night, October 4, 2024, will be the Bonfire and Relic Presentation from each class. The bonfire is open to the community, but the games that night are only for high school students. Saturday, October 5, 2024, will be the Homecoming Parade starting at 11 a.m. At 9:00 a.m. coffee and donuts will be sold on Neuman Green for parents and students prior to the parade. At noon, the CHS football team will play Afton at Gay Field. The doors open for the Homecoming Dance at 7:45 p.m. The doors close at 8:30 p.m. and no entry will be allowed after that. If you have a child who needs to come late due to an event that night, please let T'Shon know, as that can be accommodated. Students will not be allowed to leave and return to the dance. The dance ends at 10:30 p.m. An e-mail to get Parent Volunteers to help with the Coat/Bag Check and Snack Table will be coming out this week. Parent volunteers are needed from 7:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m.

**VI. COMMITTEE CHAIR UPDATES**

1. Staff Appreciation – Emily Whitney
  - a. The next meal for Teacher and Staff Appreciation will be from Tres Reyes on the night of in-person parent teacher conferences on October 15, 2024.
  - b. Donuts will be provided to CHS teachers and staff this coming Friday, October 4, 2024.
2. Parent Connections – Robin Leonard – Grade Level Liaisons

- a. Jenny Abeles shared that the Freshman Parent Connections Event will take place on November 7, 2024, at C.J. Muggs in Downtown Clayton from 5:30-7:30 pm.
  - b. Jenny Abeles will continue to send out Freshman Parent Letters via e-mail to share helpful information.
  - c. The Junior Parent Connections Event was held on September 30, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. in the CHS Library. Thank you to CHS College Counselors who offered an informal Q&A session for parents who attended the event. The event had a good turnout and was very helpful for parents supporting students who are planning to attend college after graduation.
  - d. The Senior Parent Connections Event on October 1, 2024, at the Clayton Winehouse had a good turnout and was enjoyed by all who attended.
3. Homecoming – Jenny Abeles and Emily Balestra
    - a. Parking for Homecoming will be difficult, as soccer games are taking place in Shaw Park that day. Please walk, carpool, or arrive early to get a parking spot.
    - b. Coffee and Donuts will be available for purchase on October 5, 2024, from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. on Neuman Green before the Homecoming Parade.
4. Faculty Special Projects Awards (formerly Funds for Excellence Programs) – Suzy Oge and Bridget McAndrew
    - a. Suzy shared that the committee would ensure that those receiving these Awards give feedback to the committee and the board what they used any awards for, and this information will be shared with the community.

## **VII. QUESTIONS AND OTHER BUSINESS**

1. Enforcement of the existing cell phone policy is going well. About 9-10 devices (cell phones and EarPods) have been taken during the school day, and there are still no repeat offenders.
2. The WIFI at the high school was adequate for the Juniors' registration for the PSAT.
3. Further discussion of the recent social media threats and bomb threats occurred. Principal Gutchewsky noted that school safety is a number one priority. Building doors are locked, there are cameras throughout the school in public locations., students have badges to get in and out of the building, bulletproof glass is in the front vestibule, and staff now have Centegix Badges. These badges when pressed by staff identifies who is calling for help, gives their specific location, and calls for immediate help. It will be integrated with the PA system at the school shortly. Students need to remember that if someone asks them to open a door in the building, they should direct folks to the front door and/or get a staff member to assist them. It is the one time being polite to an adult is not necessary as safety is a serious concern. Over a dozen students reported the social media threat to the school within minutes of its occurrence. The St. Ann Police, along with other local law enforcement agencies, are investigating the social media threat. It was made with a photo from an unrelated Pinterest website. The FBI is investigating

the bomb threat that was called to 911. The 911 call originated overseas, so it was not made locally. It is unknown when the investigations will be complete.

4. Children who wish to stay home from school on days when threats of violence are made will receive an excused absence, but it still counts toward the attendance policy. School attendance was 92% on September 24, 2024, the date mentioned in the social media threat. Neither of these threats was deemed credible by law enforcement, but the police and the district took every precaution to ensure the safety of staff and students.
5. The Superintendent and several school administrators have been asked to collect data about how enforcement of the District's current cell phone policy is going. The data will be reported to the Clayton School Board at their next meeting on October 2, 2024. The Board is monitoring how enforcement of the existing cell phone policy enforcement is going. Any parents concerned about changes to the existing cell phone policy can contact the Clayton School Board or attend the Clayton School Board meetings to make their concerns known.

The Next PTO Meeting will be held on 11/6/24 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