

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CLAYTON HIGH SCHOOL PTO
Wednesday, November 6, 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 Communications Director Priya Bazzani.

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
Jennifer McKeown, Wellness Coordinator, CHS Wellness Center
Emily Whitney – Staff Appreciation Committee
Jenny Abeles – Homecoming Committee and Freshman Parent Connections
Bridget McAndrew – Faculty Special Projects Awards
Tim Schaumburg
Alice Karandjeff
Melissa Rideout
Amy Wilson
Tahnee Jackson Whitlock
Deanna Simanowitz

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

Tori Sombright
Janis Stoll
Grace Lee
Robin Leonard – Senior Parent Connections Liaison
Emily Zou – Junior Parent Connections Liaison

I. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

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

II. SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKER

Special Guest – Jennifer McKeown, Wellness Coordinator, CHS Wellness Center

The CHS Wellness Center is a safe space on campus for students to access support at CHS. The Wellness Center was planned and designed with the input of the CHS Wellness Youth Council last year. It is currently a trend at schools across the United States to offer Wellness Spaces, but CHS currently has the first and only Wellness Center in the Midwest. Wellness Center Staff are

working hard to use best practices to support students while tailoring the offerings to meet the needs of this specific community. Staff at the Wellness Center are working to connect and create relationships with all students at CHS. The Wellness Center provides daily access to a safe space for students to drop in anytime they need mental health support or a break from their day. Those supports include one-on-one drop-in counseling, longer-term counseling through “Safe Connections” licensed counselors, a social worker on staff in the Wellness Center, time for drop-in “brain breaks” when students need to regulate emotions, and access to any additional services when needed to support students’ mental health long term. Students can access “Wellness Activities” during Greyhound Time in the Wellness Center. The Wellness Center also has a practicum student on staff this year to support students. The Wellness Center has already had many student events to engage and educate all students on how to access and use it to support themselves. All students have seen presentations from staff about the Wellness Space as of this date. The freshman class is accessing the Wellness Center and will be the first students to have access to the space for all four years that they will be students at CHS. The Wellness Center is also working with an English teacher in coordination with the students reading “Catcher in the Rye” to address some of the book’s themes that involve mental health issues. There are discussions of doing this with other books students read as part of their English Curriculum at CHS. Conversations are also occurring with the CHS Theatre Program to collaborate addressing mental health issues and stress about performing.

There are three tiers of engagement that students engage in.

Tier 1 is outreach, presentations, and making connections with students.

Tier 2 provides targeted support to students through “brain breaks” and Wellness Activities such as making art or engaging with other students and trusted staff within the wellness space.

Tier 3 further supports students through a social worker, Jennifer herself, or Safe Connections counseling.

The Wellness Center is also working on also beginning to provide programming to support parents. On November 18, 2024, from 6-7 pm on Zoom, the Wellness Center is co-sponsoring a parent event: Parenting in the Digital Age: How to Support Your Child’s Digital Wellness. This presentation will address ways caregivers can support students in engaging in media in a positive and supportive manner. This virtual presentation will be accessible via Zoom. You must register to receive the Zoom link, and if you register, you will also receive access to a recording of the event. This program is geared toward parents of children K-12. It is presented by #halfthestory and Larissa May.

E-mail Jennifer with any questions or concerns.

III. PRESIDENTS REPORT - Jena Schaumburg and Joanna Dinsmore

Please let us know if Zoom is not working properly. We will move the microphone around more during meetings to help folks hear better on Zoom. Zoom is a matter of accessibility, which the CHS PTO is committed to, and we will keep working on that.

Jenny Abeles moved to approve the minutes from the October CHS meeting. Tim Schaumburg seconded. A vote was held, and the October meeting minutes were approved.

A parent at the meeting who attended the first Parent-Teacher Book Club about the book *Learning to Disagree* by John Inazu shared that a good conversation with differing views about the book occurred, and the session went well. The next session will be held on a Wednesday after school.

Tonight, there will be a meeting for the Long-Range Facilities Master Plan at the Building Level at CHS starting at 6:30 p.m. and also at Glenridge earlier at 4 p.m. Information will be shared about proposed plans that have been put together by small planning and discussion groups of staff, parents, and community members. The next meetings will be held district-wide to invite the entire community to attend and give input on the process.

IV. TREASURER'S REPORT- John Holmes could not attend, so Joanna Dinsmore shared the Treasurer's Report.

The October Funds for Excellence push was reasonably successful, and John believes around \$7000.00 has been raised toward the CHS PTO budget. He is still working on the final numbers. Last year, at this time, participation was at 10%, but currently, we are at 12% participation, which is an improvement. Last December, the CHS PTO did one more end-of-year charitable giving push, which caused 20-25 additional donations, so the PTO is planning to do that again this year to support our events. However, the CHS PTO Board wants only some communications from the PTO to be requests for money, so they are trying to be mindful of that.

The winners of the Spiritwear raffle for the October Funds for Excellence Fundraising Campaign were announced, and someone will contact them soon to place their orders. Joanna hopes to be able to order the Spiritwear to be delivered by December.

V. PRINCIPAL'S UPDATE – Dr. Dan Gutchewsky

Parent-teacher conferences went well, and Dr. Gutchewsky thanked the parents for their engagement and the CHS PTO for providing dinner for the staff. The staff really appreciated the meal. He has received overall positive feedback about the conferences this year. Feedback indicated that both the online and in-person conference options are being accessed and appreciated, so CHS will continue offering both to parents.

Enforcement of the cell phone policy is still going well at CHS. He updated the Board about how enforcement was going and will continue. So far, 24 electronic devices, including Air Pods, have been confiscated for violating the policy. The totals per grade were 7 devices for 9th grade, 6 for 10th grade, 8 for 11th grade, and only 3 for 12th grade. A survey with CHS staff in September indicated that 95% of faculty reported that enforcement was going well. 93% of Staff reported that cell phone use was down or was never a problem in their classroom. Dr. Gutchewsky will check in again with staff toward the end of the year. Students at CHS have been made aware that if enforcement of the current policy does not work, other policies to curb cell phone use during

instructional time could be proposed. The students understand and do not want that, so they are following the current policy well.

Under the new Attendance Policy, attendance has been up slightly overall. The policy has an overall positive effect on student attendance. Those with the highest absences in the student body often deal with medical issues, which are subject to exemption under the policy. The policy is detailed in the Student and Parent Handbook. For example, on Sophomore Challenge day, when there are often many absences, as the Sophomores take the PSAT that day, 96% of students attended this year. Usually, attendance is around 75% on Sophomore Challenge Day.

The CHS Fall Play 12 Angry Jurors was great. It is the first of two fall plays at CHS. This was Mallory Duncan's first show directing, and she and the rest of the theatre staff did a great job. The next play is a Clue Parody and will be performed in a few weeks.

The Long-Range Facilities Master Plan CHS Building Session is at 6:30 pm tonight, 11/6 and will last about an hour and a half. These meetings will be a great place to find out what is happening and be heard. This process started with thinking about solving current facilities problems at CHS, but now the plan is to extrapolate that into what we think will support district students for the next 10 years. The district wants to support current programs and clubs, like Robotics, but also plan for future curricula like Geometry of Construction, a program where the CTE and Math Departments will join and offer students the opportunity to build mini houses and sheds with applied mathematics.

National Honor Society Induction notifications went out this week, and the inductions will be held soon.

Faculty and Staff Special Projects applications are out and coming in for review.

Final exams are coming up soon. There will be a similar schedule as in the past. Finals will take December 18 for periods 1-3, December 19 for periods 4-6, and December 20 for periods 7-8 plus make-up exams. If you need to miss those dates, there is no guarantee that you can take exams early, and you may have to take them after students return from Winter Break. Check with teachers to find out how they manage missed finals in their classroom.

While attendance has always been reported on CHS Report Cards, attendance will now be shared on school transcripts. This is at the request of colleges. This will be calculated using a formula provided by the State of Missouri that totals the percentage of time the student attended school. It will be a cumulative number for each year. It will not distinguish between excused and unexcused absences. The percentage is calculated by the first to last bell minus the length of 1 passing period (5 minutes) and a 25-minute lunch. There is a list in the student handbook of what qualifies for an excused absence, and there is an option to submit a written request for anything not on the list to be reviewed by the administration to grant an excused absence under exceptional circumstances.

VI. ACTIVITIES UPDATE – T'Shon Young

Around 600 students attended the Homecoming Dance. It was well attended, and there were no incidents that required discipline. The students had a great time at the Homecoming Parade and the Bonfire.

Fall sports are finishing up, and Winter sports are starting. The CHS Girls' Tennis Team placed first in the state. The Boys' Swim Team just won their Conference Championship and is headed to state soon. The Cross Country Team is competing at state this upcoming weekend. Basketball starts this week, and wrestling starts next week.

VII. COMMITTEE CHAIR UPDATES

a. Parent Connections – Grade-Level Liaisons

Robin Leonard, Senior Parent Connections Committee Chair, shared that the Liaisons are all doing a great job. The Freshman Parent Connections Liaison, Jenny Abeles, has been doing a great job in sharing information with Freshman Parents via a newsletter and will share her newsletter template to be archived and available for all Parent Liaisons going forward.

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.

Parents and Juniors had a great Counselling Q&A Session recently with Caroline Blair. There was discussion of doing the event at the Center of Clayton next time and possibly providing food and non-alcoholic drinks.

The Seniors had their parent's social, and it went well.

A freshman and sophomore parent college Q&A will also be scheduled for this year.

The Parent Liaisons Committee is taking steps to locate a short list of event spaces for future events. This will give the Liaisons a variety of options for planning with easy-to-work-with locations.

CHS PTO Communications Director Priya Bazanni shared that she is learning her way around the CHS PTO website and is working to make information sharing and archiving of helpful information and documents available for CHS PTO volunteers. Reach out to her if you are looking for something or want something added to an archive or the website.

b. Faculty Special Projects Awards (formerly Funds for Excellence Programs) - Bridget McAndrew.

Staff is submitting applications, and decisions will be coming soon. The CHS PTO is encouraging teachers and staff to think big and ask for things that will make a long-term impact.

VIII. QUESTIONS AND OTHER BUSINESS

Please inform the CHS PTO Presidents if you have anything you want to include on a future agenda or if you have any questions or ideas for speakers.

It was suggested that options for corporate matching be emphasized in the December PTO End-of-Year Donation ask to encourage people to do that.

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

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Amber Kempf, Secretary