



**Columbia Secondary School for
Math, Science & Engineering
Parent Teacher Association**

**January 11, 2022
6:15 PM -7:30 pm via Zoom**

WELCOME: PTA President, Veronica Villalpando welcomed everyone to the meeting, and reminded everyone that we have simultaneous Spanish translation.

APPROVAL OF DECEMBER MEETING MINUTES: Co-Recording Secretary, Laurie Brown Kindred quickly reviewed the minutes (which also appeared in the Newsletter sent days prior to the meeting). Veronica launched the poll. 93 parents in attendance, officially approved with majority vote.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

- Cash balance as of 1/9/22 was \$93,882.72; \$5,762.24 in outstanding checks, leaving register balance of \$88,120.48.
- December Income:
 - Uniform & Facemask Sales were \$1061
 - Membership Donations were \$3860
- December Expenses:
 - Rugby Uniforms & Mascot = \$1358.41
 - Clothing for Uniform Sales = \$6145.15
 - Food/Supplies for Holiday Events = \$1047.08
 - Dept/Grade Level Grant (7th grade ELA books) = \$523.60
 - Admin Expenses, Teacher Mini Grants (chess sets), Pie Sales expenses, Paypal/Square = \$324.95
- Now more than 75% of meeting Membership Donation Goal; need \$5k to reach our goal!
- Recent items we've invested in include:
 - Reading material for students
 - Lab Equipment
 - KN95 masks for students & staff
 - Classroom Heaters
 - Teacher & School Admin Appreciation Event
- Ken talked through current budget.
- Q previously was if PTA can donate to Friends of CSS; A - potentially possible, but only under the provisions of the PTA
- The membership donations goal is \$23k but there are other fundraising goals set forth within the budget.

FUNDRAISING UPDATES

- CSS Winter Gear still available for purchase (CSS-PTA.Square.site) - beanies, scarves, classic hoodie and sweatpants (can be worn in the classroom!)
- Farm to People (sustainable grocery delivery that partners with small farms and local makers to provide wholesome food to NYers)
 - CSS PTA will receive 5% of everything you spend between now and 2/15
 - The more signups, the closer we are to a \$250 bonus for our school
 - Share code FARMTOCSS with anyone who wants to participate
- Now that we are an official 502c3, know that all donations made to the PTA, including purchase receipts, are tax-deductible. Contact PTAfundraising@columbiasecondary.org if you have any questions.
- Spring Fling: up until now, we're planning for virtual. If you'd like to volunteer or want more info, please let us know.

- Volunteering Options will be

PICTURE DAY

- Scheduled for Jan 20 & 21 for Grades 6-11 (Senior Portraits will be done separately)
- Safety measures in place (distancing, masking, no groups)
- Parent Volunteers needed each day (7:30a-11a & 11a-2p)
 - Must provide proof of vaccination
 - Class Escort, Portrait Stylist, Signboard Manager
 - Sign up Link provided
- Senior Portraits are not organized by the PTA

PARENT SURVEY - PRELIMINARY RESULTS

- 62 responded before the meeting (90 by the start of the meeting)
 - 58 parents
 - 3 teachers
 - 1 student
- Link to Survey provided in English and Spanish
- Top 3 funding priorities for parents are arts/music, social or resocialization events for students and AP courses
- Top requested PTA talks focused on college planning and courses; other noteworthy topic requests include study skills and wellness.
- A few verbatims from the open-ended question:
 - Wish the PTA meeting would allow for parents to ask Qs and bring topics up for discussion
 - Note that questions can always be asked in the chat and topics are more than welcome to be suggested prior to the start of a meeting
 - Could we look into getting Latin for current 7th graders?
 - Support student groups that win local competitions and advance to regional/national levels
 - Could the PTA, in collaboration with CSS staff, perhaps create a procedure for teachers to file requests for books, materials and other course supporting items beyond the basic course books and materials before the start of each academic year?
 - Compared to elementary school, I feel barely involved with the PTA. The distance is partly due to Covid, but the sense of community just isn't there.
 - Thank you to every PTA volunteer for investing your time, energy and creativity on behalf of all of our kids and school!
- There's still time to answer the survey! We'll accept survey submissions thru next Mon 1/17
- Parents, Students and Teachers/Staff can participate in the survey.

UPDATES & Q&A WITH PRINCIPAL NIGHTENGALE:

- Happy New Year to an overwhelming start. The covid spike that started before the break on 12/18 continues, and we're seeing the peak.
 - Fallout was cancellation of January regents, lots of absences, distribution of at home test kits (to all close contacts); distributed 200 kits today, sent out about 900 as of now
 - Most results that we're getting now are from kits that are distributed.
 - Kudos to staff hanging in with all uncertainty, taking it all day to day.
- Today we had a few students participate in the walk-out, in support of Remote Learning.
- Federal and DOE budget spending is determined by the DOE, will have to wait to see how the new administration enforces policy changes
- Traditional activities: Cross Valley 8th grade trip & musical are being curtailed
- QUESTIONS:
 - Federal funding given to the city; money being sent as 'catch up' money has been recategorized as maintenance money
 - The idea is that the money is being recategorized as SERS
 - As covid recovers, we see this being

- When will the 2022-23 calendar be released? No set date, but last year was over the summer.
- How are students able to not fall behind if they have to quarantine? There are google classrooms set up for quarantine students & teachers set up specific office hours. Teachers provide 2hrs of service and an extra hour for every course they teach (union settlement)
- Is the federal funding specified in its use? Like grant money has to be used for specific things? Not sure how much flexibility the city has, but the school can only spend the money based on the decision by the city.
- How is the school engaging with students about how they feel and their views? How do their voices get to the DOE?
- Is there a way to get updated on positive numbers at the school, which may determine parents' decision to keep students at home? Daily numbers aren't consistent enough to be good data points, i.e delayed cases. You can go to the covid stats per school online at schoolcovidreportcard.health.ny.gov
- Who should we contact if my kid is quarantined and not receiving any instructions on office hours or additional assistance? It's different per grade. 7th grade has been making calls and contacting students directly. Please contact your teacher rep if your child hasn't been contacted.
- Have we been able to get more permissions to test on file so that the pool of students tested on a weekly basis is more representative?
- How will the school treat absences during this covid spike period? There are no excused absences if you choose to keep your child home due to covid. Overall when possible, the teachers are posting info on google classroom, and allowing students to make up work.
- At the rate the school is handing out tests, can you estimate how many CSS are testing themselves each day?
- When is the end of the current marking period? January 28th
- If my child is sick, how can my child play catch up? Teachers are posting assignments on Google classroom. Once they return, they'll receive extensions from teachers.
- In the pre covid, some schools during January Regents week had the week off. Am I correct that CSS never has that week off? Correct, there will be normal instruction.
- Will the HS have midterms? We won't have the typical midterm week. There will be a mock regents exams, but won't have the extended time. There will be math and ELA screeners during regents week.
- No test required for positive cases to return to school after their 10 day quarantine.
- What is the grading policy right now? Please understand that this has been for 2 weeks, so teachers trying to adapt to grading smaller things, and create projects that students can work on remotely but not all curriculum can be adapted, esp in 10 days.
- So the semester grade will be made up of 3 marking periods? Correct.
- Can you provide any info as to the extent of in-school transmission? We're not knowledgeable of this, but positive cases last week came from holiday layover. We've had 1 student and 1 student positive within the two week testing period.
- Currently there are about 54 positives in the school community.
- The health screener determines the quarantine length. It's currently 10 days for kids, and 5 days for adult.

118 parents participated.

Meeting adjourned at 7:16

Next meeting February 15, 2022 @ 6:15pm