

CSS PTA Meeting – October 12, 2021

WELCOME!

Veronica, PTA Prez, welcomed everyone.

APPROVAL OF SEPT MEETING MINUTES:

_____ Minutes approved by a majority of the present parent body. Several abstained.

UPDATES FROM PRINCIPAL NIGHTENGALE:

- We've been in school for a month, and it's all calming down from admin point of view.
- Staffing shortage: Missing teacher 8th grade math and 6th grade science, plus special ed (since beginning of year 900 candidates, but only 13 responses; so hiring is challenging)
 - Have request for an interview of new math teacher, per parent recommendation; great hires are from alumni pool and parent references - send to Principal (even without cert) can sub and excel hiring
- Covid - had 1st case of covid, few close contacts, few students had to quarantine, so no shut down;
- Assessment front - starting soon, 6-12 giving diagnostic to whole school in Math and ELA, and some in social studies and foreign language, due to the impact of the remote learning in order to understand needs of tutoring and after school academic support (teacher learning center for 9th grade geometry) to get a baseline, help know right support needed for students

QUESTIONS:

- 8th grade Math: have been covering the position with another teacher (took from another program, student with disabilities, so can't be permanent); interviewing recommendation from parent, but know that there aren't dozens of candidates, can only hire substitute
- Are retired teachers a consideration? Retired teachers would get the higher pay
- Subs? Have to work a certain amount of days to get benefits
- At what point will admin reconsider guidelines due to regents year? Ultimately, would have to reallocate a teacher for students with disabilities.
- Have had a stream of college admission offices frequently virtually for high school parents, can email to parents of juniors and seniors, but if another grade, can email the high school counselor
- Cafeteria is set to be completed by October 31st , but then a couple of weeks of "testing", so could possibly be back in the cafeteria by mid November.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

- \$96,514.36 balance after outstanding checks

- Income for Sept - raised \$7,291 uniform sale, \$342.35 from musical shirt, \$6,445 donations
- Expenses - \$807.44 shirts sept, \$900 piano tuning, paypal/square \$330.64; In addition bill for \$7k in uniform inventory
- October sale of uniforms \$8,800
- Received more than 40% of donations for the year
- TEACHERS: Submit grants to help support the school, to fund items allocated for in budget
- Off to a great start!
- Reminder that PTA can only fund supplies/equipment, but Friends of CSS CAN pay salary/services.

QUESTIONS

Q - can the budget be adjusted to fund programming for math/science enrichment for those affected? Yes, depends on the programming, etc.

Q - could PTA help fund transportation for trip so that classes could do Covid safe trips? Potentially in the budget there could be items in the budget that could fund coach buses for trips within the 5 boroughs. (Since right now the DOE prohibits the use of yellow buses and also prohibits trips outside the 5 boroughs.)

Q: do we get portions of sales from Lands End? Yes, last year we received about \$1k

Princ: have done local trips in the neighborhood, use of subway is discouraged, not prohibited, not allowed are out of town trips or overnight trips

- Could do local universities, would need to pay for a charter bus (yellow buses not allowed)

FUNDRAISING CO-CHAIR UPDATES:

- ONGOING:
 - Spirit sale
 - Donations
 - Amazon Smile
 - Vaccine Referral Bonus: **Got a child waiting to turn 12?** Get vaccinated at a participating NYC-run COVID-19 site and mention "Columbia Secondary School Parents Association" or schedule an appointment online
 - To get your \$100 incentive and for CSS-PTA to get its \$100 referral bonus, you must go to a participating city-run site at nyc.gov/vax4nyc
 - **American Museum of Natural History** is an approved site, PLUS, they give a complimentary pass for 4 people to visit in the future
- OTHER IDEAS (need owners/leaders)
 - Thanksgiving Pie Sale?
 - CSS gloves & hats?
 - Return of the Popcorn Fundraiser?
- HOW TO GET INVOLVED?
 - Email us at PTAFundraising@columbiasecondary.org or PTAVolunteers@columbiasecondary.org
 - **NOTE: You don't have to take on a formal PTA position but can join our volunteer pool or offer to lead an activity**

- Send a [chat message](#) to the host or to me right now with your name, email address and your child's name and grade
PTAfundraising@columbiasecondary.org
- PTAVolunteers@columbiasecondary.org
- Go to [Sign Up genius](#) and volunteer to run our Nov. & Dec. spirit wear sales
<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/70A0844AEAC23A5F49-spirit2>
- BIG EVENTS:
 - Spring Fling Auction 2022
 - Virtual Turkey Trot 2021 - **WHAT'S THE CSS TURKEY TROT?**
It's **FLEXIBLE!**
 - Virtual
 - 1 Mile, 5K or 10K
 - It's **FRIENDLY!**
 - Meetups throughout Nov.
 - It's **FUN!**
 - Let's be healthy + social together!

Let's Trot Together!

- Stay tuned for dates/times to meet up to complete various distances
- Kids are welcome but optional
- Feel free to just bring yourself to reconnect with other human beings and enjoy the fall sunshine (or drizzle!)
- **Email Laura Adams: laura@adams.family.us**

PTA Open positions

Volunteering updates/community events

Community building events planningL

- **This Sunday, 10/17, 2:00-5:00PM:** first CSS Get Together in Morningside Park (middle school hot chocolate hangout in morningside park; HS families welcome to stop by and meet the new CSS families
- Cultural Committee - Hispanic Heritage Month ending soon, but planning on events in late oct and early Nov, thanks to Dean Young; stay tuned for more info!
- CSS Cookbook - idea started last year, gathered lots of recipes from community; fundraising and community event, will create a nice e-book for mid December, multicultural cookbook, with an online kick-off event cooking lesson in December; new recipes send to PTA volunteers email, or to **adeline.monzier@gmail.com**

Returning to School During Covid" Guest speaker: Gail Belsky

Exec editor of understood.org and an understood parent expert. An author, writer, etc.

Available to answer your questions. The bizarre and stressors of school and covid. Even outside of Covid, MS and HS is normally stressful, as they are “transitional years.” With covid, have kids who have experienced trauma first hand, inundated with bad news and images, kids who themselves that their lives were upended - with no context that we have as adults.

Trying to adjust to this learning style is challenging but going back, but back with an absence - this “insane new normal.” It isn’t normal, it doesn’t negate what we have all been through.

What should families watch out for?

- any change of attitude or behaviour, sometimes impossible to find out cause, get angry over little things
- not wanting to go to school, seeing more acute behavior than before,
- Notice a new group of friends / or no group of friends

What can families do?

- Don’t be lax, but be open to emotions, even if your child is not articulating them beautifully
- Remember that kids worry about being judged (“someone will think I am not good at this...”)
- Acknowledge the weirdness we are all feeling. Use your own authentic experience.
- Ask open-ended questions: How are other kids managing? What do you think your friends think about all of this? (avoid questions that have a yes/no answer.)
- Let kids know they are safe and you are with them.

What can the school do?

- Teachers have been trained and are well-versed to expect the social-emotional needs of their students. Teachers know the seriousness of our situation has not escaped any student.
- Teachers recognize that a kid may begin to “clown around” because of stress
- Teachers are actively helping students to connect to one another - this is KEY and important

Question: My child has really been enjoying being back in school, but how do I help her deal with the uncertainty that is still there? The fear that everything will change again?

- Remind kids of all the skills they already have. **THEY ARE GOOD AT CHANGE!** They learned to be flexible and they have adapted to change many times. These are skills!

Question: My child is on screens more than s/he ever was before. Do you have advice about setting or re-setting screen limits?

- Setting limits on screens is ALWAYS important. Getting back into the structure of in-person school is more important than ever. You might remind your kid “You might think you have time for (xyz....screen thing...) but you have to set aside your screen until

your school and extracurricular commitments are all taken care of.” Make a schedule with their input.

- (At the same time, recognize that the screens feel safe and reliable to them because of what this time has been like. They can build other safe, reliable coping mechanisms.)

*Final piece of advice:

- This is the year of all years to reach out to your kids’ teachers earlier in the year. Start a dialogue!

NEXT PTA mtg: Tuesday, November 9th