**CSS PTA Meeting – September 21, 2021**

**WELCOME** – President, Veronica Villalpando, welcomed new and returning parents. She introduced our current board members and reminded everyone of the PTA mission – support our school with resources, plan events and meetings, advocate for important causes, and foster our community engagement.

**PARENT VOLUNTEERS** – Our Volunteer Coordinator, Adeline Monzier (ptavolunteers@columbiasecondary.org) talked about how we depend on support and volunteering from our parent body. While it’s never mandatory, there’s several opportunities throughout the year to get involved. Right now, we’re looking for volunteers to be a part of the Cultural Committee (created last year in order to be more inclusive of the diversity of cultures within our CSS community. Monthly breakdown & event ideas (not final):

* **Hispanic Heritage (Oct) →**
	+ Musical Performance of hispanic artists
	+ Genevieve Aidala salsa dancing and former Spanish teacher at CSS
* **Black History (February)**
	+ Movie: Judas and Black Messiah; Chess Queen of Kature
	+ Book: The Underground Railroad
* **Asian Pacific Islander (May)**
	+ Movie: Hunt for the Wider People / Book: Whale Rider
	+ Hula Dance Demonstration
* **June? Any other ideas?**

**PTA OPEN POSITIONS**

* Co-President (contact Veronica Villalpando – cssptapresident@columbiasecondary.org)
* Fundraising Co-Chairs (contact Manisha Shah – ptafundraising@columbiasecondary.org)
* Recurring or one-off volunteers (contact Adeline Monzier – adeline.monzier@gmail.com)

**PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES**
June PTA Minutes were approved/passed at 6:32pm

**TREASURER’S REPORT**

CURRENT BALANCE – as of 9/19/21, our total cash balance was $84,744.66. There are 3 outstanding checks ($4,894.94), leaving current register balance of $79,849.72.

RECENT RECEIPTS – $385 in donations for July & $370 in donations for August

EXEPENSES (July & August) –

* $4,512.20 – web design & maintenance in July
* $2,827.50 – school-wide support (planners) in August
* $26.72 – paypal/square expenses in July & August

SEPTEMBER TO DATE –

* sold about $7k in uniforms!
* Need donations from members to reach out $23k donation goal

**501c3 APPROVED!**

* Your company might do a matching donation, so let them know!

**BUDGET**

* Approved budget from June 2021 meeting
* Fundraising - hoping to get at least $45k net (mostly through Spring Fling, membership)

**FRIENDS OF CSS**

David Lurvey, president of FOC, explained the voluntary nonprofit, that is separate from the PTA, that funds things that the PTA can’t. The main contributions to the CSS community are:

* college counseling office staff
* funding for college campus visists, AP classes, preparation books
* tech team staff
* administrative aides
* $700K budget primarily goes to fund salaries to meet the institutional needs of the school ("you have to have the right people and the right people can't be funded only through DOE funds.)

Last year, expenses were entirely salaries, since the school couldn’t/can’t rely on funds from DOE to supply things that it needs. As with the PTA, FOC needs people who may have experience in fundraising, grant writing or marketing, as well as contributions. They haven’t been as aggressive over the past couple of years, so they’re now trying to build back to continue to supply the necessary services.

If you go to the school’s website, Parent Involvement Tab, donation button shows a great summary of both PTA and FOC. Both groups need parent and financial support. The ‘ask’ is $500 per family, but it’s really whatever you’re comfortable with. If you go there, you can make a recurring monthly donation, and then never have to think about it again.

Q – what is normal budget? A - Expenses average $750k per year.

Q - What grants have you historically been seeking? A - Mostly for programs, i.e after school or college prep/counseling

Any questions, please email DavidLurvey@yahoo.com

**PRINCIPAL’S MESSAGE**

Typically other schools have been given a subsidized funding, but schools who are not specialized have not received additional funding. First graduating class was 2014 and now in 2022, we have survived because of support from PTA and FOC, as well as incredible faculty.

Covid Related News: This year is different story. Covid has made the school ‘crunched for space.’ We had to create smaller class sizes, but then needs more teachers and space (MS – 7th & 8th in 4 sections, 6th is capped, ie didn’t fill waiting list; same as 9th; HS was able to preserve most of classes). CSS did not ‘back fill’ seats vacated by students who moved, decided not to enroll, etc. This has left the school slightly under enrolled. Since school funding from the city is based on student numbers, the school’s ‘survival’ is that much more dependent on PTA and FOC.

Most recent DOE news – testing will now happen weekly & limited quarantine (if a positive case and everyone is masked, no need to quarantine). We’re providing lunch in the auditorium (all 3 schools using this), which makes event use of the space more challenging, so we’re unlikely to have use of the space for large performance area. We’re in discussion about smaller production or a series of smaller productions, but it won’t happen the way it’s happened in the past. Only vaccinated students would be able to participate.

There was some discussion about all-school events, such as trips, extra-curricular activities, and the musical in particular.  Principal Nightengale noted the school's "tradition of inclusivity," and noted that "it doesn't feel good" to have "vaccinated only" activities right now.  Principal Nightengale asked said she is open to ideas to find ways to "preserve the best things about our school without putting anyone at risk."

Question from a parent about the "free periods" during the day.  Principal Nightengale noted that these will be used for  1) reading & writing, including a possible "pen pal" set-up between HS and MS,  2) assistance with executive functioning (organization, etc.),  3) STEM / STEAM

Curriculum Night and Parent/Teacher night are all virtual this year.

If you need a tablet, please contact Roxana.

SoNYC programming – the dept of music development has given last minute directives, which have caused change in programming. Full after

We have not heard any results from the NY state testing. We’ll investigate.

The SLT has a focus group around Special Education

**MISC –**

Reordered more uniforms – will schedule another sale in a couple of weeks. Be on the lookout, and will be in need of volunteers.

If you have gently used uniforms, please send them our way to sale.

Free Family Resource Links: Parent Toolkit, Family Guides, Mental Health Resources, Special Education Toolkit, Notes from the Backpack: a PTA podcast (contact the PTA for links)