



October General Meeting Agenda (2022-2023)

Location: ZOOM ONLY - *please note in-person is canceled*

Tuesday October 11, 2022

6:15PM to 7:30PM

1. **Call to Order & Welcome - Co-President Leanne Gonzalez- Singer**

A Hispanic Heritage Month video plays prior to starting the meeting .

2. **Approval of Minutes - Assistant Recording Secy. Tom Henry**

Minutes from last month's PTA General Meeting (Sept 13, 2022) were emailed earlier to all PTA members; PTA president displayed the minutes online via Zoom; vote taken among members present at meeting and minutes approved 100%.

3. **Bylaws amendment approval - Co-President Leanne Gonzalez-Singer**

At the September meeting we discussed that PTA Bylaws recently approved last June had to be revised again to conform with new DOE requirements. Last summer, the PTA Executive Board revised the bylaws to conform with the DOE requirements. The revised bylaws were sent to all PTA members via email (in the invitation to this meeting) and they are now to be voted on for approval by the general membership. A vote was conducted and the new bylaws were approved 100%.

4. **Treasurer's Report - Treasurer Karen Foncette-Moore**

Karen presented the treasurer's report; current balance of approx \$75k. PTA still needs donations to support needs of the students and the school; for Sept we had \$1800 in donations, goal is \$23,000(?); uniform sales made \$4602;

Expenses \$946 for teachers breakfast and \$150 for Hispanic Heritage month, \$125.49 in expenses for PayPal

CSS PTA is now a 501c3 organization so donations are tax deductible.

Next slide details all expenses for July - Sept.

PTA members may contact Karen with questions.

Treasurer's report made available as a link in the chat.

5. **Health Advocate Presentation - Karen Foncette-Moore**

Karen introduces herself; she is the parent of 12th grader and is the Health & Wellness Advocate for the school; she expresses that she serves this role to support students, parents, families, particularly due to problems arising from the pandemic; you can



contact her if you have questions or needs; there will be posters at school that will display available resources; she can discuss any needs that may lie outside the listed resources.

The flier will be shared in the next PTA communication.

6. Social Media Use/not Use - Dean Young

Dean Young discusses that social media is becoming more of an issue at CSS. Her presentation discusses how to be aware of it and how to discuss it with our children.

Social media is interactive technology to share information, ideas, interests; she asks people how aware they are of their childrens' use of social media; what platforms do they use? It can be useful for communicating about school matters. It can also be a problem. She displays an offensive post about her from a student. She highlights this as an example and notes that there have been similar issues with posts about teachers and peers. Also explains that posts are problematic if they include representation of CSS (such as the shield/logo). Also mentions the problem of students posting behavior of other students.

How do we have conversations about this? Encourages parents to speak with their children; make them aware of dangers: cyberbullying, inappropriate content, a decrease in face-to-face conversation, online predators, addiction, peer pressure; also a challenge in the classroom for teachers - it takes students' attention away from the teacher/class; decreases students' abilities to communicate in person. She also highlights problems of colleges finding negative information about the school or students from old social media posts. Encourages the need to decrease phone/screen time that has increased since the pandemic; notes that students will model parents and adults, so it is important to model good screen behavior and etiquette.

She provides general social media tips: know what they are using, know their names and passwords (including school accounts), make it a habit to know what your child is posting and looking at, know who your child is communicating with, get to know the families and parents of the other students, know how they would like to handle this.

She points out that SnapChat has a feature called "My Eyes Only" that gives students the ability to hide information. She notes that parents can check an internet history to see if they are getting distracted and to see what they are looking at; this also gives an idea of how much time they are spending at each site.

Inappropriate tech use takes away from student learning time and damages peer and student/staff relationships.

Parent cell phone expectations: monitor their child's phone and computer use, know what platforms they use and check their logins, check for multiple accounts; make sure they know dangers of texting with peers and unfamiliar people, also remind them that they leave a digital footprint that can remain online for a long time; she provides example of a student who was rescinded from Harvard for inappropriate posts made in the 6th grade; encourage your students to report harmful or threatening behavior.



During school hours students can use the school phone to contact their families. She reminds parents that inappropriate cell phone use is a tech violation and will disrupt your child during class. Asks that parents do not text their students while in school.

In summary: trust but verify.

Q&A: What about further discussion about racism, harassment, conflict management and school culture; "Reimagine CSS" is being revitalized (?)

Q&A: The college office should talk about possible ramifications of student social media posts/comments.

Other questions - Dean Young will reach out about them; can contact her as well

Cell phone must be off and in backpack; otherwise it can be taken from the student.

7. Friends of CSS Presentation - FoCSS Board member Miriam Nightengale

Former Principal Miriam Nightingale speaks. She is now a board member of Friends of CSS. She notes that there is a lot going on with school and DOE now: changes with admissions, and budget, for example. FoCSS helps to create stability around these changes and issues; it provides a "safety net" and buffer around some problems; for example, loss of school musical and other in-person things affected by pandemic

Who are FoCSS? It is a nonprofit, 501c3, composed of current and former parents, students and staff who serve on a volunteer basis and meet monthly. She displays current members; PTA president also sits on the FoCSS board; this year this is Nydia Prishker

Purpose of FoCSS is to enhance the educational experience of students, as well as the teachers and staff who serve a diverse population of academically talented students.

The finances are public; she shows examples of the finances as published on CausalQ. FoCSS is currently working at a deficit due to shortfall in 2021 that has continued; the current deficit of approx \$60k; all this is published on clearinghouses of nonprofits; the number of employees that is listed includes college office personnel, after school activities (high school) personnel who work with GSA, student government, publications, newspaper, field trips which all require teacher work-hours; so FoCSS is as large an employer as the school due to paying many staff for all this extra work; it also pays health and unemployment insurance. FoCSS works behind the scenes supporting the school every day.

How does it receive funds?: Columbia University (CU) provides approx \$100-150k/yr. It also has an endowment of \$5 million that it received from a single donor in 2011; this has provided support and salaries for the college office and also supplements the cost of college trips over the years. The endowment is managed by CU and the interest earned is used for the support; it also receives funds from parents and community (approx \$60-100k) via direct contributions, matching grants and identified grants; not many schools in the city are like this.

FOCSS lost some fundraising during the pandemic that was somewhat compensated for by extra funds that the school itself received; but this extra funding is going away.

COLUMBIA SECONDARY SCHOOL PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION INC.

425 West 123rd Street, New York, NY 10027



Donations can be made via Paypal, listed on the website; or directly to Friends of CSS, 603 W 115th St. #433, NY, NY 10025

How does FoCSS spend funds? Mostly on salaries: 2 college counselors, occasional college office support which has really helped the students over the years; a variable number of school aides; our technology team; CSS would not have these amazing resources without the funding from FoCSS; these are essential supports for our students, staff and parent community; also most of the sports teams, rugby, soccer, basketball, cheerleading, cross country, track, volleyball, electives (after school) academic support, Future City, robotics, debate, musical,...., field trips Frost Valley, June trips, college trips, class trips, senior trips; also pays for some services: bus costs, fees for Naviance for college office

How does FoCSS differ from the PTA? FoCSS funds people (a coach, staff to run musicals, for example), whereas the PTA buys things (for example, uniforms, props/costumes); they work together to take on costs. It is hard for PTA to pay salaries.

How can you get involved? May donate via PayPal site, employer matching funds or grant programs; also can help to identify possible donors or foundations.

Contact David Lurvey if interested in serving on the FoCSS board.

David Lurvey speaks: CU manages the endowment and also makes annual contributions; but does not have oversight over how the money is spent nor does it do additional fundraising.

Miriam Nightingale: per agreement around the endowment is that it must be used to support college office; FoCSS entirely supports the college office; but CU does not control the money; this is at discretion of the principal in consultation with FoCSS

8. Annual Appeal/Fundraising/Volunteers - Director of Annual Appeal Danielle Hartley

Danielle speaks: She reminds everyone that all parents and legal guardians are automatically members of the CSS PTA. This year the PTA is looking to increase participation at in-person events and is seeking volunteers. PTA is asking for a suggested donation of \$250 per family this school year, similar to that asked at other schools; but asks members to give whatever they are able to give, and no amount too small. Donation is not required for PTA participation or membership. Examples of how PTA funds are used: purchase of student planners and teacher requested grants. Members can make donations online on the CSS website; also email PTAFundraising@columbiasecondary.org

Desirée Rodriguez is the Director of Parent Resources; she is an 11th grade parent (been at school since 6th grade); we have some volunteer needs: bake sale at the end of this month; spirit wear sales; various meet and greets.

PTAVolunteers@columbiasecondary.org

Leanne Gonzalez-Singer speaks: We need a VP of Fundraising!! Please reach out to the CSS PTA president if you are interested (CSSPTApresident@columbiasecondary.org)



9. Facilities Report - VP of Facilities Dave Thom

PTAfacilities@columbiasecondary.org

Dave speaks: For the facilities report he notes that this year is the 100th anniversary of our building; it was opened in 1922 as the Lincoln School; PS125 took over in 1948; Kipp Starr opened in annex in 2003. CSS started upstairs in 2007, initially as an interim location; but in 2010 the DOE committed to it being a long-term location. He discussed how the space is shared via a plan worked out by the Building Council and approved by the DOE; waiting to hear from Principal Nelson about the Shared Space Committee.

Projects: Play street - we are waiting to hear from the three school administrations on a letter of support; scaffold for required facade repairs has gone back up and hope it comes down by end of 2022(?); 3rd floor library under construction, with opening plan for spring 2023; schoolyard open by summer 2023; roof waiting to hear about scope and timeline of repairs; pool out of service due to boiler and other issues; waiting to hear from SCA on scope and timeline, likely 2024 or beyond; basement cafe renovation? grant applied but SCA claims this is a DOE project, waiting to hear about scope and timelines, could be 2024 or later.

10. Principal and SLT Report and Q&A - Principal Nelson

Principal Nelson speaks. She reminds everyone to keep an eye out for the emailed Parent Digests (weekly).

She briefly notes that the high school activities fair was held; SONYC has started; student government nominations made and election process started; the 7th grade had an assembly about school culture and climate with Dean Young - purpose is to build positive relationships in the school.

She mentions that October is anti-bullying month; Respect for All campaign, don't eat alone...(?)

Philosophy teacher started....? Professor Coto has resigned;

Christain Velez foreign language has returned.

Experiential trips starting soon; check emails and bookbags for info; 6th grade has one in November; school is looking for chaperones.

Community day will be 11/18; the grade team leaders planning this.

D5 Town Hall with the Superintendent on 10/18; the SLT is invited to attend; this will address the middle school admission process; Principal Nelson will be there too.

School will administer the Social-Emotional Learning screener (Dessa) to understand how children are doing; see their strengths and look for areas for assistance.

Hispanic Heritage event 10/?

Parent-Teacher conferences will virtual this year during evening of 11/17 5-8 p.m., and afternoon of 11/18 in afternoon (in Parent Digest #3?).

Emergency drills will be held

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SLT had 1st mtg 9/15; talked about election of chair, bylaws, and admission statement and they will revisit at next meeting 10/20.

Q&A: Can parents opt out of Dessa? Yes - the forms will go home next week.

Q&A: Is there school safety information for parents to know? What was the Incident today? Principal Nelson that a lot of the problems are coming from the middle school; school is working with these students and the parents; unclear what happened; she discusses that goal is to pursue restorative practices before punitive responses; Dean Young comments on restorative practices - community days, teacher training; incident at recess - students playing basketball, some students "trash talking" that escalated to physical altercation; she encourages parents to remind students that their words have meaning, and to know when it is time to walk away; also notes that this is further complicated by students sharing space with students from other schools; students need to know that it is OK to report issues to teachers and staff before they escalate. A parent asks why don't parents hear about these things, why doesn't the school inform parents? The parent notes that she would like to talk to her kids about these incidents, but she can't if she doesn't know about them; she asks that the principal and the school keep parents informed.

Q&A: Discussion about middle school screening; will it return? There will be a CEC-5 meeting with Deputy Superintendent next Tuesday 10/18 to discuss this; SLT and principal will attend; per Principal Nelson, CSS does not currently have a position on this matter and is awaiting direction from the superintendent; a parent asks question about criteria for screening: would admission be based on grades? attendance? a test? Seems that DOE indicates that 4th grade grades would be criteria, but this is not clear; this is a big topic that requires a separate discussion and CSS president indicated that PTA will send communication about separate discussion soon.

11. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned 8:01 p.m.

Mark your calendar for the upcoming 2022 meetings:

11/15/2022

12/13/2022