



December 12, 2023 General Meeting Agenda (2023-2024)

Location: Zoom

Tuesday, December 12, 2023

6:15pm - 7:33pm

1. Call to order & Welcome - Janiz Soriano & Cathleen Roque, Co-Presidents
 - Co-presidents Janiz Soriano and Cathleen Roque called the meeting to order at 6:15 pm with 42 participants.
2. Catherine showed highlights of what the PTA has funded in this past month.
 - CSS Music Room Propagation Station
 - i. 25 Community Members now have a plant! (10 MS - 1 per music class & 5 HS from the Green Team, plus 10 staff)
3. Approval of Minutes -
 - Minutes from the November meeting were distributed prior to the meeting, a QR code was provided at the meeting.
 - Motion to approve and approved by the majority of 24.
4. Treasurer's Report - Christine Kovich, Treasurer
 - As of November 30, 2023, our total cash balance was **\$55,090.44**.
 - i. Receipts for November
 1. Spirit Wear Sales = \$1339
 2. Bake Sale = \$855.56
 3. Annual Appeal = \$4016
 4. Pie Sale = \$2524
 5. Turkey Trot = \$436.60
 6. Holiday Wreaths = \$190
 - ii. Expenses for November
 1. Spirit Wear purchases = \$1335.90
 2. Wholesale Pie Orders = \$1664
 3. Paypal/Square credit card fees = \$259.97
 4. Canvaa subscription = \$119.99
 - iii. Grants paid out in October = \$9744.05
 1. 4 grants approved in November to support student activities totalling **\$7338.72**.
 2. Robotics, Athletics uniforms
 - iv. QR code was shared for YTD budget breakdown
 - Proposal to amend the 2023-24 budget:

COLUMBIA SECONDARY SCHOOL PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION INC.

425 West 123rd Street, New York, NY 10027



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- i. Athletics budget from \$10k to \$15k. (32 of 44 participants voted yes; 0 voted no)
 - ii. Wholesale purchases of Spiritwear expenses line item from \$6k to \$12k. (26 of 44 participants voted yes; 2 voted no)
 - Any questions, please contact **Christine Kovich**, CSS PTA Treasurer (PTATreasurer@columbiasecondary.org)
5. FRIENDS OF CSS - Dr. Min Hong
- Ezra from School Government shared a video promo for *Spongebob Squarepants the Musical*.
 - Dr Min - we will continue to ask for funding for additional support (advisement, musical, etc.)
6. CSS School Government SY 2023-24
- Co-Presidents - Adelis Alcantara and Ezra Ju
 - Co Vice Presidents - Elais Navarro and Haruki Barman
 - Secretary - Therese Roque
 - Treasurer - Nicolas Visconti
 - 12th Grade Representative - Rose Mercedes
 - 11th Grade Representative - Aleena Arain and Cyrena Persaud
 - 10th Grade Representative - Andrea Sereni and David Gelpi
 - 9th Grade Representative - Aneisa Ramersaud and Eva Marmolejos
 - Goals:
 - i. Reflecting the diversity of our student body in school wide events
 - ii. Creating sustainable structures to promote student accomplishments, initiatives, and unions (e.g., HSG website, instagram, newsletter, etc.)
 - iii. Fundraising and school spirit (i.e., spirit weeks, grams, and more to come)
 - Will work to start up a new website and Instagram account, and sending out a newsletter 2x a month
 - Fundraising items and spirit items for Spirit Week, Candy Grams, and more info to come out throughout the year!
7. ATHLETICS DIRECTOR & DEAN - Harold DeLucia
- Fall Sports: Boys & *Girls Soccer, Girls Volleyball, Co-Ed Cross-Country
 - Winter Sports: Boys & Girls Basketball
 - Spring Sports: Boys & Girls Rugby, Co-Ed Ultimate Frisbee
 - Club Sports: Cheerleading (Year-Round), *Boys Volleyball (Spring)
 - New Offerings In the Works: Golf, Badminton, Baseball
 - Current Financials: 11 Sports/Clubs use \$10,000 Budget. Banquet w/ Trophies and Food ~\$3,500.
 - \$6,500 left to manage 11 sports. Increase of \$5,000 requested.



- The lessons that are learned from athletics go beyond the court/field. Athletics are crucial, when I got at CSS there were zero athletic programs. Every year, we continue to add more sports and offerings.

8. FUNDRAISING REPORT

- The next Bake Sale & Spirit Wear Sale will be Friday, January 12th.
 - i. Thank you to everyone who participated in the December Bake Sale & Spirit Wear Sale!
 - ii. Our student bakers, who get community service hours for baking, are showing their talent!
 - iii. Please do NOT send items baked with nuts.
 - iv. Please sign-up to donate baked goods or volunteer to help sell here
- CSS Hat Pop-Up!!!!
 - i. The CSS Knit Hat is back by popular demand!
 - ii. Hats are \$10 each and there are only a limited number.
 - iii. This hat is the ONLY hat permitted to be worn during the school day inside the school.
- 2023 Picture Day
 - i. MIDDLE SCHOOL Picture Day Info!
 1. On Monday every Middle School Student was sent home with a slip to order pictures. Please retrieve this slip so that when pictures are released you can order your pictures with no delay.
 2. If your student has lost their slip please email ptafundraising@columbiasecondary.org and we will get back to you.
 - ii. HIGH SCHOOL Picture Day, Mon 12/18
 1. We need volunteers from 7:30am to 1:30pm. Volunteer here: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/70A0844AEAC23A5F49-46153194-high#/> or scan orange QR code.
 2. High School Students must be in Uniform on Picture Day.
 - iii. Retake & Sibling Picture date TBD in January.
 - iv. All pictures for all grades will be released in Jan 2024.
 - v. Special thanks to AP Lynn for all of his help with keeping Picture Day moving along.
- Farm to People
 - i. Please visit the [Farm to People site](#) when doing your holiday food shopping. The products are fresh, delicious and delivered right to your door. If you use our code, CSSFAM, Farm to People will donate 5% back to our school with every purchase! Below are a few tasty items available at Farm to People right now!



- Holiday Gift Bags! Our family holiday gift bags, a CSS tradition, help us to say thank you for all they do!
 - i. Each CSS family brings 12-15 of the same small gifts to the OSS from between NOW thru Tues 12/19 @ 8am.
 - ii. The gifts are anonymous. Simply label the bag/box with your child's last name and grade.
 - iii. If you want to give a gift to specific teacher(s), please wrap the gifts and label the teacher's name.
 - iv. The gifts do not have to be expensive ~ let your imagination and budget guide you.
 - v. Some teachers follow special diets or dietary laws. If you donate homemade treats, please list the ingredients.
 - vi. Be sensitive to diversity, stay away from religious symbols.
 - vii. On Thur 12/21 @ 8:30am, create amazing holiday gift bags for each and every staff person that works with our kids.
 - viii. Past hits include: Cookies, Chocolates, Snacks, Gourmet Coffee, Teas or Hot Chocolate Mixes, Pumpkin/Maple Butters, Fruit Spreads, Dried Fruits/Mushrooms in Jars, Holiday Decorations, Movie/Theatre Tickets, Art Supplies, Hypo-Allergenic Soaps or Hand Lotions, Chap sticks, Chopsticks, passes to Museums, T-Shirts, Lottery Tickets, Socks, Gift Cards, Hand-Printed Certificates of Service (Help a Teacher After School, Chaperone for Their Classes, Bring Them Lunch, Run Errands)

9. FACILITIES REPORT - Space Sharing

- SHARED SPACE COMMITTEE - Held first meeting, reviewed space sharing schedules. Note: CSS doing much better than past years, overall (inside) is close to 55% share expectation. But...
- BUILDING UTILIZATION PLAN - ...without a BUP we will continue to experience problems. Continuing to talk to DOE, Citywide Council on High Schools, CEC5, Borough President and other officials regarding the lack of a BUP. Very hard to get attention despite being one of only 12 high school buildings in Manhattan that is overcrowded, no uniform bell schedule, K-12 mix, etc.
- AFTERSCHOOL - We clarified that afterschool use should be proportional to program size.
- SCHOOLYARD - Past policy assigned yard time on days a school did not have a primary gym day. But because CSS is almost always in one of the gyms (as we should be based on our size), we are assigned only one day per week on the new turf field. This is not adequate or equitable – we are working with the administration to revise this.
- Pictures shared:



- i. Rendering of new CU apartments on site once promised to CSS for its own building.
 - ii. CSS, PS125 & KIPP students celebrating the schoolyard opening on 12/4/23.
- o Construction - December construction updates from the School Construction Authority:
 - i. SCHOOLYARD - Now open. Thank you parents for sending letters!
 - ii. BOILER REPLACEMENT - Ongoing until February 2026. \$27,348,705 budget (!!!)
 - iii. POOL - Scope completed. Beginning design. No dates. \$7,750,000 budget (!)
 - iv. BASEMENT CAFETERIA - Scope completed. Beginning design. No dates. \$550,000 budget
 - v. SCAFFOLD - Has returned, for reasons we do not know.
- o We still have 3 projects and at least 4 years to go - you can help
 - i.
- o

10. PRINCIPAL REPORT

- o Welcome Sgt. Wong from local Precinct 26.
- o First of the structured Parent Engagement Sessions happened on Dec 4, 2023 - it was on two topics: Our children's social emotional learning, and an information session on Jupiter Grades. Presented by the faculty and social worker.
- o The playground is finally open. It is for the campus and no outside permitting is being done because the facility does not fall under NYC Parks. For those playing soccer, asking NO metal cleats.
- o Our superintendent visited us on Dec 5, 2023. He observed lessons, talked our ILT team, talked to a group of high school students and a group of middle school students besides having a word with a few parents.
- o We utilized the gym for a pan-8th grade district exam today. This went off very smoothly. This was a great preparation for AP exams, Regents exams, and middle school state exams.
- o We invested in new graphing calculators that are being rolled out in classes. These are way more intuitive and we hope that it will help students.
- o After school and before school soccer is coming!! Badminton, Golf Boys Volleyball and Pickle ball coming.
- o We only today got an intimation from the NYPD detective investigating the case that the case is close. Here is the short message: I ended up closing out the case as a result. There was no information at this time that was obtained that would lead to a possible suspect.
 - i. Chain of events: The following phrases were found written on a desk by a teacher on Monday evening - "School Shooter" "12/7/23"

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PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION INC.

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1. Police was called upon.
 2. RBS principal was involved right away
 3. Police was in the school till past 8 PM
 4. Subpoenas were issued for information and we complied.
 5. DOE legal restrained us from divulging case details. However on urging that we need to intimate parents, they gave us pre-approved communication.
- ii. We were hyper vigilant. We tried to get scanning right away but the entire scanning unit was busy due to stabbing incidents at schools in Brooklyn and the Bronx.
 - iii. We had police presence at the main entrance all day.
 - iv. We finally got scanning due to the intervention of our precinct 26 Captain Jose Taveras [who has been very helpful throughout]
 - v. The day of the scanning he told the PTA president and me that the threat was not deemed credible but complemented us for taking it so seriously.
 - vi. We had police support on Friday too
 - vii. On Monday, we approached the detective to see if the case was close, but got no response.
 - viii. Today close to noon, we were told the case is closed.
 - ix. Follow up: Tomorrow morning we have a session for all grades with the youth officers of NYPD
 - x. We are also looking to increase our SEL training. Some initiatives planned are:
 1. Morningside Institute
 2. Working with the students government
 3. Bringing back Office Hours, and will start in the spring semester
 4. Bringing back advisory wherever possible
 5. ELA department will through their philosophy classes talk about responsible free speech.
 - xi. Appeal to Parents: Please lobby for more school safety agents. Our campus next year will be over 1300, and we only have one safety agent, per the 4-5 which are required.
- Q - was there anything that led up to the threat? No, per the Police investigation there was nothing that led up and nothing that came out of it.
 - Q - what steps have been taken to address antisemitism in the school? (The answer to this was confusing. Parents are asking for a more detailed response.)
 - Comment - i believe it is relevant to address that CSS initially refused to submit evidence before receiving the subpoena without explanation. AP Flaherty confirmed - CSS is not allowed to give student/staff info without a subpoena.
 - Q - how are the threats/incidents scored? PARora, CSS determines if the NYPD is contacted and we air on the side of caution. DOE and Board Safety Director



restrain CSS to come out with information right away. If there is something outside of the community, it's easier for us to report. If it's within the school, we can be told not to report. Per AP Flaherty, once the investigation becomes an NYPD investigation, the school is not allowed to create an additional obstacle or obstruct that investigation. NYPD confirmed.

- Q - is there a required mode of communication to parents/students? PARora - email is our best form of communication, but also zoom meetings. Officer Maize has mentioned that we'll have a community info day. However, we chose not to include students in this information based on the topic.
- Q - what is the safety protocol for the other schools that share the space in the building. PARora, PS125 have identical, but KIPP since Charter have their own private security, but similar.
- Q - is there an update on the student who was assaulted just off campus near the school? Since this was public area, difficult for us to monitor. We attempted to close the double gates, and more but was told that we couldn't due to safety hazard. There is a campus wide safety meeting tomorrow, as the other principals need to agree. This is a monthly meeting among building administrators.,
- Q - is Soccer coed? PARora as of right now, there is a boy team and a girl team, but will ask Dean DeLucia to survey.
- Q - are the officers trained in de-escalating and in DEIB? Yes, trained in de-escalating. Officers admitted to not knowing or having training in diversity, equity inclusion and belonging, which the parent emphasized is especially significant for children of color who are not always going to feel safer with more police interaction.
- Q - why are freshman and sophomores having their lunch periods removed? PARora - the preference is that students do not drop their lunch. If there are cases that are not approved, it should be brought to the administration's attention.
- Q - why have new calculators been purchased that neither students or teachers know how to use. PARora - new calculators have been purchased, as there are some issues within the math class as teachers are teaching pre-requisite skills in which there is a learning gap. PARora has used these calculators in the past when there were learning difficulties, eliminating common mistakes made. It was new for the teachers, so had a training session, and it might be a learning curve, but based on analysis
- Q - there was a survey a few weeks back about computers. PARora mentioned that it was to prepare for possible remote learning. Per Isis, those parents that requested computers at home for their kids, will receive one. Isis sent out a survey via email last week, and will resend.
- Q - Can there be clarity on rules re: sweaters/coats as the temps drop? there is unlevel heating throughout the building. Anyone else requesting space heaters



will receive one, but some rooms get more heat so may open a window. The rule is that if you plan on going outside to take your coat with you to lunch.

- Q - what has the school done regarding swastikas or defamatory language found in the school? All reports are considered confidential and reporters kept anonymous. All reports are taken seriously, and AP Gordon encouraged 412A as a brave space. A student spoke at length about her experience and feels that the administration does not prioritize this, and therefore students don't always go to them.
- Q - how quickly are the signs removed off the walls, bathrooms, etc? Once it's brought to our attention, the bathroom/space is immediately closed. The incident is documented and then custodial staff is ask to remove/cover the markings ASAP.

11. UPCOMING ANNOUNCEMENTS

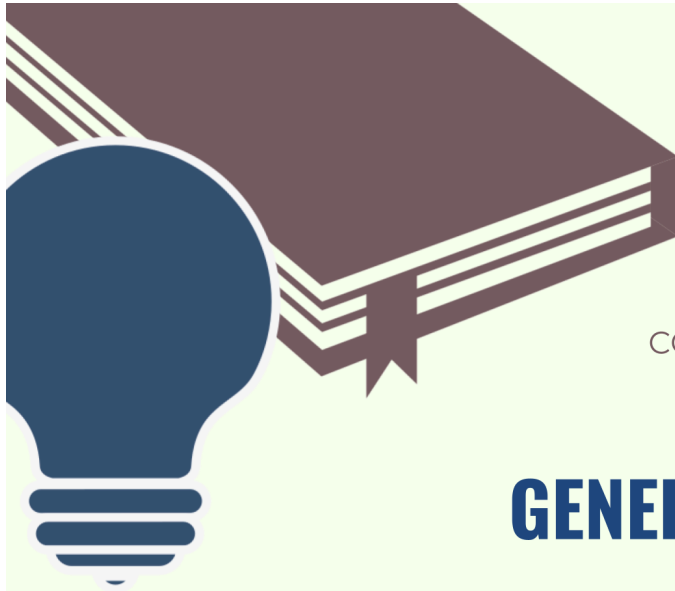
- Holiday Gift Items due **Tues 12/19 @ 8am**
- Last Day of School - 12/22/24
- Fri 1/12/24 - Bake Sale & Spirit Wear Sale
- Picture Day
 - i. Mon 12/18 - 9th - 11th grades
- Holiday Gift Bags - for teachers and staff!

12. FUTURE PTA MEETINGS:

- **January 9, 2024** **6:15-7:30 P.M.**
- February 13, 2024 6:15-7:30 P.M.
- March 12, 2024 6:15-7:30 P.M.
- April 9, 2024 6:15-7:30 P.M.
- **May 14, 2024** **8:30-9:30 A.M.**
- June 11 , 2024 6:15-7:30 P.M.

13. Adjournment

- Meeting adjourned at 8:06pm.



COLUMBIA SECONDARY SCHOOL
DECEMBER 2023
GENERAL PTA MEETING

December 12, 2022

6:15 - 7:30 PM

Location: Zoom

AGENDA

1. **Call to Order & Co-Presidents** - Cathleen Roque & Janiz Soriano, Co-Presidents
2. **Approval of Minutes** - Laurie Brown Kindred, Recording Secretary
3. **Treasurer's Report** - Christine Kovich, Treasurer
4. **Friends of CSS** - Dr. Min Hong, FOCSS President
5. **CSS Student Government SY 2023-2024-** Greetings
6. **Athletics Director & Dean** - Harold DeLucia
7. **Fundraising and Volunteering** Starr Peoples & Josie Torres, Director of Fundraising & Spiritwear
8. **CEC5 Report** - Sheila Sweeney, CEC5 PTA Delegate
9. **Facilities Report** - Dave Thom, VP of Facilities
10. **Principal/SLT Report** - Principal Vikram Arora
11. **Announcements & Co-Presidents report** - Laurie Brown Kindred
12. **Adjournment**



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CSS Music Room Propagation Station

🎵





🎵 CSS Music Room Propagation Station 🎵

POTHOS BASICS • EASY POTTING & CARE INSTRUCTIONS

Botanical name:
Epiphyllum phyllanthoides

Common names:
Devil's ivy, Chinese money plant, ivy plant, silver vine, and Golden Pothos

How to propagate:
Stem cuttings and leafy tips will root in water.

Light and Water:
Pothos is a very hardy plant that grows in low to medium light. It is a very forgiving plant and can tolerate a wide range of light conditions. It is a very forgiving plant and can tolerate a wide range of light conditions. It is a very forgiving plant and can tolerate a wide range of light conditions.

Soil:
Pothos is a very forgiving plant and can tolerate a wide range of soil conditions. It is a very forgiving plant and can tolerate a wide range of soil conditions. It is a very forgiving plant and can tolerate a wide range of soil conditions.

Temperature:
Pothos is a very forgiving plant and can tolerate a wide range of temperature conditions. It is a very forgiving plant and can tolerate a wide range of temperature conditions. It is a very forgiving plant and can tolerate a wide range of temperature conditions.

Humidity:
Pothos is a very forgiving plant and can tolerate a wide range of humidity conditions. It is a very forgiving plant and can tolerate a wide range of humidity conditions. It is a very forgiving plant and can tolerate a wide range of humidity conditions.



Propagation:
Pothos is a very forgiving plant and can tolerate a wide range of propagation conditions. It is a very forgiving plant and can tolerate a wide range of propagation conditions. It is a very forgiving plant and can tolerate a wide range of propagation conditions.








25 CSS Community Members now have a plant!
 10 Middle School Students (one per Music class)
 5 High School Students from The Green Team
 10 Staff

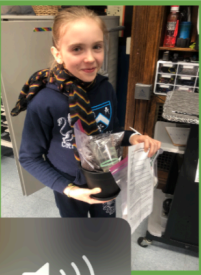
wheelofnames.com was used to select our random plant winners

**THANK YOU CSS PTA FOR SUPPORTING THIS
 PROPAGATION STATION PROJECT**







Winners received:

1. Propagated Pothos plant leaves w/roots
2. Black pot w/base to catch extra water
3. A 1 gallon bag of Organic Soil
4. Directions for planting & plant care



Approval of November 2023 Minutes

PTA RECORDING SECRETARY



CSS PTA | 2023-2024



Membership can also access minutes thru the CSS website once they have been approved:
<https://www.columbiasecondary.org/get-involved/pta-minutes>

TREASURER'S REPORT

Christine Kovich, Treasurer

As of November 30th 2023, our total cash balance was **\$55,090.44**

Receipts for November

\$1,339.00 in Spiritwear sales
\$ 855.56 through the bake sale
\$4,016.00 in Annual Appeal
\$2,524.00 through pie sales
\$ 436.60 for the Turkey Trots
\$ 190.00 through Holiday Wreaths

Expenses paid in November

\$1,335.90 in wholesale Spiritwear purchases
\$1,664.00 in wholesale pie orders
\$ 259.97 in credit card fees
\$ 119.99 for Canvaa subscription

Grants paid out in November: \$9,744.05

4 grants approved in November to support student activities totalling: \$7,338.72

For a more detailed YTD budget breakdown:



CSS PTA | 2023-2024



TREASURER'S REPORT

Christine Kovich, Treasurer

Proposal to amend the 2023-2024 budget to increase the:

1. **Athletics budget from \$10,000 to \$15,000**
2. **Wholesale purchases of Spiritwear expense line item from \$6000 to \$12,000**

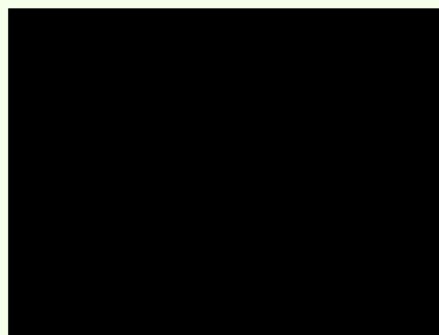
Scan to view side by side
current and proposed
2023-2024 budgets.



CSS PTA | 2023-2024

Friends of CSS

Dr. Min Hong





CSS School Government SY 2023-2024

Adelis Alcantara & Ezra Ju, Co-Presidents

Co Presidents:
Adelis
Alcantara and
Ezra Ju



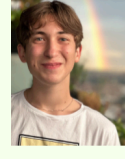
**Co Vice
Presidents:**
Elais Navarro
and Haruki
Berman



Secretary:
Therese
Roque



Treasurer:
Nicolas
Visconti



**12th Grade
Representative:**
Rose Mercedes

**11th Grade
Representatives:**
Aleena Arain and
Cyrena Persaud



**10th Grade
Representatives:**
Andrea Sereni and
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Representatives:**
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Goals:

- Reflecting the diversity of our student body in school wide events
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CSS PTA | 2023-2024

Athletics Director & Dean

Harold DeLucia

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FUNDRAISING UPDATE



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Thank you to everyone who participated in The December Bake Sale & Spirit Wear Sale!

Our student bakers, who get community service hours for baking, are showing their talent! *Please do NOT send items baked with nuts.*

Please sign-up to donate baked goods or volunteer to help sell here <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/70A0844AEAC23A5F49-46714912-csspta#/> or by scanning the QR code above.

Check out pics from our December bake sale!

CSS PTA | 2023-2024



CSS Hat Pop-Up!!!!

The CSS Knit Hat is back by popular demand! Hats are \$10 each and there are only a limited number.

This hat is the **ONLY** hat permitted to be worn during the school day inside the school.

The sale is Thursday, Dec. 14th from 2:30pm-4:00pm outside the PTA office (across from Rm 503).

Cash, apple pay and cards accepted!



FUNDRAISING UPDATE

2023 PICTURE DAY

MIDDLE SCHOOL Picture Day Info!

On Monday every Middle School Student was sent home with a slip to order pictures. Please retrieve this slip so that when pictures are released you can order your pictures with no delay.

If your student has lost their slip please email ptafundraising@columbiasecondary.org and we will get back to you.



HIGH SCHOOL Picture Day, Mon., Dec. 18th

We need volunteers from 7:30am to 1:30pm. Volunteer here: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/70A0844AEAC23A5F49-46153194-high#/> or scan orange QR code.

High School Students must be in Uniform on Picture Day.



Jeff, Say Cheese Kidz Head Photographer, and Antoinette, Class of 2027 Parent and Middle School Picture Day Volunteer!

RETAKE DAY & SIBLING PICTURE DAY will be scheduled for early next year after school pictures are released.

All Pictures for all grades will be released in January 2024.

CSS PTA | 2023-2024



FUNDRAISING UPDATE



GOODY BAG PACK OUT AND DELIVERY TO STAFF

The PTA is looking for a few more volunteers to pack up and deliver holiday bags for our Teachers and Staff.

Thursday, December 21
8:15 - 10:30am

Link to sign-up:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/70A0844AEAC23A5F49-46660123-goody#/>

Thank you all for supporting our students and teachers by participating in PTA fundraising events! Sincerely, Starr & Josie, PTA Fundraising Committee. Please contact us at ptafundraising@columbiasecondary.org with any questions.

CSS PTA | 2023-2024



FARM TO PEOPLE

Please visit the [Farm to People site](#) when doing your holiday food shopping. The products are fresh, delicious and delivered right to your door. If you use our code, **CSSFAM**, Farm to People will donate 5% back to our school with every purchase! Below are a few tasty items available at Farm to People right now!



[Matzah Balls & Sage Butternut Squash Soup](#)

HOLIDAY GIFT BAGS - Staff Appreciation!!

Our family holiday gift bags -- a CSS tradition -- help us to say thank you for all they do.

Here's how it works:

- Each CSS family brings **12-15 of the same small gifts** to the OSS from between NOW thru **Tues 12/19 @ 8am**.
- The gifts are **anonymous**. Simply label the bag/box with your child's last name and grade.
- If you want to give a gift to **specific teacher(s)**, please wrap the gifts and label the teacher's name.
- The gifts **do not have to be expensive** ~ let your imagination and budget guide you.
- Some teachers follow special diets or **dietary laws**. If you donate homemade treats, please list the ingredients.
- Be **sensitive to diversity**, stay away from religious symbols.
- On **Thur 12/21 @ 8:30am**, create amazing holiday gift bags for each and every staff person that works with our kids.



Tips! Past hits include: Cookies, Chocolates, Snacks, Gourmet Coffee, Teas or Hot Chocolate Mixes, Pumpkin/Maple Butters, Fruit Spreads, Dried Fruits/Mushrooms in Jars, Holiday Decorations, Movie/Theatre Tickets, Art Supplies, Hygiene/Allergenic Soaps or Hand Lotions, Chap sticks, Chopsticks, passes to Museums, T-Shirts, Lottery Tickets, Socks, Gift Cards, Hand-Printed Certificates of Service (Help a Teacher After School, Chaperone for Their Classes, Bring Them Lunch, Run Errands)





CEC5 REPORT

SHEILA SWEENEY SUAREZ



Sheila is a mom to a CSS Senior and this is her first year on the PTA. She's serving this last year as PTA Delegate to CEC5. She previously served on the SLT at Amistad Dual Language where both her children attended middle school.

District 5 CEC Meetings are generally held the last Wednesday of each month at P.S. 36. Janiz Soriano and Isis Ramos attended the November 15th meeting. All CEC By-Laws, Mission Statement and Minutes from July through November (upon approval) are available at: https://www.cec5.org/home_page

Superintendent Davenport was in attendance this month. He is in the process of visiting our districts schools for introductions with the principals & visited CSS on Tuesday 12/5/23. Largest enrollment of the school year is Columbia Secondary School. There are currently 24 teacher vacancies in D5, 15 are special education vacancies. There are 935 English Language Learners in the district and that population has grown due to our migrant population.

Office of Food and Nutrition Services (OFNS), D5 Supervisor, Brittany Garcia presented. She visited CSS 11/14/23. If the CSS community is interested in having Halal & Kosher menus please let our school administrators know so that they can fill out an application form for these services.

Our Parent Coordinator Isis Ramos responded to the districts invitation and attend this meeting. She was formally introduced to the district council members and answered any questions pertaining to her role at CSS. They were pleased to know that she was a CSS alumni parent who loved CSS school culture and decided to attain employment at CSS.

There was no additional discussion concerning CSS' missing Building Utilization Plan, but pending communications between Data District Planning and CSS Admin should provide additional focus soon.

Please feel free to reach out to Sheila at sweeneysuarez@gmail.com with any questions on our involvement with CEC5.

CSS PTA | 2023-2024

FACILITIES REPORT

SPACE SHARING

SHARED SPACE COMMITTEE - Held first meeting, reviewed space sharing schedules. Note: CSS doing much better than past years, overall (inside) is close to 55% share expectation. But...

BUILDING UTILIZATION PLAN - ...without a BUP we will continue to experience problems. Continuing to talk to DOE, Citywide Council on High Schools, CEC5, Borough President and other officials regarding the lack of a BUP. Very hard to get attention despite being one of only 12 high school buildings in Manhattan that is overcrowded, no uniform bell schedule, K-12 mix, etc.

AFTERSCHOOL - We clarified that afterschool use should be proportional to program size.

SCHOOLYARD - Past policy assigned yard time on days a school did not have a primary gym day. But because CSS is almost always in one of the gyms (as we should be based on our size), we are assigned only **one day per week** on the new turf field. This is not adequate or equitable – we are working with the administration to revise this.

CSS PTA | 2023-2024



New CU apartments on site once promised to CSS for its own building



FACILITIES REPORT

CONSTRUCTION

December construction updates from the School Construction Authority:



SCHOOLYARD - Now open. Thank you parents for sending letters!

BOILER REPLACEMENT - Ongoing until February 2026. **\$27,348,705 budget (!!!)**

POOL - Scope completed. Beginning design. No dates. **\$7,750,000 budget (!)**

BASEMENT CAFETERIA - Scope completed. Beginning design. No dates. **\$550,000 budget**



SCAFFOLD - Has returned, for reasons we do not know.



Doors to the 3rd Floor Library



FACILITIES REPORT

1923

PARENT ENGAGEMENT

WE STILL HAVE 3 PROJECTS AND AT LEAST 4 YEARS TO GO!



You can help by sending a letter to the SCA to encourage them to expedite remaining projects and provide better communication. Use this link or QR code to access the template letter and mailing list:

<https://bit.ly/scaconstruction>



CSS PTA | 2023-2024

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT



- First of the structured Parent Engagement Sessions happened on Dec 4, 2023 - it was on two topics: Our children's social emotional learning, and an information session on Jupiter Grades.
- The playground is finally open. It is for the campus and no outside permitting is being done because the facility is not under NYC Parks
- Our superintendent visited us on Dec 5, 2023. He observed lessons, talked our ILT team, talked to a group of high school students and a group of middle school students besides having a word with a few parents.
- We utilized the gym for a pan-8th grade district exam today. This went off very smoothly. This was a great preparation for AP exams, Regents exams, and middle school state exams.
- We invested in new graphing calculators that are being rolled out in classes. These are way more intuitive and we hope that it will help students.
- After school and before school soccer is coming!! Badminton, Golf Boys Volleyball and Pickle ball coming.



PRINCIPAL'S REPORT - Safety Incident

We only today got an intimation from the NYPD detective investigating the case that the case is close. Here is the short message:

I ended up closing out the case as a result. There was no information at this time that was obtained that would lead to a possible suspect.

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT - Safety Incident

Chain of events: The following phrases were found written on a desk by a teacher on Monday evening

"School Shooter"

"12/7/23"



PRINCIPAL'S REPORT - Safety Incident

Police was called upon.

RBS principal was involved right away

Police was in the school till past 8 PM

Subpoenas were issued for information

We complied

DOE legal restrained us from divulging case details. However on urging that we need to intimate parents, they gave us pre-approved communication.

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT - Safety Incident

We were hyper vigilant. We tried to get scanning right away but the entire scanning unit was busy due to stabbing incidents at schools in Brooklyn and the Bronx.

We had police presence at the main entrance all day.

We finally got scanning due to the intervention of our precinct 26 Captain Jose Taveras [who has been very helpful throughout]

The day of the scanning he told the PTA president and me that the threat was not deemed credible but complemented us for taking it so seriously.

We had police support on Friday too

On Monday, we approached the detective to see if the case was close, but got no response.

Today close to noon, we were told the case is closed.



PRINCIPAL'S REPORT - Safety Incident

Follow up:

Tomorrow morning we have a session for all grades with the youth officers of NYPD
We are also looking to increase our SEL training. Some initiatives planned are:

Morningside Institute

Working with the students government

Office Hours

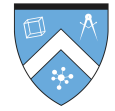
Bringing back advisory wherever possible

ELA department will through their philosophy classes talk about responsible free
free speech.

Appeal to Parents: Please lobby for more school safety agents.

Announcements:

- Holiday Gift Items due **Tues 12/19 @ 8am**
- Last day of School - **Fri 12/22/23**
- Picture Day
 - **Mon 12/18** - 9th - 11th grades
- **Fri 1/12/24** - Bake Sale & Spirit Wear Sale



THANK YOU FOR JOINING US!

UPCOMING MEETINGS FOR SY 2023-2024

January 9, 2023 6:15-7:30 P.M.

February 13, 2023 6:15-7:30 P.M.

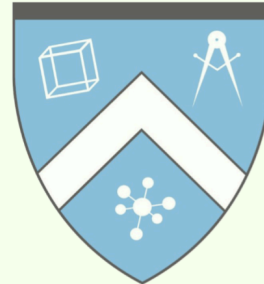
March 12, 2023 6:15-7:30 P.M.

April 9, 2023 6:15-7:30 P.M.

May 14, 2023 8:30-9:30 A.M.

June 11, 2023 6:15-7:30 P.M.

Columbia Secondary School for
Math, Science, and Engineering



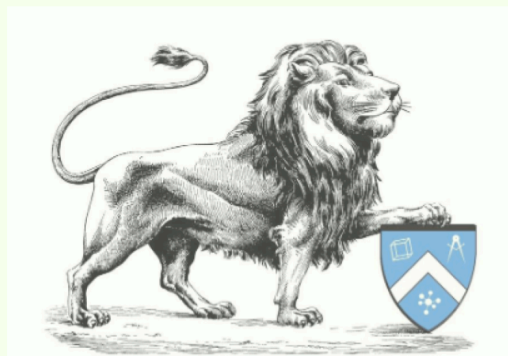
Challenging Academics
A Passion For Reason and Knowledge
Strength in Diversity

CSS PTA | 2023-2024

WORDS OF INSPIRATION

**Education is the most
powerful weapon which
you can use to change the
world.**

NELSON MANDELA



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