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## February 13, 2024 General Meeting Agenda (2023-2024)

Location: Zoom

Tuesday, February 13, 2024

6:15pm - 7:33pm

1. Call to order & Welcome - Janiz Soriano, Co-President
  - Co-president Janiz Soriano called the meeting to order at 6:19pm with 39 participants.
  
2. Co-President Report - Janiz Soriano
  - CRASEL (Cultural Responsive & Affirming Social Emotional Leadership) - Thank you to our CSS parent community & parent coordinator Isis Ramos for attending and participating. Event included
    - i. 60-minute meditation & yoga session. w/ Multitasking Yogi
    - ii. 90-minute training on stress relief and self-care with Pure Edge Inc.
    - iii. CSS Parent cohort's attended the zoom Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Professional Development (PD) and training. Thank you for your participation.
    - iv. You can click on the link here to sign up to be a part of the the CSS parent cohort - [Parent/Caregiver Cohort Sign-Up](#)
  - School Safety Agent - Congratulations to the Parent Community of CSS for reaching out to community officials about getting our building a second school safety agent.
  - Parent Grant Writing Seminar - Thank you to the parent community for actively participating in the google form survey. Our first grant writing seminar with Collette Young is scheduled for **FEBRUARY 27th**, details will be emailed to those who participated. If you're available & interested, please email us at [cssptapresident@columbiasecondary.org](mailto:cssptapresident@columbiasecondary.org)
  - *Spongebob Squarepants* musical - Congratulations to the CSS Community this year's musical made \$9,488.00 in comparison to the \$2k it made last school year. This will give the musical the opportunity to purchase the rights next school year. There was participation from all grades. (showed photos from musical)
  - Cheerleading team update (Nancy Lerman, cheer parent) - shoutout to the Cheerleading team (MS & HS) who cheered the CU Women's Basketball team to victory last week (PTA assisted with fundraiser for new uniforms).
    - i. When the Cheer Team is invited to participate at CU games, CSS families are able to purchase discounted tickets.
    - ii. Go show team spirit!
  - Spring Fling is coming back!

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- i. Friday, May 10th @ 6:30pm at Buunni Coffee uptown
  - ii. NEED VOLUNTEERS!
    1. Auction Committee (3-4) - to help solicit and organize donations. Any parents who worked on auctions at their previous school would be great!
    2. Planning Committee - create theme, logo, etc.
    3. Video Compilation - compile photos and videos of all PTA supported activities and create videos for the event.
    4. Event Onsite - before, during and after event
  - iii. DONATIONS NEEDED - ideas of popular previous items are:
    1. Tickets: sports, theater, concerts, events
    2. Experiences: tours, museums, unique activities, memorabilia
    3. Restaurants: gift certificates, food items
    4. Fitness: classes, training sessions
    5. Gift Cards, Wine, Travel: ALWAYS POPULAR!
  - iv. The Spring Fling is one of our largest fundraisers and pays for many activities and supplies at CSS. Last year's fundraiser supported this year's Robotics team!
  - v. It's a great bonding experience for our community and a great way to support our students and faculty.
  - vi. Email [PTAspringfling@columbiasecondary.org](mailto:PTAspringfling@columbiasecondary.org) to volunteer, donate, or for more info and check your CSS family email for updates.
3. Approval of Minutes -
- o Minutes from the January meeting were distributed prior to the meeting, a QR code was provided at the meeting.
  - o Motion to approve and approved by the majority of 65%.
4. Treasurer's Report - Christine Kovich, Treasurer
- o As of January 31, 2024, our total cash balance was **\$48,912.62**.
    - i. Contributions to the PTA are tax-deductible, in which receipts are automatically populated if you donate online. If you don't via check or cash, it will take some time for the Treasurer to create a receipt.
    - ii. Scan the QR code for YTD detailed budget activity.
    - iii. From a fundraising perspective, January was a slow month. Receipts for January
      1. Spirit Wear Sales = \$356.50
      2. Bake Sale = \$844.00
      3. Annual Appeal = \$895
    - iv. Expenses for January

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1. Paypal/Square credit card fees = \$43.21
  - v. Grants paid out in January = \$11,877.68
    1. Emergency grants for heaters when the classrooms were too cold, via the administration.
    2. The musical! (costumes, sets, etc.)
    3. We award grants to teachers, after school programs and athletics.
  - vi. If you haven't donated yet to the Annual Appeal, please think about donating. We'd like to have about 50% participation, and at this time only have about 11%.
- Any questions, please contact **Christine Kovich**, CSS PTA Treasurer ([PTATreasurer@columbiasecondary.org](mailto:PTATreasurer@columbiasecondary.org))
    - i. Q - do we ever do a dress down day to raise money? (see Principal's Report Q)
5. FRIENDS OF CSS - **Leanne Gonzalez-Singer**, new board member
- Shared QR code to learn more about FoCSS & donate; asked for questions in the chat.
  - What is Friends of CSS?
    - i. A group of current and former CSS community members supporting CSS's academic mission and provide the personnel, activities and programs that set CSS apart from other schools.
    - ii. A New York state charitable corporation - all contributions to Friends of CSS are tax deductible to the full extent allowed by law.
    - iii. Separate and independent from both the PTA and from the DOE, though we work together as appropriate.
    - iv. Funding: Three Sources
      1. our Columbia University endowment
      2. a private, one-time endowment made in 2011
      3. and families like yours
  - Personal Story: FOCSS wants parents to have a personal connection of how to help students
    - i. You get a spreadsheet from the college office (re: summer opportunities, internships, etc). Leanne's son found a summer internship in 9th grade, got a national award, and volunteer hours. Couldn't have had that opportunity without FoCSS.
  - What does Friends of CSS fund?
    - i. CSS College Office - FoCSS is the main employer at CSS, after the school itself.
    - ii. College visits
    - iii. CSS Tech Team
    - iv. 8th Grade Frost Valley Trip



- v. CSS Musical: Book rights / Licensing (although the musical raised so much money this year that they'll be able to pay for this next year, so FoCSS will be able to put several thousand dollars to other programming).
- o Help us support CSS!
  - i. FoCSS is looking at a shortfall of up to \$125,000. Our Endowments alone cannot support our programs. Shortfall is because during the pandemic, FoCSS stepped back from direct fundraising not knowing what would happen.
  - ii. Donate through our PayPal site: [Donate \(paypal.com\)](https://www.paypal.com) or scan the QR Code. The ask: \$500 per family, but any amount helps!
  - iii. Check with employers for matching or grant programs
  - iv. Ask around for possible donors, grants or foundations
  - v. <https://www.columbiasecondary.org/get-involved/friends-of-css>

## 6. FUNDRAISING REPORT

- o Thank you for all of the donations this past Friday! If every Bake Sale makes \$1k, then we automatically raise \$10k a year, just by selling donated baked goods. This month we had over 85 donations and raised \$1106.
  - i. Please sign up to volunteer!
- o Spirit Wear sale was this past Friday and we sold over \$500 of gear!
  - i. More sizes are coming in so if you need a specific size, please email Fundraising.
  - ii. This hat is the ONLY hat permitted to be worn during the school day inside the school.
- o The next Bake Sale & Spirit Wear Sale will be Friday, March 15th!.
  - 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.
- o 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! Sign up and use code CSSFAM
- o Any questions about fundraising, please email [PTAfundraising@columbiasecondary.org](mailto:PTAfundraising@columbiasecondary.org)



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7. CEC5 Report - Janiz on behalf of Sheila Sweeney Suarez
- District 5 CEC Meetings are generally held the last Wednesday of each month at P.S. 36. Sheila Sweeny Suarez, Janiz Soriano, David Thom, and several parents from CSS & the PS125 building community attended the January 24, 2024 meeting. All CEC By-Laws, Mission Statement and Minutes from July through December (upon approval) are available at:[https://www.cec5.org/home\\_page](https://www.cec5.org/home_page)
  - Superintendent Davenport was in attendance this month.
  - School Construction Authority (SCA), Proposed Five Year Capital Plan Amendment for Fiscal Years 2025-2029 was presented by Manager of External Affairs, Joshua Adams. Our VP of Facilities Dave Thom will dive into details now.
  - NEXT MEETING : February 28, 2024 @6:30 PMJ PS 36 Unit 2 - Conference Room 228 123 Morningside Drive, NY, NY 10027
    - i. Presenters: Turbo, Ryan Miele / FY 2025 Fair Student Funding (FSF)
  - Please feel free to reach out to Sheila at [sweeneysuarez@gmail](mailto:sweeneysuarez@gmail.com) with any questions on our involvement with CEC5.
8. FACILITIES REPORT - David Thom
- The CEC5 presentation was very broad - no detail, just fluff. We did have a productive meeting with the SCA project manager after the meeting. Bottom line - they realize that they have 3 schools in the building and need to talk to all 3. But at this time they have nothing to share, so when you ask specific questions, they can't answer.
  - Updates from the School Construction Authority
    - i. BOILER REPLACEMENT - Ongoing until February 2026. \$27,348,705 budget (!!!); will go on for a few years, nothing we can do at this time.
    - ii. POOL - Scope completed. Beginning design. No dates. \$7,750,000 budget (!); still in the design phase
    - iii. BASEMENT CAFETERIA - Scope completed. Beginning design. No dates. \$550,000 budget; we reminded them not to disrupt the school year for cosmetic renovation, hoping they listened.
    - iv. SCAFFOLD - Has been removed which is positive, but the equipment is still out there for boiler replacement.
    - v. Updates from the Division of School Facilities
      - 1. LIGHTING - Still waiting for repair of high-level fixtures; although they've added more lighting on the ground level.
      - 2. SIGNAGE - Working with vendor to finally add CSS signage
  - Space Sharing - showed photo of the original Manhattanville plan that showed the location of the 2011 site that the DOE decided NOT to take for a new school building. In the meantime, spring is coming and the schoolyard will be a hot topic



as to how to share. In the interim, we're still working on a building utilization plan which is tough to get 3 school to communicate, but we're continuing to work on it.

- i. SHARED SPACE COMMITTEE - Second meeting of year has not been scheduled yet. (supposed to have 4 total); talk construction and sharing spaces
  - ii. BUILDING UTILIZATION PLAN - Continuing to talk to DOE, Citywide Council on High Schools, CEC5, Borough President and other officials to plead for a BUP for our building.
  - iii. SCHOOLYARD - Still a work in progress for permanent scheduling
  - iv. NEW BUILDING - Continuing periodic communications with District and others to push for a long-term solution given that three growing schools cannot fit in our current building. Complicated topic tied into numerous commitments from the Manhattanville CU expansion. DOE rejected the original site in 2011, sending us down our current path. Exploring the topic, but not something that will happen this decade.
- WE STILL HAVE 3 PROJECTS AND AT LEAST 4 YEARS TO GO!
- i. You can help by sending a letter to the SCA to encourage them to expedite remaining projects and provide better communication.
  - ii. Use this link or QR code to access the template letter and mailing list: <https://bit.ly/scaconstruction>
  - iii. EVERYTIME you get frustrated, please send SCA a letter, which has been very helpful
  - iv. If you have any questions, put them in the chat.
    1. Q - Pickle Ball court lines in the schoolyard? (See PArora below)

## 9. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

- Congrats on the 2nd School Safety Agent - thanks for your letter writing. It definitely had an effect, combined with the push from administration. Thanks so much!
- Algebra - 2 Regents Results [Mastery rate was 51% - highest ever in CSS history]; this is a phenomenal jump from last year.
- 8th grade math enrichment after school - 8th grade is experiencing problems in math, so created this after school opportunity; teachers identified which students need extra help.
- Cheerleading resumes Saturday programming starting March 2. (Had a hiccup with SONYC losing people to manage the practice on Saturday so it stopped, but admin said it was important to the community so they figured out how to reinstate the Saturday programming). They performed amazingly at Columbia vs. Brown game.

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- *Spongebob* Musical ran three days and had multiple well attended showings. Congratulations to students, faculty and staff for this amazing performance. They even had a show for the elementary school students at RBS, which helped to bridge the difference between the two schools.
- Summer Soccer coaching has started on home turf. We will soon be sending out interest forms checking the interest for morning soccer. (PARora took a train in one morning and saw the practice!)
- We got an approval for Co-ed Golf PSAL team!! An outside company reached out and they helped get PSAL recognition mid-year. Met with a few of the students and they are happy!
- We tested NYC DOE Gama system for messaging. We are going to deploy it in case of emergency notifications, should we find ourselves in an unfortunate situation.
- Spring Semester: Our SPED compliance is expected to be very close to 100 percent. Reports will come out next Monday. AP Gordon is not teaching anymore, so can focus on SPED. PARora is teaching AP-Physics-2 and enjoying it.
- Morningside restorative circles training (CRASEL from Co-Pres report) has started with 6th grade (since those teachers worked to get the programming) and will be expanded to other grades in due time. It will help improve school culture and climate.
- SCA has agreed to install hydration stations on all our floors over the summer, to help eliminate plastics. Will be good for the students and staff.
- Black history month is being celebrated. Events will be posted.
- Three staff members will soon be out on child care leave. This puts pressure on the school system, so if staff is a day or so late in replying to a message please be patient.
- AP Gordon delivered a SPED Engagement session on Jan 11, 2024 at 6 PM.
- We need to have a Uniform discussion. There are lots of opinions so don't want to make a single decision. Will discuss at the next SLT and then maybe involve larger community input.
- We have received a conditional approval for Mental Health Clinic! Currently ABC is only available once a week, but said that if we open a clinic they could be there more often in the week and available to staff. So admin cleared out an office/room that was being underutilized (a bit small), but the state has approved. Need to make it sound proof and have some kind of entry system. The staff would be supported by ABC. PARora will ask David Thom to visit and give a ball-park budget. May start as early as next year.
- Frost Valley preparation coming along. PARora will attend in AP Flaherty's place.
- Mr. Attridge has started teaching the virtual Music History class for credit. We are among the first schools in the city and first in the district to start this new DOE

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- initiative. It helps with the tightness of space and can give credit to our art teachers virtually. Currently 10 kids are enrolled. Depending on the experience, we may have more next year.
- We are seeking grants for new computer carts as the old computers are getting outdated. The goal is to have 20-28 new carts, one in every classroom.
  - More library books. Hoping by next year the shelves will be full of books
  - Yoga is coming to SONYC soon. Paperwork is in process, so very soon will have as an option.
  - Before close - introduced Mr. Alex Faba, worked with RBS in building, but just started at CSS as Phys Ed instructor and Asst Dean to Mr. Delucia; going to be golf coach
    - i. Mr. Faba - introduced himself. Was at PS125 for 7 years, just joined CSS family so familiar with the building and faces. Was in both gyms on the 5th floor, so was always in CSS. It's good to be in new in the school. Teaches 3 classes of phys ed a day then goes to the dean's office. Last year was coaching rugby with Dean DeLucia. This year coached girls' volleyball, now golf and will continue coaching rugby. Then will start boys volleyball, so looking for new coach. He talked about how much he admires all of parent teamwork and involvement. Feel free to reach out directly at [alexfaba@columbiasecondary.org](mailto:alexfaba@columbiasecondary.org);
  - Last year's Spring Fling fundraiser was able to fund the robotics, but want to add a classroom to reduce stress on classroom spaces. Want to convert an office that is not being properly used, to a computer classroom next year.
  - QUESTIONS:
    - i. Q - pickle ball lines in playground? A - not able to do it due to extreme cold in last few weeks, but as weather warms up will work to complete
    - ii. Q - For Algebra2 - what is the Algebra2 average rate at schools like Bronx Science? A - When PARora started at Bronx Science the Mastery rate was 44% but when left was 80% or higher, so already we're higher than when he started. If we do well in Algebra2, we can do well in higher maths like calculus. Algebra2 is the foundation of all STEM classes. Big improvement from year's past. Highest in CSS history.
    - iii. Q - Dressdown day? A - from AP Flaherty: SGA would do dress down as a fundraiser but stopped due to equity (only those that could afford would be able to participate). So will continue to support dress down in events like Spirit Week.
    - iv. Q - for Volunteer Hours, why can't students help out more at the Bake Sale? A - AP Flaherty said students are not allowed to be involved in cash transactions at school (during school). But can earn hours by baking and donating baked goods; good/safe to keep it separate.





- v. Q - daughter was in SONYC basketball, had 1 or 2 actual sessions, and then understanding that it's no longer available until maybe March. A - (prioritized to practice/games for school sponsored teams); Faba - shared gym space is a big issue with phys ed and sports, PSAL teams took priority; but in spring no PSAL sports in spring season. Response: When kids signed up wasn't told that it was going to stop, so they would have signed up for something else; coupled with if PSAL schedule is known then it could have been predicted. Kid observation also is that other activities have been moved (not sure if case by case or week by week) but if they moved to outdoors, so why can't basketball be outdoors. Faba will get back with details, will reach out to SONYC for more details.
- vi. Q - emailed w PARora about furniture in engineering class, specifically the stools. A - PARora hasn't had a chance yet to investigate, but hope to get to it by tomorrow. Response - cushions are being removed, ruining the students' uniforms. A - if there needs to be replacement, will do so right away
- vii. Q - everytime [I'm] at the school the dispensers are empty or not working. Specifically the soap dispenser in the bathroom was missing and outside the bathroom one dispenser was missing and one not working. A - The school had a problem with toilet paper and solved it, so will address this with the custodian right away.

10. Ice Skating Event this Thurs 2/15. Parent (Sam) offered to split the cost (up to \$50) with the kids in order to get involvement as it's a great event. (email the PTA)

#### 11. UPCOMING ANNOUNCEMENTS

- o Winter Break: Mon 2/19 - Fri 2/23
- o Bake Sale & Spirit Wear Sale: Fri 3/15, theme "Empowering Treats"

#### 12. FUTURE PTA MEETINGS:

- |                         |                       |                  |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| o <b>March 12, 2024</b> | <b>6:15-7:30 P.M.</b> | <b>in-person</b> |
| o April 9, 2024         | 6:15-7:30 P.M.        | in-person        |
| o <b>May 14, 2024</b>   | <b>8:30-9:30 A.M.</b> | <b>virtual</b>   |
| o June 11 , 2024        | 6:15-7:30 P.M.        | virtual          |

#### 13. Adjournment

- o Meeting adjourned around 7:35pm.