



January 10, 2024 General Meeting Agenda (2023-2024)

Location: Zoom

Tuesday, January 10, 2024

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 6:22 pm with 46 participants.

2. Catherine showed highlights of what the PTA has funded in this past month.
 - Parent donations have allowed the award-winning “CSS Harlem Rails Robotics Club” to thrive and join robotics teams from all over NYC for the unveiling of NYC’s 1st 2024 Robotics Competition game!
 - CSS Cheerleading Team came in 2nd place at their first ever USA/UCA Cheer Competition sponsored by the National Cheer Association. The PTA purchased their new uniforms. The team’s next public appearance will be at the Columbia vs Brown Men’s Basketball game at Columbia University on Feb 23, 2024.
 - For supporting the CSS Winter Showcase: PTA provided pizza, and every student played one of the 400 jingle bells - thanks to the grant from last year!
 - Holiday Gift Bags to all of our faculty and staff - PTA volunteers gathered on 12/21 to create 102 gift bags for every person that works with our kids (teachers, staff, paras, aides, after school, cafeteria workers, security agent, custodians, etc). Messages of thanks were shared.

3. Approval of Minutes -
 - Minutes from the December meeting were distributed prior to the meeting, a QR code was provided at the meeting.
 - Motion to approve and approved by the majority of xx.

4. Treasurer’s Report - Christine Kovich, Treasurer
 - As of December 31,, 2023, our total cash balance was **\$57,967.28**.
 - i. Lots of Annual Appeal this month was due to companies that matched donations.
 - ii. 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.
 - iii. Receipts for December
 1. Spirit Wear Sales = \$1255
 2. Bake Sale = \$681

COLUMBIA SECONDARY SCHOOL

PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION INC.

425 West 123rd Street, New York, NY 10027



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3. Annual Appeal = \$7515
 4. Farm to People = \$7515
 - iv. Expenses for December
 1. Wholesale Wreaths = \$82.50
 2. Paypal/Square credit card fees = \$349.21
 - v. Grants paid out in October = \$6456.68
 1. 4 grants approved in December to support student activities totalling **\$2203.54**
 2. Robotics, Athletics uniforms
 - vi. QR code was shared for YTD budget breakdown.
- Any questions, please contact **Christine Kovich**, CSS PTA Treasurer (PTATreasurer@columbiasecondary.org)
5. FRIENDS OF CSS - Dr. Min Hong
- FofCSS wanted to share a video clip of Frost Valley, but unfortunately it was challenging to create in the new year.
 - Dr. Min mentioned that they are one of many volunteer on the board of FofCSS.
 - Dr. Min Hong was in attendance and available to answer any questions in the Chat, and provided their email.
President_FriendsofCSS@ColumbiaSecondary.org
 - FofCSS is a NYS charitable corporation that was formed to support the academic mission of CSS. The purpose of FoCSS is to enhance the educational experiences of the students, teachers and staff of CSS.
 - Link provided to learn more about FoCSS & donate:
<https://www.columbiasecondary.org/get-involved/friends-of-css>
6. 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.
 - v. Need volunteers and list of donations for the Bake Sale by **TOMORROW** or needs to be canceled.
 - 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.



- 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
- Re-Take & Sibling Picture Day for ALL grades will be on Mon, 1/22
 - i. If your student missed picture day please email ptafundraising@columbiasecondary.org. Please send your child's name & your CSS family email address and we will schedule for your child's picture to be taken.
 - ii. If you want a picture of siblings please sign up [here](#) or https://www.signupgenius.com/go/70A0844AEAC23A5F49-47083803-signup#.
 - iii. To volunteer to help out on Re-Take & Sibling Picture Day go [here](#) or <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/70A0844AEAC23A5F49-47083250-retake#>
 - iv. All pictures for all grades will be released in Jan 2024.

7. CEC5 Report

- District 5 CEC Meetings are generally held the last Wednesday of each month at P.S. 36. Janiz Soriano and Sheila Sweeny Suarez attended the December 20, 2023 meeting. All CEC By-Laws, Mission Statement and Minutes from July through November (upon approval) are available at:
- Superintendent Davenport was in attendance this month.
- Harlem International Museum, Executive Director, Donald Clayton who has been a resident of Harlem for over 40yrs was the meetings soul presenter and discussed the need for NYC to have it's first and needed African American Museum. He was inquiring for D5 support.
- NEXT MEETING : January 24, 2024 @6:30 PMJ PS 36 Unit 2 - Conference Room 228 123 Morningside Drive, NY, NY 10027
- Please feel free to reach out to Sheila at sweeneysuarez@gmail.com with any questions on our involvement with CEC5.

8. FACILITIES REPORT - Space Sharing

- STORAGE - Administration successfully held onto CSS storage space that custodians wanted for storage displaced by boiler project. (They will now use pool locker rooms.)
- SHARED SPACE COMMITTEE - Second meeting of year has not been scheduled yet.

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- 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.
 - SCHOOLYARD - Administration reports additional time has been secured for lunchtime field use on Tues and Thurs in addition to Wed. Still a work in progress.
 - 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.
 - NOTE: challenging to get anyone to respond to solving the above issues.
 - Pictures shared
 - i. School building in 1923 (original capacity of 500 students, today's population is 1325 students)
 - ii. Front of the building to show that we've requested the repair of the high-mounted floodlights on the building facade to reduce dark areas.
 - 1. There was immediate response that discussed immediate replacement of lights by the doors, however we are requesting that these floodlights get repaired.
 - 2. Also told that the SCA will add lights to their trailers to help.
 - 3. Will continue to press to have the floodlights replaced.
 - Updates from the School Construction Authority
 - i. BOILER REPLACEMENT - Ongoing until February 2026. \$27,348,705 budget
 - ii. POOL - Scope completed. Beginning design. No dates. \$7,750,000 budget
 - iii. BASEMENT CAFETERIA - Scope completed. Beginning design. No dates. \$550,000 budget
 - 1. We're pressing to get this project moving, especially over the summer.
 - iv. SCAFFOLD - To be removed over next two weeks
 - 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>
 - 1. IF you'd like to add your voice, please use the link to send a message to the SCA
 - If you have any questions, put them in the chat.



9. PRINCIPAL REPORT

- Gave thanks to the parents for the Holiday Gift Bags. Was the largest bag received as a DOE employee, and all the staff was just as appreciative.
- Parent Engagement Sessions happened on Jan 8, 2024. [Coffee with the principal]
 - i. First couple of sessions were only about 15, but we'd like to continue to grow these sessions.
 - ii. Good to hear from the parents and their concerns, and good for parents to hear the administration challenges.
 - iii. Haven't decided on the next date, but encourage parents to attend.
- We gained more usage time on the playground - detail will be given by AP Lynn.
 - i. Can now have 3 lunch periods.
 - ii. Per Dr. Lynn - Increased the field times on Tues & Thurs in period 6, splitting with PS125
 - iii. Next year will start from scratch with space utilization.
- Math Department unrolled new calculators in their classes. These are way more intuitive and we hope that it will help students.
- SONYC has started offering Pickleball.
 - i. Have purchased the equipment by the PhysEd department, and made available to after school
 - ii. Hope that this grows and we're able to create a team in the future.
- We got an approval for Boys Volleyball Varsity PSAL team
 - i. Agreement signed today.
 - ii. Have a great girls' team but always an aspiration for a boys team
- We are working with a very reputed Golf organization to start Golf PSAL team
 - i. This is a great organization, and our kids will go to very prof golf courses, transportation provided by the organization
 - ii. Still working on the approval
- More lighting around the school perimeter
 - i. Per Facilities report still working; the corner of the building is still dark, which is where the most of the crime has happened.
- Precinct 26 has promised increased presence in the Morningside Park and around the school at the time of late dismissal.
 - i. Invited the Police security here and have agreed to increase police presence in the park and near the school during dismissal hours.
 - ii. This can change if they have more pressing priorities but we're hoping that we can hold them to this.
 - iii.
- We are going to deploy NYC DOE GAMA - for emergency alerts going forward
 - i. We explored other options but this service seems the most promising.

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- ii. After School is challenging as there is only one administrator in the building, however during the school day is easier.
 - iii. This will allow for real time messages to be sent, and then followed up by email.
- Bathroom Toilet Paper Issue has been resolved.
 - i. New fixtures and more regular monitoring
- Morningside restorative circles training has been discussed and finalized. They will start with the 6th grade early next semester.
 - i. Social and emotional learning, and restorative talks
 - ii. Will start with the 6th grade early Feb and then work to get to other grades.
- CRESAL funding provided a yoga session for CSS, as well as 50 yoga mats.
 - i. There is a day of wellness scheduled tomorrow, Wed 1/11, email sent via Isis.
- We are looking to install more hydration stations.
 - i. Designs we have are not workable, but will work to duplicate the service that we have in the basement.
 - ii. Will be good for everyone, to reduce waste.
- Debate and Cheer teams have won big accolades.
 - i. Cheer team news via PTA earlier.
 - ii. Debate team
- We had a very well attended and a very festive Winter Celebration.
 - i. Was great to see student participation and celebration.
- We got to keep our Gym balcony space that SCA threatened to take.
 - i. Facilities report confirmed that we were able to keep this space, in order for storage.
 - ii. Will work to reorganize and maximize the space.
 - iii. Per Dr. Lynn - Got to keep things in the balcony. Asked if the pool could be used to store things, and got answer - YES!
- AP Gordon will deliver a SPED Engagement session on Jan 11, 2024 at 6 PM.
 - i. Lots of parents from SPED have concerns
 - ii. This isn't a session for specifics to be discussed due to privacy concerns, but will distribute a form prior.
- Students taking Columbia Classes for credit this Spring semester is 27.
 - i. Last year was 7
 - ii. There was limited offering and hesitation from professors to have minors
 - iii. Also option to get college courses from CUNY, SUNY and other colleges in the city.
 - iv. Increases are coming but not as fast as we'd like.
- We are on track for providing office hours during Spring Semester
 - i. Community has expressed interest in this.

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- ii. Are assessing faculty availability per student access.
 - Frost Valley preparation coming along.
 - i. PARora joining the 8th Grade for this trip!
 - Black Studies Curriculum
 - i. We decided to join Prof McGuiness and include this curriculum within the History curriculum.
 - ii. He's already started prof development in the district.
 - Private Office Space - per Dr. Lynn, we're beginning the process of building private office space (acoustical panels that go to ceiling); work to start in 409
 - i. PARora and DLynn have meeting on Thurs - to work on offices in 507 and to subdivide a former classroom to be more efficient space, esp with upcoming class size cap (trying to get ahead of this)
 - Basement Cafeteria - per Dr. Lynn, PS125 principal received communication that they'll start over the summer and complete prior to start of Fall 2024
 - 1. Once done, the 6th floor cafeteria will have much more availability and allow for our students to have more access
 - Virtual Learning - per Dr. Lynn, We've been approved for school based virtual learning.
 - 1. More info coming out in the coming days.
 - 2. Allows us to offer a health and art credit in the spring - log on in the evening or afternoon online.
 - 3. Current plan is that Attridge will offer an interdisciplinary course on the BEATLES in music.
 - Q - pickleball lines, can lines be taped - will ask phys ed, as this sounds like a great idea. More important to get the courts, so we'll have 4.
 - i. Parent - Mariana Marron requested to have more detailed discussion at the next meeting.
 - ii. PARora - thinks we can move faster than the February meeting.
 - Q - folks asked about Futsol - Someone came by to discuss, is a great idea, and would be good to have in the winter. Need to ensure that we're in DOE compliance. Will continue the conversation. Also inquiring about badminton in the future.
 - Q - who is the contact person to reach out to regarding request for new sports? PARora - send an email to Dean DeLucia but copy PARora to make sure it gets processed.
 - Q - is it true that the 6th grade is going from 4 sections to 3? A child was told this by the teacher, but no communication to the parents. PARora - it was discussed at the last SLT.
 - i. The MS classes should be maxed at 33. We were forced to create 4 when the 6th grade class had more than 99 (108 this year).

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- ii. Now that we're back down to 99 with 4 sections, it looks like we have more seats than the building can accommodate so the DOE can add students that aren't screened.
 - iii. 4 sections ate up lots of teacher resources. Now we'll be able to re-allocate and bring us into compliance and equalize the teacher load.
 - iv. Will also prevent the DOE from adding more students.
 - v. Will have new intermingling of students so they have new sets of friends, but done carefully in collaboration with the teachers in order to keep friends.
 - vi. Per Dr. Lynn - as we organize the 6th grade, we've moved Prof Carter from Philosophy to Science and Prof Sears will be joining the Math/Physics course in upper grades in order to have an ICT credit.
 - Q re: 10th grade physics, who is teaching the Math/Physics class? Prof Kovac is teaching both sections of the class that had 2 teachers.
 - i. This class is popular among students and help with their credit load.
 - Q - has the NYPD made specific commitments about their policing of the CSS area? The NYPD is reluctant to put anything on paper, but they have assured CSS & PS125 that they'll be around dismissal much more at 5:45 & 6:15, when after school lets out and there's a true lack of staffing. (at regular dismissal we're good with safe dismissal as we have more staff available then.)
 - Q - can we do a test of the emergency alert, and can this also be sent to the students? Doing a test of the emergency alert is a great idea. Regarding sending to students, PARora is in favor of sending to high school students as they are more mature and can handle the alerts, but have had mixed feelings about sending to middle school students who should probably hear from their parents.
 - i. PARora would like to hear from the PTA on how the parent body feels about this.
 - ii. The alert will use the parent info that is registered on the DOE NYSchools account, so please make sure this is updated.
 - iii. If you have 800#s blocked, you'll need to turn this off so you receive the alert.
 - iv. The number is the same for all alerts, so parents can save this to their contacts.
 - v. The admin will send out an email prior to the test being sent out, sometime next week.
 - Q - any report update of the parent who was injured in the attempted robbery near the school last week? Unfortunately no. The NYPD admitted that there have been 3 robberies in the last 3 weeks, and it's suspected to be the same group of adolescents from the vicinity.
 - i. Since they are minors, they aren't able to hold them, and they are released soon afterwards.



- ii. Q - were the students provided counseling after watching a video of suicide? Yes, they were provided guidance right after the incident.
 - 1. AP Gorden and Admin working with Sonic to have more oversight in After School supervision.

10. UPCOMING ANNOUNCEMENTS

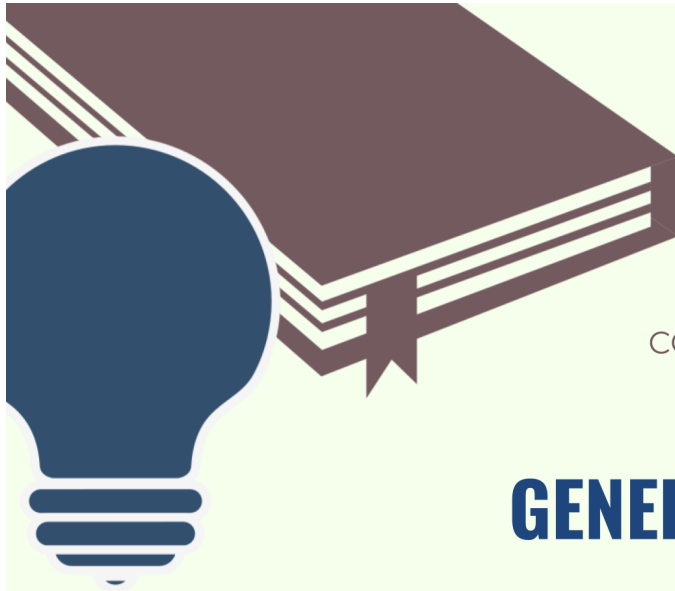
- Holiday Gift Items due **Tues 12/19 @ 8am**
- Last Day of School - 12/22/24
- Fri 1/12/24 - Bake Sale & Spirit Wear Sale
- Picture Day
 - i. Mon 12/18 - 9th - 11th grades
- Holiday Gift Bags - for teachers and staff!

11. FUTURE PTA MEETINGS:

- | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| ○ February 13, 2024 | 6:15-7:30 P.M. | virtual |
| ○ March 12, 2024 | 6:15-7:30 P.M. | in-person |
| ○ April 9, 2024 | 6:15-7:30 P.M. | in-person |
| ○ May 14, 2024 | 8:30-9:30 A.M. | virtual |
| ○ June 11, 2024 | 6:15-7:30 P.M. | virtual |

12. Adjournment

- Meeting adjourned around 7:26pm.



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

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🎵 CSS Music Room Propagation Station 🎵
POTHOS BASICS • EASY POTTING & CARE INSTRUCTIONS

Equipment needed:
 1. Sharp knife, Garden Shears, Spray bottle, Ziploc bags, Paper plates, and Rubber gloves (or gloves)

How to propagate:
 1. Cut a stem from the mother plant and "leaf" (leaves with base) or petioles.

Planting and Care:
 1. Make a hole in the soil with your finger for each cutting. Gently insert the 1.2 inch stem from each stem and 1.2 inches apart from the pot.
 2. Place cuttings in the hole and press soil firmly into place.
 3. Water and seal the propagation station with a plastic bag to cover all the sides. Remember to keep a 1 inch space all the way up your pot for watering.
 4. Place propagation station under bright indirect light and avoid cold drafts.
 5. Check propagation station daily for 2-3 weeks. Gently rotate the propagation station to get even light on all sides.
 6. If possible, choose a location where you can talk and sing to your plants. You will both love that!


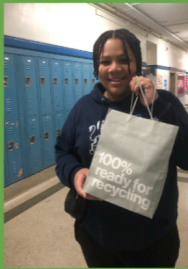
Watering:
 1. Water every 1-2 weeks.
 2. Water until the bottom starts to drain. Dry between waterings. Watering once every 1-2 weeks.
 3. Check the soil of the pot to see if it is too dry before watering. Watering once every 1-2 weeks.
 4. Check excess water from the saucer underneath so that plants are not sitting in water.
 5. If possible, use a saucer underneath to keep your propagation station healthy.






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**

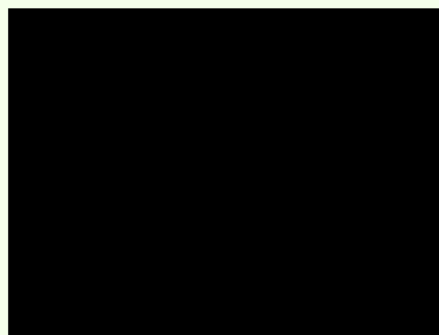
Scan to view side by side
current and proposed
2023-2024 budgets.



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



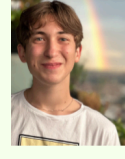
**Co Vice
Presidents:**
Elais Navarro
and Haruki
Berman



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
David Gelpi



**9th Grade
Representatives:**
Aneisa Rampersaud
and Eva Marmolejos

Goals:

- Reflecting the diversity of our student body in school wide events
- Creating sustainable structures to promote student accomplishments, initiatives, and unions (e.g., HSG website, instagram, newsletter, etc.)
- Fundraising and school spirit (i.e., spirit weeks, grams, and more to come)

CSS PTA | 2023-2024

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.

CSS PTA | 2023-2024



FUNDRAISING UPDATE



The next Bake Sale & Spirit Wear Sale will be Friday, January 12th.

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!

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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.

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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 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



CSS, PS125 and KIPP STUDENTS CELEBRATE THE SCHOOLYARD OPENING 12/4/23

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.

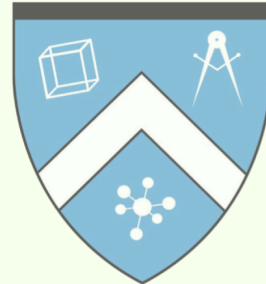
March 12, 2023 6:15-7:30 P.M.

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



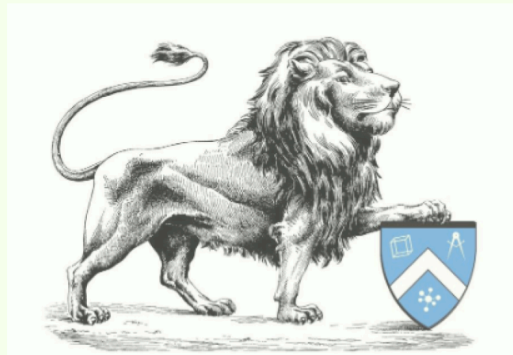
Challenging Academics
A Passion For Reason and Knowledge
Strength in Diversity

CSS PTA | 2023-2024

WORDS OF INSPIRATION

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

NELSON MANDELA



CSS PTA | 2023-2024