



September 19, 2023 General Meeting Agenda (2023-2024)

Location: Auditorium

Tuesday, September 19, 2023

6:15pm - 7:45pm

1. Call to order & Welcome - Janiz Soriano & Cathleen Roque, Co-Presidents
 - Co-presidents Janiz Soriano and Cathleen Roque called meeting to order at 6:18 pm with 105 participants; Cathleen reviewed the mission and protocols of the PTA. Janiz asked if anyone required translation services. (No one requested). Janiz also introduced the PTA Executive Board members & the Parent Coordinator, Isis Ramos.

2. Prof Kilduff & Prof Treece announced the musical for the year - *Spongebob Squarepants the Musical*
 - Prof Kilduff & Prof Treece introduced themselves.
 - Started auditions today and will continue tomorrow.
 - Gave thanks to the PTA for all the support in the past and pre-emptive support this year.
 - They'll form committees for volunteers, and would love to welcome all skills.
 - The musical will take place in February 2024.
 - Have a partnership with an outside dance company in Harlem, giving free classes on Friday, working on 3 dance numbers including tap.
 - Rehearsal on Tuesdays & Thursdays.

3. Approval of Minutes - Laurie Brown Kindred, Recording Secretary
 - Minutes from the last meeting of 2022-23 school year in June were distributed and QR code provided at meeting for all those present to review.
 - Motion to approve and approved with the majority of those present.

4. Treasurer's Report - Christine Kovich, Treasurer
 - Christine explained the PTA budget approved at the end of last year. (see slide #5 & #6 at end of these minutes).
 - i. Explained the variety of income / donations / fundraising
 - ii. Talked through the big buckets of money go to Teacher Grants.
 - The income does not include the boisterous Spirit Wear sales in August and early September.
 - The balance on August 31st was \$52,387.23.
 - i. Receipts through the summer

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1. Membership Dues / Annual Appeal
 - a. July = \$192.62
 - b. August = \$532.47
 2. Spirit Wear Sale = ?
 - ii. Expenses through the summer
 1. Website Design & Maintenance = \$1338
 2. Dept./Grade Level Grant
- Christine presented the updated FY23 budget
 - Any questions, please contact **Christin Kovich**, CSS PTA Treasurer
 - PTATreasurer@columbiasecondary.org
5. Principal's Report - Principal Arora
- On the administrative front, I am happy to confirm that Ms. Flaherty and Ms. Gordon are now fully appointed and will continue to serve as Assistant Principals.
 - We have enhanced our leadership capacity by adding Dr. Lynn, who has joined us as the Assistant Principal for Operations.
 - LIBRARY IS OPEN!!! It's been a long time coming, due to lots of postponements. We started access on Mon 9/18, and is a very good resource for the students.
 - PArora shared the values of CSS - Pride Values for 2023-24:
 - i. Perseverance - Every uphill battle shape's tomorrow's champions. Keep climbing and rise above. (persistence in doing something despite difficulty or delay in achieving success)
 - ii. Resilience - Stand firm amidst rising tides. (the capacity to withstand or to recover quickly from difficulties)
 - iii. Integrity - Do the right thing even when no one is watching. (it's about having strong moral values and sticking to them, even when it's difficult. It's like having a strong inner compass that guides you to make truthful and honorable choices.)
 - iv. Diversity - Different colors. One canvas. Celebrating one world together. (embracing and valuing the unique stories, background and perspectives each of us brings to the table, enriching our learning and understanding of the world.)
 - v. Engagement - Deep dive into learning where every question you ask lights up a path to your brightest future. (to part in something with a degree of attention, interest and passion)
 - Administration realized that it's very stressful for students to have multiple tests on a single date. So this year we're implementing specific Academic testing days:
 - i. Subject-specific testing days:
 1. Monday: English Tests
 2. Tuesday: Social Studies Tests
 3. Wednesday: Science Tests
 4. Thursday: Math Tests (with tutoring opportunities before test day)
Kids they talked to expressed more stress surrounding Math.



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5. Friday: Spanish Tests and Make-ups
- Testing Room to avoid students transferring room-to-room for those that require extra time.
 - i. Room 300 is now designated for testing ONLY.
 - ii. Dedicated to extra time students.
 - This academic year, we have enriched our curriculum with various advanced elective courses tailored to cater to our students' diverse interests and academic goals. Some of these are:
 - i. Anatomy and Physiology (in-house)
 - ii. AP Psychology (previously Virtual Learning Classroom, now in-house)
 - iii. AP Spanish Literature (Virtual Learning Classroom)
 - iv. AP US History (Virtual Learning Classroom)
 - v. AP Government (in-house)
 - vi. AP Computer Science Principles (Virtual Learning Classroom)
 - vii. Forensics (Virtual Learning Classroom)
 - viii. Journalism (in-house) taught by someone that is a professional journalist
 - ix. Cybersecurity (in-house)
 - x. AP Calculus (transitioned from an after-school program to two in-house sections)
 - xi. AP-Statistics (Virtual Learning Classroom)
 - xii. (feedback - students are loving the virtual learning classroom)
 - New Grading Rubric:
 - i. For most classes, the grading breakdown is:
 1. Summative Assessment: 50% (research papers, projects, etc.)
 2. Formative Exercises: 35% (homework, etc)
 3. Engagement: 15%
 - ii. Purpose if students do bad on one assignment, that they have the opportunity for the overall work to be analyzed, and get proper credit for student's overall work.
6. AP Special Education Welcome - Tricia Gordon, Assistant Principal Special Education (Supervisor of Special Education; IEPS, 504 Plans)
- Contact: triciagordon@columbiasecondar.org (now located in 412A)
 - All students with disabilities who require special education services have individualized Education Programs (IEPs). IEP contains specific information about your child's interest, strengths, needs, goals, and specially designed educational program. It is a legal document that describes how the DOE (CSS) will provide your child:
 - i. A Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)
 - ii. In the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)
 - Prof. Crawford - Intervention & Reading Specialist
 - i. Prof. McDonough - STEM
 - ii. Prof. Hewitt - STEM



- iii. Prof. Guzman - Humanities
- iv. Prof. Gjikola - STEM
- v. Prof. Huzzy - Humanities
- vi. Prof. Emmanuel - Humanities
- vii. Prof. Seifert - Humanities
- viii. Prof. Kim - STEM
- ix. Prof. Frampton - Humanities
- x. Prof. Huttick - Humanities
- xi. Prof. Martin - Humanities
- xii. Prof. Sears -STEM
- xiii. Prof. Attridge - Humanities (new!)

7. School Leadership Team (SLT) Report - Christine Kovich, SLT Parent Representative

- o **Highlight issues from June SLT meeting:**
 - i. Discussion of CU Immersion and Edge rubrics and possible modifications to be addressed in CSS-CU Committee 23-24
 - ii. Discussion of June 8 Faculty PD planning session - cultural heritage events calendared for 23-24 SY
 - iii. 70 students participated in climate survey; some time devoted to discussing observations about school climate survey
 - iv. Hope for more parental engagement with both cultural heritage showcases and major events (musical, etc)
 - v. To join the SLT meeting as an observer, please email Parent Coordinator Isis Ramos for the Zoom link the day before the meeting:
isisramos@columbiasecondary.org

8. FACULTY REPORT - Dr. Lynn

- o Shifts in UFT workday - Faculty work until 3:30 on Mondays and 3:03 on Tuesdays
 - i. SONYC (MS) programs daily from 2:30 - 3:00, so faculty members will set time for extra help on their own schedules - but anticipate wider availability Wednesday - Friday for many teachers
- o Several teachers completed College Board APSI training over the summer thanks to PTA support
- o New teachers: Iris Lopez (MS Counselor); Michelle Roit (ENL and Spanish); Gerald Herring (now permanent staff); Braly Guzman (changed position to Special Education teacher); Ferzileta Gjika (Physics, AP Physics); Yanique Sears (Special Education & Biology)
- o New staff: School aides: Bryan Rodriguez; Emani Brown; Daniela Batista



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- New electives, including new VLC electives.
 - Period 0 PE: Due to overcrowding in the current PE courses, High School students may sign up for Period 0 PE. Students may sign up for every day, A days or B days. Students who sign up for every day will receive 1.0 credits instead of the usual half-credit, but THE ADDITIONAL CREDIT MUST COUNT AS AN ELECTIVE, AND WILL NOT EXEMPT STUDENTS FROM PE IN SUBSEQUENT SEMESTERS.
 - i. Students who move to Period 0 PE will be able to have a Study Hall added during their school day, and, if space is available, will be able to add another class if their space in their program and space in the class.
 - ii. Period 0 PE will begin on Friday, Sept 22nd.
 - iii. It's a way for students to free up time during their day for a study hall. They would drop their PE during the day to take it earlier in the morning, during which sports such as full-court volleyball will be available. Additionally, if they come every day (not just B days) they earn ½ credit of elective credit each term (a credit over the course of the year), which could lighten their load senior year.
9. FRIENDS OF CSS - Dr. Min Hong, David Lurvey, Solenn de Kersauson
- Dr. Min Hong gave a special story about the PTA, and thanks to the CSS PTA.
 - i. Introduced the other board members present.
 - Friends of Columbia Secondary School for Math, Science, Engineering, Inc., is a New York State charitable corporation that was formed to support the academic mission of CSS.
 - It is separate and independent from both the PTA and from the DOE, although the friends and PTA regularly consult to coordinate efforts where appropriate.
 - They fund people for the musical, after school not PSAL teams, and most importantly the college office. (a personalized college prep program that separates CSS from other public schools)
 - Contact: President_friendsofCSS@columbiasecondary.org
 - Solenn welcomed new parents, volunteering for the college prep office for the past 5 years now.
 - David mentioned two other differentiating factors - the only academically streamed school for middle school, and CSS has a very special relationship with Columbia University that helps with both teachers and students. Also, described that the funding of Friends of CSS vs PTA go to two very different missions.



10. FACILITIES REPORT - Dave Thom, VP of Facilities via Laurie Brown Kindred

- OVERVIEW:
 - i. Building is now 101 years old with an interesting but complicated history, hosting five schools over a century.
 - ii. CSS has been here since our beginnings in 2007. We were originally supposed to get a dedicated new building, but in 2011 the DOE made 425 West 123rd our permanent home.
 - iii. My position exists to try and help navigate building space issues and to keep track of endless construction and renovation projects inherent to a building of this size and age. I will communicate everything back to the parents. Any questions please email me at:
ptafacilities@columbiasecondary.org
 - iv. [Picture shown of Schoolyard in Sept 22, under construction]
- [Pictures shown from 1923-1925 when the school was the Lincoln School]
 - i. Girls Gym
 - ii. Library
 - iii. Physics Classroom
 - iv. Auditorium
- SPACE SHARING:
 - i. We share the building with KIPP and PS125. Each school has its own dedicated instructional rooms, but the gym/cafeteria/library/pool/auditorium & schoolyard are all shared spaces.
 - ii. Because our co-location is so old, DOE never set up formal space sharing rules. This has made for awkward coordination and there were many problems last year with double-bookings.
 - iii. Sharing is working better this year and we are hopeful for further improvements if we can get the attention of higher-up officials at DOE to remedy our disproportionate situation – but this takes time and effort.
 - iv. [Pictures shown of KIPP & PS 125 signage]
- SIGNAGE
 - i. Temporary Signage is up!
 - ii. Waiting on installation of permanent signage over the east entry.
 - iii. [Picture shown of current temporary CSS signage over east entry]
- CONSTRUCTION
 - i. [Pictures shown currently of Library/Tech and Schoolyard]
 - ii. Library/tech room open, front scaffolding removed after years of delays.
 - iii. Pool renovation design work has begun but it will not reopen for years due to scale of project and slow pace of SCA. No date provided.
 - iv. Basement cafeteria renovation design work has begun. Not clear when work will take place. We are asking SCA to please only start construction during summertime to avoid disruption. No idea if they will listen.

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- v. Ongoing work on roof leaks and rear facade. No date provided for removing scaffolding at rear but at least the front scaffolding has now been removed after many years!
 - vi. Boiler project now starting, will last several years. Awaiting more information.
 - o Dr. Lynn mentioned that there is an argument that we need more space, if we can fund additional electives in order to maximize space that we are given.
11. CeC5: Community Education Council District 5 - Leanne Gonzalez-Singer on behalf of Sheila Sweeney Suarez, Delegate
- o CEC is the NYC's version of the School Board, and the middle school (not HS, as that's represented by another entity)
 - o Since Leanne was the delegate last year, she gave the report here.
 - o June 21:
 - i. Presentation/discussions on FY 2024 budget, new class size & that we'll have to work with what's put into practice; how the DOE teaches literacy moving forward.
 - ii. Guest Presentation on Panel for Educational Policy (PEP)
 - iii. Initiative on SLT monitoring standards.
 - iv. cec5.org ELL, D75, Student rep vacancies
 - o July 26:
 - i. <http://pluspool.org/> Two bills passed re: pool availability, access, swim lessons free for all Second graders city wide
 - ii. New Design Middle School seeking to start dual language program
 - o Next CeC5 meeting: Wednesday, Sept 27th, @ 6:30pm at PS36, Margaret Douglas on 123 Morningside Drive
12. ATHLETICS AT CSS - AP Gordon on behalf of Harold DeLucia, Director of Athletics and Dean of Students (contact harolddelucia@columbiasecondary.org; room 412A
- o HIGH SCHOOL:
 - i. Fall Sports: Cheer, Girls Volleyball, Cross-Country, Boys Soccer
 - ii. Winter Sports: Boys & Girls Basketball, Cheer
 - iii. Spring Sports: Cheer, Boys & Girls Rugby, Ultimate Frisbee, Boys Volleyball
 - o Middle School SONYC: Baseball Club, Basketball, Rugby, Soccer, Volleyball
 - o All HS students must have PSAL Physical & Parent Permission Forms into Asst AD Workman: nateschaworkman@columbiasecondary.org
 - o Parent spoke: athletics is declining in CSS over the past few years (girls' volleyball had only 5 players, 1 girls interested in soccer, etc)
 - i. Reminder how good it looks on their college application
13. SONYC AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM - Phoenix Madera

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- Contact: sonycdirectorCSS@columbiasecondary.org
 - i. sonycprogramming@columbiasecondary.org
- For 6th graders - the 9th period of after school is mandatory, for homework support.
- The Y's SONYC CSS After School Program started this Monday, Sept 18th. - There was some confusion about spots being filled up. Please see the OSS office.
- Student Schedules
- Google Sign up malfunction - There is a plan for those that are 'wait-listed' and ensure that they have first dibs in the winter/spring.
- Apple Picking Trip (30 students & family members)
- Cycle 1 - began this past Monday and ends before the break in December; showcase will be at the end of the first cycle (virtual montage)
- Cycle 2 - showcase will be in person
- Emails - email just started this week; prioritizing student/staff schedule and space needs; will answer in the coming week
- Gym Space - use the gym alot for after school; mandated in contract to provide physical electives; need support from parents to prioritize CSS
- SONYC Apps - if your 6th grader doesn't have an application in, please email or go to OSS office and see PC Ramos
 - i. For 7th & 8th grade - if new, they need to fill an application like 6th grader; if returning, it's rolling over and just an update will be needed. You'll be contacted to either have same info as last year or need to be updated.

14. COMPASS AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM - Shwanetae Walden

- Contact: compass@columbiasecondary.org
- COMPASS High will officially begin October 2nd, 2023 for 9th & 10th Grade Students.
 - i. COMPASS operates Monday - Thursday from 2:25 PM until 6 PM
 - ii. Students can still pick up applications (Room TBA) as enrollment is ongoing.
 - iii. Beginning October 26th, 2023 we will be offering the following:
 1. Study Hall (Room will be announced once available)
 2. Debate (Tuesday & Thursday from 5 PM - 6 PM)
 3. Cheerleading
 - iv. Things that will be offered this fall:
 1. Rock Climbing
 2. Knitting
 3. Bioinformatics in Medicine
 4. College & Career Readiness
 5. 9th & 10th Grade Support Groups



15. FUNDRAISING UPDATE:

- Welcome! The Fundraising Committee is excited to work with you at upcoming fundraising events this school year. Fundraising activities directly fund materials and activities to enrich our children’s education. We thank you for your support!
- Bake Sales & Spiritwear Sales
 - i. This year we will hold bake sales and spiritwear sales, headed by Josie Torres, on the same day, one Friday near the beginning of each month. The dates are being finalized and will be shared with the CSS community shortly.
- VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES:
 - i. We are ALWAYS looking for Volunteers to donate baked goods. Students get community service hours for baked goods they make for PTA bake sales!
 - ii. We are ALWAYS looking for Volunteers to help sell at the bake sales. (FYI: We accept Apple Pay and other POS options at our bake sales, in addition to cash.) If you can volunteer for even one hour it would be helpful!
- The Annual CSS Pie Sale
 - i. The Annual CSS Pie Sale is a beloved fundraiser where you can literally treat yourself and others by ordering a pie to be donated to teachers/staff members, other CSS families or families in need in our community.
 - ii. The PTA receives a portion of the sale of each pie which are ordered online and distributed before Thanksgiving Break at CSS.
 - iii. Past flavors include: Apple Crumble Pie, Brandied Pumpkin Pie, Brownie Pie and more!
 - iv. VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY:
 - 1. The operation to organize and distribute pies is HUGE! We will need several volunteers. More details will be coming over the next month but please mentally “save the date” to volunteer to give out pies at CSS right before Thanksgiving Break.
- The CSS Turkey Trot
 - i. The Turkey Trot is a tradition which brings CSS friends and family together to run or walk in support of the PTA.
 - ii. For approximately a month period, generally running from the beginning of November thru December, you, your friends and family can run or walk YOUR distance of choice, ANYWHERE, ANY PLACE and on YOUR OWN TIME!
 - iii. There is a suggested fee for participation and a “pay as you wish” option. These proceeds go to the PTA.
 - iv. You log onto an online “race page” to register your team, print out your personalized race bib and record your final walk or run time.

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- v. We love to see your photos and videos! Please take plenty.
- vi. The Turkey Trot Committee is just organizing! Please reach out if you are interesting in planning this year's Turkey Trot!
- VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES:
 - Planners to help organize the over race program
 - Race Coordinators and Race Leaders to help organize the signup of your race participants and to help your walk/run go smoothly.
- PICTURE DAY: This school year we have a new picture vendor: Say Cheese Kidz! Please hit this [link](#) to view their portfolio.
 - Picture Day will be held the first three Mondays in December.
 - Sibling Photos will be optional!
 - All students must be in uniform in a top/sweater/hoodie with the CSS Logo for picture day.
 - VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES:
 - Helping with the flow of classes into/out of the auditorium
 - Organizing, distributing cards with student information to be given to each student for the photographer's use
 - Supporting students in looking their best. Past volunteers have brought hand-mirrors, wipes
- There are many ways and opportunities to VOLUNTEER with the Fundraising Committee to help raise money to support our kids.
- We will use SignUp Genius to connect with volunteers. The SignUP Genius link will be included in the PTA newsletter, sent individually via email and what's app chat.
- You may also sign up to volunteer by emailing Parent Coordinator Isis Ramos, isisramos@columbiasecondary.org.
- If you have any comments or questions about Fundraising activities (including spiritwear) feel free to email me at ptafundraising@columbiasecondary.org.
- Thank you! STARR PEOPLES, Fundraising VP

16. ANNUAL APPEAL

- What is "Annual Appeal?"
 - i. The CSS PTA does not require dues. Any CSS parent/guardian, or faculty, is automatically a member in the PTA
 - ii. What used to be called "Dues Drive" is now Annual Appeal
 - iii. We are asking for a yearly donation from our families of \$250; this is in line with PTAs at similar schools
 - iv. Last year we had only 15% of our families donating to Annual Appeal.
 - v. All donations are voluntary!
 - vi. Any amount helps. \$5, \$10 - it adds up!

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17. SPIRIT WEAR SALES UPDATE - Josie Torres

- Spirit wear sale 8/31/23 & 9/1/23 Totaled \$4,027.00
- SignUpGenius will be sent out for Spiritwear Sale/Bake Sale Volunteer Sign ups

18. Announcements:

- Hispanic Heritage Month
 - i. Save the Date - Friday, October 13th! Let's celebrate
 - ii. Student Showcase - 4:30p in the Auditorium, followed by a potluck in the 6th floor cafeteria
 - iii. [QR codes provided for sign-up and pre-ordering celebration tshirt]
- Picture Days Fall 2023:
 - i. Monday, December 4 (Seniors)
 - ii. Monday, December 11 (Grades 6-8 or Grades 9-11, TBD)
 - iii. Monday, December 18 (Grades 6-8 or Grades 9-11, TBD)
- iv. Our Photographer: Say Cheese Kidz! [portfolio QR code shared]
- Bake Sale & Spirit Wear Sale:
 - i. October 6, 2023
 - ii. November 10, 2023

19. FUTURE PTA MEETINGS:

- October 10, 2023 6:15-7:30 P.M.
- November 14, 2023 6:15-7:30 P.M.
- December 12, 2023 6:15-7:30 P.M.
- 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.

20. Adjournment

- Meeting adjourned at 7:39pm.

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