



**CDSP General Meeting
December 7, 2023, 10 a.m.
At the Board of Education**

In person: Joanna Walsh, Crystal Hill, Byrne Pozzi, Carrie Vomacka, Diane Urab, Jessica Levey, Christina Kreuz, Caitlin Chaill, Libby Cook, Meghan Thornton, Adrienne Kelly, Melissa Gluck, Catherine Piorkowski, Beth Lane, Caroline Jennings, Katie D'Acunto, Cameron Sokolik, Kate Kaufman, Vanessa Donatello, Amy Reid, Jess Newhouse, Lauren Swenson, Whitney Ranson.

Meeting called to order by Joanna Walsh at 10:07 a.m.

Vote to approve the minutes from November 9, 2023. Motion to approve by Joanna Walsh, Beth Lane First; Caroline Jennings, Second. Passed unanimously.

Co-Chair Updates:

Personnel Updates: Interim principal for Ox Ridge is now in place and the process of hiring a long-term candidate is ongoing. To get the best pool of applicants the administration begins this process in January as most administrators don't leave their school in the middle of the year.

Spanish teachers at Tokeneke and Ox Ridge have new hires in place for Jan 2nd. The stop gap solution is two long term Spanish sub at Ox and Chrstitina Mauricio (Department head) at Tokeneke.

The district is short two Special Ed teachers at DHS, these positions are being filled by existing teachers, but this is not a tenable long-term position. The Special Ed department Chairs are going on maternity leave at MMS and DHS but the previous head of the department is coming in to sub.

At the BOE Meeting on 11/14 members discussed Participation Fees for after school extracurricular activities at all our public schools. Most of the board took issue with the fees as they didn't go to running the programs, but just act as a general revenue source. Additionally members were worried it would discourage participation in clubs and intramurals. The fee would have been extended to clubs such as student government and safety patrol. The BOE tabled the discussion until the Spring or summer.

Communications Focus Groups: Thank you to everyone for scrambling to find people to fill the focus groups in the short notice we received. The focus groups have been rescheduled for January due to lack of participation; Joanna and Crystal have requested to know the dates ASAP so PTOs can solicit participation before Winter Break. Beth has asked that Dr. Addley avoid midterm exam study week so parents can be available to assist students. Reminder that the solicitation emails should be distributed to the entire school community so that it is not only Exec Board members; anyone who wants to participate is welcome.

Field Trips: Joanna and Crystal sent a district document with today's agenda and minutes outlining district policy. PTO's pay for two field trips; in addition to that the district pays for 2nd graders to visit the

Police station and library and 3rd graders to visit the Museum of Darien. The 5th grade has the option of a Museum of Darien Tour as well. There has been some confusion for fifth grade field trips, options are: NY Hall of Science, CT Science Center of Hartford, Fairfield Museum or Bus Tour of Darien (this can be paid for by the District).

DHS students visit our elementary schools to teach a STEM course for grades 2 – 5. Moving forward your enrichment committees will not need to order, organize, or distribute the supplies. PTO's will still fund the program and snacks for the students.

Please add the Kindergarten Cut Off information to your Wire's so that we can help disseminate this information to the community.

At the previous BOE meeting the district was projecting an \$800,000 deficit and it's now down to \$650,000. We won't know for a while what the Excess Cost Reimbursement rate from the state will be; we budgeted 70% but this year we can get up to 85%. Rich Rudl does not think Darien will receive 85%. If there is still a significant deficit the BOE will need to go to the town, around March, to ask for an appropriation.

Darien was granted a transitional literacy waiver from the state. The district needs to make changes to its reading curriculum by the 2025/2026 school year.

Officer Updates:

(Special Education):

- Thank you to everyone for all your efforts for SpEd Day! It was very appreciated by the district.

Libby Cook (Treasurer):

- Libby will send out a note that 1099 filing is due in the next week so all W9's for vendors who were paid over \$600 need be collected and sent to Libby.

Megan Thornton / Christina Kreutz (Budget):

- Budget season is approaching! Budget Books will be released online at 12/21

Caitlin Cahill (Nominating/Special Projects):

- Caitlin has found an independent insurance vendor to add a SAM clause to any vendor who might not have that clause; there is a \$140 fee.
- There is a desire to have recording equipment at each school; Caitlin will be reaching out to everyone to understand what equipment is currently in your building so all buildings have access.
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Byrne Pozzi (Communications):

- Blast email to alert our parent community that budget materials are online.
- Please let your WIRE teams know that during budget season we occasionally have tight turn arounds with materials we need to send out.
- Please let your WIRE team know that we will likely send a WIRE Blast out on 12/21 or 12/22

Diane Urban / Carrie Vomacka (DEI):

- At the previous BOE meeting they mentioned that they will be reviewing DEI District recommendations in December.
- The team has been working with Dr. Dadd and Dr. Fedegan to coordinate Dr. Dadd's workshops and to have an open channel of communication.
- All elementary schools should be working on their Heritage and Passport nights.

School Updates:

Hindley:

The first ever Holiday Bingo night is scheduled for next week but turn out is looking low so they might postpone until January/February.

Holmes:

Dr. Dadd meetings had a great turnout (38 parents)! She also hosted a 4/5th grade workshop that had 30 parents in attendance. January dates are set.

Various Parent community events had varying success of attendance

Ox Ridge:

The interim principal began before Thanksgiving

PTO hosted a sold-out Gingerbread House even during conference week, but there was a small issue with Daren After School programming. A teacher didn't show up for the event and they had trouble releasing students to parents.

Parent Social tonight for Wreath Making at Nielsen's is not as well attended as it has been in the past.

Tokeneke:

The Turkey Drive was very successful, and principal dressed up as a turkey. Holiday Helpers filled up instantly through Darien After School. Teacher Gifts and Hot Chocolate cart is planned for the last week of school.

Royle:

20 parents attended the first DEI coffee and conversation hosted this morning; the topic was belonging. Bingo night sold out and ran smoothly. Gingerbread House activity during conference week was successful. Dr. Dadd presentation is at the end of January.

MMS:

No update at this time.

DHS:

The bonfire the Tuesday before Thanksgiving had to be canceled due to weather; a postponed date has not been set.

The PTO hosted two programs: workshop for freshman parents to talk about how to speak to your teenagers, and the college student panel – typically alumni of DHS in freshman year of college attend and they discuss their process in applying to college and their adjustment to college.

Dr. Addley came to the meeting to voice appreciation for SE Day. He discussed getting volunteers for rescheduled Communication Focus groups. Dr. Addley will create an email with a Google Form to be distributed in each wire; the google form will be controlled by someone at the district office and they will tell the schools if we need to solicit more volunteers.

New Business:

None

Motion to adjourn by Joanna Walsh at 11:22 am. Caitlin Cahill first; Adrienne Kelly, Second. Passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by Jessica Levey, CDSP Secretary.