



**CDSP General Meeting
October 12, 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, Caroline Comfort, Adrienne Kelly, Melissa Gluck, Beth Lane, Caroline Jennings, Katie D'Acunto, Xameron Sokolik, Kathy Jabara, Gail Bisher, Kate Kaufman, Daisy Straus, Lauren Adkins, Amy Reid, Daisy Straus, Lauren Adkins, Whitney Ranson, Lauren Haley, Julie Best, Pam Roberts.

Meeting called to order by Joanna Walsh at 10:05 a.m.

Vote to approve the minutes from September 7, 2023. Motion to approve by Joanna Walsh. Beth Lane, First; Kate Kaufman, Second. Passed unanimously.

Caroline Comfort presented, representing DAEG; Darien Advocates for Education of the Gifted. The Darien gifted and talented program begins in 2nd grade; students test into the IDEA program. 10% of Darien's student population participates - roughly 220 students. The smaller percentage in elementary school is due to testing criteria (executive functioning skills, development, etc). 2nd grade: 7 students; 5th grade: 40 students and up to 50 students per grade in middle school. There are 4 dedicated IDEA teachers in the district. The program ends in eighth grade because the class choices at DHS allow students to self-differentiate and have their needs met for what their interests are.

Two years ago, an independent study was conducted to analyze Darien's Gifted Program; the district is doing a wonderful job fulfilling these suggestions. DAEG is advocating changing the MMS schedule so that IDEA students don't have to miss lunch, for an accelerated Math Program and additional STEM and Science classes in Middle School.

Co-Chair Update:

Tara Wurm resigned from the BOE; the law stipulates that the position must be filled by someone from the resigning party. After interview process the Board elected Robin Nelson.

CDSP made public comments at the September 26th BOE Meeting stating that we will not be responsible for selecting parents for the challenged materials committee. CDSP is an advocate of the PTO's to the district administration and will not be the mechanism for which the parents are selected for BOE committees. At the October 10th BOE meeting the board discussed Dr. Addley being responsible for selecting parents. They will vote on the full policy at the next BOE meeting.

Finance sub-committee meeting reported that Darien Board of Education is projecting a \$600,000 deficit based on unexpected special ed costs. ECR rated not yet set, so amount can change.

BOE attendance; pre-covid and before zoom was introduced all co-chairs attended all BOE meetings in person. Moving forward, if there is a topic on the agenda regarding your school, please attend the meetings. CDSP asks one school to cover the BOE meetings and send an email to the group updating us on what was discussed. It's important that the BOE understands CDSP is the larger group of all 7 schools. Every school will be responsible for sending 2 people for the meeting they select.

Reminder for WIRE's we cannot advertise or promote anything with a religious background. Beth has suggested not to accept anything from outside organizations, as DHS has done.

We are still looking for one to two CDSP SE reps. Joanna, Crystal and school SE reps have already had two meetings with Shirley Klein and her team. School SE reps will be reaching out to co-chairs to discuss Special Ed Appreciation Day on Thursday, 11/30. National SE Day is Saturday, 12/02, so the schools have elected to celebrate on Thursday, 11/30. A reminder to please create spaces for students who may need a sensory break at the events you are hosting – any supplies required for these spaces should come out of the event budget not the SPED budget. If you buy supplies that you can re-use, please feel free to purchase those out of cap.

Information regarding field trips for elementary schools should have been received by the end of September for bus budgeting; Joanna and Crystal will circle back with Dr. Fedigan.

Outside organizations that are not PTO run should be left off the slate. The issue becomes the set of rules and regulations created by the outside organization that the PTO has no control over.

Officer Updates:

Libby Cook (Treasurer):

- Taxes from each school are due to Libby this week; please assist and support your treasurers while they complete these taxes.

(Budget):

- No update at this time.

Caitlin Cahill (Nominating/Special Projects):

- No update at this time.

Byrne Pozzi (Communications):

- Jamie Perry at YWCA has asked that she be put in touch with parent awareness reps from each school. They have revamped their model away from more, smaller events to fewer big events.
- Perhaps instead of having a PA rep schools can add a community outreach member.

Diane Urban / Carrie Vomacka (DEI):

- Waiting for follow up from Dr. Fedigan and Dr. Dadd on consistency, expectations from the district regarding DEI at each school.

School Updates:

Hindley:

- Book fair is next week! Hindley is celebrating its 75th anniversary this year, which will kick off on Friday 11/3 with a student tie-dying and DJ event at recess. That night is the parent cocktail party at CCD; They are beginning to plan a coffee with the principal.

Holmes:

- Holmes hosted their Walkathon on Monday, and their back-to-school picnic is coming up at the end of the month (rescheduled due to rain). The book fair is next week. Coffee with parents and principal was today; attendance was lackluster.

Ox Ridge:

- This was a busy week at Ox Ridge; the PTO hosted a principal coffee, which was well attended; this was the first time since covid and construction. Whale mobile came. The official ribbon cutting with bubble guy and a DJ was hosted as a Sunday Funday. The PTO is focusing on rebuilding the OX community this year. ELP Trunk and Treat will be at the parking lot next Saturday. Book Fair end of month and then Veteran's day, the Parent Speaker Series is starting next month with a visit from Alicia Dadd.

Tokeneke:

- Pumpkin carnival this weekend! Working with SE to develop a close community between parents and administration. The PTO is adding a Community Outreach section in the Wire to address one topic per month. Coat drive, turkey drive upcoming as well as Parent's night at the Beer Garden and a mom's work out class at the Dance Studio

Royle:

- October book fair is held at Barrett bookstore and in the spring the PTO hosts the bookfair at school and uses scholastic.
- The Walkathon met their fundraising goal. The fall parent's social at 314 Beer Garden. The DEI team is starting to brainstorm with other schools and they anticipate being more active in the coming months.

MMS:

- Book fair coming up next week. This is a re-buidling year for fieldtrips at MMS; the current plan is:
 - o 6th grade – Mystic Seaport
 - o 7th grade - Medieval times, which aligns with their curriculum
 - o 8th grade – Six flags will replace holiday hill this year, as an end of year good time and send off.

DHS:

- The first parent series was a panel with the new administrators: psychologist, social worker, substance abuse counselor, and teen talk counselor. It's recorded and will be distributed; twenty parents were in attendance.
- Next week is homecoming spirit week; there is a Pep rally and bonfire next Friday night.

- The student government is hosting a trunk or treat on October 29th; each school club has the opportunity to host a car, they will give out candy and play games.

Dr. Addley came in to say hello and provide updates. Admin is working on new Kindergarten cutoff. October 24th literacy update for all elementary parents will be held at the Darien Library. Will send out communication to parents regarding the war in Israel. In new challenged materials policy he will randomly select two parents, who apply, for the committee. Full policy will be coming at the next meeting. Thank you to the Darien Foundation for the \$41,200 grant hosting the third year of Robotics.

New Business:

None

Motion to adjourn by Joanna Walsh at 11:19 am. Beth Lane first; Caroline Jennings, Second. Passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by Jessica Levey, CDSP Secretary.