



Council of Darien School Parents P.O. Box 2643, Darien, CT 06820

**CDSP General Meeting
November 9, 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 10:06 a.m.

Vote to approve the minutes from October 12, 2023. Motion to approve by Joanna Walsh. Caroline Jennings, First; Katie D'Acunto, Second. Passed unanimously.

Co-Chair Updates:

At the previous BOE meeting the district discussed their plan to address the new Kindergarten cut-off for the 2024/2025 year. Any parent who wants to put their children through who no longer make the cutoff can request a screening. No child will be denied entry.

The district is projecting an \$800,000 deficit due to poor budgeting of Special Education costs. Have hired 11 contractual paras, and have 7 unilaterally placed students, with more expected. Still don't know what the Excess Cost Reimbursement rate will be, but it seems likely the BOE will need to apply for an appropriation through the town.

Dr. Fedegan and Dr. Dadd are planning to attend DEI meetings every other month to allow the DEI chairs to connect with them directly. Dr. Dadd will begin hosting her talks at each school; she will visit each of the schools for her four topics (total of 28 meetings). Each school asked to report feedback to assist future planning. Some schools have conflicting information, chairs will follow up with Dr. Dadd and Dr. Addley for clarity.

Field Trips were supposed to be assigned by the end of September so PTO's could budget accordingly, but this did not happen. Dr. Fedigan has now reached out to the school principals to remind them to send their lists to the PTO. Ox Ridge has their list of trips but is running into trouble with bus availability.

The district is still looking for a Spanish teacher for Ox Ridge and Tokeneke. The building sub no longer assists Spanish classes at Tokeneke and there is no plan in place except that the children are watching movies during this time. It is difficult to find language teachers due to staff shortages and more districts adding language programs. It took Holmes a year to find a Spanish teacher last year.

Ox Ridge interim principal has resigned; there is a town hall tonight at Ox Ridge with Dr. Addley to discuss turnover at Ox Ridge.

Dennis Maroney and Sara Parent were reelected to the BOE, and Greg Grambling has been elected to replace Duke. At the next BOE meeting members will have an organization election for Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary positions.

Joanna and Crystal have distributed the spreadsheet for attendance at the BOE – please review as not all schools have signed up.

Officer Updates:

(Special Education)

- SE Day will be November 30th and should be recognized at each school.
- SE Department Chair at DHS will be going on maternity leave in March.
- Shirley's SE presentation to the BOE is on Nov 28th; CDSP SE reps asked to preview the materials and send in any questions they have as well as attend that BOE meeting.

Libby Cook (Treasurer):

- Gift guideline reminders cannot exceed \$75 in cash or gift cards for any staff. \$15 per teacher and \$5 per aid per student.

Meghan Thornton / Christina Kreuz (Budget):

- No update

Caitlin Cahill (Nominating/Special Projects):

- Caitlin is looking into an independent Insurance policy with a SAM clause for vendors who don't hold their own.

Byrne Pozzi (Communications):

- Planning budget season communication for the Wires
- Music for Youth, Darien Foundation and Parent Awareness have all received their donations
- YWCA Parent awareness is looking for a new contact person.

Diane Urban / Carrie Vomacka (DEI):

Coffee and Conversations at schools will follow Dr. Dadd's presentations.

MMS is picking the theme "Being an Upstander" to explore this year.

School Updates:

Hindley:

Last Friday they hosted a kickoff DJ and tie-dying event for 75th anniversary. Melt Mobile came for the teachers & staff followed by the cocktail party at CCDI. The Veterans Day event is tomorrow.

Holmes:

Mom's night out at Middlesex Club and back-to-school picnic went well. Dad's night out at Rikko's is coming soon. Kids Club is hosting a Turkey drive with Palmers. Their Direct Appeal is launching in the next few weeks. Celebrating Hawkes birthday in January- election day vote on his favorite song.

Ox Ridge:

Town Hall tonight with Dr. Addley, followed by a parent's social at Rikko's. The Veterans Day program was a big success. Kids Care club meets monthly; they are currently hosting a coat drive. The PTO is hosting a Gingerbread decorating event and is partnering with Darien after school to register for the event.

Tokeneke:

The PTO is trying to increase contributions to the Turkey Drive so the principal has offered to wear a turkey costume if they hit a certain number. The Pumpkin carnival did make over \$20K despite the rain, which is 50% of typical proceeds.

Royle:

The parent social which was a success and well attended. Holding a Gingerbread decorating workshop November 14th. The PTO hosted a Weed Beach cleanup on Election day. Mohegan Sun group had to cancel because of an insurance issue.

MMS:

Fundraising efforts are going well; the direct appeal is currently at 80% of their goal. The PTO is gearing up to give Thanksgiving pies to the teachers and hosting a breakfast for SE appreciation day. PTO hosted a pumpkin painting fundraiser for breast cancer and it went well; parents were able to assist. Stuart Gibbs is visiting soon.

DHS:

DEI chair resigned for personal issues; they are looking for a replacement. The direct appeal is going well; they have reached half of their goal and they are running a raffle for two tickets to the turkey bowl.

New Business:

None

Motion to adjourn by Joanna Walsh at 11:05am. Carrie Vomacka first; Christina Kreuz, Second. Passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by Jessica Levey, CDSP Secretary.