



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

**CDSP General Meeting
February 9, 2023 10 a.m.
At the Board of Education**

In person: Joanna Walsh, Lori Olson, Jessica Levey, Sara Goertel, Libby Cook, Byrne Pozzi, Leila Buckjune, Victoria Coghlin, Diane Urban, Amy Zerbe, Jen Morici, Dawn MacDonald, Caitlin Cahill, Antoinette Cowles, Lauren Stevens, Catherine Yates, Shannon Keefe, Christina Kreuz, Courtney Galligan, Catherine Piorkowski, Lauren Swenson, Katie Kaufman, Jess Newhouse, Amy Reid, Dawn Macdonald, Meghan Thornton, Cameron Skolonik, Rachel Bauer Talor.

Meeting called to order by Joanna Walsh at 10:03 a.m.

Vote to approve the minutes from January 2023. Motion to approve by Joanna Walsh. Sarah Goertel, First, Caitlin Cahill, Second. Passed unanimously.

Co-Chair Updates:

Deb Ritchie has resigned in order to pursue other possibilities. Please see Joanna if you have any concerns or questions.

Budget: Vote is on Tuesday, February 14th. The Board will be presenting the BOE cuts and additional, proposed cuts by Dr. Addley line by line at this meeting.

CDSP and PTO's are still hearing that parents are concerned about:

- Class size, which is under the proposed cut of the Budget Control line item.
- Teacher coverage, across the board, which is affected by cutting the 3 building subs and intern program.
- Removing the Ox Ridge paraprofessional is causing concern based on the 1:88 paraprofessional to student ratio changing to 1:110.
- Removing the science secretary at the High School. The current secretary is deeply familiar with the curriculum and is responsible for setting the students up for success. This is a student facing role.

Capital Budget: Colleen Thompson, Director of Music was asked to look at the auditorium and offer an assessment for what upgrades are needed. The original ask was \$873,00. Upon request from the BOE, Ms. Thompson prioritized individual parts of the project. At facilities subcommittee BOE members discussed different ways and different priorities to ask for funding.

From the floor:

Middlesex parents are very concerned about the lack of substitutes. Reports that classes are not being covered and students are left alone in their classrooms. They are also very worried about removing the school secretary who is responsible for advising 350 students.

Emails and public comment are effective ways to have the BOE hear our parents. Meghan Thornton mentioned that Ox parents are considering bringing their children to speak to the BOE.

Mental Health Task Force:

At recent meeting of full Task Force, a High School student presented on the takeaways from a November meeting of 30 Darien students of high school age. Darien students feel stress and pressure for high expectations. The question is how do we, as parents, help them? We can change the culture in town and we can prepare kids better to face these expectations.

Sara Goertel reported that Lisa Damour, PhD is coming to DHS on 5/10. CDSP will help promote the visit among all our school communities to assist in changing the culture and support parents in finding specific ways to speak to kids and teens.

Officer Updates:

Libby Cook (Treasurer)

- Field Trips have been an issue due to bus cost increasing exponentially. Elementary schools can now pay for bussing out of cap.
- Quickbook subscriptions will also move to out of cap expenses.
- Libby provided a worksheet to explain how to build PTO budgets. This will be distributed to all school treasurers.
 - o 5th grade graduation: has to be within a cap of \$50 for each student. Gift must be under \$2,000; can be paid by either the PTO or they can fundraise for it. Dr. Addley must approve any gifts over \$500 and the BOE must approve any gift over \$2000.
- Elementary chair and treasurer meeting is being scheduled.

Lori Olson (Nominating/Special Projects)

- Starting the nominating process; Lori will be emailing a request for one rep per school so we have representation from all schools.

Diane Urban (DEI)

- Meeting with co-chairs and Chris Tranberg on February 13th. They have created a DEI document for continuity among schools and the district.
- YWCA Parent Awareness talk is about talking about race and other hard topics, held on February 15th
 - o YWCA has requested that each school has designated a parent rep from each school

Katrina O'Connor (Special Ed)

- Absent

Sara Goertel (Budget)

- Please keep your parent body engaged in the process until the budget is passed.

Byrne Pozzi (Communication)

- No update at this time.

School Updates:

Hindley:

Enrichment event Sucari today. Hindley Heritage night tonight – 19 tables representing the diverse community. Next week is Kindness week; activities are being run through DEI committee. Souper Bowl drive this week. They are starting the nominating process for next year's slate.

Holmes:

The 5th grade committee is running their flowergram for teachers fundraiser; this is the second year and last year was very successful. DEI committee is working on kindness week. Kids care is running the souper bowl drive. H factor talent show will be on 4/1 at DHS.

Ox Ridge:

The DEI committee has been busy creating the first ever talent show, Ox Rocks, at the High School showcasing differences. They created a display celebrating black history month and allowing children to make announcements on the school's morning announcements. They are working on Kindness week. Hoe Down social fundraiser upcoming and their previous parent social at Sono Beer Garden was a success. The Science Author visit was very well received.

Tokeneke:

Souper bowl drive is ongoing. DEI is working on celebrating Black history month through an in class project and bulletin board; they are also facilitating Kindness week. Kat the acrobat, an enrichment event, was well received.

Royle:

Souper Bowl drive ongoing. Launching a direct appeal in March. Matt DeLa Pena's visit was very successful. Working on acts of kindness for Kindness week.

MMS:

Enrichment event with Tom Varano, called Emotions into Art, pairs speed painting and inspirational speaking in his performance. Extremely well received. Did for all three grades. PTO is considering it for a sixth grade event next year. Possibly using him for teacher convocation next year.

DEI created a Black History month bulletin board in the cafeteria. 5th grade curriculum night incoming 5th graders will be February 15th. Special Ed presentation on March 1st for incoming 6th graders. Career day will be held on March 10th for the 8th graders with keynote speaker.

The PTO is working on the slate for next year's Committees.

DHS:

The PTO held the Electives Expo in January. Held curriculum night for incoming parents of middle schoolers. It was recorded for those not able to attend. Held coffee with presentation on special education transition from MMS to DHS. The Snowball dance sold over 200 tickets and about 175 students came; it seemed to be a good mix of students.

New Business:

No new business from the floor.

Motion to adjourn at 11:10 pm by Joanna Walsh. Lauren Stevens, First; Christina Krutz, Second.

Respectfully submitted by Jessica Levey, CDSP Secretary