

Central Parents Council Minutes: November 5, 2020

1. Pledge of Allegiance

2. Welcome, Call to Order — CPC Vice-Chair, Heather Morante Young

Meeting called to order at 9:04 AM.

3. Approval of Minutes for October 1, 2020 Meeting — CPC Secretary, Jennifer Kornreich Cahn

Lisa Smith motioned to approve the October minutes; Stephanie DiNozzi seconded.

4. CPC Chair Report — CPC Chair, Cristina Monterroso

The vice-chair read out the report as the chair was absent today.

5. CPC Status and Resolution Report — CPC Vice-Chair, Heather Morante Young

6. CPC Treasurer Report — CPC Treasurer, Genevieve Cimino

7. School and Club Organizational Reports:

Goosehill Parent Teacher Group (GHPTG), Junior/Senior High School Parent Teacher Group (CHSPTG), Lloyd Harbor School Parent Teacher Group (LHSPTG), West Side School Parent Teacher Group (WSSPTG), Junior/Senior High School Parent Teacher Group (CHSPTG), Cultural Arts Committee (CAC), Families of the Community United with Schools (FOCUS), Arts Booster Club (ABC), Special Education Parent Teacher Organization (SEPTO), Seahawks Booster Club (SBC), Cold Spring Harbor Education Foundation

In an addition to the organizational report, Stephanie DiNozzi spoke about reintroducing FOCUS to the district community on a personal level, including a new initiative to develop “engagement pods” which will be opportunities for district parents to connect over shared interests (e.g., exercise, parenting, healthy meals). In the near future, such pods would occur remotely due to the pandemic.

8. Presentation (9:31 AM start time)

Denise Campbell, our Assistant Superintendent for Student Services and Human Resources, spoke about ongoing health and safety protocols. She reviewed the new travel advisory, and spoke about the DOH-governed process that occurs when the district learns about a COVID-positive case. She also discussed the variables that help determine closures and identify who needs to be quarantined. She reminded attendees that all students living with a COVID-positive person automatically need to quarantine.

9. Parent Issues and New Business (9:54 AM—end of meeting)

—Some parents registered their unhappiness about the fact that junior and senior high school students have not yet been allowed to return to school full-time. They were concerned that by remaining in the current hybrid model, their children may be falling behind peers in other districts academically, in addition to suffering socially. They offered to assist the administration in facilitating whatever changes needed to happen to enable full-time attendance sooner rather than later. Robert Fenter, our Superintendent of Schools, expressed appreciation for these parents' concerns, and gratitude for their community engagement, but reiterated the need for caution; he noted that there have been two new COVID cases within just the last four days. A particular obstacle he said, is that in-person students in grades 7 through 12 are exposed to several cohorts throughout the day, rather than just to one cohort (as is the case with the lower grades)—so the impact of each new COVID case in terms of exposure and subsequent quarantine requirements and/or closures automatically affects more people than cases in the other schools. He also observed that there are, moreover, still a significant number of high school parents who do want to continue with the hybrid model.

— Some parents also raised the issue of transparency in communication between the community and the administration and Board of Education. The question was raised as to why parents have not been able to participate in BOE meetings rather than just watch them live-streamed. Later in the meeting, both Mr. Fenter and BOE president Amy Brogan assured attendees that a delayed response to a particular letter in question, which had been sent and signed by multiple parents, must have been an unintentional oversight; the administration and the Board are fielding hundreds of queries by phone and by email. Ms. Brogan also pointed out that the procedure for running BOE meetings is legally determined—so aside from a set time for public commentary, an ongoing dialogue during BOE meetings is not permitted. In pre-pandemic meetings, there was a set time for people to step up and ask questions or raise concerns. In virtual meetings, there is time set aside for the BOE clerk to read questions sent in ahead of time by district members.

—An attendee requested that district parents receive a copy of the district's proposed plan to reintegrate students full-time ahead of the BOE meeting, so that parents would know what the BOE is discussing. BOE trustee Ingrid Wright said that legally, Board members and building administrators can't discuss these issues ahead of time privately; rather, BOE business is conducted publicly as the meeting itself occurs.

—A parent asked how quickly a full-time return to school could happen for junior and senior high school students if the BOE voted to allow it at the upcoming meeting on 11/10. Mr. Fenter said there was no specific determination at this time.

—A parent asked whether the most recent survey results would be provided to parents. Mr. Fenter said that they have not been released as of yet, but that they will be. Later in the morning, he cautioned that the survey results will not be used as a majority vote that will

solely determine the district’s plans. Other factors are federal, state, and county guidelines; scientific research; and school-specific considerations. Later, when a parent asked whether faculty and staff are surveyed in addition to district members, Mr. Fenter indicated that administrators regularly solicit feedback from faculty and staff.

—Someone inquired whether there will still be six feet of distance between students in the upper grades once they return full time. Mr. Fenter said this would not be feasible: unlike in other districts, the classrooms in our schools are too small to allow that much distance between students. Later in the meeting, when parents asked about building outdoor “bubbles” or tents to supplement indoor classrooms to allow for greater distancing, Mr. Fenter and Mr. Stucchio explained that this could not happen for various logistical reasons having to do with building permits and space considerations.

—A couple of parents worried that students who have been demoralized by the prolonged period of hybrid schools have dropped out of AP classes. The administration responded that there is actually annual attrition in the AP classes, and that there is no significant difference in the number of students dropping AP classes this year from previous years.

—Someone wanted to know why CSH intramural sports have not resumed. The administration indicated that the primary focus has been on reopening the schools first, and that in due time coaches will be appointed and intramurals will resume.

—Another parent asked whether the administration had considered grading some classes with a pass/fail designation rather than letter grades for this semester. Mr. Fenter replied that while such an option may seem compassionate, it may not serve students well when it comes time for them to apply to competitive colleges.

10. Important Dates

Next BOE meetings (virtual): Tuesday, November 10 at 8 PM and

Tuesday, December 8 at 8 PM

Next CPC meeting (virtual): Thursday, January 7 at 9 AM

11. Meeting Adjournment — Heather Morante Young

Jennifer Cahn motioned to end the meeting, and Nicole Prizzi seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned at 11:21 AM.