

Central Parent Council Minutes: September 30, 2021

1. Pledge of Allegiance

2. Welcome, Call to Order, and Introduction of 2021-22 CPC Board — CPC Chair, Jennifer Kornreich Cahn

Meeting called to order at 9:09am

3. CPC Chair Report — CPC Chair, Jennifer Kornreich Cahn

4. Guest Speakers — Principals *In today's meeting, guest speakers were invited to present earlier than scheduled due to timing.*

Ms Lynn Herschlein, Principal of Goosehill Primary School, described how well the students are acclimating to their daily routines. She discussed the new updates that have been made within the school over the summer which included new cabinets and doors. Classroom learning carpets have been brought back for lessons. The staff is focused on keeping a warm environment, teaching the students to collaborate and work with each other. 24 new families have been welcomed into the school, and there are 7 first grade classes which is the highest number in many years. Goosehill, in conjunction with the School Improvement Team (SIT) will continue its HERO theme (Honest, Empathetic, Respectful, and Openhearted) and will focus this year on self-care, keeping in mind that: if we can take care of ourselves, we can take care of each other. Additionally, academic assessments have begun as well as support services.

Ms Alison Hazut, Principal of West Side School, reported that the first WSSPTG meeting shows great momentum early in the year with many new family volunteers. The students have settled into their routines, and teachers have mentioned that the students enjoy discussing morning meetings and goals. This month, the school held an assembly for the remembrance of 9/11 where students shared what resonated with them. Regarding books, Ms. Hazut mentioned they are focusing on high- interest books in which the students are more engaged in reading. West Side School, in conjunction with the School Improvement Team, will bring this year's focus to taking care of ourselves and taking care of others. This will be supported with the help of Peer Mentors and the school's 6th Grade Heroes. Additionally, Ms. Hazut announced the date of the next WSSPTG meeting: Monday, Oct. 4, where Ms. Latham will speak on the topic of transitioning into the new school year.

Ms. Valerie Massimo, Principal of Lloyd Harbor, reported that the school opened with 374 students, with 45 of those being new students. Student council is up and running and class representative elections will be held soon. This September, the school engaged in a school-wide read. The school-wide read will be maintained monthly, leading students to discuss what the books mean to them; it also brings connection to all those involved. Some of the book themes include courage, hope, teamwork, and generosity. In conjunction with the School Improvement Team, Lloyd Harbor School will pick an official theme this October, keeping the focus on expressing ourselves. Additionally, orchestra, band, and intramurals started this week.

Daniel Danbusky, Principal of CSH Jr/Sr High School, reported that the school had a successful opening. He welcomed and thanked the new administrative team of Assistant Principals; Jason Huntsman (grades 10-12) and Caitlyn Coffey (grades 7-9). Teachers have started their assessments. Mr. Danbusky also expressed his appreciation for those who organized and participated in the 9/11 remembrance ceremony. Additionally, Mr. Danbusky congratulated Caitlin Roberts, CSH High School Senior, who was selected to be a 2022 National Merit Scholarship Semifinalist, a very prestigious honor. Mr. Danbusky reported that making daily live announcements using Bitly as its platform has improved ease of communication. This week, the school is preparing for homecoming and spirit week. In preparation for the upcoming pep rally, Mr. Danbusky remarked that it was great to see this sense of normalcy start to return. Regarding college preparation, he announced that college representatives are making their presence at the school on a regular basis this fall to provide information to the students. This year's School Improvement Team focus will be based on the following idea: Technology is supplementary but should not replace the interaction of human beings.

5. Approval of Minutes from the 5/06/2021 CPC Meeting — CPC Secretary, Joann Kuncewitch

Lynette Simmons moved to approve the May 2021 minutes, and Michele Gulitti seconded.

6. CPC Status & Resolution Report —CPC Vice Chair, Michele Gulitti

7. CPC Treasury Report — read by CPC Vice Chair, Michele Gulitti

Although CPC Treasurer, Bernadette Flynn, was not present at this meeting, she submitted a report which indicated that the CPC has engaged in no new activity for the month of August.

8. School and Organization Reports:

Goosehill Primary School (GHPTG)
Lloyd Harbor School (LHSPTG)
West Side School (WSSPTG)
CSH Junior/Senior High School (CSHPTG)
Arts Booster Club (ABC)
Cultural Arts Committee (CAC)
Families of the Community United with Schools (FOCUS)
Special Education Parent Teacher Organization (SEPTO)
CSH Educational Foundation

9. Guest Speaker — Jill Gierasch, Superintendent of Schools

Jill Gierasch, Superintendent of Schools, began by thanking the parent involvement throughout the district for their support in the re-opening of this school year. Ms. Gierasch introduced new members of the district administration. She emphasized that the school opening of 2021 is a different year in that the logistics of opening the schools to in-person learning is different than previous years and have required more time in planning. She expressed that the most important goal is to have students learning in-person, in the classrooms, keeping in mind that the students are safe.

Ms. Gierasch thanked all parents for participating in the Back-to-School Night Survey which resulted in welcoming parents in-person to visit their children's classrooms.

Additionally, she thanked parents for being mindful of safety protocols.

Ms. Gierasch reported that the 9/11 memorial service took place and that it was important to have the students, families, and community come together again for this event.

As communication has been a major focus within our school community, the district's communication pathway has been published and is being distributed during Back-to-School nights and can be found on the district website.

Ms. Gierasch stated the district will place its focus on five main goals 1. Curriculum and instruction 2. Student achievement results 3. Staff development 4. Communication 5. Health safety & security.

Regarding DEI (diversity, equity, and inclusion), there has been faculty training. A presentation is being organized to inform the community about what the DEI training has

entailed. Additionally, the formation of a DEI Task Force will be in the planning stages this October.

In reviewing COVID cases, Ms. Gierasch reported that positive cases of students and staff have shown to be caused by community spread and have not been spread within the district. She requested that everyone stays mindful of our safety outside of the school day.

10. Parent Questions/New Business

A few parents asked questions on the topic of the DEI Task Force (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion). One question was about the start-date of the Task Force meetings. Ms. Gierasch responded that the goal is to have Task Force representatives selected in the following weeks, with meetings likely to start in the beginning of November. Another parent asked how the selection process will be conducted for the representatives of the Task Force. Ms. Gierasch responded that the Task Force will comprise a broad range of community members including but not limited to parents, board member(s), PTG representatives, students, and community partners such as library representatives. The final details of the selection process are currently being worked out. Ms. Gierasch added that the DEI Task Force meetings will have focus points to discuss topics in the format of small group discussions in order to create a collective collaboration.

A few parents had concerns regarding academic exams. One parent stated that while students are receiving their exam grades, in several instances they have not been able to review which questions were incorrect. Another parent added that this has been an ongoing issue for years and they are seeking an explanation. Parents expressed students need to review their test questions to clearly understand their subjects and to become stronger students. Another parent asked if there's a timeframe from the time students take an exam, to the time students receive feedback on an exam. Ms. Gierasch agreed that students need to understand what they got wrong and will examine this issue, as well as a guideline of time for feedback on exams and assignments.

A parent requested for the district to send notifications to parents at times when items from the reopening plan change.

A parent asked about teacher observations and how it is determined that they are pre-announced vs announced. Ms. Gierasch described the observation procedure in response.

Regarding Summer Reading Lists, a parent inquired who is responsible for deciding which books are 'suggested' vs. 'required'. Ms. Gierasch stated that right now, there's no answer as to who in particular leads that responsibility, however the Cold Spring Harbor

Library assists the district in creating the reading list. This will be looked into further. Ms. Gierasch added that the book selections are made while keeping in mind balance in variety, i.e., variety in authors, and fiction vs. non-fiction. She added that book selections should relate to the curriculum.

A parent asked about the process in which teachers are granted tenure and whether parents have any input. Ms. Gierasch explained the process, stating that it involves several components which she then described in detail. She also reported that parents cannot determine tenure status.

A parent asked why students cannot partake in remote learning if they are home sick for other reasons than COVID. Ms. Gierasch responded that remote learning is not an effective delivery of learning due to many factors including the number of distractions from both the teacher's and student's side of the screens. Extended absences will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

11. Important Dates:

Jr. High Back to School Night — tonight, 6:45 PM
Sr. High Back to School Night — Thursday, 10/7, 6:45 PM
Next BOE meeting — Tuesday, 10/12, 8 PM
FOCUS/SEPTO presentation — Wednesday, 10/20, 7 PM
Next CPC meeting — Thursday, 10/21, 9 AM

12. Meeting Adjournment — CPC Chair, Jennifer Kornreich Cahn

Lynette Simmons motioned to end the meeting, and Joann Kuncewitch seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned at 11:04 AM