

Parent Connection Minutes

December 15, 2009, noon

Chair Report: Carol Hennessy opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. Carol introduced herself, and asked the rest of the Parent Connection (PC) Leadership Team for reports, if any. There were no reports, except to note that the CHS Student Directories are now available in the office.

Dawn Granger—Principal

What's New at CHS—as a mother of a senior at CHS, Dawn was thinking ahead to graduation and is so grateful to our teachers. The class of 2010 is unique and the teachers here at CHS are responsible for making this a great class.

Winter Formal: the communication successfully went out to families about the potentially hazardous conditions that could have cancelled the dance; student safety was the primary concern. The dance was held, and approximately 900 CHS/CV students attended. Our administrators were there and were pleased to say that the students behaved very well and we should all be proud of them.

School Satisfaction Surveys: Dawn is working on making the environment at CHS warm and welcoming, and to assess how well things are going, a school satisfaction survey was given to the students during an advisor session: one was just for seniors and one was for grades 9–11 combined. The results are as follow:

1. Senior Student School Satisfaction Survey Results – Fall 2009

Question 1. What things make classes easier for you to understand and improve your learning?

Responses to this question were divided mainly between factors associated with teachers and with classes. Students enjoy teachers that provide good learning techniques, engaging activities, provide clear and detailed directions and enough time to complete assigned tasks. Responses relating to classes are largely in favor of the use of visuals and hands-on activities. Smaller class size and breaks in classes were also mentioned.

Question 2 . What things make it harder for you to succeed in the classroom?

Most of the responses to this question referred to the quality of teaching, disorganized/bad/boring. Students provided feedback on this that included: long lectures, excessive homework, teachers going too fast, unclear directions, and not enough time in class to work on assignments. Behavior of other students distracting, talking, being noisy was a major distraction for learning. Many factors related to classes were also noted, length of class time, large class size, tests, and late lunch.

Question 3 . What do you like about CHS?

Students enjoy the quality of life at CHS, particularly the open campus and accepting community. Teachers, sports, friends, and the variety of classes available were noted as positives.

Question 4. What would you change at CHS?

A wide variety of suggestions were made in response to this question. Most of them relate to the school schedule, particularly the start/end times and the advisor period. Several students noted food selection that's available as an area they would change.

Question 5. What are your plans after high school?

The vast majority of students indicate that they will be pursuing some kind of post-secondary education after CHS. Most of those students intend to attend university. A very small number report that they will join the military.

Question 6. Do you feel prepared for life after high school?

The vast majority of students feel that they are prepared for life after high school. A small number responded with mixed feelings (“kind of ready”) and a smaller number responded that they didn’t feel prepared.

Question 7. What makes you feel prepared?

Most of the students feel that the education, maturity and confidence that they’ve gained at CHS prepare them for life after high school. The help provided by Beyond CHS was specifically mentioned by 14 students.

Question 8. What do you need to feel better prepared?

The responses to this question ranged widely, from better life skills to specific help with college planning. Several students responded that there was nothing in particular that they would need to feel better prepared.

2. Student (grades 9 –11) School Satisfaction Survey Results – Fall 2009

Question 1. What things make classes easier for you to understand and improve your learning?

Responses to this question were divided mainly between factors associated with teachers and with classes. Students appreciate teachers who are engaging, knowledgeable, and excited about what they teach. They want teachers who are organized and give good feedback, use lots of examples and are respectful. Responses relating to classes are largely in favor of the use of visuals and hands-on activities. Prevention of students talking while the teacher is talking is desired. Less homework is noted as a plus, as well as group work/activities, smaller classes, and shorter classes. Another factor mentioned by several students is the comfort of having friends in class with them.

Question 2. What things make it harder for you to succeed in the classroom?

Most of the responses to this question referred to the quality of teaching. Boring/bad teachers who don’t explain things, go too fast, or are unclear about expectations constituted the majority of these responses. Many students also noted that long lectures were a negative. The behavior of other students in the classroom was also a major impediment to success, particularly students who are talking, noisy, and distracting. Many and varied factors related to classes were also noted, particularly the early start time, long classes, late lunch, and large class size.

Question 3. What do you like about CHS?

The responses to this question largely refer to the quality of life on campus. The students appreciate the freedom of the open campus and the off blocks, as well as the comfortable, fun and accepting environment of the school, the school building, and the variety of classes available. Good teachers and athletics/clubs were also noted as positive aspects of the school.

Question 4. What would you change about CHS?

There was a widely varying response to this question. A large portion related to the school schedule, particularly, start/end time, length of classes (too long), timing of lunch (too late) and the advisor

periods (too many). Several responses related to the library and aspects of classes. It should also be noted that 121 students replied “nothing” to this question.

Question 5. Do you feel safe here? Why/why not?

The majority of students indicate that they feel safe at CHS. The “sometimes” and “no” responses range from personal experiences to a general feeling about their safety at school, but constitute a significant minority of responses.

Question 6. If you had a problem at school and needed help/advice, who would you go to?

Most of the students indicated that they would seek help from a teacher/coach or school counselor. A significant number indicated that they would go to their friends for help. Family, the office staff and the school administrators were also mentioned by many students. Several indicated that they would not seek help.

Achievement Gap: Dawn is following the book *Using Data to Close the Achievement Gap* by Ruth S. Johnson. She took a “readiness survey” and the results will be available in the next meeting. At CHS, teachers think about the individual child and not broad generalizations. At the lower achievement end are the students with lower socioeconomic status, African Americans, Hispanics, ELL students and students with disabilities. Crescent Valley High School is also struggling although their main subgroup of concern is the lower socioeconomic group. CHS has the 5 subgroups listed above and improvement is sought in all. Good instructional quality and a belief in students’ abilities are proven strategies for success.

Credit by Proficiency: Some parents have expressed concern about the use of credit by proficiency in math classes. Credit by Proficiency is a proven method to lower the achievement gap; clear standards must be met before the student can move on. Dawn is watching other school districts that are using it across the board. The system works but this is CHS’s first semester of implementation. Dawn would like to see discussion with middle schools about using it there—it would help students prepare for high school. (See the Nov. PC meeting minutes for more information regarding Credit by Proficiency www.csd509j.net/chs/Parents/PC_Meeting_Minutes.htm) Dawn is hoping that CHS can sustain the all-day tutoring center, staffed primarily by students and parent volunteers, helping students mostly in math (pre-algebra).

Ask an Administrator Day: twice per month Dawn, Eric Wright, or Alicia Ward-Satey is available to the students all day in the forum, for questions, comments or conversation. Dawn was there on December 10th. She spoke with 20 staff, 42 students, and 3 parents, and made the following notes:

42 students were able to stop by and chat about issues that they thought were important.

10 had comments about our school schedule. Specifically:

4 thought we start too early and lunch is too late

1 loved the block system

2 hate the off block

3 wanted shorter classes

4 students discussed their math classes: upcoming tests, credit for proficiency. One of these had an idea that math teachers teach specific standards at lunch and take turns. Students then would have a chance on their own to re-learn the standard and teachers would not have to give up too many lunches.

5 just wanted to chat and get a piece of candy, I think.

4 stopped by about the concert/assembly and to tell me how important arts were to their education
3 were worried about the dance and the storm that is coming in. They do not want it canceled.
2 wanted to talk about the pre-apprenticeship program
2 wanted more world languages offered (specifically Japanese and Chinese)
2 had questions about starting a club
2 were on the verge of homelessness and needed to know where to go for help
1 informed me about the culprits behind a recent vandalism issue
1 needed school supplies
1 wanted to update me on his legal issues
1 asked about the big screen TV and why it was not up
1 said our teachers are excellent
1 wanted to know why the library had blocked off certain areas to thru traffic
1 wanted us to stock Gatorade in the snack shack
1 reported a burst pipe that was really a broken downspout

School Schedule Change: both high schools will soon be meeting to discuss schedule changes, the block system, and beginning and end times for the school day. A committee has been formed and will soon be meeting; it is made up of 14 representatives, 7 from each high school, and will include teachers, parents, students, and counselors.

School Report Cards: just came home with students this week. CHS has improved in every category, and met attendance expectations. Great job!

Budget Update: budget meeting in February—things don't look good, especially if ballot measures 66 and 67 fail. Even if they pass, cuts to the budget similar to last year will have to occur. Revenues from the tax levy are falling and personnel costs are rising (insurance issues and teachers moving up seniority scale). Administration stays committed to a comprehensive high school that follows the mission statement: *To educate responsible, knowledgeable and highly engaged global citizens.*

Lisa Corrigan—Corvallis School Board Member

Lisa spoke briefly about ballot measures 66 and 67 and handed out an information sheet. The current budget assumes these tax measures pass. If not, the Corvallis School District could lose \$3.2 to 3.7 million in state funds from this budget (2012-2011). In Measure 66, the top 2.5% of the wage earners pay the lowest income tax rate. The increased income tax rate for taxpayers making over \$125,000 (individual) or \$250,000 (joint) is 10.8% (up from 9%) during 2009-2011; in 2012 and beyond the rate drops to 9.9%. In Measure 67, the corporate minimum tax for S-corporations and partnerships would be changed from \$10 (set in 1932) to \$150. Even if Measure 67 passes, Oregon will continue to have the third lowest corporate taxes on the West Coast and the fifth lowest in America.

For more information, visit the Corvallis School district website: [www.csd509j.net/story/Measures 66 67.html](http://www.csd509j.net/story/Measures_66_67.html); OSU Extension Service publication EM 8997 "Perspectives on Oregon's Taxes—An economic look at Measures 66 and 67" at <http://ir.library.oregonstate.edu/jspui/bitstream/1957/13620/1/em8997.pdf>; the nonpartisan Voter's Guide found at the website for League of Women Voters of Oregon at www.VoteSource.org; and a factsheet produced by Oregon Center for Public Policy at www.ocpp.org/cgi-bin/display.cgi?page=Measure6667.

Important Dates:

January 5—last day for new voters to register –register students who will be 18 by Election Day!
January 8-10—ballots mailed to voters
January 9—meet at Linus Pauling, 9 am, volunteers needed for neighborhood flier “door hanging”
January 13—Election Forum, presented by League of Women Voters, 7-9 pm, Public Library Meeting Room; Katherine Cleland, Sara Gelser, Annabelle Jaramillo, and Anne Schuster
January 26—Election Day—VOTE!!

Jean Nelson came to speak in opposition to Ballot Measures 66 and 67. Jean is a 1953 CHS graduate and grandmother of CHS students. She stated that if these measures pass, everyone will pay—they will cost jobs, and prices on everything, including food, will go up. These ballot measures are essentially unfair. She handed out information and some points she presented are:

Language in Measures 66 and 67 is deceptive:

--“Percentage Point” increase is confusing the voters, and is traditionally not used to indicate the impact of an increase.

--The Measure 66 “result of a ‘yes’ vote” statement says tax rates will increase 1.8 “percentage points” on amounts above \$500,000 for households. The percentage, not “percentage point” rate increase is 20% and 22% for the 1.8 or 2 “percentage point” increase.

--The Measure 67 “Result of a ‘yes’ vote statement says “Raises tax rate some corporations pay on profits by 1.3 percentage points. For profitable businesses, this is a change from 6.6% to 7.9% before 2012”. The percentage, not “percentage point” rate increase is 20% for profitable corporations.

Jean included an article from OregonCatalyst.com: “Measures 66 and 67: A new report but an old and bogus story”, visit at www.oregoncatalyst.com/index.php/archives/2856-Measures-66-67-A-New-Report-But-An-Old-and-Bogus-Story.html

For more information visit Oregonians Against Job-killing Taxes at <http://www.stopjobkillingtaxes.com>.

Julie Williams—CHS Teacher, Gay Straight Alliance Advisor, Green Club Advisor, Aerobics Club Advisor, Assistant Track Coach, Link Crew Advisor

Thank you for the invitation. I am a graduate of CHS class of '80. This is my twenty-third year of teaching at CHS. I've taught Outdoor Rec., Aerobics, Adv. Weights, Net Games, Fitness Concepts, Global Studies, US History, Health 1, ELL Health 1, Sustainability, and now this year, Sociology. I am also the advisor for the longest functioning Gay Straight Alliance (GSA) in the state for 15 years, and I am the co-advisor of the Green Club.

I'd like to share some of the joys and challenges of my participation in these activities.

Aerobics is officially a cult this year☺ very fun incredible results in female fitness.

The GSA's mission is to support, educate, and activate students on issues pertaining to fairness and equality for all students. Some of our activities: Gay, Bisexual, Lesbian, or Transgender (GBLT) History Month in October, National Coming Out Day where students and staff can come out in support of the sexual minority youth, Transgender Remembrance Day with a “Die-in” in the Forum, and AIDS Awareness on World AIDS Day (Dec. 1st), where we hand out condoms and information about safe practices for sexual health (Condom study is needed, with parent participation). (There were 12 teen pregnancies at CHS last year, so we want to provide a balance between advocating abstinence and providing protection from pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases.) We will likely go to the Oregon Queer Youth Conference (OQYC) in Portland in the spring, when they set the date, and we participate in

the “day of silence” and culminate with a celebration in the Alt Prom set for May 22nd, 2010. The Alt Prom was very popular last year—including students who cannot afford to go to Senior Prom. It is an incredibly active group and we recently initiated a GSA Summit, inviting four other schools to a pizza feed and a sharing of ideas. These students are amazing.

The Sociology class is a challenge for me, this late in my career, to be this uncomfortable in the issues of a first-year teacher. I’m afraid I’m not very good at it yet and the students have been very forgiving so far. We are going to try our first project this winter when we return from the break and I’m excited about the students’ ideas.

I am incredibly passionate about the Green Club and the Sustainability and Society course. The student projects are pretty amazing. I was chosen from 120 applicants in the U.S. to attend a Fulbright gathering of teachers from around the U.S. and Japan, to share our “Best Practices in Sustainability Education Development”. What I found out was sobering and exciting at the same time and in a few moments I will ask for your action on this project. Sustainability, PAW, and Green Club have been doing really exciting work with the solar panel project, alternative travel project, school conservation project, recycling project, renewable energies project, community education project, and green art project.

(At this point Julie intended to give a PowerPoint presentation but didn’t have the technical support so gave us the following facts without the technology:)

According to Jim Hansen, NASA’s Lead Climatologist, 350 ppm CO₂ is the maximum level of CO₂ allowable for the human species to thrive on this planet. Our present level is 383 ppm.

Our generation is perpetuating a system of energy usage that will lock the next generation into a situation that is NOT of their choosing, and that they will NOT be able to change.

We Can Pay It Forward!

We can purchase today’s technology in order to buy time for the next generation, to create the technology that will provide clean and affordable energy for the entire planet.

This generation can invest in the carbon future of the next generation ... in the very survival of the next generation ... today.

For example, Corvallis High School uses 1,899,820 kwh per year. Seventy-four percent of our power comes from **coal**, through Pacific Power. Through simple donations from concerned citizens, at the price of \$5,500 per year, we could purchase 30% of our power from Blue Sky. That’s 570,000 kwh, **carbon free**. That’s 500 families donating \$1 per month, 50 families donating \$9 per month, or 5 families donating \$92 per month. This equals 350 tons of carbon kept out of the atmosphere each year. This is equal to taking 60 cars off the road each year. (Tax-deductible donations can be made through the Corvallis Public Schools Foundation).

For a comparison, I am purchasing a 2 kwh PV (photovoltaic) system for my home. Over the next 30+ years of my system’s generation, I will save 70,000 lbs or 35 tons of carbon. The system itself costs about \$20,000, and with tax credits it will ultimately cost me about \$2,000 and take six years to recoup the cost.

Yet with a small donation to Blue Sky, through the Foundation, I can affect 10 times that amount, every year for the next 30 years. This is 10,500 tons, or 21 million lbs. of CO₂ kept from ever entering our atmosphere.

To get to 350 ppm, we only need to reduce by 9% globally. If everyone pitched in, we could reduce our carbon footprint substantially and ensure a brighter future for the next generations.

Finally, Blue Sky will donate funds to our Green Club for every kwh of Blue Sky that we help to promote. This will make it possible for the Green Club to fulfill its mission to reduce our carbon footprint and to see solar panels placed on every building in the district. If you are not already using Blue Sky renewable energy, you can sign up for the Blue Sky program and make sure CHS gets the credit. For more information, contact:

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Here, three of Julie's students, Aiden, Tyler, and Kayla, performed a song written by Aiden:

INTRO

*You want to change the world
My friend do all that you can
The Earth could use some help
Please love her like a mother.*

*Our mother ain't doin' too well
Carbon levels have begun to swell
Safety is 350 parts per million
But now we're nearing a zillion*

VAMP

*Polar bears die as the ice caps fry
And all we do is walk on by...*

*We got a great idea
Switch to Blue Sky energy
It isn't all that hard
A single step's a start*

Keep our sky blue!!!

On Dec. 4, SunWize Technologies, a solar energy products company based in San Jose, California, donated \$6,000 to the Green Club, which hopes to install 100 kW of solar power at CHS by 2018. There's still plenty of work for club members to do--the club's plan is to install one 10 kW solar panel per year. Each panel costs about \$100,000. So far, the club has \$26,000 to go toward purchasing their first one. In June, the club received \$20,000 of that amount from Wal-Mart, after winning the retailer's "Earth Day Everyday Challenge" for being voted the nation's most eco-friendly school. Julie is working

with Fred Kane, director of the Corvallis Public Schools Foundation, on ways to raise money to purchase the first panel.

Next PC Meeting—January 19, noon, in the band room.

Respectfully Submitted,
Sally Olson-Edge
PC Secretary

[Parent Connection](#) is a group of parents, for parents and guardians, who foster and facilitate communication within the CHS community. There are monthly meetings scheduled for the third Tuesday of each month with CHS Principal *Dawn Granger*. Everyone is welcome.