

Parent Connection Minutes

November 17, 2009, 7 pm

Chair Report: Carol Hennessy opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. Carol introduced herself, and noted that this is a combined meeting with the Spanish-speaking parent group (the meeting was simultaneously translated into Spanish via ear pieces), and introduced the translators, Monica Schlecter, Family Advocate and Latin America Club Advisor, and Tani Aguayo, a volunteer from OSU. Carol then asked the rest of the Parent Connection (PC) Leadership Team for reports, if any. There were three Leadership reports:

Website: Alesia Duncombe—recently updated the website calendar to Google Calendar. At the Home page, the calendar link can be found at the upper right. When you access the calendar, each day shows whether it is odd or even, and if you click on that you will get the bell schedule for that day. Alesia is constantly updating because of the changing schedule, with concerts, assemblies, etc. Nothing is translated to Spanish yet, although district listserv information is occasionally sent in Spanish.

Listserv Moderator: Dawn Vermeulen—noted that school policy does not allow student personal information to show up on the school listserv, i.e., a student's name with his or her personal email address.

Staff Luncheon Coordinator: Kathleen McAteer—The food donated by parents for the October conferences was much appreciated. There will be a staff luncheon coming up in January sponsored by the juniors and seniors, and one in March sponsored by the sophomore and freshmen classes.

Dawn Granger—Principal

What's New at CHS—Dawn was pleased with the turnout this evening—larger than ever before.

Budget: Next year we are projected to have 40 fewer students and will lose \$110,000; Dawn appreciates input as to what is important to preserve. We want to keep it all—good variety of classes at different levels and keep small class size, but some difficult decisions will have to be made. Dawn appreciates parent volunteers—they have helped CHS keep some student services, like Beyond CHS and tutoring. Please contact her if you have something to offer.

School Mission: developed this year; Dawn wanted to keep it short and yet include all for maximum impact. *Our mission is to educate responsible, knowledgeable and highly engaged global citizens.* Dawn is working on ways to measure with the students what it means to be responsible, knowledgeable, and highly engaged global citizens.

Student Scores: Math: we have a 60 percent gap between the highest and lowest achieving students (i.e., 75.7 percent versus 14.7 percent met Oaks [Oregon Assessment of Knowledge and Skills] Standards). Students are grouped by income, race, ELL, etc. In reading, there is a 68 percent gap between the highest and lowest scoring students. This leads us to reevaluate how we teach students

and how they are assigned to classes. There will soon be a parent survey asking you your opinion and what hopes and aspirations you have for your child relating to his or her education at CHS.

Dawn had these goals written on the board:

Goal No. 1: Improve school climate to support student achievement

- Staff collaboration
- Teacher empowerment
- Attendance
- Authentic communication
- Student voice
- Close achievement gap
- Parental involvement
- Examine systems and policies for equity
- Redesign master schedule

Goal No. 2: Literacy—improve reading and writing for all students

- All student scores as measured by OAKS testing; 10 percent more will meet benchmarks
- Staff collaboration/ training at literacy
- Identify students needing intervention
- ELL (English language learners) intervention
- Targeted systematic intervention
- Common formative assessments
- Literacy instruction in core classes
- Assessment informs instruction/course design
- Literacy instruction for career/essential skills
- Examine current practices
- Department goals support literacy

Eight smart boards have been given to teachers so far from the student body.

Students are given access to school administrators (Dawn, Eric Wright, or Alicia Ward-Satey) twice a month in the forum—opportunity for any student to talk about whatever they want, like changing the block schedule, or school start time in the morning.

Schedule Changes: there must be a mutual decision between the two high schools before a potential schedule change can occur—this won't happen next year but maybe the year after. Dawn is still gathering input from other schools—there are many different options. One possible scenario is that elementary schools start earlier and high schools start later. Schools cannot all start at the same time because of bus constraints. We must keep in mind things like after school sports—students should not miss any more school time because of sports. Half of CHS's 650 students participate in sports, and coaches often are teachers.

Pinnacle: one way for teachers to communicate with parents is through Pinnacle, our online grading system. Dawn asks parents for feedback on how well this system is working. Postage is expensive and this is a way to monitor your child's progress—you can check on grades, attendance, missing assignments, etc. CHS would like to save the expense of postage by not mailing home quarter grade reports.

Debbie Zeller—CHS teacher, Family and Consumer Sciences, Culinary Arts Program

Culinary Arts Program at CHS—Debbie gave a powerpoint presentation, and some of the courses in the culinary arts program offered include:

Foods (a basic foods and cooking class)

Culinary Arts I and II (both use the ProStart curriculum, see below)

Senior Foods (teaches cooking and shopping basics on how to survive on your own)

Sewing (basic skills)

Apparel, Interiors, and Fashion Merchandising (A.I.M.) (students explore career options and learn through a variety of media)

Life Management Skills (helps students gain skills for life on their own, i.e., banking, budgeting, credit, insurance etc)

Child Development (students learn about family, parenting, and how children develop through working with the preschool)

Human Development (students learn family relationships, and development issues from prenatal to young children)

See the CHS Course Catalog for a more complete description of these classes.

Debbie spoke about the ProStart Program (which she uses in Culinary Arts I and II), a two-year career-building program for high school students. Whether students are looking to enter the job market directly after graduating, or if they plan to attend college, the program helps make the student a solid candidate for success. ProStart students gain experience and recognition in several ways: Classroom Experience, Mentored Work Experience, National ProStart Invitational, and a ProStart National Certificate of Achievement—this certificate recognizes students who have successfully completed the program and are eligible to earn special scholarships and college credit from colleges and universities across the country. For more information on this program go to

<http://prostart.restaurant.org/about/overview.aspx>

Eric Wright, Vice Principal

Math “Credit by Proficiency”—many students are earning college credit here at CHS but others don't have the math skills to succeed in upper level classes. If a student is already behind, the trend in math is to fall farther and farther behind—if they fail tests, there is no second chance, and the class moves on. We want to close the achievement gap across all schools and want students to learn what they need to move to the next level. Therefore, this is the first year that CHS has implemented “Credit by Proficiency” for Algebra 1a, 1b and Algebra 1. The following are characteristics of a proficiency-based model: 1) teachers identify key learning that students must master to succeed at the next level; 2) all students must master these key standards to pass the class; and 3) grades are tied primarily to mastery

of the key learning standards. This is a change for some students, where before they could fail in middle school and still pass on to the next class. Under this new system, students can retake tests as many times as is necessary until they show they are proficient in the standards. The Oregon Department of Education has selected these core standards as those needed for success in college and the workplace. Once a student is proficient and has met the standard by testing, he or she moves to the next level.

Students who are struggling have access to the tutoring center all day long and CHS is trying to recruit bilingual tutors.

Advantages of this system are:

Students know exactly what they need to learn, and can take more responsibility for their learning and progress, in and out of the classroom

Teachers are able to focus on helping students master the most important concepts

Tests are linked directly to what students need to learn and to what is being taught

Multiple assessments ensure that students retain knowledge over the long haul

Test items at various levels of difficulty challenge capable students to apply knowledge in authentic contexts

Frequent assessments with test items at different levels of complexity help teachers modify instruction to fit the needs of all students

Students have multiple opportunities to demonstrate proficiency and a variety of ways to demonstrate proficiency

Students who need more time or help to master standards are not penalized

Parents get better information about exactly what students need to learn; they don't just receive homework or assignment scores

Grades insure that learning occurred rather than reflecting what assignments or homework was completed

One problem with the system is that Pinnacle automatically assigns grades and will show an F if the student has not yet completed the standards. Students are getting very frustrated with their Pinnacle grades. One fix is for the teacher to override the grade and assign an incomplete until the standards are passed. Math teachers are currently meeting twice a week to try to make the system more successful. Another complaint is that daily work counts very little for the final grade. So far CHS teaches only math in the Credit by Proficiency system, but another good fit would be language classes.

Elsewhere in the state, the Beaverton School District has made a district-wide commitment to be a proficiency-based K-12 system within the next ten years. They have documented increased student engagement and academic success, as well as a reduction in disciplinary referrals.

Scappoose High School's proficiency-based efforts began with one English/social science teacher and spread throughout the science and mathematics departments. In 2007-08, 52 out of 55 Pre-algebra and Algebra 1 students successfully transitioned to Algebra 2 through proficiency- and standards-based

practice. Test scores have soared and the school is now meeting Adequate Yearly Progress when before they were not.

Redmond School District began implementation in 2007 with a freshman academy designed around proficiency-based instruction and assessment. Redmond intends to move proficiency throughout their system by grade level increments and has opened a proficiency -based charter school. In the first year of the proficiency-based ninth grade academy, their dropout rate plummeted to zero and discipline referrals fell to 8.7 percent.

With focused district and school level support, Forest Grove High School will begin actual implementation of a proficiency-based approach in 2009-10. Like the Corvallis School District, they are currently forming professional learning communities, aligning all courses with standards and proficiency levels, and developing standard-based assessments. Forest Grove is recognized for its efforts to close the achievement gap.

Next PC Meeting—December 15, noon, in the band room. We will hear a regular update from *Dawn Granger* and our guest speaker will be CHS teacher, *Julie Williams*. She will speak and answer questions about sustainability at CHS, the \$20,000 award to purchase solar panels, as well as share information about the two clubs for which she is an advisor, the Green Club and the Gay Straight Alliance.

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.