

Parent Connection Minutes

Tuesday, September 16, 2008

Noon – 1:00 pm

Alesia Duncombe, co-chair called the meeting to order. She welcomed the 50 attendees to Parent Connection (PC). Alesia introduced Carol Hennessey as her co-chair. Alesia explained that PC is not a PTA; there are no by-laws or governing rules. There is only a mission statement which is:

Parent Connection is a group of parents and guardians for parents and guardians who foster and facilitate communications within the CHS community.

Every parent or guardian in the CHS community is welcome to attend PC meetings. PC raises funds by donations and escrip. The funds are used to help foster communication within the CHS community. In the past the funds have been used to purchase name plates for doors, fund staff time to establish a master calendar, and translate into Spanish the course catalog, student handbook, and monthly newsletters. The last big purchase was a 58" monitor which will be located in the forum. On the screen will be running daily announcements and other announcements meant for CHS

The other initiative is the CHS website. PC is working with the administration and web master to continue to improve and update the website. If you have any expertise or desire to work on the website, please let Alesia Duncombe know.

Each PC meeting will feature a staff member and a club. If you would like to see something in particular addressed at a PC meeting, please send us your suggestions. PC is here for you and we want to answer your questions, concerns and interests.

PC has two evening meetings a year. Our October, 21 meeting happens to be one of the evening meetings. The meeting will run from 7:00-8:00 pm in room 203. Nancy Shaffer, Beyond CHS, will be our guest. Nancy will bring with her the idea and purpose of BCHS as well as her incredible wealth of knowledge of colleges, applying to colleges, financial aid, SATs, ACTs, scholarships, etc. If you have a question or want to learn more about life 'Beyond CHS' do attend.

The 2008-2009 PC leadership team was introduced and asked for a report.

Carol Hennessey again, was introduced as co-chair. Carol has been working on establishing a link on the website that can be accessed for those who want to see the documents that PC has paid to have translated. Carol also reported that she has been contacted by OPB who are looking to interview parents of freshman regarding the new graduation requirements. If you are interested in being interviewed, please contact Carol.

Mary Ellen Brown was introduced as treasurer. She reported that PC collected approximately \$3000 in donations at registration (thank you to those who donated!) Mary Ellen emphasized the fact that these funds will be used to further PC's goal of communication by purchasing door name plates, and translation services.

Nell Kolodziej is acting as Volunteer Coordinator for the year. Nell had the enormous task of organizing the many volunteers who worked registration. She has also organized volunteers to work in the front

office and the attendance office. Nell will be working with Sherry Faller throughout the year as volunteers are needed.

Pat Collier returns as the Luncheon Coordinator. Pat shared with us the purpose of the luncheons is to provide a time when staff can come together, relax, talk and share over a meal. This is a very popular program with the teachers! Pat and her crew will provide approximately seven meals for the staff this year. These include two conference times also. The first lunch is sponsored by the PC and will happen next week. The conferences in October will be the next time to help with this service. If you are unable to donate in-kind donations, money is always appreciated. The rest of the lunches will be 'sponsored' by classes. A notice will go out on the listserv with the sponsoring class and needed items for each lunch.

Shanna Molitor is the District Leadership liaison. Shanna will be attending monthly meetings at the district with other representatives from 509j schools. She will communicate CHS' concerns and comments as well as report back on district news.

Jan Zajicek is the Site Council liaison. She will attend both PC and Site Council meetings and share news. The site council looks at school climate and will begin the year formalizing by-laws.

In addition to being co-chair, Alesia is also the listserv moderator for CHS. This summer Alesia had the huge task of transferring the listserv which was at the ESD, to the district listserv. Her hopes are that there will be technical support and greater operating ease with the new listserv. The purpose of the listserv is to help communicate any CHS related activity. Please keep in mind that notices will be rejected that contains any personal student information (name, email, etc) there also needs to be a specific subject line so that the recipients can easily decide if they need to read the email, or delete it. The listserv is one more tool that PC is using to create communication within CHS. Listserv guidelines can be found on the CHS website, at the Parent Connection link.

With the introductions being complete, Alesia introduced Dawn Granger, the new CHS Principal. Dawn introduced the assistant principals, returning Eric Wright and new to CHS Alicia Ward. Alicia comes to us from the Gresham/Barlow School District. There she taught health and Spanish. She then spent a year working in the ELL (English Language Learners) at the district level. Before Gresham, Alicia worked in the Estacada school district where she was also involved with ELL programs and programs for kids at risk. Alicia has family in the area and is happy to be in Corvallis. Alicia's first day at work was the first Friday of the school year, so she "hit the road running and has not slowed down" according to Ms. Granger!

Ms. Granger wanted to start her time by sharing what was new to CHS this year:

-Gretchen Cuveas has been hired as support for the two assistant principals. She will handle their calendars and schedules as well as other support they may need. Gretchen is also the generator of the new master calendar for the school. The calendar will eventually have all sporting, theater, leadership, club, conference, academic, and any other news that pertains to CHS. It is now on the CHS website and can be assessed there. Gretchen has been hired for 5 hrs/day.

-Karen Nelson is our new registrar. Karen comes to us with many years of registrar's experience from Linus Pauling. Zoe Sibernagel, our registrar from last year has been helping Karen adjust to CHS. Karen had the unfortunate experience of being caught in a new job between two new computer programs that were not working together. Karen spent several hours beyond the working day to help facilitate the function of the programs.

-Erica Gabonay is a new math teacher. Erica student taught under the direction of Therese Patterson. Eric Wright will be her mentor.

-Chad Morrow (a.k.a. Mr. Chad) has been hired as a behavior/campus support person. Attendance is an area of focus for CHS this year. One component of Mr. Chad's job will be to help those students find their classrooms when they seem unable to do so themselves. Chad will be working with Ed Strowbridge. Chad is calm and easy going; however he is also willing to hold students to the CHS behavior expectations. Chad will help maintain a safe environment at CHS.

-Monica Schlechter has been re-hired as a translator for our Spanish population. Dawn listened to concerns from the community that there is a Spanish speaking staff member for those parents and guardians of our Hispanic community. In addition to Monica, Alicia is also fluent in Spanish. CHS will also be using the Spanish speaking services of Angie Stambuk from the ESD, two to three days per week.

-Lisa Griffith has been hired as the High-O-Scope advisor. She will also be teaching READ 180 second semester.

-Laura Delp our new Alternative Ed teacher in the Learning Lab will be helping those students who may have lost credit in some areas, gain it back. She will also have a supervised study hall for those parents who request it for their child.

-Angie Bice has been hired to teach Chemistry. Tom Martin will be team teaching with her for some classes.

-Laura Braibish is the new Theater/Drama teacher.

Dawn reiterated that the new staff members are incredible additions to CHS. The staff is knowledgeable and caring of kids. Although the philosophy is that CHS is an academic school, Dawn wanted to share that CHS is also a school that is focused on who we are when we graduate kids and what impact our graduates will have on the world. She quoted a student: "There is a place for everyone at CHS."

What isn't new at CHS? Dawn! Dawn is 'recycled'. She spent the last year in the old school and the first year in the new school as assistant principal. Dawn returns joyfully and humbly to CHS. She feels she is comfortable and prepared to be here. She anticipates her years at CHS to be the best in her career.

Dawn shared with us her focus will be on attendance this year. When kids are absent, not only are they wasting a great opportunity to spend time with teachers, but the class chemistries change too and affects everyone. Students, curriculum and teachers are affected by absences. Teachers are being encouraged to make it so kids want to be at CHS. The student leadership is being encouraged to help with attendance. Dawn sited the last assembly where it was well attended. Sports and dance etiquette were discussed at the assembly. The kids then owned the rules and it was very evident at the football game and following dance that the kids were proud of their school. LINK Crew was a big proponent of the pride, etiquette and exuberance the kids exhibited Friday night. The enthusiasm from the older students and LINK Crew mentors trickled down to the underclassmen. The upper classmen were indoctrinating the younger students how they want their school to be.

Another focus is school climate. Systems will be in place where what people (staff, parents and students) says matters. There is an emphasis to be transparent, in particular about the budget. Dawn believes that it is easy to be transparent if one is knowledgeable. As a school we need to look at how we want to spend money and don't want to be limited by it, we need to use it as a tool.

The great parent, staff, building and students need to close the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) gap. CHS is working on systems to make sure we are closing this gap. This information is not new, and CHS is not in a crisis mode. Budget struggles are not new. The levy is not going to last forever, so CHS needs to think ahead. These are all struggles, that are not new and Dawn is confident we will get through them.

There is a diversity survey that is out for parents and guardians. It is located on the CHS website. This survey will be used by the district Diversity Action Committee to establish a baseline as the committee looks at how CHS encompasses diversity. Dawn and Eric are both on this committee.

Open House will be Wednesday, September 17. College planning night will be on September 22. Both of these events are open to everyone. At the College Planning Night, translators will be available, as well as representatives from several universities and colleges, the military and financial aid planners. This is a valuable informational night.

Dawn has set up non-mandatory monthly brown bag lunches for the staff to attend. The purpose is to foster communications within the staff and administration.

Question to Dawn: "Will you be addressing the newspaper article in today's (9/16) paper?"

Dawn indicated she would be discussing the results at the Open House. She also emphasized that there are limited factors that play into the results of the achievement ranking of the AYP. Those are attendance and three tests (reading, writing and math) that all tenth graders must take regardless of language, special needs, etc. The tests are nationally normed and must be equitable to all students across the country. AYP is based on numbers, and Dawn wants to focus on our students. However, CHS does need to focus on the gap and make sure that all students have access to what is available to all students. ELL, special needs and poverty are three areas that we need to focus on and create a system that meets the students' needs in these categories. CHS is a diverse school in a diverse world. When we can do a better job for all students, then the goals will be met. Dawn does not want this to be divisive. The results do not reflect the school; they reflect the results of one grade for the year. Next year the results will be reflected by a different class.

CHS did not meet the attendance guidelines. Dawn met with Dan Conway from ESD. They discussed the changing demographics of Corvallis. They recognized that it is harder to get to school for some students. Some students work full time to support their families as well as attend school. This needs to be addressed.

People need to understand the full details of the report.

Question: "Can you address class sizes? The levy was supposed to reduce class sizes, yet I hear that there were not enough seats in some of the classes."

Answer: There was some confusion on class sizes due to the computer programs not functioning as they should have. Once it was discovered there were over loaded classes, Dawn and Eric went around and counted classes to determine their sizes. Once determined, and depending on subject areas, more sections were added to alleviate the overcrowded classes. Also, CHS does meet the standard for class sizes as per the accrediting organization for high schools. There are still some unbalanced sections of classes. This will be addressed at budget and master scheduling time for next year.

Question: "The frequency of advisor periods has increased. How are advisors instructed to use that time?"

Answer: Cathy Wright compiled an advisor's notebook. Each advisor has a notebook and is to use it as a guideline. The purpose of the advisor period is to create an opportunity to meet with an adult in a small group setting, to learn about the school, and to make sure graduation requirements are met.

*The Robotics Club was highlighted this month. The co-presidents gave a lively explanation of their club. The club has approximately 25 members and meets twice a week. During 'build season' they meet daily. Build season begins in January when given the requirements for the robot and lasts about 6 weeks until the competition and completion of the robot. The club has been going strong at CHS for about 8 years. This year there are only two seniors in it. The club is a great way to meet new people and make friends. One can apply all sorts of skills (shop, physics, math, fundraising skills, etc) in the club and there are no requirements to join. At the CHS website, there is a link to the clubs and you can find a link to the robotics club there. The club is in need of mentors, a coach, and they could use help with building, mechanics, fundraising, anything! The club went to nationals two years ago and had a great time. "Everyone should join! It's fun!"

Question: "Can students who participate in sports participate in robotics also?"

Answer: "Yes!" "The meetings are in the evenings, which do not conflict with sports"

*The Robotics club lost their funding from HP this year. Donations can be made to the CHS Robotics club to the school or through the 509J Schools Foundation.

Respectfully Submitted,

Carrie Thompson, Secretary

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