



## CDSP General Meeting

September 9, 2021 10 a.m.

### BOE Meeting Room

**In attendance:** Lori Olson, Joanna Walsh, Kristen Croker Fiordalis, Kristen Smith, Amy Reid, Yesim Sukhani, Betsy Kilmartin, Mary Smith, Jess Levey, Leila Buckjune, Lorraine Collins, Amy O'Kane, Kelly LeSage, Carol Kennedy, Kadi Lublin, Sarah Madson, Stacey Tie, Duke Dineen, Antoinette Cowles, Catherine Piorkowski, Julie Best, Tiffany O'Connor, Alyson Johnson, Jenn Sherman, Crystal Hill, Shannon Keefe, Kelly LeSage, Robin Nelson, Dayna Checketts, Caitlin Cahill, Meghan Thornton, Alan Addley

Meeting called to order by Lori Olson at 10:07 a.m.

Vote to approve the minutes of [June 10, 2021](#) by Lori Olson. First, Carol; Second, Julie. Passed unanimously.

#### Housekeeping:

- *CDSP Introductions.* CDSP policies can be found on our website.
- *CDSP Conflict of Interest Forms, Dues, and Donations:* Reminder that CDSP conflict of interest forms need to be sent in if they haven't already, and [CDSP dues and donations](#) are also due. Please submit to Lorraine by the end of the month.
- *[CDSP Best Practices](#):* This is a working document with suggestions to help get everyone on the same page. It includes an overview of participation expectations (at least 1 chair from each PTO should be at every CDSP meeting and someone from each school's board at every BOE mtg), what PTOs should and should not be doing with their money (no large sums of money on credit cards; best to ask treasurer to cut check to vendor), and communication and social media guidelines (no social media postings as PTO, eg. Darien Moms; personal postings are ok, just not official). PTO business should be done in PTO channels. Need to have chain of communication up and encourage parents to go to the source. Suggestion to put these in wires and/or send out links via email.

#### Co-Chair Update:

- *State Mask Mandate:* Governor Lamont's mask mandate is in place until September 30th. We will be informed if it's extended or amended.
- *Web Audits:* Suggestion to update respective PTO websites, ensure working links and check for outdated/incorrect information.
- No official relationship with TYTF.
- *School Wires:* Feedback is that wires can be too long. Suggestion is to limit the number of community events posted and/or clearly label community events as community events. Event inclusion may differ at elementary, middle and HS levels. Each school should do what is best for them. Would a weekly CDSP Update help? Comments were that it is important

that everyone knows who/what CDSP is, but perhaps this is better/more important/most relevant in budget season. Suggestion to perhaps add a link to the CDSP [website](#).

- [CDSP Year End Memo](#): This is a review of the past year and a forward look.
- [CDSP Goals for 2021-22](#): This is a working document setting out CDSP goals. CDSP should remain a nonpartisan/neutral organization. CDSP priorities are to be proactive not reactive, and to listen and collaborate. After co-chair overview, questions are asked about the goal sheet and meeting with particular committees appearing partisan? Response is that historically CDSP has met with chairs of RTM Education, BOF, and BOE in a collaborative manner, sharing points of view without inserting CDSP into the process. Hoping this is helpful as public comments are not answered. Chairs will revisit statement and reword to reflect and address concerns. Perhaps create more of a working relationship by starting the conversations and communicating early thereby helping to build trust. CDSP should provide factual information that helps with efficiency, not give opinion(s) (eg. giving out pertinent timestamps of BOE mtg.)
- *DEI*: Admin is forming a DEI committee; CDSP will continue to prioritize, engage and support.

#### **Dr. Addley Update:**

- Welcome and thank you for your support and communication. Look forward to working together.

#### **Officer Updates:**

- *Special Education*: Kadi gives introduction and overview. She is engaging with PTO liaisons/ reps and soliciting feedback and encouraging schools to help foster community. Request to post blurb in wires introducing special education reps.
- *Communications*: Byrne not there to give overview. Chairs explain CDSP communications is a new role and not looking to replace any communications, but act more as an air traffic controller/clearinghouse to help with information flow. Encourage parents to reach out to the building/PTOs and ensure information is factual/neutral/unbiased.
- *Treasurer*: Lorraine sent out an introduction to PTO chairs, along with conflict of interest information and insurance papers. Reminder that forms need to be sent in if they haven't already. Information on taxes, dues, and annual donation amounts will be sent out shortly.
- *Community Outreach/DEI*: Jenn gives introduction and overview as liaison for YWCA, Darien Foundation, MFY, and Human Services Planning Council. CDSP is committed to keeping the DEI conversation going. Would like to be proactive, not reactive, and help make the conversations more comfortable. CDSP is promoting an event for author Dr. Traci Baxley on social justice parenting on November 3rd along with Barrett Bookstore and the YWCA. The library has also reached out about working together. Please pass along feedback.
- *Budget*: Sarah gives introduction and overview.
- *Special Projects/Nominating*: Stef not in attendance. Chairs give examples of ideas for special projects.
- DHS, MMS, Ox Ridge, Royle, Hindley, Holmes, are ok to have executive meetings in school. Tokeneke is not strongly encouraged.

#### **School Updates:**

*Hindley*: Focusing on community. Welcomed the new principal, and held a meet-and-greet coffee. Had kindergarten playdates with a high turnout and hosted a new family lemonade. Hindley Spirit Committee planned fun events with the mascot and a husky hunt around town. Hosted a back-to-school luncheon for staff after sending out a survey. Tours for new students were given by

5th graders. The Hindley Bash will be back on September 17th. DEI committee is up and running and encouraging enrichment.

*Holmes:* Hosting a picnic tomorrow. Annual walk-a-thon is coming up. Working on the website.

*Tokeneke:* Hosted a back-to-school luncheon for staff. Using Zoom for principal coffees. Planning an ice-cream social for kids on Sept 19th and an adult paddle party on Sept 17th. Will be doing a virtual author visit for enrichment. The Pumpkin Carnival, minus the haunted house, is a go.

*Ox Ridge:* Hosted a back-to-school luncheon for staff and gifted fleece blankets. A back-to-school ice cream social with ninja warrior and DJ will be on Sept 19th at Highland Farm. Photo fundraiser coming up.

*Royle:* Hosted a catered lunch for staff, popsicle social for kindergarteners, and a coffee for incoming families. Had a back-to-school family picnic with food trucks, soccer, Dance on the DL, and a DJ. The PTO kickoff will be next week. Will be doing a walk-a-thon as a fall fundraiser.

*MMS:* New principal meetings went well. Focusing on building community. Hosted a new family meet-and-greet at the beach and a back-to-school luncheon for staff. Will be having 6th and 7th grade parent socials in the DCA Garden. Set up a new reporting structure for the MPA. The MPN wire is now being sent out on Mondays.

*DHS:* Freshman orientation had spiritwear for sale. Went well. Considering how to formulate meetings combo of virtual and in-person; a survey was sent out to see where people are. Hoping to be able to have as many in-person events as possible with the exception of open house.

#### **Update from Board of Education Chair, Duke Dineen:**

- Thank you for all the events. Has been good meeting and greeting new staff. Convocation at DHS was successful and included music and singing. Communication is important; please continue to give feedback. Darien is a district in motion: Moving forward with facilities projects (eg. Ox Ridge building), and moving forward with the teachers in residence program. Darien is attracting talent despite teacher shortage. DEI will be on agendas coming up. Feedback is that there are inconsistencies with school websites. Consistency is important but also community feel. Help others to understand the chain of command; important from a communication standpoint. Thankful to Darien police for their help with traffic. DPS is up 51 new students (44 are at Ox Ridge); New Canaan is down students. More development in town may affect future numbers. While there is a shortage of bus drivers and shortage of buses, Darien is covered for dropoff and pickup; transportation may continue to be a challenge. Thanks again for your support.

#### **Co-Chair Closing:**

Will have meetings for elementary PTOs and MMS/DHS up on the calendar soon. Need parents from each school for the building committee for a December start. Please forward any suggestions.

Motion to adjourn by Lori Olsen at 11:35 am. First, Julie. Second, Tiffany.

Respectfully submitted by Kristen Croker Fiordalis, Secretary.

