



CDSP General Meeting

November 11, 2021 10 a.m.

BOE Meeting Room

In attendance: Lori Olson, Joanna Walsh, Kristen Fiordalis, Carol Kennedy, Shannon Keefe, Robin Nelson, Crystal Hill, Mary Smith, Amy Reid, Libby Cook, Lorraine Collins, Natasha Tomai, Yesim Sukhani, Dayna Checketts, Jenn Sherman, Jackie Nevin, Caitlin Cahill, Kristen Smith, Alicia Mehlberg, Mary Elizabeth Garvey, Byrne Pozzi, Antoinette Cowles, Leila Buckjune, Tiffany O'Connor, Julie Best, Marissa Herbers, Stacey Tie, Sara Parent, Amy O'Kane, Deb Ritchie, Kelly LeSage

Meeting called to order by Lori Olson at 10:05 a.m.

Will vote on minutes at the next general meeting.

Co-Chair Update

- *Veterans Day:* Thank a veteran if you see them.
- *BOE update:* There are 2 new additions to the BOE: Julie Best & Tara Wurm. BOE also voted on new leadership: Duke Dineen will continue as chair, Jill McCammon will be vice chair, and Sara Parent will be secretary. New start time for BOE meetings is a possibility; also may be modifying public comment for efficiency.
- *Teacher Appreciation:* Would like to explore possibility of a district-wide event, perhaps during Thanksgiving week. Have schools already set their budgets? Suggesting a "Gratitude Campaign" wherein students & parents write notes & emails to say thanks, ccing Admin. There would be no cost. A little note goes a long way.
- *Budget Calendar Draft:* BOE may be adding an extra night for add/cut. Hasn't been voted on yet. Feb. 1 is a special BOE mtg for proposed 2022-23 budget.
- *CDSP Budget Chairs:* Thank you to Sarah Madson who was our budget chair but had to step down. Deb Ritchie and Stacey Tie have volunteered to fill the open budget chair positions. Both have extensive experience. Suggesting a general CDSP vote via email next week. Tiffany made a motion to approve a vote by email. The motion passed unanimously.
- *Covid Vaccine Clinics and Mask Update:* There will not be a teacher/staff booster clinic. Clinics for children ages 5 to 11 are being done through the town (not school), and unfortunately they cannot add more days because they cannot get enough trained people to administer the shots. Alicia will email with more vaccine options. The mask mandate will continue until Feb 15th.
- *District Response to Hate:* In response to recent incidents, the district and BOE have brought in consultant Ken Shelton to help schools identify and deal with hate speech. He did professional development with DHS & MMS staff and met with some students. MMS also had leadership forums in each grade discussing school climate, recent happenings, and school norms. BOE is evaluating bringing Ken Shelton back again. Chris Tranberg will be leading a committee on DEI; more information will be coming on formation. MMS is

collaborating with the Anti-Defamation League on a series of educational experiences in response to recent school happenings. The four-day program will include: the social studies department conducting lessons on the history of anti-Semitism and the Holocaust to give students background for a video they will then view about experiences of adolescents during the war; next, students will hear from a high school student from the area who will share her experiences with anti-Semitism; and finally, counselors will lead a closing lesson dedicated to the meaning of symbols and respecting others. A detailed letter will be sent out by Admin. DHS efforts are also in the works.

Officer Updates:

- *Special Education:* Working on coordinating staff-focused events for National Special Education Day on Dec 2 to support and recognize special ed staff (but not exclude general ed staff). Please help find budget dollars and spread the word. Also working on consistency across all schools, increasing brand awareness, and updating websites.
- *Communications:* Working on a "Did You Know" information series on CDSP that will include fact-based information about the organization. Would like to include in the wires as well as on social media and on websites. It will be like a "CDSP 101" to help people to understand what we are and what we do. Information on specific committees will follow. The guiding principle is connecting people to resources and providing unbiased information. Also working to make the CDSP website more user-friendly, and looking for help on that. There is a suggestion to put information on each school's website and links to each other's social media, too.
- *Treasurer:* No update per Lorraine
- *Community Outreach/DEI:* Contributions for (and talks from) the Darien Foundation, YWCA, etc will be on the agenda soon. The YWCA has partnered with Darien United <https://ywcadn.org/programs>; would CDSP like to participate/promote? It is meant to unify everyone and would help keep diversity in the forefront. Would like to solicit feedback. On DEI, we are working with Admin, but not directing them. We currently have 2 DEI working groups that are meeting monthly (one focusing on a "purpose" statement (not mission statement), and the other on planning a bigger community event). They get together and talk about ideas, resources, and enrichment. Every school is represented, and CDSP acts as the umbrella. An update from the district will also soon be coming. Community involvement and conversations are ongoing. We are also continuing to sponsor the Dr. Traci Braxley book discussion.

School Updates:

Hindley: The Veterans Day share and Halloween share were outside, and great events. Hosted a successful outdoor and indoor book fair. Hosted a virtual author visit with Grace Lin for enrichment, and included DEI committee involvement. Held a teacher appreciation event on Election Day featuring desserts for teachers and staff. And to help teach about voting, also held an election to vote on our mascot's name. Upcoming: Teacher Appreciation Pumpkin Bread.

Holmes: Held Veterans Day and Halloween events. The coffee on social and emotional learning (SEL) was well attended. The Globe Trotter program has started. Upcoming: Will be hosting a Holiday Luncheon for teachers and staff, and Kids Care will be doing a Turkey Drive with Palmers.

Tokeneke: The Pumpkin Carnival was a success. The coffee on social and emotional learning (SEL) was well attended. Had Veterans Day events/shares and an all-school Halloween parade. Upcoming: Will be hosting 2 coffees (one on Special Ed and other on DEI), will be holding a

Turkey Drive with Palmers, will be hosting an enrichment event with a Soro-Bindi performance to learn about Ghana, will be bringing back holiday craft sessions for students and partnering with P2P so kids will also be bringing a gift, and will be hosting a Holiday Lunch for staff.

Ox Ridge: The carnival-themed in-person book fair was well received and well attended. Boo-grams were a success and raised money for Darien Human Services; families boo'd the school, and submissions were used to decorate the school. Hosted an enrichment event with a Soro-Bindi performance to learn about Ghana. Will be hosting a virtual coffee on social and emotional learning (SEL).

Royle: Held a Veterans Day Assembly (Wall of Heroes). Held 1st and 2nd grade art and literacy presentations for parents. The principal and some teachers had pe on election day.

MMS: Finished a successful Direct Appeal Fundraiser. Upcoming: Will be holding a virtual special ed coffee; co-sponsoring TYTF talk with author of "The Pressured Child;" working on a MMS food drive, and will be distributing Thanksgiving pies to teachers and staff.

DHS: Vision of a Graduate is focus. Hosted a special ed parent coffee with the DHS special ed team. Hosted freshman and sophomore coffees; students came and spoke but events were lightly attended. Hosted a virtual college panel, which was also recorded for those unable to attend. Upcoming: Upcoming: Will be hosting a Holiday Luncheon for teachers and staff and an author talk. DPN is a good source of information.

New Business from the Floor:

- Question was asked if outside lunch could happen again/more often, as it was able to take place at a lot of elementary schools last year. Suggestion was that perhaps at some schools but not all; food services may also be an issue.
- Question was asked if food services can limit junk food. Suggestion is to inquire at respective schools.
- Suggestion to keep in mind working parents, and consider possible zoom meetings and/or recordings. Also perhaps put more outreach in wires, and suggest opportunities to become more involved and solicit feedback.

Motion to adjourn by Lori Olson at 11:20 am. First, Mary. Second, Stacey.

Respectfully submitted by Kristen Croker Fiordalis, Secretary.