



CDSP General Meeting

December 9, 2021 10 a.m.

Via Zoom

In attendance: Lori Olson, Joanna Walsh, Kristen Fiordalis, Jenn Sherman, Crystal Hill, Deb Ritchie, Catherine Piorkowski, Byrne Pozzi, Dawn MacDonald, Libby Cook, Meghan Thorton, Amy O'Kane, Jess Levey, Antionette Cowles, Caitlin Cahill, Mary Smith, Robin Nelson, Stacey Tie, Stef Desai, Kelly LeSage, Erin Noonan, Jamie Zionic, Kristen Smith, Leila Buckjune, Sara Parent, Nicole Lyons, Tiffany O'Connor, Lorraine Collins, Shannon Keefe, Yesim Sukhani, Julie Best, Melissa Gluck, Meg Bhat, Dawn MacDonald, Nicole Casey, Kadi Lublin

Meeting called to order by Lori Olson at 10:08 a.m.

Voted to approve the minutes of [October 14, 2021](#) and [November 11, 2021](#) by Lori Olson. First, Mary; Second, Deb. Passed unanimously.

Darien United

- Karen Ford joined us to talk about [Darien United](#). Darien United is a grassroots initiative made up of Darien residents and local leaders who commit to creating and supporting a welcoming community that respects and encourages contributions of all people, in all our beautiful variety of race, ethnicity, ancestry, national origin, class, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, language, mental and physical ability, military status and immigration status. Darien YWCA, YMCA, and Library are the founding partners/organizations of Darien United along with Nobu. They are in the early stages of putting plans into place and putting together roles. They are asking individuals, and now organizations, to join in and sign the pledge, which can be found on the YWCA website. YWCA will continue to be the lead and host information while a website is being built. A sticker has been created to help raise awareness. The idea is that we all represent Darien and want to be a welcoming community and celebrate diversity. Partner organizations are talking about hosting community-wide events, educational opportunities, programming, etc. There is a partner meeting on Jan 13th. Would like CDSP to join on as a partner to help craft what Darien United could become? Currently there are 10-12 partner organizations (e.g. YMCA, YWCA, Library, P2P, the Depot, Choose Love, Barrett Bookstore, Dr. Craig, Park & Rec possibly, Chamber of Commerce possibly). Co-chairs suggest joining as CDSP, not individual PTOS, with CDSP as umbrella and Jenn Sherman as the rep/liaison (the equity team being put together by Chris Tranberg is more district focused). Asked for feedback/questions from the group. Suggestion to vote on CDSP joining Darien United.

- Motion to vote on approving CDSP to join Darien United made by Kristen. Second, Libby. Passed unanimously.

Co-Chair Update

- *Chain of Communication:* Please consider sending out a reminder in the wires about the chain of command (starting with the teacher and escalating if needed).
- *Equity Committee Update:* No update. BOE and District have not made a decision on retaining services of consultant Ken Shelton. Will be discussed at the board table again (Dec. 14th)
- *Th!nk Smart Before You Start Campaign:* Board of selectmen and police commission have partnered to start a slower-driving [campaign](#), which will promote pedestrian and bicyclist safety by raising driver awareness of road sharing and safety. MMS PTO helped by handing out magnets to launch the campaign, which will run the month of December.
- *Budget Preview/Curriculum Subcommittee Meeting highlights:* New platform called Edu planet 21 is a new way for teachers & parents to access curriculum (introduced because of technical issues with Google Docs). Another initiative is re-examining/revisiting iPads 1-to-1 model; want to make sure HS teachers and students are using them. There is also a line for acquiring a new k-2 teacher college reading curriculum, (phonics for those kids who don't do well with the reading workshop model). Question: Is this in addition to Foundations? Why this new model over other reading programs?
- District is looking for committee volunteers for the building committee. Looking for volunteers with the following skill sets: lawyers, architects, builders, communications, contract approval managers. Please forward any suggestions.

Budget Season

- Stacey and Deb have put together a CDSP [Budget Work Plan](#) and emailed it out to PTO co-chairs and budget reps.
- *Budget Process Overview:* Dr. Addley will present the superintendent's budget to the BOE, BOE will have several meetings to discuss, and then the BOE will vote. BOE has authority to add and/or cut lines. BOE will present the voted upon budget to BOF. BOF does not have line item veto, but can add or cut money overall (except for capital projects). The responsibility of BOF is to determine how to pay for the budget. BOF will vote on the BOE budget, then the BOE budget will join with the Selectmen's budget and go on to the RTM. The RTM can cut a number overall.
- CDSP & PTOs are the voices of the schools/parents. It's important to hear the views of parents and meet with principals to talk about initiatives. Please remember to highlight the public hearing on Feb 1st when CDSP and PTOs can make their voices heard. Reminder that there may also be a special BOE meeting after add/cut. Suggestion for each respective school to schedule a meeting with Dr. Addley again for questions by the parent community.
- Will be using a shared google doc again and Super Saturday outline. Reminder what CDSP/PTO roles are in educating parents and keeping them informed.

Officer Updates

- *Special Education:* (Kadi): Special Education Recognition Day on Dec 2 was well received and successful (received positive feedback from parents, admin and staff). Thank you to PTO chairs and SE reps. There was a lot of enthusiasm for this new way to celebrate SE. Committee meetings are coming up, with Shirley Klein coming to talk to reps about language sensitivity on 12/13 and the annual SE update on 12/14. Will be focusing on budget initiatives/impacts on SE going into the budget season.

- *Communications*: (Byrne): Has been working on the CDSP “Did You Know” series. First iteration was a general overview of CDSP, second was a focus on Special Education to coincide with SE Recognition week, and the third is an explanation of communication flow within CDSP. Budgeting will be a big part of the communication beginning in January. Will also be highlighting community outreach and nominating in the future. Thank you to PTO chairs for getting info into the wires. Comment on how helpful this information has been.
- *Treasurer*: (Lorraine): No update.
- *Community Outreach/DEI*: (Jenn): Organizations that we donate to annually (Darien Foundation, Music for Youth, YWCA) will come in March to present to the group and then we will vote in April. For DEI, Admin is waiting for the consultant to be approved and equity team formed, but still great work going on at the schools with enrichment activities and resources for parents. Continuing to collaborate, share ideas, and continue the conversation. Great work, events and discussion going on in the community as well (eg. Darien United, Menorah Lighting).
- *Special Projects/Nominating*: (Stef): Will be starting the nomination process in Jan and looking for volunteers to participate on the nominating committee. Please forward any suggestions.

School Updates:

Hindley: Working on their first Holiday Market that will be set up outside on the field. It will include a shopping area with items created by students and parents, with the proceeds going to charity. There will also be games, cookie decorating, Toys for Tots collection and cards-for-seniors and craft-making stations. Starting a new initiative called the Husky News that’s being run by the APs and open to 5th graders. Upcoming: Spirit Events and Kindness Week Activities are being planned.

Holmes: Hosted a staff breakfast for SE Awareness Day on Dec 2, and it went well. KidsCare Club held their annual hat and mitten drive to help those in need. The fundraising team delivered home cookie-decorating kits. The Dec cultural highlight featured Hanukkah, and they had a Holmes menorah lighting on Dec 2. Upcoming: The International Cultures Club is organizing a cookie exchange.

Tokeneke: Hosted a conference week/SE Appreciation Day hot luncheon. Held a gingerbread-making event, with kids also decorating bags and donating toys for the P2P toy store. Upcoming: one of the APs will be hosting a parent coffee on navigating friendships. Won’t be holding the annual pancake breakfast but will possibly be doing the passport night with masks.

Ox Ridge: Held their annual Hope Chest Drive, and collected 177 gift cards for foster children. KidsCare Club made homemade holiday cards to accompany. Hosted a conference week staff lunch with a hot lunch (teachers love this). SE Awareness Day featured a bagel breakfast. Upcoming: Speaker series on SEL with principal, APs, school psychologist, and teachers will be in-person, on Zoom, and recorded; a school-wide enrichment author visit by Jerry Pallotta is planned; and Kindness Week activities in collaboration with the DEI committee will be in Feb.

Royle: Held a 1st- and 2nd-grade music, art and literature share. Hosted a catered luncheon on SE Appreciation day. Hosted a Holiday Book Fair with Barrett Bookstore that was really successful. Upcoming: Spirit Week, a Special Ed Parent Coffee, and the annual Hour of Code are coming up.

MMS: Distributed Thanksgiving pies to teachers & staff. Set up a hot chocolate bar with baked items from parents for an MMS staff meeting. SE Recognition Day featured a balloon arch and

more treats in the teachers' lounge. Upcoming: Will be hosting a holiday lunch for staff. Also will be hosting author/therapist Darby Fox in person (and on Zoom) to talk about navigating friendships. A group of students approached the Administration and would like to start a gender and sexuality alliance group to talk after school about allyship, end discrimination; will be student-led with teachers and staff to moderate.

DHS: Had a luncheon for SE staff for SE Recognition Day, and it was well received. In partnership with Staples HS and New Canaan HS, held a virtual author event with Jeff Selingo to talk about the college admission process. Online Spiritwear sales and direct appeal are ongoing. In meetings with the principal heard positives about the student leadership groups (student leadership groups started doing grade level meetings this year). Upcoming: Holiday grab-and-go lunch for faculty and staff.

New Business from the Floor:

- No new business from the floor.

Motion to adjourn by Lori Olson at 11:07 am. First, Stacey. Second, Kelly.

Respectfully submitted by Kristen Croker Fiordalis, Secretary.