

**Carderock Springs PTA General Membership Meeting
June 2, 2015 – 7:30 p.m.**

Meeting called to order at 7:35 pm.

Welcome: – Amy Moore, PTA President, opened the meeting and welcomed attendees.

Principal Palmisano – Annual “State of the School” Update

- In his 6th year at CSES, Mr. Palmisano is the longest serving principal in about 30-40 years.
- Montgomery County Gallup Survey:
 - Administered survey to grade 5 students, staff and other select students.
 - Scored 4.39 grand mean is 5. Highest mean of any of our cluster schools.
 - Highest rating for staff was “I know what is expected of me at work.” Started surveying students to capture student voice. Very simple survey. No names – boy/girl indicated. Student survey was very good across the board.
 - Highest score for students was “my teacher cares about me.” Lowest score was “I am recognized for my good work at school”– lowest, but not low. We have so many high achievers here that sometimes we lose sight of recognizing kids for doing good work. Open-ended responses focused on social/emotional responses. Students were helped if questions were beyond their writing ability. Administered by Mrs. Polizzi.
- Testing:
 - **PARCC** - first year administered. All on Chrome books or laptops. Test has already been revised - shortened length of test and one time frame, reduced sections of reading and math. 11 states that gave PARCC. 15-20 states gave Bright Star test. Take away – much more difficult test than MSA. Results come out in the summer. Keyboarding is essential. Younger students had trouble keeping up if they couldn’t type well. Students receive individual scores – have not been told whether or not scores will be shared with parents.
 - **County assessments K-2 MClass, Map-R 3-5.** These assessments give good information. Scores will be shared with parents if they ask for it.
 - **Fontas and Pinell 3-5grades.** Administered by Zeitlinn and Veihmeyer. Know specific information about student ability and school ability to provide support or enrichment.
 - **Q:** Will PARCC replace some of these assessments? **A:** TBD.
- Writing Program:
 - Lucy Calkins implemented this year. Biggest complaint last year of C2.0 was that students were not going through the writing process. PTA and Foundation supported the program. Surveying students to find what their opinion of program.
 - Teachers observed excitement, confidence and stamina. Teachers liked that it was kid focused and laid out in units. Teachers didn’t like that there are too many expectations for each lesson/too rigorous. Time consuming in terms of planning. Critical piece - if you don’t implement with fidelity, it doesn’t work. To ensure this, Mrs. Zeitlinn went into every classroom at least once per week.
 - Plan next year to have a math night and Lucy Calkins night to walk parents through lessons to experience what it is like for the students. June 8/9 writing celebration.
 - **Q:** Does LC program differentiate between teaching boys/girls? **A:** No student driven.
 - Punctuation is included in the program as a mini-lesson. Writing didn’t come home because they go back and revisit each piece to make each piece stronger as they learn new things.
 - **Q:** Will keyboarding be taught? **A:** There was a flex schedule in computer lab this year - teachers could sign up as they wished. Next year, we will go back to a fixed schedule for specials – focus on keyboarding and spelling. One of the para-educators will teach computer lab. Flex schedule for media center for grades 3-5. Allows classes doing research to use the library more than one time per week.
- Common core math: curriculum used to be a mile wide and an inch deep. In upper grade allows deeper understanding. If you are in the 4th grade, by the time you get to 12th grade you will be able to take AP Calculus. (not necessarily a plus because top universities are no longer giving credit for AP classes.) Overall jury is still out.
 - **Q:** Status of math facts? **A:** Not getting overlooked but not spending much time on them.

- **Q:** Explaining the math answer is difficult. Are they getting help in the classroom to do this? **A:** Mr. Palmisano assured that support is being given.
- Computer time in class – varies widely up to 2 hours for 5th grade. Far less for younger grades
- Science Fair: Maryland Science night – invite scientists in to run stations for families focusing on STEM activities. No science projects next year. Rising 5th graders: roller coaster project will be revamped. Mrs. Talvac just returned from a conference with exciting ideas. STEM week will continue.
 - **Q:** What will replace going through the scientific method? **A:** There will be activities throughout the year.
- Spelling Bee: Mr. Palmisano’s intent was to enter kids in spelling bee and geography bee this year. Delayed due to injury this year. Will implement this coming year.
 - **Q:** Parent teacher conference at beginning of year. But after that not much indicators of how student is doing other than report cards. **A:** Mr. Palmisano has asked for EdLine. Provides up to the minute current information. Budget constraints prevent this. Reach out to teacher if you want more information. Teachers are happy to meet with you and discuss
- School improvement plan:
 - Focus on close reading. Next year we’ll add how to compare texts.
 - Social and Emotional learning
 - County requiring all schools to have a goal in plan. Current focuses on invitations to learn and gathering student data.
 - Mindfulness program would be beneficial – asked PTA and CSES EF for money for this. This year, school will focus on developing and understanding the program so that the following year it is implemented efficiently and wisely. The brightest student will not succeed if social/emotional piece is there. Affirming students, recognizing student contributions, challenging them and empowering students. Brain breaks – for every 10 minutes of instruction, there is 2 minutes of down time – something to consider for next year. Mindfulness; build capacity of staff next year, and will include parent workshops.
 - Peer to peer tutoring has been a big hit. Implemented with 4th grades by Ghaman and Polizzi. Will continue with 4th and 5th grades next year. Students in upper grades work with kids in lower grades. This year 4th graders worked with kindergarteners. Training and reflection piece for tutors. Different from reading buddies.
 - **Q:** How are tutors chosen? **A:** Looked for kids who may not be involved/chosen elsewhere. All have risen to the occasion. Younger students were selected by teachers.
- **Staffing:**
 - Retirements: Ms. Smith, Mrs. Cloherty, Mrs. Healy. All will be missed. Celebration on June 10.
 - Hired terrific people. Ann Rhodia current 5th grade teacher at Matsunagua. Samantha Riceberg from Flower Valley, currently teaching 2nd grade. Reading initiative teacher currently at Rosemary Hills teaching for K-1 for 5 years.
 - Ms. Pirone will go back to school full time to get a degree in social work. Hired Sasha Gomez currently at Bethesda ES doing her internship.
 - Current projected enrollment
 - **Kindergarten:** 20 each in 2 classes
 - **1st:** 26 each in 2 classes. If the numbers remain high or increase, the reading initiative teacher will work exclusively with first grade to reduce the numbers for reading and language arts.
 - **2nd:** Three classes - 20, 20, 19
 - **3rd:** Three classes – 25, 26, 26. Ms. Moser moving to 3rd grade
 - **4th:** Three classes – 23, 23, 23. Subjects will not be departmentalized because team needs to develop with 2 new members. Lucy Calkins support for new members for next year. Mrs. Zeitlin will work closely with new teachers to provide support. Students will switch for math only.
 - **5th:** Three classes – 22, 22, 22. Subjects will be departmentalized.
- Budget crisis - Board of Education and teachers/staff had agreed upon a contract through 2017. Since we don’t have collective bargaining rights, BoE is allowed to open the contract to renegotiate which they have done. \$33M shortfall. Instructional materials and textbook budget cut by 10%
- **Q:** What are the chance of Montgomery County adopting healthier lunch program? **A:** Mr. Palmisano encourages us to talk to Food Services.
- **Q:** What can be done about Beltway noise? **A:** Beltway noise not bothersome inside the classrooms. On playground? Contact construction office with questions.

- **Q:** Day being extended, what is going to happen with the time? **A:** Would like to use that 10 minutes within the classroom, but leave it up to the teachers how to use that time. Looking at creative ways to use that time.
- **Q:** How may parents support classroom learning because homework seems to have decreased (except for 5th grade)? **A:** Contact the teacher for enrichment ideas to do at home. Mr. Palmisano suggests reading with your child and ask them about their reading
- Volunteers – Mr. Palmisano would like to see more parent volunteer opportunities in classrooms. Will monitor VolunteerSpot and find ways to work with teachers to get more parents in classes.

2015-2016 PTA Budget

- Fiscal year end is June 30th. Budget presented is as of June 1.
- Financially, this year was challenging – experienced decrease in Giant Gift Card program and donations to PTA were down.
- Educational programs expense increasing
- Principal’s education fund: pays for planning day substitutes and training days. Shared expense with CSESEF.
- Next year’s budget: transition year with new fundraising options. Tried to be conservative with income expectations. Will roll out new fundraising initiatives but it’s hard to estimate what the net income be for these new programs. Budgeted a further decrease for the Giant Gift Card program.
- Next year, FLEX will run afterschool activities. They run afterschool programs at several schools within our cluster. Biggest administrative expense of pay4schoolstuff credit card charges will go away with FLEX managing afterschool activities.
- Wendy Kuhn moved to approve the budget. Dalia Blass seconded the motion. Budget approved unanimously.

CSESEF – Tiffany Sikes

- Space available in summer keyboarding class. Sign up via foundation website.
- Providing before school program on T/Th. Programming TBD but likely to include language, science, basketball, etc.
- If you know of a great provider for Spanish language, please email Tiffany Sikes.

Other business

- Thanks to Caroline Walsh for all her hard work as treasurer over the last two years.
- Reminders:
 - School Supply Kits deadline is June 8.
 - Writing Celebrations – June 8 K-2; June 9 Grades 3-5
 - Yearbooks – order deadline is June 5
 - Retirement celebration on June 10
 - Autism Speaks 5K is July 4.

Meeting adjourned at 9:04pm