



**CSES PTA DRAFT Membership Meeting & Parent End Speaker
March 1, 2016 at 7:30 p.m. – Media Center**

1. PTA Updates – Amy Moore

- Whitman Cluster Update
 - Advocacy emails inviting/urging families to email the county regarding construction projects pertaining to Pyle and Whitman have been sent. This is a critical time as decisions are being made and enrollment is high. The next step is advocacy steps relating to communications with the Governor.
 - Westbard Development – The area by River Road near the Giant grocery store is up for redevelopment in a sector plan that could potentially add up to 2,500 single family homes/apartments. This would impact the Whitman Cluster including Wood Acres Elementary School, which is already at capacity. This will impact families with young children who will attend schools in this cluster after the redevelopment. Pyle will be expanded by 2020 if there are no delays and funding is received.
 - Cluster leaders are given templates to assist in helping with advocacy. Janna Haynes is our Whitman cluster rep.
- Operating Budget FY 17
 - Will be going to the county for approval and funding.
 - Class sizes and per pupil funding has decreased and we would like to get back to class sizes and per pupil funding levels found in FY09.
- The PTA Nominating committee is forming – five volunteers are needed and an email request was sent to the parents. One more committee member is needed.
- Amy Moore asked for questions. There were none.

2. Parent Education Speaker – Laurie Cameron – Founder, Purpose Blue Mindful Leadership

- Introduction
 - Laurie teaches mindfulness to corporations as well as schools.
 - She sees mindfulness as an experiential state, an orientation of being, a mindset and a skill.

- She invited our group to take a minute to settle in to a quiet state before beginning.
- Why Mindfulness?
 - We tell our kids to pay attention, but we don't tell them how.
 - They need to understand how to master their body and become their own "Jedi Master".
 - Athletic coaches such as Pete Carroll as well as corporate giants such as Apple train in mindfulness.
 - Laurie teaches mindfulness at Chevy Chase Elementary School and has taught 1,500 kids.
- Neurology of Being Human
 - Brain & Survival – We are wired to scan for perceived threats. This triggers the nervous system.
 - Negativity Bias – Negative events stick, good events tend not to stick.
 - Cultivating Self Awareness & Becoming the Observer – We are conditioned a certain way and we filter content through perceptions.
- Science of Mindfulness
 - Thing Brain & Emotional Brain – The prefrontal cortex & amygdala get triggered for "fight or flight" reflexes.
 - We train our prefrontal cortex to reduce activity in the amygdala.
 - Average time spent with mind wandering is 47%. Mindfulness trains people to notice when their mind is wandering and then bring it back.
- What is Mindfulness?
 - Awareness that arises from paying attention, on purpose, in the present moment, non-judgmentally.
 - A radical shift in the way in which we attend to experience.
 - Compassion/self-compassion.
 - Going from viewing blurry to sharp resolution.
 - We can train our attention and notice our mind is wandering (meta-attention).
 - The structure of the brain is actually altered and we create new neural pathways to cultivate.
 - Emotions
 - We can choose our response and have the ability to pause, notice emotions, and know what is important.
 - "I am not my emotions."
 - Emotions come and go – they are transitory – we learn to witness them. "I am experiencing....." They are fleeting.
 - Snowglobe example: Shaking a snow globe is like watching emotions settle into calmness, clarity and well-being.
- Steps Taken With Teachers
 - Train attention for a more focused settled mind.

- Increase emotional intelligence and self-mastery.
 - Build skilled mental habits.
 - Attention Training – Follow breath, become distracted, notice the distraction, reorientation of attention.
 - Building mindfulness muscles much like muscles at the gym.
- Laurie walked the group through a sitting meditation.
 - We noticed the opportunity to shift to an optimal state.
- Roadmap for Teaching Mindfulness at Carderock
 - Training faculty attention
 - Learning about emotions and self management
 - Kindness and compassion
 - Classroom tools:
 - Mindful jar, movements, stop light, kindness mindset
 - Mindful breathing: Increments up to 1, 2, 5, 10 minutes. Quiet place to sit. Bell rings. Take three breaths. Breathe during the transitions.
 - Skill becomes the trait of being present.
- Q&A from Parents to Laurie:
 - Q: Are there workshops or camps available?
 - A: There are website resources, books and CD's. Circle Yoga in DC has mindfulness/yoga for kids. For Teens, there are IBME retreats.
 - Q: Could you see this as an after dinner activity?
 - A: Yes. Laurie does this before dinner too. Breathe and notice mindful process from farm to plate with gratitude. Body scan before bed. Train the ability to notice. Mindful listening to sounds helps too.
 - Q: Is this being implemented in classrooms at Carderock?
 - We are following the model of building capacity of staff this year. We are mapping out a plan for classroom implementation in some classes in the 4th marking period. Full implementation will occur next year, though some teachers are already using some of the methods.