Parents’ Council

General Meeting

March 11, 2013

The meeting was called to order at 9:20 a.m.  Mari Anne led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mari Anne’s welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending.  The minutes from the February meeting were distributed electronically.  She reminded everyone that our voting members are the PTO Presidents, Treasures and Representatives in attendance.  She asked for a motion to approve the minutes as written; the motion was made, seconded and approved by the group.

Mari Anne pointed out that on the tables was a copy of the proposed slate of officers for the Parents’ Council for the 2013-14 year.  We are announcing the slate today, and will vote on it at our next and final general meeting for this year, on April 15.

Mari Anne loves reporting successes, and she had one to share.  Last Wednesday, Parents’ Council held their annual Vendor Expo at ISF and it was a resounding success.  Over 40 vendors participated, and several hundred people from CCSD and neighboring districts came through.  She thanked Sandy Roberts for her outstanding efforts on this year’s event, and encouraged everyone to please let Parents’ Council know your ideas for any improvements for next year.

Mari Anne reminded the group about the Cherry Creek Schools Foundation annual luncheon coming up on Friday, March 15.  She indicated it wasn’t too late to RSVP by calling the Foundation directly, but to please contact Jill Henden or Ashley ASAP.  This year’s keynote speaker is Steve Spangler, who was a teacher in the district at Willow Creek elementary for many years.

Mari Anne asked if anyone in the group has been notified that they are one of this year’s Exceptional Volunteers for the district.  Several people raised their hands; Mari Anne congratulated and thanked them.  She asked everyone to join us to honor these individuals, as well as a volunteer from each of our schools, at the annual Exceptional Volunteer Recognition Event.  Sponsored by Parent’s Council, the dinner will take place on Thursday, April 25, from 5:30 to 9:00 PM at the Hyatt DTC.  The event committee has been hard at work for several months, and the theme for this year is "Our Exceptional Volunteers are Shining Stars, Inspiring Bright Futures for ALL Students”.  Invitations will be sent out next Monday, so please watch for them.   Please direct any questions to Wendy DeBell.

On Thursday, April 18, the KEJI College Fair will take place at Cherry Creek High School.  There is a flyer in the back; and Parents’ Council will be sending out information electronically for you to share with your parents.  This college night is for parents and students, and is specific to kids who have learning, developmental and/or healthcare needs, who carry disability labels, or who are on an IEP/ILP or 504.  Also, the annual Family Wellness Summit and 9 News Health Fair is coming up on April 20 at Smoky Hill High School.  Please see Janise McNally or Karen Fisher for more info.

Mari Anne invited Randy Perlis to update the group on the Board of Education.  Randy pointed out that there are changes on the horizon for the Cherry Creek School District, with Mary Chesley leaving and Harry Bull coming on board.  There will also be changes on the Board as well, and Randy feels all the changes are positive and encouraged us to be positive as well.  The Board is very confident in the future with the new district administrative staff and board.  TCAP’s are this week; Randy said it seems to be more stressful for his kids than past years.  His 3rd grader had a worried moment the other day regarding the test, but was talked down by older siblings.  Randy asked for parents’ assistance in helping the kid’s get good sleep and food for the testing.  The State Legislature is currently in session and there are two education bills expected to be voted on this session.  The first one is the regular education bill that’s voted on each year, and those results are generally known and expected.  Randy and the Board are very grateful for the passing of 3A & 3B and for all the work that many in the room did to help.  The second education bill is of more concern and the outcome is not yet known, and the discussions are being closely watched.  Wednesday, March 13, 2013 is the District’s Day at the Legislature.  This is a great opportunity to meet and visit with our legislators and share concerns on education.  Also, it makes an impression if a large group from a district shows up; the legislators take notice.

Mari Anne asked Superintendent Mary Chesley to provide her update.  Mary mentioned the saying “March comes in like a lion, leaves like a lamb” and how so far the lion has only shown up on the weekends-for which she is very grateful.  She assured the group that as much care is given when canceling/rescheduling weekend district activities as is given on school days.  Safety is always the first concern for the District and is what their decisions are based on.  There were folks upset this last weekend because things were canceled on Friday, based on weather reports for the weekend, and then it didn’t come in as bad.  They can only make decisions based on the information they have at the time.  She encouraged anyone who has questions about their policy to talk to her.  Mary is always reminded how much she loves our kids.  When it snowed in February, she received lots of emails from kids jockeying for a snow day.  She then read one of them that was very funny, and creative!, regarding icy roads.  Mary though it was terrific that only one of the emails was perhaps over the line.  The lions & lambs in March continue; starting with TCAPS, then SATS for juniors and continues with other assessment testing.  Spring is testing season.  While some people complain that teaching is directed towards the testing, Mary feels it should be that way, so we can assess how the teachers are doing as well as the kids.

Mary reiterated how interesting District Day at the Capitol is and encouraged everyone to attend.  She also mentioned the two education bills in the legislature; the second one (with the unknown results) was introduced by Senator Johnson.  As of today, the District would gain $447 per student from the bill; while that’s a great amount, it is only 1/3 of what other districts may gain.  The bill is very specific about districts, which she hasn’t seen before.  She has spoken to our legislators about the District’s concerns.  Our students are no less at risk, have disabilities, need services, etc. than any other kid across the street in another district.

While the lions & lambs of weather, testing and legislation come in March, she assured the group they are addressing all of them.  While they have no control of the weather, they will support students in testing and work with the legislature to ensure the best future for our students and the district.

Dr. Scott Siegfried was asked to present his talk on Physical Safety in our Schools.  Physical safety in the District was re-addressed due to the tragedy at Sandy Hook Elementary last December.  Dr. Scott Siegfried gave a presentation entitled “Physical Safety Enhancements…Sharing our Process, Sharing our Thinking”.  Dr. Siegfried will be making a similar presentation at the March Board of Education meeting (3/11/13), as well as the District Accountability meeting on March 13.  He began by providing an overview of current methods of providing physical and psychological safety in our schools.  The District has been working with various law enforcement agencies to conduct vulnerability assessments, and the Safe Schools Design Team is looking to create a new baseline.

Topics currently being addressed in regard to physical security include controlling and monitoring access to schools’ main entry points, access to mobile areas, upgrades to transportation tracking and monitoring, integration of communication notification systems, surveillance systems, school climate and psychological support, coordination with first responders, and ongoing training.

The next steps are soliciting feedback from the Board of Education and the community, hearing the recommendations from the Safe Schools Design Team, and then developing a time line for implementation.

Dr. Siegfried then addressed questions from those present, and invited people to note questions or comments on index cards which were turned in at the conclusion of the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:35 AM.

The next meeting date is Monday, **April 15**.   Topic:  High School Seniors will talk about “Overcoming Adversity on the Path to Graduation”.  Meeting time, 9:15 AM.  Networking and refreshments at 8:45 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Alicia Speer

Secretary