

# Canon-McMillan School District Parent Council

## Meeting Minutes – October 15, 2021

The October meeting of the CMSD Parent Council was called to order at 9:25 a.m. on Friday, October 15, 2021 by Mary Lynn Yurko, Parent Council Secretary. The meeting was held at South Central Elementary School. Presiding Board members: *Mary Lynn Yurko (Recording Secretary)*.

**WELCOME** Principal Tomicek of South Central Elementary School and Guest Speakers Superintendent Michael Daniels and Assistant Superintendent Scott Chambers.

### **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

#### **Approval of last meeting minutes (February 2020):**

Mary Hietpas (First motion); Tami Miller (Second).

Due to the COVID 19 pandemic, CMSD Parent Council meetings were put on hold until October 2021.

#### **South Central Principal report: Principal Michelle Tomicek discussed:**

- South Central has jumped into a busy school year, adjusting to our “new normal” without hesitation.
- Friday, October 15, 2021 will be South Central PTA Family Fun Night, with a Football Tailgate from 5:30 to 7:00 pm outside.
- Last week of October the entire district will acknowledge Red Ribbon Week, pledging to live drug-free. Activities include fun dress-up day themes that go along with the message for the day. Red Ribbon week focuses on drug/alcohol free actions. Elementary schools have a similar set up with Fire Prevention week.
- South Central Elementary was ranked #53 and Hills Henderson Elementary #70 and CMS was ranked #58 on the US News' Best Schools Rankings.
- Halloween party scheduled for October 29, 2021.

#### **Guest Speaker Superintendent Mike Daniels report:**

- PA Secretary of Health Alison Beam presented issued order on Sept 7, 2021 reported continuing to wear masks until health risk is such that it's unnecessary. CMSD Administration is complying with it to do what it has to under the order.
- 10 day quarantine –Current CMSD COVID-19 protocol is listed on website.
- Schoology classroom: Teachers are posting daily lessons to complete. There has been a concern regarding remote learning during the pandemic. CMSD stated there were a large number of students that were “lost “during remote instruction and big learning gaps were noted. CMSD wanted to create / focus on in-person learning because some students were not actively participating when unmonitored at home.
- Remote programming—this aspect needed to add more quality education/learning instruction. The CMSD Union leadership has been working with CMSD Administration over the past

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month on developing a plan to provide an improved instructional plan. Quality of instruction was missed over the pandemic.

- Cecil intermediate is closed now temporarily from a COVID-19 “outbreak”. School district follows the Pennsylvania Department of Health guidance. Length of time for the closure is a local decision. Contact tracing was also completed.
- Congratulations to the Canon-McMillan Schools that ranked in US News' Best Schools Rankings out of 1607 schools in PA:
  - 53<sup>rd</sup> South Central Elementary School
  - 70<sup>th</sup> Hills-Hendersonville Elementary
  - 219<sup>th</sup> Muse Elementary School
  - 257<sup>th</sup> Wylandville Elementary School
  - 314<sup>th</sup> Cecil Intermediate School
  - Canonsburg Middle School ranked in the top 30% of middle schools in the state of Pennsylvania with ranking 58<sup>th</sup> out of 877 schools:
- The district is still in its search for staffing – especially cafeteria workers (currently 7 open positions). In addition, the district van drivers are low and additional staffing is needed. CMSD is addressing shortages and using their available resources as best we can.
- **CMS new school update: October 2022 to be opened.** The new CMS is starting in August 2022! Since the district needs to have it open in time for the new school year, a request was made to the current contractor to focus on getting the cafeteria and classrooms first, then delay the development of the new central office to achieve the August 2022 opening date.
- Cecil Intermediate School has an elevator that was in need of repair to comply with ADA guidelines. There is an Oct. 19-2021 inspection planned and a review for occupancy.
- Parking lot Transportation was previously being outsourced. CMSD decided to put transportation assets together (43 new pieces of equipment) now housed at the football stadium. The support facility parking lot was adapted to support this new endeavor.
- Borland Manor Elementary –has been using buckets to collect water from roof. Given a risk for mold, CMSD acknowledged a need to be preventative and a new roof was recently installed.
- Muse Post Office: CMSD has owned this property for a number of years. The property was going to be part of the project to open up access to Muse and make the entrance drive wider. They relocated the post office and the old one was tore down and now CMSD is expanding the area for bus travel.
- Other focuses will include development at Wylandville Elementary school.

Question: How are snow days evaluated at the school district? *Response: They look at 57 square miles to consider weather conditions when determining a snow day.*

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Question (Tami Miller): “Can you use flex days for snow days?” *Response: yes*

Question (Tami Miller): “Will there be a special board meeting at end of month to transition kids to new school at Muse? It is going to be a big change to switch the kids out. Staffing is needed ASAP for 3<sup>rd</sup> grade to be ready”. *Response: There is a process, there were 2 candidates but one didn't accept the position. Therefore, the district must go through this process again unfortunately. The candidate at Wylandville has been a long-term substitute teacher. The district is doing what they can to find another candidate. There are three 4<sup>th</sup> grade classes (30 kids per class). Budget considerations are important to consider as well. The district must function within reasonable bounds of our resources.*

Question (M. Garner) Following contact tracing efforts, will something be rolled out for quarantine and or remote learning options? *Response: It is not an option for homeschooling purposes. The remote option will be for those quarantining.*

Question (M. Garner): Why are there so many people out (not working)? *Response: The district experienced a shortage of staffing before COVID—it was an even bigger problem after Covid19 pandemic. Pay rates also have changed.*

Question: In 2019, we had discussed field trips being put back into the school district's budget. Our field trips are free at Muse, so what is the deadline to contact this year for PTO to get this covered under the budget (in 2019)? *Response: “Fiscal year runs annually, from July to June. The district begins discussing budget items in November, December, and January. We as a school district have been lucky to have drivers to do what is necessary at this point. Funding is not an issue now; it is the availability of bus drivers. Buses are on a cycle for use and the district is purchasing 4 to 5 buses a year, to make it “budget friendly”. The district also has an “in-house” CDL training course. Currently we have 15 people signed up to attend”:*

Question: Should PTO plan to not have field trips? *Response: “PTO needs to consider a time to put on the request when CMSD is not running the buses. Look at Feb/March, if departure at 9:30 am to 2 pm. CMSD transportation director updates formula to calculate costs for this. PTO is paying district to rent the bus.*

Question: Schools have a staffing issue, but do we have a supply chain issue too? *Response: Paper and technology is difficult since the pandemic. There have been menu changes also as a result of the pandemic-related shortages.*

Question: Following an article recently published regarding the school resource officer contract with North Strabane Twp.; does CMSD still have SRO in each building? *Response: Yes, each of the district schools still has School Resource Officers.*

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### Guest Speaker Mrs. Lani Director of Curriculum/Instruction:”

- At the two intermediate bldgs. - The district has kept both Title 1 teachers.
- There is no longer “Code to Future” program as the company no longer exists. Now, new teachers are being trained on how to utilize the SCRATCH coding program. Grades 1 to 4 will use Scratch, Legos and robotics. There will be a Minecraft option for use as well.
- At 5/6 grade they are now using STEM innovation. Ms. Carol at is now at CMHS. Elementary school (Ms. Stankus) is working with others to do coding.

### Questions

Question (M. Garner): How are curriculum changes approached? *Response: CMSD selects a program after a certain number of years. Rarely do they purchase a “curriculum”; they usually purchase a textbook and it is reviewed by a committee of teachers. This year they are writing curriculum. They post a request for teachers to be on a textbook committee (at least 2 teachers) to look at publisher and evaluate and come to a consensus with the text, and bring to Board for approval. If approved, it is purchased. 2 teachers are selected per grade level for a seat on the committee.*

*For revisions to written curriculum, they first must choose the PA State standards, which must be imbedded into the curriculum documents. Publishers now list books when they expire (when they adopt it –usually for approximately 6 - 7 years). The GO MATH company no longer supports it so the district must evaluate again. Every text is reviewed renewed every seven years.*

Question: My son is at CMS (8<sup>th</sup> grade) and registered for one of the 5 week courses where the teacher out for 2 weeks. We were wondering what happens with a 5 week course? *Response: There has been a shortage of substitutes and not all have that specific area of expertise. There is probably a lesson plan that is set up. Should not be an issue for transitioning to high school, since this is not a prerequisite for anything at the high school. Follow up with that teacher is necessary.*

Question (Mary Hiaptus): Will there be PSSA testing? *Response: Testing will be happening this school year—it is on the district calendar for April 2022. The window for last year was extended and results from that testing is not due back until Jan/Feb 2022.*

- **District schools are now offering more tutoring afterschool to close the gap that occurred in learning during the pandemic.**

### Old Business

A revision has been noted for the meeting minutes from the February 21, 2020 Parent Council meeting. The revision reflects the update for the scheduled opening for new Middle School which is now set for the 2022-2023 school year.

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### **New Business:**

The PTC board asked meeting attendees if there was any opposition to continuing with existing Parent Council Board members since the pandemic had suspended all meetings during the previous year (2019 to 2020). No objections were stated by meeting attendees. The motion was carried. The current board members Megan Clouner and Mary Lynn Yurko will continue on the board.

PTC board also announced the council is accepting applicants for an open position. PTC bylaws state the applicant should have attended at least half of the meetings in the previous year (2019), but interested parties should please provide your contact information to me the Board today, or via email at [mlyurko@verizon.net](mailto:mlyurko@verizon.net).

**The next Parent Council meeting is scheduled for November 12, 2021 at Wylandville Elementary School at 9:30 a.m.**

PTC would like to thank Principal Tomicek, Superintendent Daniels, and Assistant Superintendent Chambers, and Mrs. Lani for their time and hospitality for this meeting.

Motion to adjourn at: 10:46 a.m.

1<sup>st</sup> motion: Mo Garner

2<sup>nd</sup> motion: Megan Fleming