

Canon –McMillan School District Parent Council Meeting Minutes - November 12, 2021

The November 2021 meeting of the CMSD Parent Council was held at Wylandville Elementary School and was called to order at 9:31 a.m. on Friday, November 12, 2021 by Mary Lynn Yurko. The 2022 Parent Council Board members in attendance included:

Mary Lynn Yurko-President; Megan Clouner, Vice President, and Jayme Koenig – Secretary.

WELCOME: Principal Shannon Balch of Wylandville Elementary School, Guest Speaker Mr. Jurdon Maier, Director of Transportation at Canon Macmillan School District, and Assistant Superintendent Scott Chambers.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Approval of last meeting minutes (October 2021):

Tami Miller (First motion); Trisha Ziacik (Second).

Wylandville Elementary Principal Report Overview: Principal Shannon Balch

- Wylandville has started a 5 year partnership with WQED and PBS Smartschools. As part of the kickoff students created self-portraits. Wylandville also offered a number of Family Engagement activities that families can take part in which the station hosts.
- Make your mark program” - find your talents and gifts use to make your community a better place. “Permanent Markers” program ongoing at Wylandville helps to teach leadership skills to the fourth grade students. The students apply for jobs, helping with various tasks within the school.
- An outdoor classroom was installed with a grant. The students plan the growing seasons and paraprofessionals assist in the greenhouse.
- Wylandville hosted a “Decorate Your Pumpkins” event in October as part of the behavior support program.
- Wylandville kindergarten students hosted a food drive to support World Kindness Day on November 13, 2021. The food drive will to help families in the community with the upcoming holidays.

Guest Speaker: Mr. Jurdon Maier – CMSD Transportation Director

Bus driver shortages:

Mr. Maier discussed how last year there were school bus driver shortages nationwide. CMSD put in place its own in-house training program to find candidates from the van driver pool. This allowed “in-house” van drivers to obtain their CDL for the buses. The in-house CDL trainers assisted the applicants with classroom training time, and obtaining the CDL permit. The most recent applicant pool had 18 candidates. There have been 7 new bus drivers and 15 van drivers added to the sub list.

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Alerts for school delay/closure

Mr. Maier addressed the process for assessing delays and cancellations. Student safety across the whole district is a priority. During inclement weather, Mr. Maier and Mr. Daniels evaluate road conditions across the district (Canonsburg, North Strabane, Cecil, Eighty-Four, etc.) around 4 a.m. Feedback is provided from all 3 township public works departments. A decision is made whether a 2 hr. delay or cancellation is needed by 5 a.m. CMSD is also notified by the townships if a road closure occurs. Alternate routes are then suggested and notifications for any late arrivals are then made.

Current District Projects Update:

- New Middle School: As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a delay in contractors getting in appropriate building materials necessary to complete the Middle School. October 25, 2022 is the new projected finish date. There are two new parking lots as well since all van/buses are now run from within the district. A better idea of the completion will be in March 2022. The road the new Middle School address is 100 BIG MAC BLVD.
- The old Middle School on East College will likely be sold when the new school is completed. CMSD does not intend to retain the property and will be decommissioned.
- Muse Elementary road: CMSD is working with Penn DOT to widen the road.

Closed out projects at CMSD:

- The district replaced the elevator at Cecil Intermediate.
- Borland manor had a new roof installed.
- New lockers and bleachers were installed at stadium.
- 9 schools upgrading and updating for preventative maintenance.

Additional updates:

- Martin Luther King Day (1/17/22) will be a make-up date for the flooding earlier. In service day is scheduled for 1/18/22.
- Baseball field will be getting turfed. Surveyors were at North Strabane Township fields 11/11/21. Planned activities for February/March 2022 for Spring.

Questions:

Question (M. Garner): At the last meeting it was asked why the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) are paying for using district buses for school field trips, and what is the current pricing? *Response: A request can be made for cost breakdown. Since November 2020, Transportation cost for field trips had to be moved to PTO. Mr. Chambers discussed the dramatic cuts from state. CMSD was forced to look at ways to cut these shortages in the budget. Concerns should be brought to CMSD School Board meetings.*

Question (Trisha Ziacik): Great job going through the CDL program. Once they receive their licenses, is there a contract for a period of time? *Response: There is an out of pocket expense and training must be completed first. CMSD does not have a contract with these applicants; the costs are only reimbursed by the district should the driver be hired.*

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Question: How many new drivers have been hired, how are you getting the message out? *Response: Advertising has been completed on radio and with banners on media platforms. Seven new bus drivers and fifteen new van drivers were hired.*

Speaker: Mr. Scott Chambers – Assistant Superintendent of CMSD

Mr. Chambers thanked the meeting attendees and reiterated the PTC meetings are a great resource to get accurate information to the parents and community. There is a need to provide an informal forum to address concerns within the district, which can get misrepresented in the “rumor mill”.

Remote instruction: Administration and teachers agreed that when students are in quarantine it is necessary to improve the supports to the students while they are out. The district has reached an agreement with the teacher association and the agreement is currently “IN PLACE”. If a student is out for a Covid-19-related illness, there will be video instruction available. Foreign language and AP would also be included. If the student does not have a device, then the school district would provide one during this time.

Recent court ruling regarding mask mandate: The district had received a lot of questions and had not reviewed the Order. The Plaintiff can ask if the stay be lifted, but school district did not hear about the STAY being lift or if the next steps have been filed. The governor stated in a press conference the State would be lifting the mandate in January 2022.

Question: Regarding the CMSD Legal Counsel/ Solicitor: How do the other school districts let them opt out? Why does our school district not opt out of the mask mandate? Our solicitor works for McGuffey District too, and that district opted out. *Response: The school district has an attorney (Solicitor). We have one on each side, there are interpretations. CMSD solicitor gave advice and the board opted to follow it. The State made it clear that they were dealing with districts that aren't following it. The district is trying to not expend tax dollar money (via lawsuits, etc.). The Board said the ORDER is in a STAY, it is still in effect until Plaintiff files next steps. CMSD can't speak to what the Solicitor at another school district or their school board is doing.*

Question (M. Clouner): If the mandate is lifted, can they mandate the vaccination? Will district say you can come without masks, but you have to be vaccinated? *Response: The school district will revert to previous health and safety plan.*

Question: If masks are optional in January 2022, will it change quarantine policy? *Response: We (the district) are following CDC guidance and will conduct contact tracing and quarantine. There are 500 districts with local control. Pennsylvania Department of Education is being clear about its policy with the districts.*

Question (Mo Garner): Will the school district hold another vaccine clinic? *Response: Yes. UPMC will run another clinic in December at the high school. All three booster shots, as well as the Pfizer vaccine for the 5 to 11 yr. olds will be offered. Children under 18 yrs. old must be accompanied by parent. Proposed clinic dates are December 1st and December 22nd; from 3 to 6 pm at gym or cafeteria. Information will be posted on the district website soon.*

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Digital delivery of lessons:

Remote options for snow days have been approved as a Flexible Instruction Day (FID). The district has a set number approved for inclement weather. The schools will send home paper packets, Chromebook resource (as needed) prior to the event when possible. This is considered an asynchronous learning day.

Question (J. Koenig): Will the school revert to the previously approved health and safety plan if we go mask optional? AND, will the health and safety plan be changed or addressed by the school board in the near future? *Response (Mr. Chambers): The school board has not met since the stay was lifted and appealed. Mr. Daniels has communicated with them and they have not asked for a special meeting, and it is not on agenda that we know of to update /revise the health and safety plan at this time.*

Mr. Chambers stated of weekly cases: uptick this week (November 12, 2022) in staff with COVID.

Question: Will there be a swimming pool installed at the new Middle School? *Response: There will be NO new pool at the new Middle School. There will still be swim program for the Middle School; however they will bus them to the high school. Pools are expensive to maintain and very corrosive. Replacements have just been completed at the high school because of this.*

Old Business PTC News

1. Read summary of PTC by-laws to discuss process for filling Board position.
2. Announcement for applicants that we received (2).
3. Existing PTC Board members voted to fill open position. Jayme Koenig was selected in accordance with by-law requirements (attendance of a number of prior PTC meetings).
4. A vote will be held in either April or Sept. 2022 for selection of the new PTC board.
5. PTC Board reiterated that interested CMSD parents should attend PTC meetings to qualify and to please submit names at the upcoming meetings to fill the positions on the 2022-2024 Board.

We would highly recommend our CMSD parent community participate in this great opportunity as it provides a nice “informal” forum for parents to learn and discuss issues at the CMSD schools with its Administration.

New Business

Next Meeting Scheduled for January 21, 2022 at CMSD High School

The CMSD Parent Council Board would like to say “Thank You” again to Principal Balch, our Guest Speaker Mr. Jurdon Maier, and Assistant Sup. Chambers for the updates in the district.

MOTION TO ADJOURN

1st motion: Lisa Black

2nd Motion: Jayme Koenig

Meeting Adjourned 10:33 a.m.