



Central Magnet School PTO

General Board Meeting Minutes

April 24, 2023

PARTICIPANTS

Dr. Ash	Ayat Abu Halimah	Whitney Murphy
Mr. Nichols	Meridee Pelham	Caroline Bartlett
Mrs. Clary	Nikki Messick	Holly Holton
Mrs. McAdams	Nicole Lester Russell	Claire Jarrett
Mrs. Gerhart	Kathie Elfersy	Approximately 40 CMS Parents
Kristen Warner	Wendy Mills	

A general meeting of the Central Magnet School PTO was called to order at 6:30 PM CST on Monday, April 24, 2023, in the Central Auditorium.

Welcome and Introductions

- Dr. Ash welcomed everyone
- CMS PTO President then quickly introduced the other current PTO Board Members by name and position
 - Two current members were not able to make it tonight
- Next the CMS PTO President gave brief overview of what the meeting would consist
 - Quickly go over financials, volunteer opportunities, introduce newly elected board members
 - Guidance counselors answer questions asked of them beforehand, followed by a Q&A time tonight
 - Dr. Ash's Principal Report and comments

TREASURER'S REPORT

- CMS Treasurer stood up and shared the following information
 - Total bank balance of \$37,378.69 which matches our back statement
 - CMS PTO approved and wrote a check for \$25,000 to CMS in February
 - That makes total given so far this school year \$35,000
 - Amazon Smile has brought in \$1,214.95 this school year
 - Total Brighter Future collections of \$45,504.71 so far this school year
 - Total Super Trivia Bowl collections of \$20,726.96

FUNDRAISING REPORT

- A CMS Fundraising Co-Coordinator stood up and shared the following information about the Brighter Future Campaign
 - The purpose of Brighter Future donations is to help offer more diverse ways for Dr. Ash and the school to spend money to impact our students, teachers, and staff learning/teaching experiences
 - There were pictures of Tiger Hunt, Pig Out, Super Trivia Bowl, Back to School Breakfast for Teachers, etc., on PowerPoint



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- We are at 91.1% of our goal
- Approximately \$4,500 needed to meet our goal
- The last time the goal was reached was during the 2017-2018 school year
- There will be another push before the school year ends to help us get to that goal
- We will have one final check to write and give Dr. Ash and administration for purchases needed over the summer in preparation for next school year

VOLUNTEER REPORT

- CMS PTO President thanked parents for all the ways they have already contributed and explained how there will be a couple more events as the year ends to show thanks and appreciation to the teachers and staff
 - Administrative Professional's Day lunch provided by PTO on Wednesday, April 26th
 - Teacher Appreciation Week – May 8th-12th
 - There will be snacks available to teachers all week, breakfast provided one day, and lunch provided another
 - There will be daily gift card giveaways for teachers to win gift cards
 - Every teacher will win throughout the week
 - This is a great way to say, "Thank you!" at the end of the year when you may not know what your child's teachers like, when your child has so many teachers that it can be hard to purchase something for all of them, and when you have multiple children with multiple teachers
 - \$10 gift cards are preferred
 - There will be a Sign-Up Genius emailed out to everyone with all the information and links to sign up to contribute
- CMS PTO President spoke for CMS PTO Vice President (because her voice was gone due to allergies) and gave update about the upcoming International Food Festival
 - This Saturday, April 29th from 4pm-6pm in the CMS cafeteria
 - CMS PTO President explained how the CMS PTO VP had this idea from previous school and was passionate about bringing it to CMS
 - It is not a fundraiser, but a way of giving back and allowing the families of CMS to share culture with the diversity of countries represented at CMS
 - Families invited to come and enjoy "tasting of the world"
 - 14 participating countries (India, Korea, Egypt, Netherlands, France, Venezuela, Jordan, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Scotland, Mexico, Germany, China, and USA)
 - Families of each table are donating the food and their time to share their culture, please RSVP by this Wednesday, April 26th so they know how much food to prepare

New Business

- CMS PTO President gave information about 2023-2024 PTO Board



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- Eleven positions on the CMS PTO Executive Board for next year
- An email was sent out to all the families on March 20th asking for self-nominations
 - Self-nomination window closed April 7th
- The slate of officers was emailed to all families on April 12th
- Elections were held via Survey Monkey from April 13th – April 17th
 - 120 parents participated in the election – Thank you! – We are all a part of PTO
- CMS PTO President introduced the Executive Board Members for 2023-2024 by name and position
 - Three of the newly elected board members were unable to make it tonight
- CMS PTO President encouraged parents to come and help with events to get to know teachers
- CMS PTO President explained how there are new by-law amendments proposed to help meet the current needs of the school
 - This information will be sent through email to all parents, made available on the PTO website, and on social media
 - PTO Board would like to hear any comments, questions, and concerns about these by-laws
 - We will vote on the by-laws in the fall, tentatively in September 2023
 - All contact information for PTO, Guidance Counselors, and Administration is on the CMS website

GUIDANCE INFORMATION

- CMS PTO President and Dr. Ash welcomed and introduced CMS Guidance Counselors: Mrs. Clary (A-G), Mrs. McAdams (H-O), and Mrs. Gerhart (P-Z)
- Mrs. McAdams and Mrs. Clary discussed questions asked of Guidance prior to the meeting while Mrs. Gerhart found the specific information on the CMS website and displayed on screen for those in attendance
 - Question: Please explain the difference between AP and Dual Enrollment classes. - What factors go into deciding which is a better path for a student? - Is there a case in which students should NOT take an AP exam (other than financial)?
 - Content is very similar in that both are college level courses taken in high school
 - Dual Enrollment
 - Can start Junior year in high school
 - Free with grant
 - Two math classes and two science classes offered at CMS
 - + Classes are a college semester class stretched over the whole school year for our high school students
 - MTSU professors come to CMS to teach
 - If students pass the course, they get credit
 - + No exam like with AP classes



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- MTSU credit transfers to MTSU no problem and to other state schools fine (lots of out of state, state schools will accept as well)
 - + Private colleges do not necessarily accept so you need to check with specific schools
- Some schools take the grade earned as the first grade on the college transcript (MTSU does), while others will just show as a credit (UTK does this)
- Information on how to sign up for Dual Enrollment is on the CMS Guidance website
- AP (Advanced Placement) Classes
 - All high school students can take
 - Governed through the college board
 - College level course taught by a CMS teacher
 - 29 AP classes offered at CMS
 - AP exam at end of class in May
 - Scores range from 1-5
 - + Most colleges/universities say 3-5 is passing/will count for credit
 - + Students have an Advisory lesson on this and can look and see which scores are accepted at which schools
 - CMS offers a Magnet Diploma at graduation for those who have completed at least four AP classes
 - + That averages one a year, but many students choose to take more in Junior and Senior year
 - AP exams for this year start next week
 - + Seniors will take their classes at end and will know where to send scores
 - Exams cost \$97
 - + Dr. Ash said that if you need help with the cost of the test to come see him or other administration team
 - Dr. Ash added other information
 - + He mentioned how CMS has more AP classes than any other high school in Tennessee
 - + Our teachers have a high pass rate for our students (most score 3-5)
 - + When students take advantage of AP classes they can get ahead for college
 - ◇ His daughter graduated in 2 years of college
 - ◇ Former CMS student was 3 semesters away from graduation on first day of college
- How is GPA calculated, and where can parents find their child's GPA? - How does AP/DE weight factor into the grade/GPA?



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- Rutherford County School Board defines the policy on how GPA is calculated
- 4.0 unweighted GPA
- Every semester points calculated, not by nine weeks
- A = 4 points, B = 3 points, C = 2 points, and D = 1 point
- Internal weight for CMS
 - Honors and Advance Honors get 3 points added to the final grade of the grading period
 - Dual Enrollment classes get 4 points added to the final grade of grading period
 - AP classes get 5 points added to the final grade of grading period
- Rutherford County did change rules on Valedictorian
 - Now must graduate with honors distinction, maintain a 4.0 GPA, and have the highest ACT score for that specific class
+ 36 is the highest possible ACT score
 - Salutatorian would be the same but then have second highest ACT score (35)
- Central offers a wide variety of elective classes that sometimes get overlooked. -Starting a foreign language in MS vs HS pros/cons of each. - Please highlight different classes that get overlooked. - Explain the grid list of classes given to students is just a snapshot of the classes offered and that parents/students should look at the full list of courses on the website.
 - CMS offers students the opportunity to start foreign languages and high school level math in middle school
 - Foreign Language available to 7th grades
 - Chance to get ahead and take higher level language and math classes later
+ AP classes
 - Those credits will be on high school transcripts
 - Some classes that get overlooked and can be taken as electives such as Mythology and Shakespeare
 - Dr. Ash mentioned Robotics and Engineering as options for electives
 - The grid of classes is the list of class offerings and can be found on the website
 - Lists all courses offered under each subject
 - Make sure students explore and see what they can try
 - Juniors and Senior year have three classes to fit in electives after their core classes
- Students often feel the pressure to take the hardest classes offered. - What advice can you offer parents on how to help their children set personal goals and register for classes that will help them succeed?



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- Been asked is it better to take hardest classes and get worse grade or take easy classes and have straight As?
 - Both! – They need to balance grades and rigor
 - You know your child and his/her schedules
 - Can start with a harder class and move down within the first two-four weeks and then sometimes at the semester mark too depending on the class
 - + Sometimes choosing a study hall will be helpful
- We know CMS expects much from students which can be stressful for both students and parents. - What strategies can you recommend for parents to help them identify signs that their child might be struggling? – Consider that there are different types of students, and they feel stress differently. – Students that knowingly take on the stress. Stress is no less a factor but is a known entity. How to help? – Students that take the hardest classes offered and encounter struggle for the first time and equate it with failure. How to help? – Students that are prone to stress and anxiety. How to help?
 - Signs of a struggle?
 - Lack of interest in things used to enjoy
 - Withdrawing
 - Mood swings
 - Change in eating habits
 - Dr. Ash added the following: Handling stress is a learned thing. It's ok to let your child fall a little because that will help them learn to get back up. GRIT is a developed skill, not born with it (but can get some by observing parents). Nothing is life worth having is not worth working for. If a child is having tremendous amounts of problems/issues, his/her health is number one priority – this just may not be the school for them. Everything should be a challenge; that's how they learn to reach new heights. Sometimes pressure comes from parents and not the teachers/school (parents get upset about a 97 in class, 29-30 on ACT). Need to have realistic expectations. CMS kids are special. Williamson County celebrating how they had five students in the whole county with perfect 36 on ACT. Central has 7 perfect 36 here alone and 21 35s – they are special. Requires lots of hard work and decisions about other commitments, sports, and extra-curriculars.
 - Be careful not to emphasize grades too much, but help them stay on top of their assignments
 - Communication with teachers if student is getting behind
 - Also can reach out to counselors for help
 - Progress over perfection, give encouragement



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- Remember healthy competition is alright, but be careful with too much competition
- Focus on strengths
- Every incoming Freshman who did not attend CMS for middle school says it is harder than previous school and need time to study and apply themselves more than before
- When speaking to former CMS graduates, we are told that college is pretty easy and that they are well prepared for college after their time at CMS
- Anxiety
 - Find stress relievers
 - + Music, getting outside, CARE Solace (talking to counselor/therapist)
 - ◇ CMS counselors are available to talk to student and calm their anxiety to a certain degree, but their purpose is to help meet psychoeducational needs (goal is to help with day-to-day issues/stressors and get them back to classroom ASAP; they are not therapists)
 - ◇ Many students do see outside counselors – is a good outlet for high achieving smart kids
 - ◇ There is a counselor here once a week if student does want to talk to someone more in depth
- Dr. Ash added the following: realize kids are competing against the top kids in the country. “Always my best” is motto for school, not “always my perfect.” A score of 32 on ACT is pretty good- most kids would kill for those grades. Need to be careful to compare here. Help children understand what is their best. Reward them and compliment them on their hard work. They’re smart because of genetics – hard work helps separate those who are successful. Compliment and reinforce their hard work. Then when they mess up, they know what to do to improve. Stressed when they don’t know how to be successful. CMS kids do so well in college – Senior Thesis prepares them so well (they do not like it at first, but they love it when it’s over). Some kids’ theses are better than his dissertation.

See the CMS Guidance Website to find more detailed information about these questions

PRINCIPAL’S REPORT

- Dr. Ash gave the School Update
 - Current Juniors did very well on the ACT
 - They had the highest one-day average CMS has ever had when taken during the school day earlier this semester



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- Still lower than all students' individual bests, but for that one day, average was 30
- Nine Juniors made 36, bringing total number of Juniors with perfect 36 to ten (record for school is 11)
- Seniors – had 24 National Merit winners
 - 12% of state of Tennessee winners in one school
 - If you have younger children, National Merit is what you want them to work for
 - Many schools, including Alabama, will provide a full ride for National Merit winners
- When you get ready to decide on college, "Free is good."
 - Yes, private colleges can be good, but think about what you can do with money saved when choosing a college/university that will offer a full ride (and then some)
 - You can give child a nice down payment on a house with money that would have gone to help pay for tuition
 - One former CMS student not only had a full ride, but she also made \$20,000 extra on scholarships – shows what a great student and incredible work ethic can do
 - One former CMS student received \$60,000 a year and still must come up with \$15,000 a year – free is good!
 - Go free, unless MIT – then find a way to send them!
 - \$65,000 per child in accepted scholarships last year
 - Teachers did post grades for progress reports
 - Thank a Rutherford County Board of Education Member
 - If you do not keep up with education funding, that is where most of our tax money is going
 - CMS is cheap school compared to others
 - Went from TEP to TISA
 - + Under TISA funding is per child vs per teacher position
 - + When TEP money is for next year, with TISA money is for current year
 - In Rutherford County, we are growing 1,400-1,500 students every year
 - That is a school to a school and a half every year!
 - CMS has capped enrollment, which can be both a good and bad thing
 - We had over 450 applicants for 6th grade next year – although more qualified to attend, due to space cannot accept them all
 - In answer to a question – CMS does not have field trips in the sense that other schools do
 - High School has clubs and groups that participate in field trips that are more of competitions (DECA currently in Orlando, FL and baseball team to Hilton Head, SC during Spring Break)



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- Seniors do take a field trip to Dollywood
- + Stopping at Buckees makes restroom breaks easier
- Middle School trips are expensive because would need to rent charter buses (\$45,000) since county buses must be back for their routes
- Sometimes they will go somewhere locally in town
- Most students have experiences without CMS taking field trips
- In answer to a question – College scouts do come to school and set up in College Corner during lunch for students to go speak with them
 - Used to host a College Fair at school, but Rutherford County now hosts one for the whole county
 - If you look at the different colleges/universities represented by flags in College Corner, there more than likely is a former CMS student represented there
- In answer to a question – AP HUG – passing score is generally a 3-5
 - There is a list on the website to see what specific college/university requires
 - Each subject may be different at each college/university
 - Scores back the first week of July
 - Same test given across the country (and world) – college knows what you proved on that test
- AP requires A LOT of reading – if your child says he/she does not have homework, that is not true – READ ahead!
 - They are better prepared for class and can ask more questions on material they did not understand when they read ahead
- Anytime you have a question, please email him to ensure you get the correct answer

Concluding Remarks

- CMS PTO President thanked the guidance counselors and Dr. Ash for speaking and sharing all the information
- She thanked all the parents who joined us for our General Meeting and told them they will be receiving a survey by email to help PTO could have better served them this year and be sure to serve them next year

PTO General Board Meeting ended at 7:36PM