

Claremont Immersion School
PTA General Membership Meeting
March 1st, 2016

PTA President Introduction: Amber Dungan

Amber began the meeting by mentioning that elections for the PTA Executive Board will be held at the May PTA meeting. The slate will be presented in April.

The PTA is currently looking for people to serve on the nominating committee, as well as people to serve on the board. Those interested in serving on the board or on the nominating committee should speak to Susie Wallin.

This week there is early release on Thursday, and no school on Friday. There will be a 'grab-n-go' lunch held for teachers on Thursday afternoon.

Fundraising: Melissa Schwaber

Melissa stated that tomorrow would be the official launch of the Read-A-Thon. Melissa walked the meeting attendees through the webpage and showed everyone how to log their student's reading sessions. She explained that they could be logged in using the site's timer, or logged in after the reading is completed. Ten reading sessions are automatically logged at school, and that is all that is required for the full donation to be applied. Currently, there are over 450 donors.

Amber and Melissa are chairing this year's silent auction- it will be a live/online hybrid, and will start on April 1st and run through the 9th. The live portion/party will be held April 9th at the Fairlington Community Center. Babysitting will be held at CIS. At both the online and live events you will be able to continue bidding from your smart phones. The items will be displayed at the event. More information will be coming out soon.

There will be a mini school's-out camp held at CIS this Friday. It will be a basketball and soccer camp and it will run from 9 AM to 3 PM. The cost is \$60. Twenty students are currently signed up, but there is room for more. The PTA will earn some money from these camps. Fliers were posted to Peachjar.

There was a question as to whether another yard sale will be held this year. Melissa answered that while it will not be held this year, the PTA might hold it every other year. Also, Unique Thrift Store has a program where they handle the logistics of the yard sales and give the associated PTA the funds, so this might be a possible substitute in the future.

The PTA decided not to do Artware because the Read-A-thon is doing so well. As a substitution, the PTA will be doing a collection of posters with the theme of each class's art and will sell the posters at the auction. There will be no class baskets this year, as last year it put a bit of pressure on the homeroom parents.

Also coming up is Read Across America and Pajama Day. Vamos Adelante has organized readers in every classroom to come to school and read in Spanish.

Green Initiatives: Susie Wallin

Susie gave the group an overview of the Viva Verde committee. She explained that she and Steve Duall are partners in the effort to make CIS greener. The group was formed sometime at the start of CIS. They meet twice a year and try to do things throughout the year that have an environmental theme and that expose the students to environmental causes and initiatives. Viva Verde also sponsors the Green Kids club. There are currently ten students signed up and they meet every other Friday. They garden, take hikes, and go to events. For example, they recently attended the George Mason University showcase of green schools. Viva Verde also runs several other programs throughout the year such as recycling printer cartridges and working with Kara Blank-Gonzalez on eating healthy.

Earth Day week is a very busy time of year, and during this time they have “Lean, Green, No-Screen Week,” during which kids pledge to not spend time on electronic devices. The purpose of this exercise is that they commit to not watching television and to going outside more, reading, and other activities. Later that week, they host a picnic where they encourage the kids to recycle their trash from lunch and use greener containers.

Finally, they also have a program called “Idle-Free Zone Day.” During this program, they take the Green Kids club students out to the driveway where they encourage the cars that are idling to turn off their engines in an effort to cut emissions.

Next, Susie asked Steve Duall to speak about the Outdoor Education committee. Steve chairs this committee, and he explained that the purpose is to try to get the kids to do things outside, as well as to do some learning in the outdoor classroom. This has changed over this time, and CIS is finding this hard as there are so many students and it is hard to find the time/coordinate the use of that area. He also explained that the upkeep of the school requires a lot of work- and spring is when they need to start gardening. March 12th will be the first garden day, and it will be on a Saturday afternoon. They will hold them every month during the spring and the fall, and the upcoming dates are April 23, May 14, and June 4. You can find more information at www.claremontoutdooreducation.org. Kids are very welcome to come and help. Steve just asks that parents not leave their young children there without supervision as there are tools and sharp objects in use. At the April 23rd date, they will partner with Viva Verde for garden day. Steve also mentioned that the National Honors Society students members often need to do community service. If anyone knows any members that need to earn extra hours, please let them know that they can earn those by supporting this program.

For the March 12th event, people should please bring paper bags. They have found that if you put the paper bags on top of the weeds, then they stop growing. They may put a box in the lobby for people to use to donate bags (or newspaper). They will ask if others may want to help in other ways, like those that can use tools and fix things up. Viva Verde will also sponsor a project at this garden day event and will make classroom plants. The kids will be able to paint the pots.

Steve needs to transition this duty next year, so he is looking for those that are interested. A good way to start could be to take over a single garden day.

Capacity/CIP: Bill Gillen

Bill explained that the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) is currently on-going, and this is the way the school board puts forth their request for capital improvement projects every year. On March 16th, a meeting will be held to talk about planning another school for the Oakridge district. One of the South Arlington Working Group's recommendations was to plan around the greatest need not being met, and that is currently around the Oakridge district.

Principal Update: Jessica Panfil

Jessica welcomed everyone and began by discussing APS volunteer forms. CIS has been re-reminded that regular volunteers need to complete the forms, so parents may be asked to fill it out if they come on a weekly or monthly basis.

She then discussed the Team Kids event. The CIS 5th graders selected Autism Speaks as their charity, and a delegate from the charity came to the school to visit. It is a great event for the students, as they learn about organizing a community around a cause. Their carnival went well, and everyone enjoyed seeing the students run their games.

In the area of the arts, Andres Salguero, a local artist worked with the Kindergarten to sing and present a show. Also, each grade is working on their own individual art projects.

Reading is a big focus as well right now at CIS. The PTA is doing a great fundraising event to grow the inventory of books at CIS, and there are four categories of books that the students have access to.

Parent teacher conferences are approaching, and the CIS staff worked within the APS guidelines to switch teachers this session for parents. She asked that parents please be on time, as teachers are working on back to back appointments.

Summer school registration has begun. The immersion summer school program will be hosted at CIS, and will run from 9 AM to 12 PM this year. In addition, Extended Day registration for summer and for next school year is now open.

CIS is looking for participants in the Family and Community Engagement (FACE) program. FACE helps APS learn how they can to effectively partner with families to ensure student success.

The Physical Education and Health Fair and the SPARK Art Exhibit are coming up this month. Forty CIS artists will be featured, and they will have some students reciting poetry at the event.

Finally, CIS continues to tweet out information about what is going on at the school.