

Claremont Immersion School
PTA General Membership Meeting
June 7, 2016

PTA President Introduction: Amber Dungan

Amber asked that the outgoing and the new members of the Executive Board introduce themselves, as well as the attendees at the meeting.

She mentioned all of the events coming up, and asked that everyone be please cognizant of parking, particularly with respect to the PTA Auction-sold parking spots.

Susie mentioned Garden Day, occurring Saturday from 11 AM to 3 PM. This is the last one of the year. Steve Duall ordered benches that will be located outside of the 3rd grade wing. She encouraged everyone to come and help, even if it is just for an hour.

Treasurer: Beth Addington

Beth reviewed the Treasurer's report, and discussed the overall income and expenses that have occurred in the last month. The new proposed adjusted budget for 2015/16 was sent out. Some adjustments were made because of the variances. The proposed budget was then motioned to the floor for a vote by Jorge Figueredo. Amber Dungan seconded, the vote was then taken, and the general membership approved the proposed adjusted budget for 2015-16.

VP Fundraising: Melissa Schwaber

Edukit forms went out today. Parents can order up until June 30th, and the form is also on the website. In the past, parents paid the activity fee separately, however now you can pay together instead.

Melissa asked that parents please clear out their bookshelves and return the ABS books. A question was raised as to whether books were being collected over the summer. Ms. Ebert and her brother-in-law made a donation cart which will move into the CIS lobby and be a central place for book donations, even over the summer.

Special thanks were given to Lyzbeth Monard for organizing the Taste of Claremont event- there was a great turnout. Many new kindergarten families turned out and appreciated the event. Thanks were also given to the Hard Times Café, and to the Kelley family that catered the event.

Isa Anderson of Vamos Adelante mentioned the Spanish spelling bee. They need more 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders to participate. The event will be held on Friday, 6/17, from 6:30 to 7:30 PM in the cafeteria. They will start with written words and then move on to an oral completion, concluding with a movie afterwards.

Amber then asked attendees to feel free to make suggestions and give the PTA EB ideas for next year. For example this year, the PTA EB has moved away from the guest speakers that they usually have based on feedback received from parents. Someone stated that they wanted to hear more about capacity. Amber said that Bill Gillen would continue to address capacity, as he has one more year at Claremont. Someone else thought that the school board liaison to Claremont (James Lander) was a useful speaker. Some Arlington schools are going to no-homework, and someone recommended that perhaps an expert could come and talk about that. Guest speakers on parenting could come as well, however they often charge a fee. Some parents expressed interest in that.

A suggestion was made to think of ways to encourage teacher participation in school activities, such as rewarding teachers that participate in Lean, Mean, No-Screen week.

Another comment was made referencing a past suggestion to have teachers create an Amazon wish list, so that if parents choose to purchase something for a teacher (recognizing that there is a limit to what can be spent per year), parents can pick something that the teacher would want.

Someone then said that a speaker about technology would be useful. For example, a speaker covering topics such as when your child should have a phone, how to keep the internet safe, video games, etc. Another person asked what the Arlington County school board policy was on technology. They were surprised that their child was using the iPad when they could be having recess.

Melissa asked if the Read-A-Thon was held at a good time of year, or if the winter might be a better time. Someone suggested that the time of year that falls right after winter break may be good, perhaps having it end on Read Across America day. The Read-A-Thon company is rolling out a new non-prize program, and Melissa is waiting to hear back from the company on that restructure. All the kids that participated should have gotten a bookmark. An attendee mentioned that they wished those toys were not given out, and it was recommended that if parents feel that way they save those toys for Team Kids. Melissa will put a box under the table near Nadia (in the front office) for those toys.

A master donation list was suggested, which could be made up of all of the different school needs so that parents could see what was needed by each teacher. For example, Ms. Cutelis often looks for recyclables that are needed for art.

Another person mentioned that at the end of the year, many emails come out about gifts for teachers. Some parents feel pressure and may not be able to afford contributions. They recommended having a "giving tree" like they do during Christmas, and then have the gift cards split across all of the teachers. \$100 per teacher is the limit per teacher per year.

Principal's Update: Jessica Panfil

Jessica began by talking about the school's recent concerts. In the fall, CIS had a choral concert for 4th and 5th graders, and then in the spring, the concert went to Wakefield. CIS used to try to do the choral, band, and orchestra concerts together, but they could never get it under one and a half hours. Splitting the venues in this way shortened the time, and allowed the concerts to be less rushed and more enjoyable.

Thanks were given to parents, who all stepped up to help the teachers during Teacher Appreciation Week.

A mention was given to Rebecca Waylus, who earned a Safety Patrol of the Year award. Another CIS student, Tovar Stein, placed in the Arlington Public School Film Festival. In addition, Claudia Delgadillo won a Spanish Hispanic teacher of the year award.

Jessica then went through many of the events occurring at CIS during June. Field Day is a day when the kids play games outside organized by all of the teachers- each game lasts about 10 to 15 minutes each. This year, it will be done on an early release day. The 3rd through 5th grade rotations are longer, and they will be held in the Wakefield auditorium. In the morning that day, the parent volunteer appreciation breakfast will be held, which is a token of appreciation for that volunteer at CIS.

The Kindergarten Musical and Passport to Kindergarten are two events where rising kindergarteners will be welcomed with stations in the library on June 17th.

June 20th will be the CIS Talent Show. They have more students in the talent show this year than ever. Allyson Cates and Alexandra Rojas are organizing the talent show, and parents are welcome to come. Generally, the corresponding grades watch their classmates' kids' shows.

Wakefield will host the 5th grade promotion on June 21st.

On the Thursday before school ends (June 23rd), they will have a Claremont community celebration. Here they recognize the honor roll, perfect attendance, and have class awards.

On the last day of school, CIS does a "Jumpstart to the Next Grade" event, where younger grades are paired with an older grade, and 5th graders go back to Kindergarten. And on the last day, they always do a 5th grade cheer tunnel. Finally, there will be end-of-the-year class picnics occurring throughout the week as well.

Jessica gave huge thanks for the CIS community's support of the Read-A-Thon. CIS is enjoying ordering all of the books for the students.

For next school year, they will be welcoming Kindergarteners with the 'Kick-off to Kindergarten' events. In past, Jessica met with Kindergarten families individually, but this year they are trying to encourage current families to come out and connect with others.

Next year, CIS will have six Kindergarten classes, five 1st grade classes, six 2nd grade classes, six 3rd grade classes, five 4th grade classes, and four 5th grade classes. They are currently not staffed for that larger amount of 5th graders, so they will have additional staffing that will be assigned appropriately.

This time of year, CIS has teachers that announce that they may be moving, etc. While they do have some changes, for the most part there won't be many staffing changes.

This past year was an amazing one, including the PTA's accomplishments. Preliminary scores show that CIS is meeting all of the school's SOL goals. One of the challenges has been 5th grade science, and this past year they have had really great results.

Finally, there is an open house regularly held every Friday before the Labor Day weekend. On this day, you get to bring your child to school to meet their new teacher.