

**P-CCS Parent Council Meeting Minutes  
Plymouth-Canton Community Schools  
Minutes of Regular Meeting (Virtual)  
April 15, 2021**

The P-CCS Parent Council of the Plymouth-Canton Community Schools met (virtually) in a regular meeting on Thursday, April 15th, 2021, at 4:30 pm.

**2020-21 Parent Council Board Officers**

**President:** Judy Hart

**Vice President:** Pam Cornell-Allen

**Membership Coordinator:** Andrea Schultz

**Corresponding Secretary:** Sofia Saleem

**Recording Secretary:** vacant

**Representatives**

(attendance via email)

|                    |                    |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| Bentley:           | Hoben:             |
| Bird:              | Hulsing:           |
| Dodson:            | Isbister: present  |
| Eriksson:          | Miller:            |
| Farrand:           | Smith:             |
| Field:             | Tonda:             |
| Gallimore: present | Workman:           |
| Discovery: present | Canton HS: present |
| East: present      | Plymouth HS:       |
| Liberty:           | Salem HS:          |
| Pioneer:           | Starkweather:      |
| West: present      |                    |

District Administration:     **Nick Brandon**, Exec. Director of Communications & Marketing  
  **Monica Merritt**, Superintendent of Schools

Guest Speakers:     **Kevin Learned**, Principal at Eriksson Elementary School  
                                  **Samantha Ellis**, Guidance Counselor at East Middle School  
                                  **Elena Girolamo**, Teacher at Plymouth High School  
                                  **Ben Deems**, Student at Canton High School  
                                  **Sahana Kotha**, Student at Salem High School

The meeting was called to order by President Judy Hart at 4:35pm.

- Attendance recorded via email.
- Andrea Schultz made a motion to approve the minutes from March 12, 2021. Pam Cornell-Allen seconded the motion. Minutes approved.
- In other business, Judy Hart announced that the annual Parent Council elections will be held at the May meeting. Nominations are currently being accepted for all 5 positions

(President, Vice President, Membership Coordinator, Corresponding Secretary and Recording Secretary) and should be emailed to [parentcouncil@pccsk12.com](mailto:parentcouncil@pccsk12.com).

### **District Update: Monica Merritt, P-CCS Superintendent of Schools**

- With the recent surge of COVID-19 cases in the state, county and locally, there is concern. The current rate of community spread is categorized at the “severe” level with an anticipated peak of April 15<sup>th</sup>. The positivity rate was at 19% at start of this week but hoping it will trend downward.
- Governor recently recommended a 2 week pause on in-person instruction for high schools. PCCS has not adopted this guidance in part because there’s already reduced density this week due to testing. The district is using this week to review the data and make decisions.
- Greatest challenge has been close contact quarantines. Local health department guidance recently changed length of quarantine from 10 days back to 14 days. Working to ensure continuity of learning for quarantined students. Have offered teachers a range of instructional tools to use. However, due to contractual language, cannot require teachers to offer live video instruction to students quarantined at home. Plus, it would be hard to sustain teaching in two different platforms. District has hired 1.5 FTE COVID support teachers for students on quarantine (and working towards 2.5 FTE). Some K-8 teachers are offering Zoom support sessions after school. At the high school level, there is the option for afternoon Zoom support sessions (because hybrid model only has students onsite in the mornings).
- District is constantly re-visiting at what point does in-person instruction become too great of a challenge. Must follow mandates from state or local health departments. At the district level, trying to be strategic in decisions by drilling down to the building (and even classroom) level. State requires 75% student attendance to count as an instructional day. At elementary level, where students are cohorted, the metric is lower at 50%. Outbreaks, or shared transmissions, are another metric examined. Thresholds for a 2 week period include 6 outbreaks for high school, 6 outbreaks for high school athletics and 3 outbreaks for elementary and middle schools.
- In-person learning is the best environment for most students but only when can do so safely. School transmission rates are lower than the general community. Our mitigation strategies are working.
- During Q&A, Superintendent Merritt noted that enrollment decisions for next year are needed now to ensure appropriate staffing. District is ending this school year with three separate plans for the fall – full 5 days, hybrid and virtual. There may be opportunities to shift enrollment via waitlists in the fall. She also noted that the district is working to strengthen instruction for quarantined students. In the meantime, parents are advised to work directly with teachers to ensure that students’ needs are met. Lastly, in regard to COVID-19 testing, the district will continue to work with the health department and comply with orders. In first round of athletic testing, 17 of 800 students tested were positive (including 2 false positives). From the community testing offered the first weekend in April, 57 of 900 were positive.

**Speaker- Kevin Learned, Principal at Eriksson Elementary School spoke about Elementary School Preparation for the Middle School Transition**

- Work to ensure a positive ending to a student's elementary years.
- Kids do better when feel prepared for the next step. Work with middle school counselors to create knowledge, connection and hype for transitioning students.
- Communication with parents is also important such as informational meetings and opportunities to ask questions.
- Collaborate with middle school colleagues to set students up for success. IEPs, 504s, on-going conflict between students and other info. shared to inform placements.

**Speaker- Samantha Ellis, Guidance Counselor at East Middle School spoke about Elementary to Middle School Transition**

- Want to ensure that all students feel welcomed and that they have a place. Relationships are key to school success.
- Orientation for current 5<sup>th</sup> graders and families will be held virtually this year.
- WEB (Where Everyone Belongs) is a joint effort between staff and 8<sup>th</sup> graders to introduce procedures to and increase confidence of in-coming 6<sup>th</sup> graders prior to start of new school year.
- Middle schools team teachers for 6<sup>th</sup> graders. Teachers meet and common planning.
- Increased extracurricular opportunities in middle school such as cross country, wrestling and clubs,

**Speaker- Elena Girolamo, Teacher at Plymouth High School, Ben Deems, Student at Canton High School and Sahana Kotha, Student at Salem High School spoke about this year's SJ5K.**

- Faculty adviser works with students to plan and host the annual event.
- This is 11<sup>th</sup> year for this benefit run supporting local families in medical crisis.
- Last year more than 2,500 participants and over \$130,000 raised.
- Shared video educating about effort and profiling this year's benefiting families: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CVsQ1yRoS2E>.
- Event is virtual this year. Kickoff on Sunday, May 2<sup>nd</sup> at 8am on 88.1 FM but whole week to complete race.
- Can support by participating in race, donating and/ or sponsoring the event. More info. on website at <http://www.sj5k.org/>.

**Other District News:**

**EEF Update: Gretchen Ward- Executive Director at Educational Excellence Foundation**

New campaign, "Thank a Teacher, Salute a Staff," is an opportunity to make a \$25 tax deductible gift to EEF in honor of a district teacher or staff. Recipients are acknowledged on website and social media as well as receive a certificate. Gifts allow support for teachers and staff for years to come. To donate or for more info., please visit <https://eeforkids.org/>. EEF's annual wine tasting returns next spring on April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

**Senior Events: Melissa Burnham- P-CCS Parent**

Vendor Fair will be held on May 1<sup>st</sup> from 11am-2pm in the parent drop-off/ pick-up loop at Plymouth High School. Community vendors will be on-hand with information. Currently 23

vendors confirmed but still recruiting. Free admission and raffles for attendees. Proceeds will support the Senior Party.

Senior Party is set for June 23<sup>rd</sup> from 4-9pm at Canton High School football field. Activities include hypnotists, character drawers and action inflatables. Every senior will get a t-shirt with the names of all graduating students. EEF has funds available to cover costs for the Senior Party for student with financial need. Building principals are the initial points of contact for a request.

For both events, safety is of utmost importance. Masks will be required. Markers for distancing.

**Nick Brandon, P-CCS Executive Director of Communications & Marketing**

Enrollment survey for next school year closes on April 17th at 4pm. When no response received, default is traditional (in-person) option. Equity survey coming on-line. All families will be invited to participate and give feedback. Later in the month launching K-12 annual insight survey for families, staff and students in grades 6-12. Community voice is essential. Make sure your voice is heard.

Before closing, Judy Hart reminded attendees that nominations for the Parent Council Board for the 2021-22 school year are currently being accepted. Parent Council has focused on bridging communication between parents/ caregivers/ families and district administration and staff. Parent Council Board roles are:

President – sets meeting agendas and speakers

Vice President – assists the President, thanks speakers

Membership Coordinator – gets people interested in our group

Corresponding Secretary – sends reminders and announcements to membership

Recording Secretary – takes meeting minutes (but now aided by recordings)

Nominations or questions to [parentcouncil@pccsk12.com](mailto:parentcouncil@pccsk12.com).

Motion to adjourn by Melissa Burnham with second by Andrea Schultz. Motion approved and meeting adjourned at 6:30pm.

**Our next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May, 20, 2021, from 5:00-7:00pm.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Pam Cornell-Allen, Vice-President

*P-CCS Parent Council comes together once a month to engage parents within the district to discuss important topics, advocate for parents, students and schools, and provide a forum for open communication with P-CCS administration and fellow parents of the district.*