

**Claxton PTO
Meeting Minutes
February 4, 2020**

Meeting called to order at 6:09 p.m.

Broadcasting on Facebook Live.

I. Thank You

- Thank you to all staff, especially **Ms. Nichols and Ms. Wertheim-Davis**, for handling the transition to CLX's new leadership!
- Thank you to **Lindsey Kuscera and Sarah Howell** for organizing last month's staff appreciation brunch. And thank you to our 2nd and 3rd grade families for donating delicious food!
- Thank you to **Susannah Watson and Miriam Scott** for organizing CLX's Magnet School Open House, and thank you to all the families who helped make it a huge success. Over 80 families took a tour of our school!
- Thank you to **Karen Rigby** for organizing our student tour guides. The students did a great job of leading tours.
- Thank you to **Meredith Love** for finding us three NEW corporate sponsors! Please send some community love to Silver-Line Plastics, Marks Family Dentistry, and Premier Martial Arts.
- Thank you to **Stephanie Jones**, for all the volunteer hours she and her husband Scott donate to CLX, and to Canadian National Railways, her employer, which donates money to CLX for those volunteer hours!
- Thank you to **Mark Ackerman** and all the families who stepped up to make the 5th Grade MLK Day a huge success!

II. Principal's Message (Ms. Nichols)

- This is School Counselor Week, and Claxton honored Mr. Ackerman and Ms. Owolabi for all they do to support our students.
- At last night's School Board meeting, some members of Claxton's Student Lighthouse Team lead the pledge of allegiance and the Claxton pledge. The adults in attendance were especially impressed by the Claxton pledge!
- Also at the School Board meeting, Ms. Conti demonstrated how we integrate arts into our curriculum at Claxton. She explained how the 3rd grade team is working with the specialists on the Hidden History of Asheville project, in which third graders investigate

and discover Asheville's hidden history of African-American achievement and create the monuments that this history deserves. Come to see the Hidden History presentation in the Media Center!

- Ms. Rigsby coordinated our student tour guides for the Magnet School Open House at Claxton. This was a great chance to demonstrate to families choosing their elementary school how much responsibility our Claxton students take in their school.
- 4th and 5th grade field trips to Raleigh and Washington, DC are coming up in April. These are a big deal for these kids, many of whom have never been outside of the Asheville area, and the PTO makes it possible for ALL families to participate, regardless of their financial resources.
- Parent-Teacher conference days are coming up. We haven't had a spring P-T Conference Day in years because of snow days. Not this year!

III. Special Guests from Children First and Communities in Schools Buncombe County

We had a special presentation from Mary Cozens (Student Support Specialist at CLX) and Audra Morrow (Director of Community Support) to tell us about the work Children First and Communities in Schools do at Claxton and in Buncombe County Schools.

- A. Mission:** To empower students and families to reach their full potential and encourage students to graduate.
- B. Advocacy:** They advocate for students and families on government policies. A current project, Success Equation, is about working to reduce poverty through advocacy and community partnerships.
- C. Project Power AmeriCorps** provides nonprofits with AmeriCorps members who dedicate a year of service.
- D. Direct Services:**
 - Direct services are provided at Claxton, Emma, Estes, and Johnston Elementary Schools and at Eblen Intermediate School.
 - Claxton is the only school in the Asheville City Schools district with Children First providing direct services inside the school.
 - Children First begins the school year by assessing goals for the year for all students receiving services. This year Claxton is working on meeting the social-emotional needs of students.
 - Ms. Cozens does an individual assessment/goal-setting with each individual student she works with at Claxton to provide Children First support.
 - Tier One support refers to events that affect at least 75% of students; e.g., the fall clothing drive or providing transportation home from afterschool activities.
 - Children First needs to support FOUR Tier One activities per year and is looking to collaborate with the PTO on more ideas! **If you have an idea, please share it with Ms. Cozens or the PTO presidents, Amanda Pattanayak (alsevigny@aol.com) and Stephanie Jones (stephmissvolgo@gmail.com).**
 - Tier Two supports small groups of students with similar intervention needs, e.g. academic support or social-emotional learning.
 - Community in Schools consistently tracks students and families to improve services.

- They also have family resource centers, learning centers, and summer activities for qualifying students.

E. Mary Cozens: Claxton's Student Support Specialist

- Ms. Cozens been at Claxton as a Student Support Specialist since Nov. 2018. Prior to that, she worked in our Roots and Wings afterschool program.
- She helps lead the Pisgah View Learning Center, which provides emotional and behavioral support after school and connects families to community resources and transportation.
- Ms. Cozens also coordinates Tier I services at Claxton.
- Some successes in the past two years:
 - Received a \$13,500 grant from NC Arts Council to provide art enrichment/community building at Pisgah View Learning Center
 - Implemented afterschool "Math on Mondays" for at-risk students (thanks for providing tutoring, Ms. Conti!).
 - Implemented "Mindful Mondays" focusing on social-emotional learning and sensory output.
 - Supports Holiday Giving and summer enrichment programs.

F. Group Balloon Activity

The PTO members in attendance participated in an activity that brought home just how hard it is to juggle all the big issues some of our kids and their families are facing. Children First/Communities in Schools is there to help make the juggling just a little bit easier.

G. Please support their work!

- **Claxton families are invited to ask for a Mind the Gap tour that will take interested families on a tour to show us some of the work Children First/Communities in Schools does.** Here's what Children First/Communities in Schools has to say:

The Mind the Gap tours are currently operating as a point of entry for folks to learn more about us as an organization. The tour goes through our work with advocacy, AmeriCorps and the direct service. The February 19 tour will take place from the Family Resource Center at Emma Elementary and travel to Woodridge apartments to see our work there. Once anyone registers online, they will receive a confirmation email with directions and more information. Even though this tour is at Emma, it gives a strong overview of each one of our schools. To register: <https://childrenfirstcibc.org/getinvolved/mindthegap/>

The PTO will work with Mary Cozens to facilitate a tour to start at Claxton in the future. Stay tuned for more information.

- You can **volunteer to help at Pisgah View Learning Center** by tutoring, supervising students at play, donating snacks, and helping out at events/fundraisers.
- There are opportunities to volunteer with your entire family, e.g., help out and attend the backpack/back to school party

IV. Staff Updates

A. Social Justice League (Ms. Conti)

- The Social Justice League just finished micro-aggressions training/refresher for all Claxton staff.
- They are working on integrating Teaching Tolerance standards into all of the existing curriculum plans at Claxton.
- Also have submitted an application to present at the ALL Y'all conference in Charleston. Good luck, SJ League!!!
- On March 26, Asheville City Schools Foundation is hosting Jason Reynolds in a public event. This is a BIG DEAL! Reynolds is a best-selling author of middle-grade and young adult books and was recently named Children's Book Ambassador by the Library of Congress. <https://www.loc.gov/item/prn-20-002/jason-reynolds-named-new-national-ambassador-for-young-peoples-literature/2020-01-13/> You can purchase tickets to the evening event at acsf.org
- The Social Justice League will be sending out quarterly newsletters to update the Claxton community on their work. Please note that they are taking a break from parent workshops this year to reassess and come back next year with a new workshop format even better aligned with their work.

B. Social-Emotional Learning Team (Mr. Butler)

- The Team just adopted the First Step curriculum and are very enthusiastic about it.
- First Step is very student-friendly, and some teachers are starting to integrate it into their curriculum.
- The Social-Emotional Learning Team is looking to make First Step a central part of the entire Claxton curriculum next year.

C. Specialists (Mr. Butler)

- Asheville Middle School's chorus and orchestra students are coming to Claxton with a concert for 5th graders, giving 5th graders planning on attending Asheville Middle next fall a chance to see some of the great electives available to them.
- The Asheville Middle band teacher is coming to talk to 5th graders as well to let them know about the EXCELLENT band program offered as an elective.
- Coach Hafke is working on dates for Field Day and will need lots of parent help! Stay tuned!
- The specialists have been working with the third-grade team to provide support for the Hidden Histories project, helping students use different art modalities to create their own monuments to Asheville's hidden history of African-American achievement.

D. MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Support) Team (Ms. Autrey)

- This is the first year Claxton has had a full MTSS team with all grade levels included. Hooray!

- Currently, the Team is focusing on helping teachers analyze data, examine goals, and reassess those goals with intention. Thinking about why and how they are using data and what it actually means helps teachers break down the standards they must teach and figure out *what exactly is it I'm teaching?*
- Teachers can then create common assessments as a team and work together to be intentional in how they teach those standards.
- Asheville City Schools has recently changed the requirements for Personal Education Plans provided for at-risk students. Now called Student Support Plans (SSPs), they will be provided for students chosen through a grade-team assessment of student needs and goals rather than by student EOG scores. The SSPs document the support at-risk students receive.
- The District is also working on providing after-school teachers and transportation for students who need extra support.
- The MTSS Team is excited to see that student proficiency at Claxton is really improving!!

E. Leader in Me (Ms. Morgan)

- The new Leader in Me bulletin board is up in the lobby! This is a way for students to track their own academics in language they can understand so they can invest in their own learning.
- The Leader in Me Team is also really proud of how Claxton students showed their leadership during the Magnet School Tours. Not only did they serve as tour guides for visiting families, but they stepped up when families in the classrooms as well.

V. PTO Events

A. Jubeelee (Lisa Manning and Amy Aiken)

- We still need parents to help with auction items and food donations! You can contact the organizers through the Jubeelee page on Facebook.
- This FUN party-with-auction is **March 14, 6:30-10:30** at the **A-B Tech Conference Center**.
- It will feature food, drinks, a silent auction, and live music from our parents!
- Check out Facebook Live for details about this event!
- Free tickets will be available from Mr. Ackerman for those who need them.

B. Mini Grants

- Ms. Conti submitted an application for PTO mini-grant assistance to support the third grade in its field trip with Hood Huggers International, a tour of Asheville's African-American communities and history.
- This special tour for Claxton will align with the third graders' Hidden History project.
- Ms. Conti requested \$300 to be sure all children can participate in the project, regardless of financial need.

- The membership moved to approve the request, the motion was seconded, and it passed unanimously.

C. Scholastic Book Fair (Nanci Mackey)

- The books are going to be delivered this **THURSDAY**, with set-up that day, teacher preview on Friday, and **the Book Fair is open to students and families all next week!**
- The Book Fair is partnering with the Bring Someone You Love to Lunch on Valentine's Day. Come have lunch with your student and take them to the book fair!
- We are offering **vouchers** for students who need them, at an increased amount from last year. Please contact Mr. Ackerman to obtain a voucher.
- **We need LOTS OF VOLUNTEERS!!! Keep your eyes open for an opportunity to sign up for this fun event!**

D. 3rd-5th grade dance

- The next dance is coming up on February 13 after school. Permissions slips have gone home.
- This is a fundraiser to support the 4th grade Raleigh field trip and the 5th grade Washington, DC field trip. And it's an exciting event for students.
- **Please volunteer time or donations!**
<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1RG42j7Rje7JvNlvbEJCJFuEQUSYet2Ku-ijOJTuzzwM/edit?ts=5e3b5ed8#gid=0>

E. Claxton Month of Love

- This was a new event designed to lift the spirits of our staff in these doldrum winter months.
- Every staff member has been adopted to be loved by a Claxton family! Thank you!
- See the board in the lobby to leave your own note about what you love about Claxton!

F. Volunteerism is thriving at Claxton!!!

- At the District PTO meeting, Claxton PTO Presidents Amanda and Stephanie hear many other PTOs complaining about having trouble with volunteerism at their schools. **Amanda and Stephanie are so proud of how Claxton parents step up to support our school!**
- They expressed their appreciation to every one of you for every little bit you help!
- We're currently looking for members of the Claxton community to volunteer for particular teams; you don't have to lead up any PTO project, just help out as much as you can. If you're interested in helping out with any of the following next year (or now!), please let Amanda (alsevigny@aol.com) or Stephanie (stephmissvolgo@gmail.com) know!
 - Yearbook Team
 - Finance Review Team

- Jubeelee Auction Team
- Fall Carnival Co-Chair
- Corporate Sponsors
- Advocacy Liaison
- Grounds Team
- New Families Team
- Claxton Rewards/Passive Giving
- Fun Run Team
- The teachers at the meeting also expressed their deep appreciation of the PTO support for all they do!

Meeting adjourned at 7:10.