

# Central Parent Advisory Council (PAC) Meeting Notes for Central Families

Monday, October 17, 2022, 7:00-8:30 pm

Zoom Conference Call

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85109415828>

October PAC meeting [agenda](#).

## Meeting Notes

**7:00 pm Welcome** — *Sunny Kase, & Anika Carter Ward, PAC Co-Chairs*

- Format of PAC meetings - We are currently hosting the meetings on Zoom, but we may bring back in person meetings during the year. We're still investigating the format and welcome your thoughts and ideas.
- Introduction of Principal Ayers. Principal Ayers is a graduate of Central and a parent at Central in addition to being the principal.

**7:05 pm Leadership Updates** — *Cherise Ayers, Principal of Central High School*

- **Introduction of her leadership team, the "A Team."**
  - 9th Grade AP: Michael Krech
  - 10th Grade AP: Mark Krois
  - 11th Grade AP: Tamika Montgomery
  - 12th Grade: Bethany Franz
- **Theme for the School:** We are in this T.O.G.E.T.H.E.R. Cultivating a culture where everyone thrives. Trust, Outreach Growth Empathy, Transparency, Holding space, Excellence, Respect. Life is challenging and it's important to show them what it means to care for and about each other and to help each other out.
  - Asks the kids to reach outside of themselves to build community, grow deep and develop roots, and to grow with leaves and fruit that benefits others. Foundation is in respect for others. We are respectful people and start there. Assume positive intent and develop common understanding.
  - There is a lot of work to do and we're growing.
  - Conferences: Last week were in person and they didn't require an appointment. Tomorrow's conferences are virtual. They are 5 min each and there are links to register that were sent out in the last update.
  - Grade level meetings: We're holding monthly meetings to have the students get together to hear from their administrators, their classmates, their counselors. PAC donated gift cards that were really appreciated by the students.
  - Homecoming week:
    - Spirit Days - theme for each day. Super fun.
    - Pep Rally - so much fun! Hadn't had one in several years and the students appreciated it so much.

- Dance - went well until the last 15 minutes. It was not how we wanted it to end. There was a fight but no weapons involved. Disappointing to end that way but there were a lot of successes.
    - Committed to it being a safe place to learn and a safe place to have fun. Encouraging students to come to the admins/counselors, teachers to help resolve their issues.
- **Questions for Principal Ayers and her staff**
  - **Question:** You talked about trust. We know from stories across the country how students and adults need to build trust. Check in to hear from your perspective about how you're building trust. What support do you need from parents and community to strengthen
    - Answer: Trust starts with visibility. That staff are available, visible, responsive. We're in the lunchroom, classrooms, hallways. We're not checking up on teachers but to also be engaged in the learning. Principal Ayers has been sitting in classes and trying to be everywhere, to be seen and known, so that she can build relationships. She believes in taking the time to explain the "why" behind decisions. They don't always understand or agree, but she talks with them and works for understanding. Regarding parents partner: Making sure your students are showing up ready to learn, asking students about their day and the highlight of their day. Asking them specific questions about their day. Rose and thorn: What was a rose in your day (something great), thorn is something hard. Or rosebud (what are you excited about). Would love to see parents connecting with teachers. Kids still need us and need us to build and establish relationships and trust with our kids. We are raising adults that are going out into the world and we want to be helpful. Also asked parents to answer the phone calls from Central Staff, and to respond to ur emails.
  - **Question:** It's getting cold out. Are students able to get inot the building before school? I sometimes seem them outside and wondering if there's a plan.
    - Answer: That is sticky. At this point we are leaning toward letting them in but we've been advised to not let them in until 8:15am. We don't have someone able to supervise them as they come in. If the door is unlocked, anyone could walk in. We're working on that staffing piece. This ties into the support aspect. We have resources for coats and can assist.
  - **Question:** Is there a new yearbook advisor?
    - Answer: Yes, there is. Mr. Faust is serving in that role. He stepped in last year. He is the building substitute. He's been taking staff photos and taking that project on.
  - **Question:** How are the teachers and students adjusting to the block schedule?
    - Answer: Only hearing good things. Most teachers who are talking to her about it, are reporting positive things. They like having more

time to get into the content. Allows for slowing down and giving time for questions, for connections. It's better invested and the teachers get a better return on that time. Need to hear more from the band and orchestra teacher because he was worried about the consistency of practicing. Students are reporting both positive and negative. If a student is struggling and it's longer then it can be hard. But the leadership team is working on getting into all the classrooms to work with the teachers on strategies to meet the needs of the students in each of the classes. Parents can talk with their students about how they can talk to their teachers and advocate for their needs. Teaching them to talk about conflict, email their teachers when there are issues, and understand

- **Question:** Can you share enrollment #'s?
  - Answer: When we last checked, we are at 1696 students. This is the second highest enrollment high school in the district. We have lost some numbers, but it's growing
    - December 10th is the school choice fair. We're shooting to be a waiting list school again. Working on making a video of students and families about why they chose central. The choir and jazz band will be performing there. We have so many amazing things
- **Question:** About the homecoming dance, heard that the rumors were not true. Can you speak to this?
  - Answer: The police tracked the phone number to a student who called to report that there was an active shooter. This student has made reports of weapons before and the police knew that they'd made false reports before; however they and the school needs to respond as if there was truth to the report about a weapon but there wasn't evidence of that. There wasn't as much of a fight as several administrators working to prevent a fight. When students want to fight, they're strong and it's hard to stop it, but they did. It didn't ruin the whole night and the overall takeaway of the week was that it was a big success.

#### **7:40 pm Staff Sharing - Jessica Ostrov, PAC Communications**

- **Alicia Ekegren, Athletic Director**
  - Is at the Volleyball game. Winter sports registration starts tomorrow. Here is the link to the information:
- **Joleen Armstrong, Teacher/IB MYP Coordinator/AP Coordinator (3rd year at Central)**
  - Right now there are 550 students signed up to take 764 tests in different subjects.
  - We offer 22 AP courses at Central and then students can take other AP tests that they feel they are eligible for.
  - Deadline is November 15th. (The early deadline was in October.) If you haven't registered your students for AP exams yet, you can find

information on the Central HS AP page (under Academics section here: <https://www.spps.org/Domain/1710>). There is a parent letter and schedule for the testing on that page too.

- Also serves as the IB MYP Program Coordinator. Central went through a 5 year evaluation of the program last month. The evaluators met with district staff and teachers. They provided a lot of positive feedback and highlighted the many strengths. They provided some areas of growth needed and a timeline for addressing those. It was very successful. Principal Ayers is supportive of being an MYP school for all students starting next year.
- **Scott Howell, Title One Coordinator**
  - This year has been filled with a whole new vibe and a new positive energy. There is no day alike at Central ever. The new admin team is doing amazing. The energy is so positive and reenergizing.
  - Central High School and SPPS receives Title One funds from the federal government. More information will go out in November about the meeting. More info about the [family engagement plan](#).
  - Started the second year in the Every Meal program. No questions - all families who sign up get the food. No qualifications for that at all.
  - Lunch forms need to be filled out by the parents and families. Last year we missed out on over a \$1 million in funding. We need families to fill this out!
  - Parent seminars will be starting again. If you have ideas for topics, please let Coach Howell know! [scott.howell@spps.org](mailto:scott.howell@spps.org), 651-744-5081
- **Emily Punkyo, Career Pathways**
  - Here are some of the resources she's put together for families/students/staff about the Career Pathways information.
    - Here's the [link to the Career Pathways tab](#) on the Central website.
    - Here is the [link to the main presentation](#) slides she used.
    - Here is a [link to the Career Pathways brochure](#).
  - Do you know of an organization or business that you think would like to partner with SPPS, please connect with Ms. Emily Punyko, Work Based Learning Coordinator, [emily.punyko@spps.org](mailto:emily.punyko@spps.org); 651-744-5570

### **8:00 pm PAC Committees - Sunny Kase, PAC Co-Chair**

- PAC Standing Committees
  - Conference Food: Joele Hiers and Ann Hoen - Setting up the meals for the teachers on conference nights.
  - Communications & Marketing Committee: Michelle Neal - Kicking off in November.
  - Grad Party: Tricia Wencel, Lindsey Farwell, & Elizabeth Wrobel Smith
  - Meet and Greet Connector: Tricia Wencel - Setting up meetings at each of the sports and academic teams with Principal Ayers.
  - Fundraising: Ryan Willemsen & Amy Cram Helwich - Leading the GiveMN fundraising effort on November 17th.
  - Volunteer Coordination: Ronda Plathe - Connecting parents with volunteer opportunities. You can volunteer [here](#).

- Transforming Central: Maggie O'Reilly -
  - We are having a fall annual cleanup on October 30th from 9am to 11am. Anyone and everyone is welcome! Parents, students, teachers, neighbors, everyone!
    - The plan is to water as much as we can until the ground freezes. Removing graffiti, helping the
    - Available to give seniors a volunteer opportunity that they can add to their applications to college. Students will get their volunteer time signed off on.
    - Land Acknowledgement Plaque - Transforming Central is creating a more formal and professional sign for the school to share that the school is on Dakota Land.
    - Patio has been installed. There will be some solar lights added around the patio and on the steps of the school. Transforming Central is working with the District to get these installed by springtime.
    - New banners are being designed. The first banners were created in 2016 that are currently on the building and on Marshall. They're fading.
    - Working on adding trees to add dimension and beauty. Suggestion for pollinator garden or pollinator type tree. MN native plants, butterfly gardens, wildflowers.

**8:10 pm ByLaws & Decision Making - Kate McCready, PAC Secretary**

- PAC Leadership
  - Vote to approve co-chair Anika Carter Ward as co-chair of PAC
    - This was approved by a majority of the membership.

**8:15 pm Financial Report — Heidi Van Schooten, PAC Treasurer**

- Overview of the Budget:
  - Money spent so far on:
    - Teacher requests spring '21
    - Teacher requests fall '22
    - Huemyns - Outreach Committee
    - Teacher appreciation
    - PAC Admin
    - Class \$ from GiveMN (\$5000 each) - working to develop programming for class events
    - Transportation
    - Emergency Relief Fund
    - Freshman Retreat (no longer happening - handling)
    - Be the Change event (donated by Valerie Castille)
  - Working on a new budget for 2023. Will be sharing that in the next month or two.

***CLOSING***

Thank you to Cherise Ayers for her service on PAC the last two years. Very grateful to have her as the principal now.