

Dear

On Friday, December 16, 2011, the Columbia High School Administration and Student Council will be hosting a Student Forum in the Cafeterias during Period 2, 3 and 4. The purpose of the forum is to allow selected students in grades 9-12 to participate in a discussion with administrators, faculty, and staff about issues pertaining to school climate. This is an essential conversation which began last year and will continue. The forum provides for student and staff voices to be heard, and allows the school to develop an action plan for improvement. I am happy to report that Dr. Jacqueline Cusack, a former employee of the South Orange and Maplewood School District, will serve as our facilitator.

Please respond to this e-mail to accept or decline the invitation. We would appreciate having your response by Monday, December 12, 2011. We look forward to a favorable response and your participation.

Should you have any questions, please contact Beth Dalzell.

Sincerely,

Lovie Lilly

Lovie Lilly -Principal

Beth Dalzell

Beth Dalzell – Student Council Co-Advisor

Hannah Edelman

Hannah Edelman - Student Council Co-Advisor

Keri Hoovler

Keri Hoovler – Student Council President (Class of 2012)

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Enclosed is a school trip form for your teachers to sign-off on your attendance. Please obtain your teachers' signatures for periods 2, 3 and 4. Return the trip form to Ms. Dalzell in room A 218 before or after school, or drop the form into her school mailbox (under her name). Forms are due back by Wednesday, December 14th. We look forward to a favorable response and your participation.

Should you have any questions, please contact Dr. Lilly in the Main Office.

Sincerely,

Lovie Lilly -Principal

Beth Dalzell

Beth Dalzell – Student Council Co-Advisor

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Discussions From Previous Student/Faculty Forums

- Communication between students and staff
- Safety
- Hallway Sweeps
- Respect for staff
- Inequities
- Leveling

Questions for Student/Faculty Forum on December 16, 2011

1. Has the climate of the hallways changed? If so, how?
2. Is there a problem in the student/staff relationship? If so, what is it and how do we fix it?
3. A discussion about the “T-Shirt” incident.

Back-up Questions

1. What changes, new activities or new procedures can be implemented to improve CHS school climate.



Welcome to the CHS 3rd Student/Staff Forum

Today's Facilitator:

Dr. Jackie Cusack

Community Member

Past SOMSD Assistant Superintendent

Discussions From Previous Student/Staff Forums

- Communication between Students and Staff
- Safety
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Question 1

- **Has the climate of the hallways changed?
If so, how?**

Question 2

- **Is there a problem with the student/staff relationship?**

If so, what is it and how do we fix it?

Question 3

- **Discuss the “T-Shirt” incident.**

How did it make you feel?

How can any similar incident be prevented in the future?

How do we begin a conversation to understand each other?

Question 4

- **What changes, new activities or new procedures can be implemented to improve CHS school climate?**



**Thank you
for taking part
in today's discussions.**

Next Steps

1. **The Way CHS enforces rules**
 - a. **Address issues as soon as they happen**
 - b. **Give proper punishment**
 - c. **No double standards**
2. **Improved school climate with respect to all our differences**
 - a. **Acknowledge prejudices in everyone – can't move forward without it**
 - b. **Address racial achievement gap**
 - c. **Address staff disrespect to all levels**
 - d. **More time for forums like this**
3. **Relieving racial tension**
 - a. **More time for discussion**
 - b. **No restriction on content**
4. **Remove levels, they don't benefit anyone**
 - a. **Address issues**
 - b. **Remove the muzzle**
 - c. **Don't talk to one group**
 - d. **Treat everyone as a whole**
5. **Consequences: If one does not have one – what's going to make them stop?**
 - a. **Educating staff**
 - b. **More forums**
 - c. **Students/teachers should be able to articulate how they feel**
 - d. **Students who are not becoming academically successful must have an advocate to help facilitate a conversation one-on-one, with specific teachers. It should start with the guidance counselors. They should advocate. The Dean is in charge of discipline. There is a lack of communication between teachers and students.**
6. **A periodic system in place that helps students and administration communicate about recent issues.**
 - a. **Encourage teachers to care more about the overall community**
 - b. **We need a safe place to meet and talk about issues**
 - c. **Adequate time to talk about issues**
 - d. **Less structure in order to make sure everyone can feel comfortable bringing things up and sharing their opinions**
 - e. **Student input to be considered by administration when making decisions**
 - f. **Because of the large number of students, can we have designated speakers to speak on issues while keeping order?**
7. **Communication**
 - a. **No staff prejudice**
 - b. **Don't restrict**
 - c. **Reacting quickly**
 - d. **Better staff communication**

- e. More time to talk
 - f. More specific forums
8. More opportunities for forums – more solutions
 - a. Equality – everyone needs to be treated the same
 - b. Start at the controversy first
 - c. Access to express opinion to administrators daily
 - d. Students should also be able to write up teachers/peers and expect immediate responses
 - e. Principal needs to build stronger relationship with the majority of all the students
 9. The T shirt incident and the Forum in general
 - a. Think about how your decisions will affect the future
 - b. Be sensitive to those around you
 - c. Be good listeners; don't jump to conclusions prematurely
 - d. Be mature and respectful of those inside and outside of the room
 - e. Work on reaching out to those affected
 10. Leveling and sensitivity to each other
 - a. Are students/faculty more sensitive to each other compared to a year ago?
 - b. Definitely set aside a lot more time (for example: an entire day or 2 half days)
 - c. Let's talk about discipline VS race? VS level?
 11. Teacher training with students; a conversation of personal relationships needs to be instituted (surveys)
 - a. Teacher training with students
 - b. More open set up to encourage open discussion
 - c. More time to discuss teacher/student relationships
 - d. Open set up in the gym, we need the notes on paper
 - e. Many events each year to be held to address these issues (student forums) more time for each other
 12. More respect and less ignorance
 - a. Listen to one another and take in what they have to say
 - b. Understand other perspectives
 - c. Meet and discuss issues with one another, respectfully
 - d. Addressed in smaller settings so there won't be attacks upon one another
 - e. Be open to the idea that you don't know everything
 13. Equality
 - a. Remove double standards
 - b. Staff intervention
 - c. Update policies in handbook accordingly
 - d. "Switch day" to walk in other people's shoes – races, levels, genders
 - e. More forums, more time to discuss – one forum on one topic
 14. A more understanding school
 - a. Better control of how teachers conduct their classes
 - b. More listening on all sides

- c. More facts, less guessing about what happens.
 - d. Is anything going to happen really?
15. Improved staff/student relationships
- a. Staff/student workshops to improve relationships – professional development days
 - b. Staff/student forums focused on improving CHS culture – more time, full day
 - c. Joint staff/student meeting together with Deans on discipline issues and maybe Deans select a third independent student to sit in
16. If anyone is listening: Stop leveling 2012-2013. My group feels that no one listens. Everyone keeps talking and nothing happens
- a. Just stop scheduling the classes according to levels
 - b. Mix kids by ability, race, in each class
 - c. Students feel you won't do it
17. More forums and communication between teachers and students
- a. More teacher training
 - b. Smaller class sizes – build stronger teacher/student relationships
 - c. Accommodate all students – chairs, lockers, etc.
 - d. Evaluate double standards and address them
 - e. More forums similar to this
18. Actually follow the handbook/creed. Advertise guidelines for “how to show respect”
- a. More forum time
 - b. Specific behaviors
19. More respect from staff, more time to discuss issues rather than just 3 class periods.
- a. Assemblies on communication
 - b. More discussion without strict limitations
 - c. More stress on “Diversity Rocks Club”
 - d. Allowing students to voice their opinions more often]
20. A full day in school to talk about this issue and more
- a. Administrative commitment and approval
 - b. Planning exact with time management, etc.
 - c. Publicity (invite people with political power)
 - d. Execution
 - e. Spread to other schools
21. More open communication
- a. More forums – at least once a month, different people, different subjects
 - b. Stop using the “N” word
 - c. Discuss leveling – some students like it, some don't
22. Frequent full school open forum
- a. Awareness
 - b. Facilitators
 - c. Get the entire school aware of the forum
 - d. Get professional facilitators involved (Brown University, etc