



PSO General Meeting Minutes- March 9, 2018

51 attendees, 8:30 a.m.

Kelly Townsend announced that the Latin Performance team won first place last night! She reminded all that the PSO Grant Program this year funded the costumes the team uses. She introduced Faye Chen, PSO President.

President - Faye Chen welcomed everyone and announced the following:

- PSO merchandise is for sale in the back of the room today.
- The Ways & Means Committee Volunteer Training is today from 10:30-11:30 am. This committee will sell OCSA branded merchandise at the new family event in April to help raise funds for the Grant program and PSO sponsored events.

Ways and Means Update - Koren Takata announced the Box Top winners (names can also be found on the PSO Facebook site).

- Koren also mentioned winner's names are announced on "Art Attack" so the whole school knows who won. Awards included a *month long* elevator pass, tickets to OCSA shows and other coveted prizes. She thanked all the parents for clipping the coupons which provide funds directly to our school. This money is used to fund the PSO Make It So Grant Program open to all academic and conservatory teachers.

Teacher's Appreciation Lunch (March 23) Update - Shannon Page Cutler enthusiastically announced the theme of the Teacher's Appreciation Lunch, *Mad Tea Party!* She noted that she is looking for more tea pots and other decor as well as students to dress in costume (please see sign up below!) to make the event even more special for the amazing OCSA teachers. This appreciation event will be held on a non-school day. The sign up genius link with all the details is below.

- Please sign up to donate your time, or an item to share, and drop off your items at the Webb Receptionist desk by March 22nd in the morning.
Sign up: <http://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0d4ea5ad23a7f49-ocsa6>

Parent Ed Presents: Smart Track TM College Funding Program Presentation - Kelly Townsend introduced Zach Congelliere, the OCSA President/ College Funding Advisor of the Smart Track TM College Funding program. This is a new free resource provided by OCSA to the families. Please read below for some additional information.

(Background- OCSA provides access to a free new resource for our 9th-12th grade students and families called the Smart TrackTM College Funding Program!

Figuring out how to pay for college is the what this program hopes to answer. OSCA is supplying this online system with the tools and resources to educate parents/students on

navigating the college funding process and finding opportunities to save on college costs, when it really counts – prior to actually applying for financial aid. Here is a link to the Smart Track landing page for OCSA families: <https://collegefundingkit.com/OCSA>)

Zach Congelliere (President/College Funding Advisor) presented the Smart Track College Funding Program. He noted that this program is in it's 17 -18th year of existence. It is available to all OCSA families and includes a 15 minute free consultation. Additional consultation time is available at 50% off of the normal retail cost.

Congelliere opened his presentation by stating that the two most common questions parents ask about affording college, "How do we pay for college?" and "How do we pay less for college?"

A copy of his presentation can be found on the OSCA website under the Students/ Parents tab then by selecting Student Services. (It is embedded in the Smart Track section.) There was a very large and informative question and answer session throughout the presentation. A snapshot of a few key points from Congelliere's discussion included:

- * Aid comes in two main types; 1) Gift Aid (money you do not have to pay back) and Self-Help (funds you have to pay back).
- * There are two main Financial Aid Applications; the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and College Scholastic Service (CSS). In general, the CSS is requested only by private schools however, not all private colleges/ universities request this information.
- * Congelliere suggested all families complete a FAFSA. Each child in the same family needs a separate FAFSA form if multiple children are applying for College Aid at the same time.
- * The best time to complete and submit a FASFA is in October or November of the prior year the student is entering college because Financial Aid money for FASFA (federal and state funds) is first come, first serve.

Dean Becca Freeland reiterated that Smart Track has been added to our financial aid resource section on the Student Services website and they have given OCSA families free access to their resources. This is another tool for families to utilize, if they choose, but there is no contract or obligation to do so.

When asked, Dean Freeland clarified that generally college acceptance letters typically begin to arrive in mid to late March. This does not include the early acceptance letters which are usually sent before Christmas or in January. She also said all scholarship opportunities/ financial aid information are listed on-line under student services on the OSCA website.

Kelly Townsend thanked our guest speaker, Zach Congelliere.

Faye Chen closed the meeting and extended an invitation to all attendees to join the ways and means committee immediately after.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:01 a.m.

Save the Dates! - Upcoming PSO Meetings

- **Friday, April 27st 8:00 - 10:00 AM - Webb Event Center - Potluck & Elections**
Pot Luck with the Counselors, please join us for the annual end of the year PSO pot luck breakfast with our favorite counselors as they answer all your questions.

PSO on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ocsapso>

Contact us at PSO@ocsarts.net if you have any questions or comments.