

**Minutes of the James Madison High School PTSA
Monday, November 12, 2018**

Meeting was called to order at 7:01 pm.

In attendance: Greg Hood, Timothy Buckley, Beth Eachus, Marcy Davidson, Sarah Helmicki, Ellen MacGregor, Monica Ansel, Lenka Denemark, Ann Kuhlkin, Cathy Wasilewski, Shannon Sieff, Jenny Thompson, Rossana Carney, Monica Cramer, Melena Durham, Luke Kurcina, Heather Colbert, Linda Colbert, Jennifer O'Beirne, Kebra Krol, Marianne Roman, Cathy Sontheimer, Sarah Barry, Afsaneh Shahbazi, Delia Troy, Vinaya Kamath, AJ Snijders, Marissa Petty, Carolyn Ubben, Naomi Hutchins, Sylvia Martin Estes, Ellen Murphy Korenko, Ryan Go, Adam Rizzoli, Zhyldyz Isaeva, Eileen Sciuto, Becky Kong, Shannon Lee, Lynn Ailes-Sengers, Susan Robeson, Pascale Centola, Mary Ferrara

I. Call to Order and Welcome – Beth Eachus

II. Approval of October PTSA Meeting Minutes – Beth Eachus

Sarah Helmicki provided the October 2018 PTSA minutes. Beth Eachus asked for comments. No comments or changes were suggested. Marcy Davidson made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Monica Cramer seconded. The minutes were approved as written.

III. Warhawk Foundation

Nathan and Gail Hibler founded the Warhawk Foundation, a 501c3, in 2017 to help JMHS students achieve their higher education goals. Mr. Hibler introduced, Susan Robeson, who is the Executive Director of the foundation and formerly an Assistant Principal at JMHS. Susan provided some information about the foundation and explained the purpose and some of the activities of the organization. Currently, the foundation has provided scholarships to students who attend NOVA Community College, James Madison University, George Mason, Old Dominion University, and Virginia Tech. Some of the scholars are first generation college students in their family. Beyond financial support the Warhawk foundation also helps mentor their scholars by identifying or providing resources that support the social and emotional needs of the students. Beyond the support for students attending college, the Warhawk Foundation provided funds supporting the senior's Ethics Day and the new Mentoring Program that began in the 2018/19 school year. Anyone interested in learning more about the organization or making donation can access the website at www.warhawksf.org or email warhawksf@gmail.com.

IV. Student Services – Timothy Buckley

Mr. Buckley thanked those who had provided support for the Mentoring Program. He also announced that first quarter grades would be mailed to students' homes. This will be the only time grades will be printed and mailed. If parents have any questions about grades, they should direct these to the teachers as they are best equipped to respond.

Mr. Buckley also noted that Academic Advising will begin soon for the 2019-2020 school year. In the first week of December, the portal with classes that will be offered in 2019-2020 will go live. In January, there is a quick turnaround to sign up for classes, so parents should begin having conversations with their students about which classes to take.

Finally, Mr. Buckley announced that the fall Academic Awards Ceremony would be held on Tuesday, November 13 from 3:30-4:30. The National Honor Society Induction Ceremony will be held on Thursday, Nov. 15, at 3pm.

V. Faculty Report – Ms. Petty

Ms. Petty provided highlights of the cohort model of teaching that has been instituted at James Madison HS. This new model should enable teachers to provide deeper learning in the classroom. Teachers are working with the new model and will report back in January to discuss how the new model is working in practice. Also, staff have the option of attending Lunch and Learns to get suggestions on how to use the new model in their classrooms.

Ms. Petty also noted that the two applications for conferences for which the PTSA pays have gone live. The teachers appreciate the support provided by the PTSA.

VI. Student Report

SGA president, Heather Colbert, reported that the SGA is sponsoring a canned food drive until Thanksgiving. In an effort to shift the focus onto impact of how the food helps others, rather than a competition between classrooms, the total number of donations has decreased, but ultimately, the shift to impact should improve education as to why food is collected. Food collected will be donated to Food for Others as well as to the JMHS pantry. Heather also reported that the homecoming dance, sponsored by the SGA had record turnout.

VII. President's Report – Beth Eachus

Beth thanked the parents for the continued donations into the school for families in need. For the winter coat drive, many coats were collected, but we are still in need of men's coats size M, L and XL. Jill Feeko donated 70 to 80 coats to the Octagon Club coat drive. Coats not provided to the Octagon Club were donated to the Marshall Road Elementary Schools coat drive or to CHO (Community for Helping Others.)

The food pantry is overwhelmingly full thanks to the many donations of the JMHS community. Soon hygiene products will be added to the Amazon wish list.

In years past, JMHS staff have sponsored a Giving Tree for the holidays. This year, that will be expanded so that the entire community can participate in the Giving Tree.

Beth also reported that money from mock SAT and ACT testing is used to pay for the Academic Awards Ceremony and two conferences for teachers.

VIII. Treasurer's Report – Marcy Davidson

Marcy Davidson reported that we have 520 members in the PTSA. Also, she noted that she had filed our taxes with National PTSA and submitted our paperwork for national membership. Marcy also filled out the paperwork for our PTSA's 501c3 status.

IX. Committee Reports

Ethics Day: Monica Cramer reported that she is seeking 4 additional table leaders to help facilitate during Ethics Day. All other volunteer positions have been filled. She also noted that senior parent, Linda Colbert, arranged the event with the Town of Vienna. Other than the 4 additional table leaders, everything including food, drinks, buses, etc. is ready for the event that will take place Friday, Nov 16.

Academic Boosters: The fall Academic Award ceremony will take place on Nov. 13. Mock testing continues. The second offering of the mock SAT was offered on November 10. The second offering of the mock ACT will be held on November 17. The next round of mock testing will be in Feb 2019. For now, Educational Connections, who proctors the test, does not offer the test with "accommodations." If this is offered in the future, the PTSA would have to manage this.

Food Pantry: Rossana Carney reported that 200 pairs of shoes were donated in 2 days when the request was issued for donations. Right now, food donations are doing very well, so the new focus is on hygiene products. There will be a Giving Tree wish list set up in the next few weeks. Rossana thanked everyone for their support of the pantry.

All Night Grad: Cathy Wasilewski reported that meetings for All Night Grad has had their first committee meeting but there will be many more opportunities to volunteer after the first of the year. Please help with advertising the event to both students (who must register for the event) and parents who are needed to volunteer. Some committees are in need of chairs. Meetings for the event usually take place the hour before the monthly PTSA meeting. In addition to planning, many volunteers are needed on the night of the event in 2 shifts.

PTSA Website: Jennifer O'Beirne reported that that people should feel free to send her content, announcements or helpful links. She would be happy to include these on the PTSA website.

Directory: AtoZConnect came out in October and is available to all parents. Some teachers have requested access, which Jenny can provide. If you would like access to the directory, email Jenny at directory@jmhsptsa.org.

Special Education: Beth Eachus reported that the newly formed JMHS Best Buddies group is linked with the National Best Buddies organization. The group has participated in a walk in Washington DC and with Marshall HS.

There has been so much interest in the group that each special needs student has 6 “buddies.” The group will participate in the Unified Special Olympics that will take place at Robinson Secondary School this year.

Hospitality: The next hospitality event will be December 6 which will be a “grab and go” breakfast. Help will be needed with setup if you have availability.

Rewards Programs: Ann Kuhlkin provided an update on the donations earned from Harris Teeter and Giant for parents who shop at those stores. There is also a link, called Amazon Smile, in which parents can link their Amazon.com purchases. Search JMHS under Amazon Smile. Instructions to link other store cards are on the PTSA website. Already, our earnings from these programs have doubled since September. If we stay on track, we are projected to earn \$9600, up from \$2600 last year.

Band: It was reported that JMHS Marching Ensemble won first place in the Virginia State Championship Competition. The band has received straight superiors in the state marching assessment and placed 4th overall and was the Class AAA champion at the Bands of America Regional Competition at the University of Delaware in October. The band will have some fundraisers to look out for. They are selling White House Christmas ornaments, hosting the Vienna Turkey Trot on November 18, and presenting the Tiny Tots Holiday Concert on November 29 and 30.

Drama: Ellen Korenko presented an update on the Drama club. Drama presented a comedy called Noises Off on November 7, 8, and 9. Due to the unforeseen cancelation of the December 8 performance, encore performances are planned for November 16 and 17 at 7:30pm. As a result the cabaret will not be held on Sat, Dec 1, at 7pm. In the spring, drama will show West Side Story. Auditions will take place on Dec 11 and 12. Call backs will be Dec 14 and 15. Forty drama students are registered to attend the Thespian Conference at Radford on Feb 1-3. Drama will hold 2 upcoming dining for dollars fundraisers at Chipotle on 11/28 and at Tequila Grande on 12/13.

Athletic Boosters: It was reported that the swim and dive teams are selling poinsettias. Forms are available to place an order. The winter Meet the Coaches night will be on 11/13. The wrestling team will be laying wreaths at Arlington National Cemetery for the holidays. The cross country team had a good season and an excellent showing at states. The football team is in the playoffs again this year.

X. Principal Report – Principal Greg Hood

Mr. Hood shared that there had been a fire in the art wing caused by a 24 hour kiln. There was no major damage as the sprinkler in the art room had put the fire out. Many fire trucks were at the scene right away. Fairfax County sent a crew to clean out the water. New shelving and kilns are needed. The fire was restricted to the art wing and was completely away from other activities taking place. Everyone was safe.

Mr. Hood also reported that Hillary Clinton was at JMHS watching a game.

Mr. Hood shared that the Octagon Club has instituted a recycle program that is student run. They have installed a refrigerator to collect the milks that are not consumed during lunches. They can also accept whole fruit.

A new format was used for This Week at Madison, which is intended to be more clear for parents. Lastly, similar to previous years, all schools in the JMHS pyramid will support the policy that no homework will be assigned during major holidays. Also, there will not be tests or major projects due just after the holidays so that families can enjoy their time together without the concern of grades and tests.

XI. Old Business: No news to report.

XII. New Business: In new business, Beth introduced the Mindful Memorial. This will be a project in which the entire student body will volunteer. All students will help make cards with ribbons attached. These will hang at Arlington National Cemetery at the Women’s Memorial in honor of fallen soldiers. The cost for the community to participate is \$2231 and will cover the materials. The PTSA has \$2000 budgeted for special projects. Monica Cramer made a motion to apply the \$2000 budgeted toward special projects to the Mindful Memorial. Sarah Barry seconded the motion. The motion passed.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 pm. Following the meeting, Monica Ansel introduced the Parent Program: **Teaching Students to Handle Stress and Other Challenges** presented by Rachel Bailey, M.A., CPDPE.