

**Minutes of the James Madison High School PTSA
Monday, February 11, 2019**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm.

In attendance: Greg Hood, Timothy Buckley, Beth Eachus, Marcy Davidson, Sarah Helmicki, Ellen MacGregor, Monica Ansel, Cathy Wasilewski, Jenny Thompson, Rossana Carney, Luke Kurcina, Kebra Krol, Cathy Sontheimer, Marissa Petty, Sylvia Martin Estes, Ryan Go, Adam S., Pascale Centola, Mary Ferrara, Sonia Marsden, Shelly Koshuta, Chris Lande, Rene Newman, Lynn Sabia, Joceline Nahigian, Anne-Stuart Kirkhorn, Mary Ann Rashid, Beth Tudan

I. Call to Order and Welcome – Beth Eachus

II. Approval of October PTSA Meeting Minutes – Sarah Helmicki

Sarah Helmicki provided the November 2018 PTSA minutes. Sarah asked for comments. No comments or changes were suggested. Mr. Buckley made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Marcy Davidson seconded. The minutes were approved as written.

III. Principal Report – Principal Greg Hood

Mr. Hood shared information about the JMHS building addition. We currently have approximately 2240 students. We are growing by about 25 students per year and are projected to have 2400+ students. We are running out of space. The county has been coming up with plans to address this issue. JMHS has a small footprint, so there is little choice except to expand up. Mr. Hood presented some preliminary plans for the addition. It is likely that JMHS would have 3 floors with the new space added above the current library. The library would be housed on the 3rd floor and 14 additional classrooms would be added on floors 1 and 2, and two of them will be science classrooms. After previous additions, there is space that is not maximized (eg, the “hallway to nowhere”) that will also be reallocated to classroom space. There will also be renovation to increase the size of the cafeteria, which is too small for the current population. During the construction, parking spaces in the front of the building as well as the gravel lot would not be available. Likely in that scenario, parking would only be available for seniors. The renovation/addition is projected to take 2 years. The timing is estimated to be from summer 2020 to July 2022. In addition to classroom spaces, there will be some new office/conference room spaces added.

Mr. Hood also raised the potential to use funds from PTSA raised through Academic Boosters to send ten teachers to a conference aimed at improving the learning environment for students at JMHS. The administration and teachers at Madison are trying to be on the forefront of shifting the learning paradigm so that our students are prepared for the future. The Deeper Learning Conference held in March in San Diego is an opportunity for teachers to learn about best practices and new teaching strategies that they can ultimately bring back to JMHS.

IV. Faculty Report – Ms. Petty

Ms. Petty provided more detail about the Deeper Learning Conference that was introduced by Mr. Hood. The conference is very large and draws teachers from all over the world. The goal of the conference is to identify how teachers engage students in meaningful learning. In the past, teachers taught all students with the same pace, but now, they seek to teach with “mastery learning” so that the pace is tailored to the student. Ms. Petty has begun to implement mastery learning in her classroom and she has found that it makes students excited about learning.

Whereas the Deeper Learning Conference focuses on the bigger picture of new learning strategies, the Washington International School Summer Institute for Teachers (WISSIT) in DC, another conference described by Ms. Petty, discusses how teachers can implement deeper learning in the classroom in a way it makes sense to teachers and students. They provide tips and strategies to immediately implement and integrate new teaching strategies.

Teachers who attended these conferences have shared information learned with other teachers at JMHS, and the school has seen a ripple effect where more and more teachers are using these strategies in the classroom.

V. Student Services – Timothy Buckley

Mr. Buckley is looking for volunteers for AP proctoring. There is no expertise required. Parents just need to sit in the room with students taking their tests. AP exams take place in May. Mr. Buckley also noted that International Night will take place on Friday, 2/15. From 7:00-8:00pm, there will be a show with a number student performances

in which they represent their heritage. From 8:00-9:00pm there will be a pot luck dinner with international foods provided by parents and students. There will also be some food donations by local restaurants.

Mr. Buckley also explained that a new county policy might lead to students taking fewer SOL tests as early as 2019. Overall, the county is moving in the direction of reducing the amount of testing. As a result, if a student does not need an SOL, the student will not need to take it. For students in grades 10-12, 9 SOL tests are required for the Advanced Diploma and 6 SOL tests are required for the Standard Diploma. (Note that an AP exam can substitute for an SOL for students taking AP classes.) As a result, the county has asked each high school to work with students to identify which diploma they can achieve, and then to determine how many additional SOLs are still needed for their respective diplomas. If all SOL requirements have been met, then students would not need to take any additional SOL tests. The process to implement this new county policy is still in development by the JMHS administration and will be in place before the SOLs are given in May. Ninth grade students, under new graduation policies, will only need 5 SOL tests for both the Advanced and Standard Diploma.

VI. Student Report

The SGA representative noted that the Harry Potter themed winter dance was a success. Unfortunately, there was a snow day on the day that was supposed to have a pep rally, so the SGA is looking for another date to reschedule. Now, the SGA will start preparing for Prom and Mr. Madison, which is a fund raising event put on by sophomores to raise revenue for the following year's prom for which they are responsible.

VII. President's Report/Committee Reports – Beth Eachus

Beth combined her report with the Committee Reports.

Ethics Day: Beth Eachus reported that Ethics Day had been a huge success. This was the second year that it had been planned for the senior class, and students and volunteers were very pleased with the event. Mr. Buckley thanked the PTSA for supporting the event with financial backing and volunteers.

Academic Boosters: The fall Academic Award ceremony took place in November. The event recognized over 300 students who were called to the stage for their academic success. The event takes tremendous effort and cost approximately \$2400 which is funded by PTSA's mock testing revenue. Mock testing continues. The next mock ACT will be on Feb. 23. In March, the final mock SAT (3/23/19) and ACT (3/30/19) will be offered.

Mock testing has been more successful than budgeted. The PTSA budget estimated \$8500 in revenue from mock testing. After the first 2 rounds of mock testing, the income is already \$7766. As a result, the income for mock testing is expected to exceed projections. After paying for the Academic Award Ceremony, the remaining funds will be allocated to pay for teachers to attend the two conferences highlighted by Ms. Petty. Beth noted that \$6100 is already allocated in the budget to pay for the conferences, but additional funds are needed to send to all those who are interested in attending the conferences (10 teachers). The increase would need to be \$2500 with a total \$11,000 expense for Academic Awards and (Teacher) Development. Sonia Marsden made a motion to increase expenses in Academic Awards and Development by \$2500 to \$11,000 so that more teachers can attend the development conferences. Chris Lande seconded the motion. The motion passed.

All Night Grad: Cathy Wasilewski reported that meetings for All Night Grad have continued. Ticket sales are underway. Tickets are currently \$60, but the price will increase to \$75 on March 1. Tickets will increase again in May to \$90. Additional advertising will take place since some senior parents do not realize that All Night Grad tickets are not included in senior dues. Tickets are available online through the PTSA. Cathy reported that some additional volunteers had signed up to chair some committees, including food and chaperones/security. In addition to planning, many volunteers are needed on the night of the event in 2 shifts.

Food Pantry: Anne-Stuart Kirkhorn thanked everyone for their support of the pantry. 125 bags with personal hygiene products were distributed to students prior to the winter holidays. Counselors and teachers let the PTSA know that these bags were very well received and appreciated by the recipients. In addition, the pantry was opened prior to the holidays to parents in need. The pantry was essentially cleared out at that time, but with the generosity of parents and community members, the pantry was restocked almost immediately after school restarted. So much food was donated that the PTSA was able to offer food to families who were impacted by the government furlough. Beth and Rossana Carney also reiterated their thanks for the support of this new program at JMHS. Beth noted that the two co-chairs of the pantry will be leaving with their graduating seniors. New co-chairs are needed for this vital program. Please contact Beth if you would like to volunteer.

Beth also mentioned 2 local partners who are also supporting the JMHS pantry, Bringing Resources to Aid Womens Shelters (BRAWS), a local non profit, has donated female supplies and undergarments to JMHS students. Another local non-profit, Community for Helping Others (CHO), has provided bikes to students in need of transportation to their after school jobs.

Beth also mentioned that the JMHS Pantry may be the recipient of funds raised by a non-profit, local rummage sale. These funds are estimated to be between \$2000-5000. This money would be used to provide food and supplies to JMHS students in need over the summer.

Hospitality: Kebra Krol thanked those who donated snacks and drinks for the science fair judges on Feb. 6. The Hospitality committee also hosted a dinner for the Science Fair faculty. The next hospitality event will be on Feb 20 for the "Stars of JMHS," an Academy Awards-themed event with a red carpet, drinks and snacks for teachers. Help will be needed with setup if you have availability at 7am on 2/20.

Mindful Memorial This will be a project in which the entire student body will volunteer. The logistics of how students, faculty and staff will volunteer has not been determined, but the PTSA has already contributed \$2231 to cover some materials for the event. One week before Memorial Day cards with ribbons attached will be made and hung at Arlington National Cemetery at the Women's Memorial in honor of fallen soldiers who have passed in theater since Sept. 11, 2001, which is almost 7000 soldiers. Volunteers will be needed on the day that these cards are made and hung at Arlington National Cemetery. In addition, more volunteers will be needed over Memorial Day weekend to "mindfully honor" those soldiers. If you would like more information or would like to volunteer, contact Lynn Sabia at lynn@armordown.com.

Drama: Ellen MacGregor noted that notwithstanding the snow that drama students were able to attend the Thespian Conference at Radford on Feb 1-3. Some students won awards at this event and two people earned the opportunity to work in a regional play both in costumes and as an actor in the play. On Feb 21-23, ten One Act plays will be presented. There will be 5 Acts at each show. In the spring, drama will show West Side Story. The show will take place on May 2-4. For those interested in helping behind the scenes for this show, Drama will be hosting Tech Saturday for students who want to learn if this might be of interest. Lastly, Drama and the PTSA will support a Kids Drama Camp on April 5.

Band: It was reported that JMHS Winter Guard has started their competition season. Fifteen band students were selected for All District Band and will audition for All State Band. Also, the 18-piece Jazz ensemble will be performing on April 1 at Jammin' Java in Vienna. Tickets are available through the band. Choir participated in All District Chorus over the weekend of Feb 9-10. Some students auditioned for All State Chorus and were selected.

Athletic Boosters: It was reported that winter season has been successful for many JMHS teams. In swim and dive, the boys won 2nd in the conference and 2nd in the regionals. The girls one first place in both competitions. Both boys and girls will be competing at states next. In basketball, the girls are first in the conference and will be starting their post-season games. Unfortunately, the boys basketball team was eliminated from conference post season play in an upset. The wrestling team is moving onto state competition. Lastly the gymnastics team won 2nd in the regional competition and will be moving onto the state competition as well.

VIII. Treasurer's Report – Marcy Davidson

Marcy Davidson noted that we have met our PTSA membership and fundraising goals. She did not have any additional information to report other than what was discussed to increase Academic Awards and Development expenses.

IX. New Business: Monica Anshel noted that there are two additional upcoming parent programs. On February 20, Brian Maslowski, an FCPS Prevention Teacher, will review current trends in teen substance abuse, strategies for engaging students in discussions about their choices and signs that your child or their friends are involved with illegal substances. Then on April 4, the PTSA will present a program on Navigating the College Admission Process.

In other new business, an announcement was made that Fairfax County PTA has instituted a high school voter registration challenge to try and encourage more students to register to vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 pm.