

**Minutes of the James Madison High School PTSA
Monday, May 13, 2019**

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 pm.

In attendance: Greg Hood, Timothy Buckley, Beth Eachus, Sarah Helmicki, Ellen MacGregor, Monica Ansel, Marcy Davidson, Tarah Weaver, Anne-Stuart Kirkhorn, Sonya Marsden, Cathy Wasilewski, Rossana Carney, Kebra Krol, Sarah Espanol, Christopher Lande, Naomi Hutchins, Irina Smirnoff, Sophie Shayne, Emma Gartin, Natasha Karasick, Marissa Petty, Kieran Kahn, Suzanne van der Eijk, Deepa Rao, Shelly Koshuta, Jenny Thompson

I. Call to Order and Welcome – Beth Eachus

II. Approval of October PTSA Meeting Minutes – Sarah Helmicki

Sarah Helmicki provided the April 2019 PTSA minutes. Beth asked for comments. No comments or changes were suggested. Anne-Stuart Kirkhorn made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Sonya Marsden seconded. The minutes were approved as written.

III. Principal Report – Principal Greg Hood

Mr. Hood noted that end of the year is fast approaching. The PTSA has heard about the Deeper Learning Conference and the impact that it has had on the teachers but has not heard the benefit to students. Ms. Van der Eijk and Ms. Petty introduced some students to provide some insights. Sophie, Deepa, Kieran, Natasha, and Emma, a group of freshman and sophomores in Ms. Petty's World History and AP World History classes, spoke to the group and explained what they liked about learning with the new deeper learning teaching philosophy. Some highlights of their comments include:

- Students like learning new skills, such as working with new software like Google Slides and Adobe Spark, video-editing, and conducting long-term research
- Students are participating more and getting involved in classroom discussion rather than listening to lectures, which has led to more individual learning and engagement in the classroom.
- Teachers notice improved critical thinking.
- Students learn more with project-based learning, rather than traditional testing.
- Students are seeking to expand knowledge on topics rather than learning facts for the test and subsequently forgetting the information.
- Students have more ownership for their learning and have freedom to choose how they demonstrate their mastery of a topic.

Teachers are all learning the new Deeper Learning paradigm. Not all teachers are in the same place and comfort-level with the new teaching strategies. However, the school would like to continue to move toward project based learning since group based learning helps prepare students to work in groups in the future. Self-directed learning is part of the strategy – motivation is intrinsic to students.

Mr. Hood added that all disciplines and all teachers are moving away from “sit and get” which is helping students become more engaged. Now “voice and choice” is more of the theme, so teachers should act as facilitators, and students should have more self-directed learning. Financial backing by the PTSA has helped move more teachers in this direction with training that has come from conferences sponsored by the PTSA.

Mr. Hood also described the Wings Program, a capstone program, that is optional for seniors. About 100 students will participate this year in lieu of exams. Once the program is over, students must come back and share their experiences.

IV. Student Services – Timothy Buckley

Mr. Buckley shared that the school is in the middle of testing. AP and SOL tests are all taking place at the same time. So far, no major issues have surfaced. The school will administer 2500 AP tests across 19 subjects. 82 parent volunteers will have given 328 hours of their time. Also the county has passed new regulations for SOLs which has led to a decline in the number of SOLs taken overall. If students pass all that they need for the diploma that they are striving to earn, they no longer need to take all SOLs. The class of 2022 will only need five in high school. If freshmen pass three SOLs in their freshman year, they will not need more SOLs until the two required in junior year. For more information on SOLs and the changes in requirements, please reference “This week at Madison” for week of 5/13. There is an explanation. There are different standards for different classes as the

standards are changing. The classes of 2019-2021 will be transition classes. The class of 2022 will have the same SOL requirements as future classes, unless standards or requirements change again.

V. Faculty Report – Ms. Petty

Ms. Petty thanked the PTSA for teacher appreciation week. Teachers appreciated the opportunity to grab snacks and refuel as everyone is moving toward the end of school.

VI. Student Government Report

Student government representatives reported that the Mr. Madison event was successful. In previous years, the event was tainted by sexual innuendo and gender issues. This year, student government leaders sought changes that would eliminate these issues. While some were not sure how these changes would impact the overall event, in the end, the event was positive and more family friendly. If the event continues in the future, there may be more changes to make the event more inclusive. Also, it is possible that it will move away from a single gender focus.

Representatives also noted that prom went well, students signed a banner for Teacher Appreciation Week, and retiring teachers received a letter from the SGA. Also, Madison Matters will be a week highlighting mental health during AP exams, SOLs and finals. They are in the process of finalizing plans and are getting ready to advertise to the student body.

VII. New Business

To ensure a quorum for the vote for the 2019-2020 slate of PTSA officers, New Business was discussed earlier in the meeting. The PTSA officer slate for the 2019-2020 school year had been presented at the April PTSA meeting. It was presented again by Marcy Davidson. Marcy asked if there were any other nominations from the floor. No one offered any additional nominations. The slate was approved by vote. The slate is as follows:

President - Beth Eachus

1st Vice President - Sonya Marsden

2nd Vice President - Ellen MacGregor

Treasurer - Tarah Weaver

Secretary - Sarah Helmicki

VIII. Treasurer's Report

Expenditures out of the 2018-19 School Budget were addressed during the meeting.

- For the Food Bank, at the end of the year all funds reset to \$0 on June 30. As a result, the PTSA would like to make sure that food bank donations are restricted to food bank use. Cathy Wasilewski made a motion to reserve \$2150 for the food bank. Anne-Stuart Kirkhorn seconded the motion. The motion passed.
- For Special Projects, the Digital Arts department created a logo for the PTSA. As a thank you, Sonya Marsden made a motion to give a donation to the Digital Arts department for equipment to be utilized by the students by adding \$500 to the Special Projects budget. 2. Ellen Macgregor seconded, and the motion passed.
- For the Triple I Awards and Ceremony, some unexpected expenses from last year (lanyards pre-purchased that will be re-used), reduced the budget for Triple I Awards, so a one-time increase by \$500 is needed in this year's budget to cover the gifts for Triple I. Christopher Lande made a motion to increase the Triple I Awards and Ceremony budget by \$500. Ellen Macgregor seconded. The motion passed.
- Naomi Watts made a motion to cover summer expenses for the PTSA accountant for tax preparation with a \$750 allocation. Ellen MacGregor seconded. The motion passed.
- Sonya Marsden made a motion to send 8 teachers to WISSIT, a week-long program at the Washington International School. It gives teachers the opportunity to network with teachers from other DC-area and Eastern seaboard schools. It will also provide tools and techniques for Deeper Learning. To pay for the program, \$2500 will come from the Principal's Fund, \$1000 will come from Student Activity Grants/Mentoring, and another \$1000 will come from revenue earned from practice standardized tests. Ms. Petty seconded the motion. The motion passed.
- Lastly, Marcy Davidson made a motion to restrict some funds for the benefit of future renovation to the school. Given that the PTSA has an ending cash balance of over \$30,000, it was suggested \$10,000 in funds would be restricted and utilized for the new technology, furniture, etc. after the renovation. The renovation is planned to begin January 2021. Christopher Lande seconded the motion. The motion passed.

IX. President's Report – Beth Eachus

During her report Beth focused on volunteer recognition. In particular, she thanked those parents of graduating seniors for their service to the PTSA.

- Anne-Stuart Kirkhorn served as PTSA secretary and co-director of the Madison Food Pantry.
- Rossana Carney served as the co-director of the Madison Food Pantry and was instrumental in getting the project underway.
- Marcy Davidson served both as Treasurer and VP of the PTSA.

Beth also thanked the PTSA officers for 2018-2019, including Vice President Monica Anshel who is leaving the PTSA board, Treasurer Marcy Davidson who is also leaving the board, Vice President Ellen MacGregor, and Secretary Sarah Helmicki.

Finally, Beth also thanked the committee chairs who attended the meeting, including:

- Kebra Krol – Hospitality
- Jenny Thompson – Directory
- Shelly Koshuta – Mad Memos
- Cathy Wasilewski – All Night Grad
- Ms. Petty – PTSA Teacher representative

Thank you to all of the volunteers.

X. Committee Reports – Beth Eachus and Committee Chairs

Mindful Memorial - The ribbons were done incorrectly initially, but there is a group of students and volunteers who will correct these before they are needed. Contact Lynn Sabia if you want to participate over the Memorial Day weekend. There has been a lot of good coverage in the media for the event.

All Night Grad – May 15 is the next deadline for sign-ups. The committee is trying to get more students to attend, and they will send a KIT to senior parents. The event will be held at Oak Marr. The committee is asking for parents to volunteer especially on the night of the event.

Hospitality – Kebra Krol thanked everyone who donated their food and time for hospitality events. Some Tupperware items were left behind. She is already planning the August 23 Welcome Back to School Breakfast.

Triple I – Many good referrals came in for the Triple I teacher awards. Ten teachers selected, and awards will be given at Convocation. Applications also came in for the PTSA Make a Difference Scholarship. Winners will be announced at Convocation.

Drama - West Side Story, the spring musical, was nominated for 5 cappys including, best musical, best vocal ensemble (Jets), best supporting character, best female in a lead role, and best musical pit.

VII. New Business (continued)

Next year there will be three sections of AP Environmental Science. These classes will support the project plans for the beautification project of the courtyard. Funding will be covered in part by the school because it is part of the AP Environmental Science curriculum.

Anne-Stuart Kirkhorn made a point to thank Beth Eachus for her support of the school and the county through the PTSA.

Most of the JMHS athletic teams are 1st or second in the conference – with a few exceptions. Several spring teams will compete in the post-season.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:18 pm.