

**Minutes of the James Madison High School PTSA
Monday, April 20, 2020**

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

In attendance: Greg Hood, Timothy Buckley, Beth Eachus, Sarah Helmicki, Ellen MacGregor, Sonya Marsden, Tarah Weaver, Kebra Krol, Robyn Nguyen, Jennifer O'Beirne, Sarah Lundquist, Naomi Hutchins, Katrina Smart, Kathleen Sichenze, Debra Steppel, Shelly Koshuta, Christine Nell, Amy Masters, Annemarie Harthun, Michael Kowal, Cathy Wasilewski, Pam Dodd, Rene Newman, Angela Gutenson, Emily Korff, Gwen Riddle, Jenny Thompson, Fern Hernberg, Kari Govan, Sylvia Martin Estes, Chris Lande, Linda Khan, DeAnna Duncan Grand, Claire Marble, Courtney Chadwick, Ellie Bechtle, Sarah Espanol, Naama Yager Ende, Elizabeth Copeland, Moni-ca Anshel, Pam Styles, Alison Geib

I. Call to Order and Welcome – Beth Eachus

Beth welcomed those in attendance and asked for participants to note their names in the chat box in Zoom.

II. Approval of March PTSA Meeting Minutes – Sarah Helmicki

Sarah noted that the March 2020 PTSA minutes had been emailed and posted on the JMHS website. Beth asked if there was any feedback. No comments or changes were suggested. Ellen MacGregor made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Cathy Wasilewski seconded. The minutes were approved as written.

III. Principal Report – Principal Greg Hood

Mr. Hood shared that FCPS distance learning has been a very difficult situation. FCPS has overpromised and under-delivered. The plan called for synchronous and asynchronous learning on alternating days. However, synchronous learning relied on the Blackboard platform, which was unable to handle the online traffic required to meet the system needs. The initial coverage enabled 16,000 users. After improvements, Blackboard was only able to handle 50,000 users, which is only a fraction of what is needed. The superintendent will determine a new plan for the system. However, Mr. Hood has volunteered JMHS as a pilot school for alternative/backup platforms. Some FCPS schools will go into asynchronous learning for the remainder of the week. JMHS will hold synchronous learning classes as planned. The Virginia Department of Education requires that attendance is taken in each synchronous class in order to track which students are in the virtual classrooms. Students who do not attend will be noted with VSN (Virtual Student Non-participation). There are plans to tape/record all virtual classroom sessions in the event that students are unable to attend virtual classroom sessions due to other obligations (work, care of siblings/younger children, etc.) These students would be marked as VSN, but they would still have access to the material.

With respect to student grades, Mr. Hood noted that for the remainder of the 3rd Quarter (3Q), students will have the opportunity to make up work, re-take assessments, or otherwise turn in work not completed before the building closure to improve their 3Q grade. Work and assessments in the 4th Quarter (4Q) will not receive a numeric grade. Instead, students will be marked as Proficient, Attempted, Not Attempted. Final grades for 2019-2020 will be the better grade of either the average of Quarters 1, 2 and 3 or Semester 1 (the average of Quarter 1 and 2 only). Students can receive a 1/2 letter grade improvement to their final grade based on their 4Q performance as per the discretion of the teacher.

Mr. Hood also addressed graduation for the Class of 2020. He said that graduation has not been canceled for the class of 2020. All FCPS schools are holding their reservations at either Eagle Bank Arena or DAR. No decisions have been made at this time. FCPS is working with the Health Department to see what is possible. Mr. Hood also said that other graduation options are being considered, including a virtual graduation, postponement until later in the summer, as well as alternative graduation locations.

Mr. Hood discussed refunds for funds paid for which the services/items were not received due to the school closure. He suggested that there would be refunds/partial refunds for art/photography materials fees, field trips, senior dues, and parking. Parents will also have the opportunity to donate their refund back to the school.

With respect to the renovation, Mr. Hood noted that modular classroom units have already been placed in the JMHS parking lot. There is a possibility that the school closure may speed up the process/timeline of the renovation. In addition, if there are items in the school that students need/are essential, Mr. Kenney can access the building and can work with parents/students to provide those items.

IV. Student Services – Timothy Buckley

Mr. Buckley noted that school counselors are still available for students. There will be group online drop-in hours for the counselors on Wednesdays between 1-2 and Fridays between 10-11. These sessions will be handled using the same platform used for online learning. More information about these sessions will be forthcoming. In the meantime, counselors are regularly checking their emails for student's individual needs.

Mr. Buckley noted that seniors will receive a survey in the next 1-2 weeks. This survey is typically given to students in school and is used to determine where to send final transcripts (e.g., schools, scholarship organizations, etc.) For those students who have not finalized their plans, their transcripts can be sent to multiple schools. He also indicated that Lynn Otto had recently sent students in the junior class resources and parent programs that will help them with the upcoming college application process.

With respect to graduation requirements, Mr. Buckley said that SOL testing requirements and certification exams for any student in the class of 2020 who is missing these have been waived. This means that the only seniors who are in danger of not meeting graduation requirements are those not passing a class. These students, their teachers and parents have been notified to determine a plan to improve grades.

V. Faculty Report

There was no Faculty Report in the meeting.

VI. Student Government Report

There was no Student Government Report in the meeting.

VII. President's Report – Beth Eachus

Beth shared that the JMHS Pantry had donated hundreds of pounds of food and many gift cards (\$25-\$100/week) for families with food insecurities. JMHS has partnered with churches and not for profits to help reach families in need.

In addition, Beth thanked the JMHS teachers and staff for their ongoing hard work during this time. She noted that plans were in place to show the PTSA's appreciation.

VIII. Treasurer's Report – Tarah Weaver

Tarah Weaver noted that many pantry financial donations have been made through the PTSA. In March, that amount was \$7357. She said that there would be additional pantry financial donations in April.

Also, there is \$20,460 in All Night Grad. At this point in the school year, donations are typically coming in, but at this time, All Night Grad is on hold, although not canceled.

IX. Committee Reports

Athletic Boosters – Beth reported that all food already purchased for concessions was donated to the pantry.

All Night Grad – Cathy Wasilewski reported that the ANG committee had not canceled their June 2 date with the Vienna Community Center in hopes that some type of celebration can take place for the Class of 2020 graduates. The vendors that were already contracted for the event have agreed to reschedule within 90 days free of charge. There would not be a refund if the event cannot be rescheduled. However, the vendors have been very flexible. Food vendors who typically donate to ANG have not been approached at this time, given that they are under stress due to the pandemic. The Vienna Business Association has offered to do a banner for the Class of 2020 across Maple Ave. If parents have other ideas to honor the graduates, they should contact Cathy or Mr. Buckley.

Baccalaureate – Sylvia Martin Estes shared that an alternative for Baccalaureate has been planned. This multi-faith service is typically the kick-off to the graduation events and is a contemplative service with comments from many faith leaders and some students. These different speakers will now video their speeches. A videographer has offered to compile all the videos for the senior class.

Hospitality – Kebra Krol thanked the teachers again for all of their work. She shared that there are plans in place to show "distance appreciation" to the teachers and staff.

Academic Boosters – Ellen MacGregor noted that the final mock testing of the year was canceled. However, the Academic Boosters did host 3 SAT and 3 ACT tests earlier in the year.

Parent Programs – Sonya Marsden reported that the PTSA sponsored 2 virtual parent programs that were very successful. Rachel Bailey hosted a Zoom presentation that was attended by 57 parents. The presentation offered tips for handling stress during the quarantine. The second parent program was a webinar led by Jed Applerouth and was attended by 100-150 parents. The topic discussed was Navigating the College Admissions Process. Sonya also reminded parents about the 3 Making a Difference Scholarships for seniors offered by the PTSA. The PTSA will also be accepting recommendations for the Teacher III Awards that are sponsored by the PTSA.

X. New Business

Beth Eachus introduced the Nominating Committee for the PTSA slate for the 2020-2021 school year, Elizabeth Copeland (Chair), Sarah Helmicki, and Shelly Koshuta. Elizabeth noted that anyone who is interested in serving on the PTSA board should contact Sarah Helmicki at secretary@jmhspts.org. She also introduced the proposed slate:

President: Christopher Lande
Vice President 1: Sonya Marsden
Vice President 2: Beth Eachus
Treasurer: Tarah Weaver
Secretary: Sarah Lundquist

Voting will take place on May 18, our last scheduled PTSA meeting of the year.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:16 pm.