

**Minutes of the James Madison High School PTSA
Tuesday, January 11, 2022**

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 pm.

In attendance: Greg Hood, Timothy Buckley, Elizabeth Dean; Michael Kowal; Abby Shannon, Andrea Kramer, Becky Kong, Beth Eachus, Christine Nell, Donna O'Harren, Eliza Morss, Gayle Schlueter, Heather Ireland, Heba Singer, Irina Smirnoff, Janice Alodah, Janine Bruhn, Jennifer O'Beirne, Lynn Collins, Maribel Langas Miller, Megan Wallace, Missy Dixon, Pascale Centola, Rene Newman, Robyn Nguyen, Sarah Español, Sarah Lundquist, Stacey Leimbach, Sumei Wang, Tara Lowen

I. Call to Order and Welcome – Beth Eachus

Beth welcomed all to the meeting.

II. Approval of November PTSA Meeting Minutes – Sarah Lundquist

As there was no December meeting, Sarah announced that the minutes from the November meeting had been posted to the PTSA website for several weeks. Andrea Kramer moved to approve the minutes. Gayle Schlueter seconded the motion, and the motion to approve the minutes was passed.

III. Principal's Report – Principal Greg Hood

Mr. Hood gave the following updates:

COVID: The fall felt like we were back to normal but now the Omicron surge is changing things again. See [messages](#) from Dr. Brabrand about how FCPS plans to stay up and running. It is most likely that any possible shutdowns would occur on a school-by-school basis rather than district-wide.

There has been an uptick in cases since returning this month, but there has been no spread from one student to another in school. This shows that the mitigation strategies are working very well, and that spread is occurring outside of the school day.

Over the past 2 days, 10 students and 1 staff member were in school who then tested positive. 48 students are paused due to close contact. 35 students are isolating – they tested positive on their own. One challenge lately is covering for staff who need to isolate. There are 2 parent monitors who help fill in every day, and 2 more helping periodically. We still need more substitutes as well. Tracing the close contacts is a time-consuming process for our Madison administration.

The question was asked: What happens if a student tests positive? Mr. Hood responded that the student is to stay home for 10 days per Fairfax County Health Department (FCHD) guidance. As far as class goes, the hybrid model was not a great process for our students or staff and hard to manage. If a student is going to be out several days, live streaming or recordings are set up. If the students are out for a brief amount of time – because they may have been exposed, for example – the students will have asynchronous work to do and should check Schoology for that. Thankfully, quarantine time for those exposed/identified as a close contact has decreased, and FCHD is clearing students quickly. If you test positive, please be sure to notify your counselor and the Assistant Principal assigned to your section of the alphabet. If the student is told to pause, the administration creates an action plan that so that they can keep up with their schoolwork. All parents should familiarize themselves with the current FCPS COVID-19 policy found [here](#).

Following is the status of events through the end of this month, at least: In-school activities like Curriculum Night are virtual. Any clubs or activities that are larger than a class size are split or virtual. Only family members of players are permitted at athletic events.

Graduation: Location has changed many times over the years: It was held at DAR, then on the field, then at Wolf Trap, and then 12-13 years ago it was moved to Robinson SS. We then outgrew that space as well. There are currently only 2 venues that schools use besides their own facilities – DAR or Eagle Bank Arena; there are pros and cons to both. For example: Eagle Bank Arena has convenient parking and can hold more guests, but it costs more and is based on a queue of prior use so our graduation date could be very late. JMHS moved to DAR in 2017; this is a great space, the price is reasonable, and they can give us the date we want, but it can be inconvenient to drive to DC, to park, and enter or exit the facility.

Jiffy Lube Live last year was great – partly due to great weather, which cannot be guaranteed. We contacted them again but they won't let us book a date ahead of time because they are trying to schedule concerts and would make us wait to see where there are holes in the calendar. Also, FCPS paid to book the venue last year, so we would have to partner with 3 other schools because it costs \$50,000 to rent. Wolf Trap has said that they will not do graduations when asked in recent years and would also make us wait to see when we could use the space. Our field is always an option but guests would be limited, this venue is also susceptible to weather, and extra costs such as renting a stage, etc., would be incurred. Additionally, it impacts the use of our fields for sporting events and practices. Someone asked about The Kennedy Center, but it is a smaller venue and we would be limited to perhaps 3 guests per student.

IV. Student Services Report – Tim Buckley

Mr. Buckley gave the following updates:

Next Monday is the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday. On January 20 students will be released 2 hours early for the end of the quarter. Then students are off January 21 and 24, and the third quarter starts Tuesday, January 25. There is always stress about the end of the quarter, but reminders are being sent to teachers that we are on a rolling gradebook so they can allow assignments to come in later. The second quarter/first semester grade is a snapshot in time.

The rising 9th-grade Curriculum Night was held online last night. Thursday, January 13 is Curriculum Night for rising 10th-12th graders, to be held virtually like last year. Different departments will present. The following Tuesday, January 18 is Electives Night. This will also be virtual, which was even better last year because everyone could see all questions and answers. There will be a Zoom link provided for the opening session with Mr. Hood and Mr. Buckley, then attendees will be released at 6:10 to choose three different 15-minute sessions, each with a different link. Information will be made available in advance as to what departments will be presenting. Tomorrow is the College Planning Night for juniors, targeted to those interested in 4-year colleges. Several college reps will present, so it is helpful for your student to join you. All events will be recorded and posted on the Academic Advising page approximately 24 hours after the event.

During the school day this Thursday there will an Academic Advising presentation for students covering the initial advising information, and course selection sheets will be given out. This sheet is not turned in, but students should keep it for use in inputting their own class choices online by January 28. These initial choices are finalized by meeting one on one with their counselor. We are giving upperclassmen more time because they have more/bigger decisions to make. Meetings will begin January 31 for 9th grade, February 10 for 10th grade, and February 23 for 11th grade, and will run through March 11. Counselors will email families of current juniors to discuss college planning, which is to take place by April.

Teachers in core subjects will help give recommendations or guidance for a student's next level. Teachers will be informed of what students signed up for so they can review/discuss. Also note that a "recommendation" isn't something required to get into a certain course (that is the prerequisite); it is really just advice based on where you are and what the teacher has observed. Ultimately a student/parent can choose anything but should think about what is best for the student.

If your child isn't taking PE, from which students are being pulled to meet with their counselor, the counselor will find them and pull them for a meeting, likely from an elective.

V. Faculty Report – Elizabeth Dean

Dr. Dean thanked the PTSA for the recent donuts – it was great timing for treats. It is fun coming to work and seeing smiles on faces. We appreciate it!

Student Listening Groups: These started during the pandemic, held in the cafeteria at the beginning of each month, to share what it's like to be a student at JMHS with someone there to listen who is not responsible for their grades. Dr. Dean and Ms. Anderson work with the students to synthesize what the discussion was about. Faculty and students are working to make JMHS a better place. Questions asked might include: What's on your mind? What do you wish adults knew? How does what's going on in the world affect you and your friends? They might talk about workload, things they can't change, and other issues. Everything discussed is anonymous – it's a safe space. Dates are announced on the SGA's Instagram page.

VI. Student Government Report – Alyssa Kowal

Alyssa reported that the canned food drive wrapped up in December and was very successful. The winter formal date will likely move to late March or April. It will probably be held outdoors in order to accommodate more people and because "even colder weather is tolerable" when dancing.

VII. President's Report – Beth Eachus

Beth thanked everyone for their generosity and support this year – of money and donated goods – as well as their flexibility. The winter clothing drive was a great success, as hundreds of items were given to students in need and their families. We worked with the SGA on their food drive, and our JMHS food pantry was stocked before hundreds of pounds of food were sent to local food pantries. Donuts and coffee were given to the staff on the last day before winter break. On Friday, they will be treated to Anita's breakfast burritos and coffee, sponsored by One Neighborhood Foundation; many thanks to them for their support.

VIII. Treasurer's Report – Janine Bruhn

Janine reported that the following occurred during the reporting period of November 1-December 31:

- The 2020-2021 financial review was accepted in November by VA PTA.
- VA PTA membership dues were paid for an additional 44 members (total 516) through December 1, 2021.
- Fairfax County Council of PTAs membership dues were paid for 516 members as of December 1, 2021.
- PTSA taxes for the 2020-2021 school year were filed in November by the accountant Turner, Leins & Gold LLC.

Financial status through December 2021:

- PTSA revenues through December 2021 are \$24,219. The PTSA account has had expenses of \$6,604 to date.
- ANG income in November/December is \$2,436 for a total of \$4,411 to date. No expenses to date.

Since this meeting is not being held in person, anyone who needs a check written should send Janine an email at treasurer@jmhspts.org. She will send a soft copy for you to return with receipts and she can cut a check for you.

Monthly income and expenses – this report reflects November and December activity:

	Nov-Dec 2021	Total
Income		
200 Membership and donations, net	0.00	0.00
210 Membership and donation revenues, gross	0.00	0.00
211 Donations - general	1,060.00	11,945.02
213 Membership dues	992.16	9,717.16
Total 210 Membership and donation revenues, gross	\$2,052.16	\$21,662.18
Total 200 Membership and donations, net	\$2,052.16	\$21,662.18
300 Academic booster revenues, net	0.00	0.00
310 Donations - academic boosters	149.77	2,581.13
311 Practice Exam expenses	988.00	1,311.00
Total 300 Academic booster revenues, net	\$1,137.77	\$ 3,892.13
375 Miscellaneous	0.00	600.00
380 Food Bank Donations	988.03	1,676.39
400 All Night Grad Income	0.00	0.00
402 ANG - Registration Deposits	1,534.40	1,607.91
405 All Night Grad donation	123.49	476.34
406 ANG Yard Signs	778.12	2,327.02
Total 400 All Night Grad Income	\$2,436.01	\$ 4,411.27
Total Income	\$6,613.97	\$32,241.97
Cost of Goods Sold		
250 Costs of Membership	0.00	0.00
251 Cost of directories	0.00	800.00
252 National, State, and County Dues	165.00	1,935.00
Total 250 Costs of Membership	\$ 165.00	\$ 2,735.00
Total Cost of Goods Sold	\$ 165.00	\$ 2,735.00
Gross Profit	\$6,448.97	\$29,506.97
Expenses	0.00	
500 School and Teacher Support	0.00	0.00
503 Special projects	321.42	321.42
Total 500 School and Teacher Support	\$ 321.42	\$ 321.42
600 Student and Parent Support	0.00	0.00
603 Parenting Network and Student Services	250.00	250.00
606 Special Ed Programs	114.85	114.85
610 Food Bank	256.70	628.04
Total 600 Student and Parent Support	\$ 621.55	\$ 992.89
700 Community and Hospitality	0.00	0.00
702 Hospitality committee expenses	607.84	3,709.34
Total 700 Community and Hospitality	\$ 607.84	\$ 3,709.34
800 Administration	0.00	0.00
801 Insurance	0.00	343.00
802 Supplies and postage	21.69	21.69
803 Website and On-line accounting fees	50.00	293.47
805 Accounting/ Taxes	750.00	750.00
Total 800 Administration	\$ 821.69	\$ 1,408.16
Total Expenses	\$2,372.50	\$ 6,431.81
Net Operating Income	\$4,076.47	\$23,075.16
Net Income	\$4,076.47	\$23,075.16

IX. Committee Reports

Membership – Robyn Nguyen reported that the PTSA has 527 members as of the beginning of January.

Staff and Teacher Appreciation – Details were given during the President's report; Dara Dirth and Angie Gutenson are doing a great job. Karla Mihalak is in charge of Thankful Thursdays, when gift cards are raffled off to staff members each week. A staff appreciation event is held every month through the school year. Please reach out if you want to help or get involved.

Choir – Pascale Centola reported that 52 students were selected for District Choir, to be held February 10-12. On January 27 Madrigal Singers will sing the National Anthem at the FCPS School Board meeting.

Drama – Pascale Centola reported that auditions were held in December for both the One Acts, to be performed February 17-19, and the spring musical, *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*, to be performed April 28-30.

Band – Heather Ireland reported that many students auditioned for district band. The March (spring) assessment is coming up. Thanks to everyone for all the support. They were happy to continue the tradition of the Tiny Tots concert, which was very successful. Band students will also play for the spring musical.

Academic Boosters – Abby Shannon reported that three mock tests are scheduled in next few weeks: ACT January 22, SAT February 5, and ACT February 26; cost is \$20 per test. Signups are accepted up to the Wednesday prior to the mock test date, then the student is emailed the link to take the test online. A very detailed and personalized report will follow. Mock tests are a great way to help determine which test you might prefer.

Academic Awards assembly: We are still trying to determine the best course of action. If we don't do virtual, then parents wouldn't be allowed because of space constraints. We understand that students and parents have been waiting but we are trying to find the best solution to give them the recognition they have earned. The National Honor Society awards ceremony is similar, and it has been determined that it will be held virtually on February 9. Abby asked for feedback from parents as to whether we should just proceed with a virtual ceremony in light of the current COVID restrictions, and the parents participating in the meeting all agreed that was the best approach.

JMHS Pantry and Outreach – Beth Eachus thanked everyone again for their generosity. Students wrote thank-you notes for the warm clothing – it was very much appreciated. The PTSA has also worked with CHO to provide bicycles for student transportation. In addition to bags of food each week, the PTSA Outreach program provides both cleaning and hygiene items.

Parent Programs – Gayle Schlueter reported that a program with Rachel Bailey was held in December. We are taking January off because of all the Curriculum Nights and college planning sessions. We will resume in February for 9th- and 10th-grade student college planning in order to start that conversation. We are also looking into a digital citizenship presentation for students and parents in an effort to try to educate everyone. If you have any suggestions for parent programs, please contact Gayle.

All Night Grad – Sarah Español thanked everyone for their support so far. For those who aren't aware, ANG is a "lock in" the night of graduation. Fun activities are planned, such as a photo booth, musicians, casino, and a DJ. The committee also posted a Signup Genius on Facebook to solicit raffle prizes. We really want to get interest going with the students. We are always looking for more help, especially if your child is not a senior.

X. New Business

There was no new business.

XI. Old Business

As there was no old business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:08 pm.