

**Minutes of the James Madison High School PTSA  
Tuesday, May 9, 2023**

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m.

**In attendance:**

Liz Calvert, Tim Buckley, Missy Walsh; Janine Bruhn, Beth Eachus, Jennifer Hallworth, Claire Helvey, Stacey Helvey, Paris Henderson, Deborah Kennedy, Sarah Lundquist, Brian Monday, Holly Monday, Regan Morgan, Eliza Morss, Nicole Murray, Quentin Murray, Chris Nell, Robyn Nguyen, Ginger Piercy, Gayle Schlueter, Elizabeth Terry-Humen, Chris Torregrossa, Abby Shannon, Heba Singer, Angela Sorrell and others.

**I. Call to Order and Welcome – Beth Eachus**

Beth welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**II. Approval of April 11 PTSA Meeting Minutes – Beth Eachus, Eliza Morss**

Eliza announced that the Minutes of the April 11, 2023 meeting had been posted on the PTSA website.

Gayle Schlueter moved to approve the Minutes as-presented. Sarah Lundquist seconded the motion. A vote was taken, and the motion passed to approve the April 11, 2023 meeting Minutes.

**III. Principal's Report – Liz Calvert**

Teacher Appreciation

- Liz Calvert expressed the faculty and staff's gratitude for the PTSA's consistent support this year
- Faculty and staff are looking forward to lunch on May 10 courtesy of PTSA's Staff Appreciation Committee

MAD Wings

- Senior Experience portion of MAD Wings program is full swing
  - 526 seniors are involved in work experiences, passion projects and internships
  - Seniors will make presentations May 30-31
  - Visit <https://madisonhs.fcps.edu/academics/madwings> for further details about the MAD Wings program

Academic Testing

A huge Thank You to those parents who have volunteered to serve as AP proctors.

Grading

- Next week the admin will issue a grading presentation to parents and students, requesting feedback
- Current seniors have been subject to a variety of grading protocols during high school
  - Administration will survey all seniors about their experience.
- Any grading policies implemented will align with FCPS' "grading document"

Belonging at Madison

- The admin has learned that a significant number of students do not feel that they belong in the high school
- In order to understand and address this perception gap, the admin is
  - Surveying students
  - Looking into how to involve more English Language Learning students in AP and Honors courses

Staff Training

- May 23: *V&S School Solutions* will lead first staff training about grading and how to design quality assessments

**IV. Student Services Report – Tim Buckley**

General Reminder

- End-of-year school calendar is jam-packed
- To avoid missing deadlines and other important information, read all emails from JMHS and PTSA

Academic Testing

- Testing season started last week
  - Administering 2,000+ AP exams
- SOL Testing begins next week
- Parent volunteers are *essential* for test proctoring; many thanks to those who have signed up

Academic Awards for Underclassmen

- Ceremonly on June 9: award recipients in 9<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> grades and their parents will be invited to attend

### 2023-24 Course Schedules

- All parents of 9<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> graders should review their students' chosen courses for next year in *ParentVue*
- Course change requests made **now** will be put on a waitlist
- Course change requests made in August will be extremely difficult to fulfill
- Know what your students are taking and discuss those choices with your student

### End-of-School-Year Schedule

- June 12-15: half-days for 9<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> graders
  - Release at 11:20 AM
- June 16 (last day): "plaid day" with 10 mins spent in each class

### **V. Faculty Report – Missy Walsh**

Thank you again to PTSA for the consistent support of faculty and staff. Ms. Walsh also remarked that students are typically eager to help when asked, and staff appreciate that.

### **VI. Student Government Report – Quentin Murray**

The SGA and its newly-elected officers are:

- Making pots to give teachers for Teacher Appreciation Week
- Will give Teachers a snack cart on this Friday
- Planning for 2023-24
  - Homecoming will be on Saturday, September 30, 2023

Ms. Calvert also commended SGA students for helping *Vienna Elementary School* celebrate its 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

### **VII. President's Report – Beth Eachus**

#### Volunteer Award

Beth recognized Eliza Morss for being named *Volunteer of the Year* by *Fairfax County Council PTA* in recognition of her work leading the *Fairfax County Spelling Bee Program*.

#### Special Education Outreach

The *Special Olympics Feet Meet* has been rescheduled for Monday, May 22. This field day will be held at the Madison track, and it is for K-12<sup>th</sup> athletes and their partners. The event is expected to draw special education athletes from across the region.

#### Baccalaureate Service

- June 5, *Vienna Presbyterian Church*
- The event is still looking for faith leaders to speak to the senior class

### **VIII. Special Guests**

Beth introduced two presentations.

#### The Eric Monday Foundation

Brian and Holly Monday gave a presentation about their foundation's training courses for sports coaches to help them detect and support athletes struggling with mental health. The goal of EMF is to remove the stigma around discussing mental health, particularly for adolescents. For more information, visit [www.ericmondayfoundation.org](http://www.ericmondayfoundation.org).

#### Vienna Public Art Commission (VPAC)

Deborah Kennedy spoke about the importance of public art in the Town of Vienna and invited the community to collaborate in a new public art project to paint "A New Day" on the outside wall of the *Vienna Community Center*. The VPAC is seeking both community financial sponsors as well as volunteers of all types to make this paint-a-brick project a reality. For more information, visit the *Vienna Public Art Commission* page on [www.viennava.gov](http://www.viennava.gov).

### **IX. Treasurer's Report – Janine Bruhn**

Overall financial status through April 2023 (as reflected in the PTSA budget hand out):

- PTSA total income: \$24,022
- PTSA total expenses: \$13,876
- ANG total income: \$19,762
- ANG expenses: \$8,085

Budget fitness as of April 2023:

Net membership income is just shy of the 2022-2023 budget goal of \$7,700 (income is \$7,195)

PTSA donations have exceeded the 2022-2023 budget goal of \$7,500 with \$11,025 total to date (surplus budget of \$3,525 for programming in order to limit the carry-over of funds).

Academic Booster donations have exceeded the 2022-2023 budget goal of \$2,000 with \$2,797 total to date (surplus budget of \$797 for programming in order to limit the carry-over of funds).

Madison Pantry and Outreach continues to receive significant donations – total to date is \$3,703 through March. With the \$5,530 in unspent donations from last year and \$3,000 expenses to date the pantry has ~\$6,233 to spend down for support activities through June 2023/end of FY.

2022-2023 budget change:

The April revised budget reflects the \$500 increase to the Special Projects budget from \$2000 to \$2500.

**X. Committee Reports**Staff & Teacher Appreciation – Beth Eachus

In April the committee provided donuts and coffee from *Donut Chew*. For Teacher Appreciation Week, the committee has treats planned every day for the faculty and staff, including a sandwich lunch on May 10 from *Nozzo Pazzo*. On June 16 the committee will provide a Last-Day-of-School lunch from the *Sandwich Shop*.

JMHS Food Pantry and Outreach – Beth Eachus

- Giving Day on April 29 served 150 Madison families-in-need, the largest number ever served at a Giving Day
  - The need in our community is increasing
- Recent Financial Donations: *Vienna Presbyterian Church* and *Cease Hunger*
- Top Wish-List Items: hygiene items, cleaning supplies

Parent Programs – Gayle Schlueter

- Parent Coffee: Wednesday, May 10, 7 p.m., *Panera Bread*, Vienna
  - Incoming 9<sup>th</sup> grade parents have been invited to ask questions of Madison parents; informal session
- Please send suggestions to Gayle for Parent Programs in 2023-24.

All Night Grad (ANG) – Jennifer Hallworth

- 176 seniors have signed up thus far
- ANG is looking for adult volunteers to serve as event chaperones on June 6
  - Email [allnightgrad@jmhspts.org](mailto:allnightgrad@jmhspts.org) to volunteer

Athletics – Liz Calvert

Every sports team is 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> in the district. If this trend continues, it is possible that 5 teams could be competing in the State Championships on June 6, the day of JMHS Graduation.

MAD Drama – Sarah Lundquist

*Mamma Mia!* was a wildly successful production with unprecedented ticket sales that led to 2 sold-out shows.

Next up: *Open, Stay*, a musical by composers from *James Madison University*. 2 nights only, Thursday 5/18 at 7pm and Saturday 5/20 at 7pm. \$5 cash only at the JMHS Auditorium door.

Marching Band – No rep present

Beth Eachus announced that they are preparing for their trip to Disney World

Choir and Orchestra – Beth Eachus

- Choir has its Pops Concert on May 31, and a number of singers were chosen as participants and alternates for All-State Choir.
- Orchestra: Spring Concert on May 23

PTSA Scholarships – Gayle Schlueter

The deadline for seniors to apply for a *Making A Difference Scholarship* is May 15. (3) scholarships of \$1,000 will be awarded. Gayle reported that two applications have been received thus far.

Triple I Awards – Gayle Schlueter

These awards are intended to recognize teachers who have been exceptional educators in the 2022-23 school year.

Nominations are due May 15. (10) awards for \$250 will be given. Teachers who won the *Triple I Award* in 2021-22 are not eligible to win the award in 2022-23.

## XI. New Business

### 2023-24 PTSA Executive Board Nominations – Chris Torregrossa, Chair, Nominating Committee & Beth Eachus

*President:* Regan Morgan  
*Vice President:* Beth Eachus  
*Vice President:* Angela Sorrell  
*Treasurer:* Kara Reynolds  
*Secretary:* Tana Keeffe

Chris stated that all Board nominees are experienced PTSA volunteers, and as a group, the nominees have students in every grade at Madison. Every nominee present said a few words.

The election for the 2023-34 JMHS PTSA Executive Board will take place at the next PTSA meeting: Tuesday, June 13th at 7:00 p.m. in the school library. Except for Treasurer, all Executive Board positions will transition at that time.

### A Senior's Experience of Skills-Based Grading – Jennifer Hallworth, Claire Helvey

Jennifer Hallworth urged the Madison administration to

- more closely examine the student-level impact of the proposed shift to skills-based grading, and
- survey the outgoing senior class to learn of their in-classroom experience of the current iteration of this grading system

Jennifer then introduced senior Claire Helvey, who wished to tell the group about her experience with the skills-based grading system.

Claire began by stating that 2022-23 is the first year in which the skills-based system governed grading in all her classes. She then detailed what she sees as the grading systems' chief effects on students:

- Students are less motivated to prepare for and participate in class because active student input (i.e. homework, quizzes, class participation) is no longer factored into students' class grades.
  - This is the case even in AP classes (she has taken 5 APs this year)
- Because the grading system does not require students to prepare for class regularly, over time in-class discussions have degraded badly, compromising students' learning, reducing their discussion skills, and generally creating an intellectually stale class environment.
- This lack of preparation over time has students' testing anxiety to extremes, as they now cram before exams to compensate for poor study habits
- Ambitious students are discouraged and feel that they are not receiving proper credit for their work
  - Half-grades are no longer given as final grades, even though there is a qualitative difference between a B- and B+ work
  - Projects that students invested in are dropped from the grade book
- In summary:
  - Claire prefers the traditional method of grading that JMHS had in place her freshman year (2019-20). In her view, that system in which every grade counted both motivated students to keep up with their work and gave them regular and steady feedback about their progress.
  - Claire strongly urges Madison to poll all seniors about their experience with the new skills-based grading system and to take into account the seniors' feedback.

### PTSA Surplus Funds – Beth Eachus

The PTSA has at least \$20,000 in excess funds. At the PTSA's request, Liz Calvert polled Madison's departments, activities, and clubs to determine where there is need. The following is that list of requests.

Please note that Clubs were able to fill their needs with *Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief* (ESSER) funding.

These funding proposals and others will be voted on by the membership at the PTSA's next meeting on Tuesday, June 13.

- Library:
  - Display table (circular, 3-tiered)
    - **\$700**
  - Power towers (4)
    - \$275 per tower = **\$1,100**
- Science
  - Physics lab equipment (various) for Optics & Waves unit
  - **\$5,999**
- General
  - Vendor to relocate ceiling mounted projectors (4-5)

- \$1,500 per relocation = **\$6,000 - \$7,500**
- Cafeteria
  - Tables for new seating area (3-5)
  - \$2,000 - \$2,500 per table = **\$6,000 - \$12,500**
- Ms. Khan's Classroom
  - Additional whiteboards (how many?)
  - \$2,000 per = **\$ ?????**
    - \$1,500 + \$500 installation
- CAT B MadGrow Inc. (Special Education class)
  - Growlite stand; plant start kits; shelving unit
  - **\$1,700**
- MAD Drama
  - Licensing Fees: \$5,500
  - Sarah Lundquist provided context:
    - Works in the public domain (e.g., Shakespeare) are available for free
    - Works not in the public domain incur licensing and royalty fees that add up quickly, particularly for newer productions such as *Mamma Mia!*
    - Even if a show is tremendously successful, ticket sales often do not recoup the costs of putting on a production, particularly if the show is more current

## **XII. Old Business**

There was no old business.

The meeting adjourned at 8:27 PM.

The final PTSA meeting of the school year will be held on Tuesday, June 13, 7:00 p.m., in the school library.