



TJ PTSA General Membership Meeting Minutes

11/02/2023 at 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm

Attendees:

Executive Committees: President: Neelam Janardhan; First VP of Programming and Events: Laura Marschoun; Second VP of Membership and Fundraising: Julia Li; Third VP of Communications: Maggy Li; Treasurer: Seema Lohia Singh; Secretary: Mirtha Arce

Committee Chairs: Academic Support Committee (ASC) Chair: Partho Banerjee; College Outreach Committee (COC) Chair: Radha Somanchi; Diversity Committee (DC) Chair: Michele Hyde; Health and Wellness Committee (HW) Chair: Elizabeth Das, Hospitality Committee (HC) Chair: Colleen Bucher

Principal: Dr. Ann Bonitatibus

Others: SGA Activities Directors: Demetra and Allison; Faculty representative: Dr. Katherine Phillips; and other 44 attendees (not all are members)

Location: Zoom meeting

Agenda

- I. Call to Order and Welcome: Nell Janardhan
- II. Agenda Adoption: Nell Janardhan
- III. Approval of 9/14/23 GM Meeting Minutes (3 mins)
- IV. SGA Report: Demetra and Allison (15 mins)
- V. Principal's Remarks: Dr. Ann Bonitatibus (10 mins)
- VI. Faculty Report: Dr. Katherine Phillips (5 mins)
- VII. Treasurer's Report: Seema Lohia Singh (10 mins)
- VIII. Updates from PTSA Officers and Committees (35 mins)
 - A. Academic Support - Partho Banerjee
 - B. ANGP - Laura Marschoun
 - C. College Outreach - Radha Somanchi
 - D. Diversity - Michele Hyde
 - E. Health and Wellness - Elizabeth Das
 - F. Hospitality - Colleen Bucher
 - G. Committee Questions & Suggestions
- IX. Unfinished Business (5 mins)
- X. New Business and Announcements (5 mins)
- XI. Adjournment

Call Meeting to Order

- A quorum was determined to be present and the President called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm.

- The President reminded the assembly of the meeting rules that were sent out in advance, and highlighted a few of them:
 - GMM will use Robert's Rules.
 - Please be respectful and courteous at all times.
 - Use the Zoom function "Raise hand" to request being recognized.
 - Only speak when recognized by her.
 - Send questions to the VP of Communications in the private chat.
 - Use a computer to vote for polls in Zoom meetings, since the poll window can be lost when using a cell phone.

Agenda Adoption

- The proposed agenda has been sent out, published on the website, and included in the Zoom chat.
- The Diversity Chair moved to approve the proposed agenda and was seconded by the First VP and the Treasurer.
- First VP moved that debate on the agenda be limited to ten minutes and was seconded by the Third VP and the Treasurer.
- Poll #1 to limit the debate on the agenda had 30 votes, with 29 yay and 1 abstention. With 97% votes in favor and 3% abstained, the motion to limit the debate on the agenda to ten minutes passed.
- The president opened the floor for discussion of the proposed agenda.
- As there was no discussion, the president asked the assembly to vote for the adoption of the proposed agenda.
- Poll #2 to adopt the proposed agenda had 29 votes, with 28 yay and 1 abstention. With 97% votes in favor and 3% abstained, the proposed agenda was adopted.

Approval of 2023-09-14 GM Meeting Minutes

- The 2023-09-14 GMM Minutes were sent out via email and have been available on the website and posted on the Zoom chat. Since the draft minutes had been distributed in advance and there was no objection, the minutes were not read aloud during the meeting.
- As there were no corrections to the 2023-09-14 TJ PTSA GM Meeting Minutes, the minutes were approved as presented.

SGA Report - Demetra and Allison

- SGA Activities directors Demetra and Allison presented their report.
- Student Government Association First Quarter Overview was about Homecoming Dance, Mental Health Committee and Human Resources Coalition, Student-Principal Advisory Council, Policy, Winter Bash, and Home Involvement.
- Homecoming Dance's second attempt finally took place on October 21st, 2023. More than 600 attended. Around \$14,000 was raised in revenue. There were phobooths and student photographers, catered food, DIY karaoke, DJ. The theme was Haunted Dreamhouse to mix Barbie with Halloween. SGA thanked all the volunteers that helped.
- The Mental Health Committee met once a month to discuss mental health concerns, SGA, PTSA Wellness Chair, teachers, administrators and staff were present at those meetings. A Wellness Room was created and is open to the students to relax. The room has kindness cubbies, with mental health supplies, such as tactile support for stress relief of high levels of anxiety. The Committee is also responsible for creating a student advocacy sheet that serves as a guide.

- Human Resources Coalition focussed decreased fundraiser revenue, and long lunch lines.
- The Student-Principal Advisory Council (SPAC) had two meetings so far. They focused on mental health and teaching policies. They are working on an index of accessible forms, contact sheets, and resources for students. They are also directing their interest on sexual harassment awareness.
- Policy: Town halls are new initiatives, student advocacy and open forum, open to talk about any issues, student advocacy, promote opening open forum,
- Winter bash is an event that will take place on January 5th, 2024. SGA needs volunteers to serve food, for security, and chaperones in charge of activities such as movies, contests, prizes, photo booth, cookie decorating, and other stations. SGA is thanking all the volunteers in advance. Sign up genius for time slots and donations will be released soon.
- SGA representatives talked about the importance of home involvement. Asked all students and families to join the TJ SGA newsletter for monthly updates on <https://tinyurl.com/tjsganewsletter> and email sga.tjhsst@gmail.com for any questions. Requested parents to keep supporting their students and helping them to make the TJ community a better place for all. Suggested parents to keep encouraging their children to attend the different activities organized by SGA. These are great opportunities for the students to socialize and relax.

Principal Remarks - Dr. Ann Bonitatibus

- Principal Remarks - Dr. Ann Bonitatibus
- Principal expressed that she enjoyed having the Principal Coffee where she had nice conversations with the parents that attended.
- FCPS revealed that 17 of its schools were named to the Advanced Placement (AP) Honor Roll. TJ was named a Platinum Distinction School, which is the top honor.
- TJ was featured in Northern Virginia magazine as the top Northern Virginia High School.
- TJ students have been celebrated at different local media and TV outlets (Washington Post, WLJA) for their accomplishments. Some worth to mention are:
 - Leading Eagle Scout projects
 - Writing Op-Ed letters
 - Publishing books and research
 - Presenting at the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics
 - Being invited to the National Symphony Orchestra
 - Starting up businesses with innovative apps
 - Qualifying for College Board Merit and Scholarships
 - Being selected as Coca-Cola Scholars senior semi-finalists
 - Leading the way in Artificial Intelligence studies
 - Advancing to state cross country competition
 - Placing well at volleyball competitions
 - Winning state publications awards in journalism for Threshold, tjTODAY, and the Yearbook.
 - Staging plays
 - Performing at concerts
 - Winning band championships
 - Being the featured percussion group at the Virginia Music Educators Association (VMEA) Professional Development Conference
- Band and orchestra concerts were great. It was wonderful to see the talent of our students.
- Sports analytics recognized as a new club at TJ. Reflective of the shifts we've seen with hundreds of students enrolled in upper level statistics courses.
- Principal expressed gratitude to PTSA and boosters for their continuous support.
- Thanked PTSA in advance for the Thanksgiving Luncheon honoring teachers and staff that are working above and beyond to deliver an exceptional educational experience to the students.
- Mentioned that students have many opportunities to share their views on school policies, operations, and events. The committees where students can share their input with TJ staff are as follows: Student Government Association and monthly Open Forums with the Principal, Student Principal's Advisory Councils (Wellness/Instruction and Logistics), Mental Health Coalition, and Human Relations Committee.

- The Mental Health coalition allows students to advocate and address mental health topics in monthly meetings. The Human Relations Committee brings to the table issues from the student perspective. The Open Forums validate TJ's student voice and opinions.
- Student Principal's Advisory Council (SPAC) were consulted by TJ administration to schedule a Catch-Up Day on a Monday Anchor Day in each of the remaining quarters. Students will have the opportunity to complete previously assigned work including missed assignments/assessments and/or previously assigned longer term assignments that had not yet reached the due date. It is not intended for introduction of new assignments or new material. The Catch-Up Days will be: December 11, 2023; March 18, 2024; April 22, 2024.
- Expressed that the school will honor the holiday breaks and give families the gift of time to spend together. There will be no short-term homework assigned over Thanksgiving. This means no new work is due on Monday, November 27. Assessments will not be given on that day, and we are discouraging major assessments for the Tuesday and Wednesday of return. Some long-term projects were assigned before and students can decide to work on them if that is convenient. However, we want our students to enjoy a mental wellness break and have time to safely connect with family and friends.
- Recognized students that are seniors. Mentioned that one student pointed out that seniors were never recognized. The advisory hour for seniors was canceled to give them time and a token of appreciation for their hard work.
- Announced that Commencement committee meetings will start to convene.
- Provided also the announcement that on Monday, November 6, TJ will have a student panel and the audience will be the teachers, and in the spring the teachers will be the panelists and the students the audience.
- Remarked that TJ has a very diverse group of students that is itself a micro cosmos. Highlighted that the administration gives students the right to have a voice and express it through civic engagement. As a response to current international events, some students chose to participate in a walk-out. A letter with more details was sent out. The demonstration was conducted peacefully, in a safe environment that the school provided. This was a testimony of the work that educators provide on a daily basis to a true community of learners.

Faculty Report - Dr. Katherine Phillips

- Dr. Katherine Williams presented a report on behalf of the Faculty.
- Thanked in advance to the TJ families and the PTSA for the upcoming Thanksgiving luncheon. Remarked that teachers and staff are looking forward to that event.
- Emphasized that TJ has a Theater program that is very successful. The writing, directing and acting of the students is fantastic. In February 2024 they will present Spongebob the musical.
- The Math Department will offer the MCA 10 and MCA 12 exams on November 8th. Around 270 students will participate.
- The Geosystems teachers will take the students on a field trip to see rock formations on Saturday November 11. Professors of University of Maryland and George Mason University will join the TJ group.
- Mentioned that during the successful extended homecoming the Faculty really appreciated all the parental support of the many activities that took place during the week.
- Announced that letters of recommendations for colleges were sent out already. Asked parents and students to thank all the Faculty that wrote so many letters on time.

Treasurer's Report - Seema Lohia Singh

- Treasurer presented her report. PTSA Revenue is 65% of the goal so far. Now it is \$24,637 of the \$38,100 target. SAT/ACT mock tests fundraiser will be reflected in the next report.
- Membership dues exceeded target. The expected revenue for Membership was \$18,000, but now is \$22,444.
- Donation goals are far from reached. From the expected \$17,700 we currently have only \$2,799.98. We expect more donations with the free money from corporations program.
- PTSA bank account has \$52,270.94. Net Income as of 10/25/2023 is \$15,562.17.

- PTSA estimated expenses for the school year are \$44,133.25, and actuals are \$9,074.83. Treasurer showed YTD expense break-out:
 - \$12,000 for School and Teacher Support (Teacher appreciation, lunches etc). Actual not yet incurred.
 - \$22,850 for Student Support. Actual \$5,348.23.
 - \$2,500 for Community Support (Regional Gatherings, Freshmen Orientation and other events). Actual \$2,052 for regional gatherings.
 - \$6,783.25 for PTSA Operations (systems, supplies, meetings, marketing and directory). Actual \$902.46.
- ANGP bank account has \$28,293.50 from the previous fiscal year. Most of ANGP transactions will occur in later months.
- Depending on fundraising, we will propose a revision to the budget if needed.
- Members can reach out to the Treasurer for questions at treasurer@tjptsa.org.

Updates from PTSA Officers and Committee Chairs

- **Academic Support Committee - Partho Banerjee**
 - ASC Chair confirmed that the Navigating TJ Math & Science Webinar will take place on November 15th, from 7 to 8:30 pm. The registration link will be announced at This week@TJ. Please register and submit questions no later than November 12. Panelists will be teachers from Math and Science, and a counselor from Student Services: Dr. Phillips, Ms. Stewart, and Mr. Burke.
 - Notified that the next event will be Breakfast for Student Services during Counselor Appreciation Week, in February 2024. This event will be announced at the newsletter. Counselors will be answering questions sent beforehand by parents. There will be coffee and snacks to share.
- **ANGP (All Night Graduation Party) - Laura Marschoun**
 - First VP provided an update about ANGP. Still no ANGP Chair was found.
 - Reported that the Class 2024 Student Council picked a design. The sale of the yard signs and Jefferson (TJ) cups will start on December 4th. Effort to recruit around 8 pick-up locations for yard signs and TJ cups has started. Class 2024 parents will be asked to step up to be the distribution centers. If there are not enough volunteers from class 2024, a request to the other classes will follow. Links will be posted on Facebook and other social media to find distribution points volunteers.
- **College Outreach Committee - Radha Yellepeddy**
 - The COC Chair shared that the First Virtual Panel discussion about the college application process happened on October 25th. The panel included three TJ Alumni parents, plus Samantha Wolf from College and Career Services, and Sean Burke from Student Services. Around 230 parents participated, even though there was a band event on that day. Similar panels will follow and there will be a real effort to pick a date that will not be in conflict with other school events. COC Chair thanked the panelists that volunteered their time, and Sonja for taking diligent notes. The summary from the 1.5 hour session will be shared along a list of resources and links in the upcoming newsletter. Please reach out if you have any inquiries to college.outreach.chair@tjptsa.org.
- **Diversity Committee - Michele Hyde**
 - DC Chair hosted Hispanic Heritage Month celebration with great success last October 13th. Expressed that it was amazing to see how far the event had come with decorations, food, music performances, dances, games, and traditional dress parade. Remarked that this third Hispanic Heritage celebration was the biggest one since it started and around 500 or more attended. Gave a special shout out to Mirtha and all the volunteers. Invited everyone to see the pictures of the event.

- Confirmed that the Diwali Festival of Lights will take place on Friday, November 10th, from 4:30-6:30 pm. All TJ students, staff and families are welcome. There are Sign ups to volunteer or to make a donation. More than 10 student performances are scheduled so far.
- Announced that Diversity will be hosting the first Hanukkah celebration at TJ on Wednesday, December 13th, from 4:30 to 6:30 pm, in the Nobel Commons. Right now the DC Chair is recruiting volunteers to help with this event organization. Anyone interested can contact Michele Hyde at diversity.chair@tjpts.org. to schedule future planning meetings at your convenience.
- **Health & Wellness Committee - Liz Das**
 - HW Vice-Chair is Ann Payne.
 - Chair mentioned that the committee is designed to support the wellness of students and teachers, but also the parents at TJ.
 - Announced that there will be monthly therapy dog visits from PAL (People, Animals, Love). Volunteers to welcome and escort the dog therapy teams and their pets to their assigned area are always helpful.
 - Shared that the 9th Grade Parents Book Club reading of “How to raise an adult” by Julie Lythcott-Hams was a fantastic opportunity to get to know other parents while sharing light refreshments. Commended the school social worker, the psychologist and the parent-teacher liaison for their phenomenal job presenting the materials and guiding the discussions. Revealed that the parents had a nice chance to talk about parenting issues in a great group setting, with experts in the field.
 - Reported that sophomore parents will start the 10th Grade Parent Book Club in January 2024. They will read “The Emotional Lives of Teenagers: Raising Connected, Capable, and Compassionate Adolescents” by Lisa Damour, Ph.D. Highly recommended this material for being outstanding, rich and useful, specially for kids that have problems managing anxiety. Two in-person sessions are planned for this book club. More details and links for registration will be shared soon.
 - Asked parents to suggest ideas they are interested in to explore and receive support in a group setting. An example of a theme for a group discussion could be anxiety, academic stress, college process difficulty, etc. Please send an email to the Chair at health.wellness.chair@tjpts.org.
 - HWC is part of the Mental Health Coalition. It is a phenomenal committee that brings together administration, staff, faculty, and students. They have gotten so many exciting things for the school community. The students meet for one hour once a month. It is a great way to get involved and to get their voice heard.
 - Pointed out that HWC also supports the Mind Matter group, a student lead club, that will continue to grow stronger in Spring.
 - Invited members to join the Health & Wellness committee and shared the link in the chat for the Amazon book “The Emotional Lives of Teenagers”.
- **Hospitality Committee - Colleen Bucher**
 - HC Vice-Chair is Priya Dodla. She will be heading the Thanksgiving Luncheon on Friday, November 17th, from 11:30 am to 1:30 pm.
 - Chair announced that the “Thanksgiving Around the World” for faculty and staff will be a buffet style luncheon. Called for donations of food or money for a successful event. Asked parents to also sign up for volunteer shifts. Reminded that homemade food should arrive with the list of ingredients on a card. Requested food that does not need refrigeration and only in disposable containers. Vegan/non-day or gluten free dishes are welcomed. Salad, appetizers and homemade dishes are preferable. Hot food should be delivered right before the event starts.

- Promoted the Virtual Desserts with the Principal new event, that will be held on December 5th, from 7 to 9 pm. A link for registration will be sent out.
- Shared that another Hospitality event organized by PTSA to show appreciation to teachers and staff will be the Holiday gift card in December. The fundraising will aim to get gift cards for every teacher of the school. Requests and reminders will be published on the newsletter.
- Explained that Hospitality also provides support for Professional Development and Teachers Day. Extra help is always needed, specially to monitor the hallways during lunch time.
- **Second VP of Fundraising - Julia Li**
 - Second VP emphasized that the fundraising goal for Membership was surpassed thanks to alumni and parents of alumni.
 - We got the student data of 300 new freshmen email addresses.
 - Remarked that the three-part readiness tests for SAT/ACT generated a lot of interest. Noticed that many parents started membership after the webinars. Explained that money from the mock test registration is expected soon and will be added to the PTSA revenue funds.
 - Indicated that PTSA has set a goal to raise \$8,000 from donations that will go directly to support many programs and events our organization provides. With that in mind the PTSA started a Corporate Sponsorship Initiative. The PTSA appointed Adedoyin as the program coordinator. To learn more about the sponsorship opportunities, please contact corporate@tjpts.org.
- **Third VP of Communications - Maggy Li**
 - Third VP gave an update on Communications.
 - Educated members on the type of information that is shared in This week@TJ. Mentioned that announcements of school events, student activities, boosters news, families or parents meetings.
 - Indicated that other social media tools such as Facebook, WhatsApp, WeChat and others are also used to promote active communication in the TJ community and keep everybody informed about the PTSA and the school administration news, or teachers and students initiatives.
 - Remarked that this year a Communication team was established with three more people added, including a graphic designer, a webmaster, and a hybrid job position that will combine different tasks.

Unfinished Business

- During the last GMM, on 9/14/2023, a member had requested to put under consideration offering a lower or no-cost tier PTSA membership for families with financial needs. The board discussed this and agreed that it would continue to provide free membership to qualifying families on a case by case basis, as it has done in the past. President asked families to reach out to the Executive Committee with any questions on the memberships.

New Business and Announcements

- No new business and announcements to report.

Adjournment

- Meeting was adjourned at 8:25 pm.

Minutes Prepared by Mirtha Arce, TJHSST PTSA Secretary.

Minutes Approved as _____ Presented or _____ Amended on ____Month xx, 202x____