Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology
PTSA Board Meeting
TJHSST Cafeteria
November 4, 2011
8:30 am – 10:30 am

Attendees: Dr. Evan Glazer, Celeste Fritzson, Amy Shaw, Sara Schneider, Robin Hatanpaa, Sean Burke, Vinay Bhargava, Helen Hastings, Pam Swift, Vince Wang, Julie Martin, Bruce Summers, Grace Becker, Leslie Culman, Linda Loffredo, Rickie Guyant, Alice Tang, Ann Burroughs Sun, Carol Anne Kelly, Ellen Smith, Ginger Reich, Julie Klosky, Lakshmi Bala, Natalie Goldring, Poonam Nangarlia, Reghu Gopinathan, Stephanie Baum, Yvette Sutton, Catherine Dirix, Jennifer Bui, Jinny Lay, Kyounghee Malawi, Laura Fifer, Santya Lanman, Sheena Abraham, Sherrie Burson, Teresa Rowe, Veronica Bartlett, Yvonne Schincovich, Officer Mark Harrington, Judith Fogel

Call to Order: PTSA Vice President Celeste Fritzson called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. in the TJ Cafeteria.

Minutes: Separate motions were made to approve the minutes of the PTSA Board Meeting held on September 28, 2011 and the General Membership Meeting held on October 5, 2011. Both sets of minutes had been emailed to members and attendees and were distributed at the meeting. Both motions were seconded and passed unanimously.

President’s Report: Vice President Celeste Fritzson chaired the meeting for President Denise Bunting who was away on travel. Celeste congratulated TJ’s 13 Siemens Semifinalists and 156 National Merit Semifinalists.

Celeste briefly recapped the history of the ongoing Surveillance discussion, including the initial meeting results provided by 25 participants (4 students, 9 parents, 12 faculty) and the PTSA Survey Monkey results, which reflects the responses of over 570 participants. Celeste shared that the 199 students who participated in the survey were overwhelmingly opposed to cameras (90%). While the majority of the parents were similarly opposed to interior surveillance (53%), the 26 teachers who weighed in were evenly split on the issue (13-13). Celeste noted that the students gave very thoughtful, detailed answers and thanked all who shared their views.

Dr. Glazer then spoke for 10 minutes about the Surveillance Camera issue. He said that he is personally in favor of giving principals discretion to install cameras where they think they are needed because he believes that cameras will enable principals to be efficient in their work.
Dr. Glazer discussed three TJ school locations where he has concerns:

1. Minor Lane (wrong-way drivers);
2. Locker Rooms (theft and assault);
3. Aud Lob (high traffic area after the school day).

Dr. Glazer emphasized that we do have a safe school and that there is an extraordinary amount of due process. He said that we have a very trusting environment, but it is not a “safe”. He commented that since he is already authorized to put up exterior cameras and that coaches are responsible for managing student-athlete behavior in the locker rooms, his main focus would be the Aud Lob, to address the presence of visitors in our building. He said that he sees no need for cameras in TJ’s Cafeteria. Dr. Glazer said that videotapes would be reviewed only if there was an event and that he was not aware of a formal retention policy for the tapes. He was not sure of the cost for surveillance, but said that he would wait until the renovation to install cameras.

Dr. Glazer will make an announcement on Wednesday, 11/9, to remind students about the need to report theft and missing items. Laptop theft has been occurring more frequently. Students can install LoJack on their computer or see a Math teacher to engrave their name on their laptop. He confirmed that assaults – typically bullying of younger, male students – have occurred infrequently. In the past, bullying has been a hazing issue. Kids think they are being playful, but they have crossed the line. He said that there have been problems with insensitive remarks and that his highest priority is to protect our kids – both physically and emotionally.

Celeste shared the Parent’s Companion Guide (Grades 4-12) to the SR& R and reminded everyone that the TJ Directory was on sale for $10. She spoke about a new, free software package called “Just Between Friends” that the PTSA is looking into for next year to expand PTSA communications. She asked people to sign up if they’d be interested in helping with that effort. She directed parents to forms for a Wellness Program featuring Zumba classes and to a list from the FCPS Transportation Department of those schools that will not have bus transportation for TJ students on late opening days. Parents will need to provide their own transportation to TJ from schools on the list only on late opening days. The list has been posted on the PTSA website. Finally, Celeste reminded parents about the upcoming School Board election and not ed that candidate information is available on both the FCAG website and the FCCPTSA website. Information on the Bond Referendum is also available at fcps.edu.

**Principal’s Report:** Principal Glazer spoke about the STEMbassadors program that kicked off in October. He thanked Amy Shaw and Kerstin Hildebrandt for helping to put a TJ parent in every school and to enable TJ students share their enthusiasm for learning. Principal Glazer shared his October slide show, which highlighted Halloween activities, Senior Nights, the Homecoming Game, and Textploration. He thanked the PTSA for both the Harvest Lunch and for the Lobby Guard. He said that this another way to protect TJ students, especially during the renovation, when there will be many unfamiliar people on campus. Dr. Glazer said the number of Siemens winners (13) is the highest number in his 6 years as principal and that students are currently working on Intel applications.
Mytonomy: Sean Burke, who has been a counselor at TJ for 13 years, and Vinay Bhargava, who quit his job at Google this year to launch their website and software offering last spring, spoke about Mytonomy. Mytonomy is a college counseling website and software that is based upon over 800 testimonials and videos from TJ Alums and students from 20 other schools. Sean and Vinay explained that the students, who were compensated with pizza and Amazon gift cards, own their individual videos and that similar to YouTube, Mytonomy is legally obligated to remove a student’s video, if requested.

Sean said that TJ Counselors invite TJ Alumni to share their college experiences with rising TJ seniors as a form of peer mentoring. Sean stated that he is not currently using the Mytonomy software to counsel his TJ advisees. Sean and Vinay would like to expand peer mentoring to other schools by establishing a nationwide network of schools who will subscribe to their website of videos. So far, Sean and Vinay have sold their services to a few schools, including Loudoun Public Schools and DC’s SEED School. Although FCPS has not signed a contract with Mytonomy, Sean and Vinay said that usage by the TJ community will always be for free as a “thank you” for TJ’s support.

Vinay said that they have currently invested $200,000 to develop the software, but they haven’t generated any revenue, yet. Currently, no one is being charged to use Mytonomy. Users who access the site today can pull up the schools that interest them without charge. Testimonials can be filtered by particular populations and areas of interest. In early January, they plan to run a prototype of a paid subscription. They plan to release a new version of the software in March 2012.

Dr. Glazer stated that he supports this effort. He has worked closely with Sean to ensure that work is done on private time (leave slips) and that they minimize any conflicts of interest. This is a business and he works with them on any potential conflicts of interest to make sure that no lines are crossed. Helen Hastings also shared that the Mytonomy facebook page is very helpful to the students.

Sean and Vinay said that the TJ community has been very supportive. Vinay said he hoped the PTSA would not just tolerate Mytonomy, but actively support their company. Sean and Vinay reiterated that they will not charge the TJ community to use Mytonomy.

SGA President’s Report: Helen Hastings spoke briefly about Freshman class elections which were held the last week of October and the Fall Sports Pep Rally, which will be held on Monday, 11/7. She shared that three band students were selected to march in the All American bowl in San Antonio, Texas. Helen told the group about the Under Armour competition. She said that TJ is currently in 2nd place with 13,000 online votes. The winner will receive $140,000 of Under Armour clothing over the next 2 years. She said that the SGA received many emails and phone calls from 9/11 First Responders thanking the TJ students for their letters. Helen said the SGA sponsored a Sadie Hawkins Dance last week and will hold the Powder Puff Football game next week. Finally, she mentioned that the Class of 2013 is sponsoring a Practice SAT as a fundraiser.

Faculty Report & Staff Report: No reports given.
Treasurer’s Report: Robin Hatanpaa presented the Treasurer’s Report on behalf of Treasurer Frances Kim. She said that we have exceeded our goal for Directory sales income and met our goal for Membership Dues. Free Money is currently on track for the year at 36% of goal with $5,500. Robin reminded everyone that check requests should include both the name of the requesting party and the party approving the request. They may not be the same person. Finally, Robin reported that Frances has already completed the PTSA’s tax report.

Membership Report: Pam Swift said that there were currently 882 paid PTSA members. Approximately 50% are couples, while 33 are students and 47 are teachers. Currently, the PTSA has received 145 donations totaling $5700.

Government Relations: Ricki Guyant talked about the 2nd Capital Arts Show in Richmond.

Partnership Fund: Ricki Guyant said that the Partnership Fund has sponsored two lab tours for parents this fall and that Alumni Day will be held after Thanksgiving on Saturday, 11/26.

Student Services Liaison: Leslie Culman explained that the SS Liaison is to act as a sounding board for student and parent concerns and as an intermediary to work with Student Services to resolve Student Services-related issues. She held a coffee for Class Liaisons in September and will be holding monthly coffees with parents beginning with Senior Parents in November, followed by Freshman parents in December, Junior Parents in January, and Sophomore Parents in February.

Free Money: Vince Wang emphasized that the Free Money programs don’t cost parents anything and that it only takes about 5 minutes to sign up. Last year, 16% of TJ’s parents participated in the Giant program. This year, Vince would like to increase participation to 30% and boost Giant Free Money to $12K. The PTSA will be sending out a blast with links to make it easier for parents to sign up.

All Night Graduation Party: Bruce Summers encouraged parents to have their students buy their tickets early. He also said that the committee needs LOTS of volunteers, especially Junior parents. They are seeking shadow chairs and would like to recruit students to edit a DVD for the Seniors.

STEMbassadors: Amy Shaw commented that meetings are not always held during 8th period and that there would not be a meeting on Monday, 11/7.

Reflections: Heidi Werntz said she received quite a few submissions, especially in the Photography/Visual Arts category. She is currently looking into options to exhibit the submissions.

Academic Boosters – Linda Loffredo reminded parents to join Academic Boosters.

Athletic Boosters – Celeste Fritzson mentioned the Powder Puff game on 11/11, the Fall Sports Awards Banquet on 11/17, and Winter Meet the Coaches on 11/21.

Band Boosters – Yvette Sutton asked parents to support the Band’s Citrus fundraising program.
**Chorus Boosters** – There will be a free performance of *Pirates of Penzance* on 12/3, which will include parents and members of the faculty.

**Orchestra Boosters** and **Theater Boosters** – No reports given.

**Crew Boosters** – Sara Schneider reminded parents that athletes must file a VHSL form with the Activities Office, complete the online concussion training, and provide the Coaches with an Emergency Care form before students will be allowed to work out with the team.

**Eight Period Volunteers:** Sharon Burson asked parents to sign up to support Eighth period activities.

**Volunteer Coordinator:** No report given.

**PCR Beautification:** Parents, students, and teachers are asked to donate items to make the Principal’s Conference Room a more welcoming space. Items that are needed include table runners, rugs, plants, planters, pedestals, as well as, baskets and bins for office supplies. Please email Leah.Reid@fcps.edu if you have items to contribute.

**Kiss and Ride Concerns:** Dr. Glazer said there had been some safety concerns during morning drop off. He reminded everyone that when exiting the school before 8:30 a.m., cars may only turn right onto Braddock Road and that the Minor Lane exit would be closed. He explained that the afternoon traffic patrol was a casualty of the budget and that Officer Harrington is only allowed to direct traffic on early release days. While parents are allowed to direct traffic on campus, Fairfax County code will not allow a civilian (parent) to direct traffic on Braddock Road. The cost for an officer to direct traffic in the afternoon is $165 per day ($55 per hour with a 3 hour minimum).

**Announcements/Upcoming Events:** November 7 and 8 will be teacher workdays. Wednesday, November 23rd, is a Telelearn Day. Dr. Glazer said that the 23rd should be considered a regular, two hour early release school day. If a student will not be participating in the Telelearn Day on the 23rd, a parent should call TJ to report the absence. A brief discussion of holiday breaks and homework assignments ensued. Dr. Glazer stated that homework expectations should be specified in advance and teachers should not accelerate curriculum or assign multiple assignments because of a long weekend or holiday break. His personal practice is to post everything to Blackboard, which he believes is a common practice. While the policy is that teachers are to have their assignment posted by the time the class is offered, Dr. Glazer is comfortable with teachers posting their assignments to Blackboard by the end of the school day, as long as they have already verbally shared the details of the assignment with their students during the class period. He is not comfortable with teachers posting assignments to Blackboard the night before a class. Dr. Glazer said that he will include reminders in next week’s teacher podcast about not accelerating curriculum and on the timeliness of posting assignments to Blackboard. He asked that students and parents address homework concerns with their child’s teacher first, before contacting him.
Adjournment: A motion to adjourn was made and seconded. The meeting adjourned at 11:05 a.m.