
Board and General Membership Meeting Notes
March 7, 2014

Call to order and President’s report: Grace Becker
The members of the nominating committee were approved. If you’re interested in being an officer next year, please contact nominating committee members Hilde Kahn, Denise Bunting, Jane Hsu, Barbara Males, or Lakshmi Bala.

January minutes were approved. (February meeting was canceled due to inclement weather.)

Presentation on Resource Development Fair: Danielle Armstrong
Danielle Armstrong discussed the Back to School Resource Fair for the Annandale pyramid, and asked for help from TJ students and families. She showed a YouTube video of last year’s resource fair, which is available here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mucbmk-zY5Q

Organizers estimate that between 3500-4000 students and family members participated last year, which was the event’s first year. They’re seeking members of the Leadership Team for this year’s event. To learn more: http://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0E44A5A629A7FB6-tjhsst

Last year, students received backpacks, clothes, and even free haircuts. This is an opportunity to help students and families in our school’s neighborhood – please join the effort. This year’s Resource Fair will be on August 20th. You don’t need to be available that day in order to help.

FLOW day: Kate Lewis
This year she’s organizing TJ’s first FLOW day; an experimental effort based on the book Drive. Flow is the state you get in when you are doing something that gives you joy, so that the time and your surroundings fall away. Organizers are inviting people to consider presenting. We want to express to students that life is full of curves – not just a straight line.

She’s running in the annual fundraiser for the Josh Anderson Foundation. They’re seeking donations to promote awareness about suicide and depression prevention. Dr. Glazer added that Lauren Anderson was a presenter at TJ’s mental health awareness week.
Principal’s report: Dr. Evan Glazer

Update on Economics and Personal Finance (EPF): Freshmen, sophomores, and juniors can take EPF as an 8th period class. That’s an exception to our normal rule of not allowing diploma requirements to be taken in 8th period. Seniors are not allowed to take diploma requirements as 8th period classes. 41 rising seniors are missing both EPF and their fourth social studies credit.

People are finding creative solutions to the challenges posed by the renovation. For example, by having one night of I-Nite at George Mason University and one at TJ, about 2500 people got to see the show this year.

Mental Wellness week – TJ staff asked students to be reflective about the amount of sleep they’re getting, eating healthy foods, and carrying out acts of kindness.

Dr. Glazer emphasized that he constantly thinks about mental wellness, and that this is a continuing concern for teachers and staff members. School Psychiatrist Greg Myers is working to encourage people to talk about mental wellness issues. According to surveys, 30 percent of our students will have an incident of depression in a given year. TJ teachers and staff want students to know that mental wellness issues are a normal part of life, and that they’re surrounded by supportive people who care about them.

We ask parents to be aware of which adults your students are close to at school. You may be able to talk with them if there’s an issue. Also be aware of students’ online activity. Some signals that students release on social media trigger a response from us. We learn about issues from many sources, including from caring adults, from social media (especially when a student’s concerned about another student’s statements), and also through depression screening.

SGA President’s report: Joey Valery

I-Nite was awesome. We know the ticket procedure at TJ was still chaotic – give us suggestions for improvements. We recently hosted our annual middle school conference on leadership skills. Service week is coming up. Honor Council has started operating; have taken the first case, which went really well.

Academic integrity presentation: Shawn DeRose

Dr. Glazer introduced this report by pointing out that the survey last spring didn’t suggest that we have a serious problem with academic integrity, but we can always improve. He also acknowledged Shawn’s recognition as Virginia’s Assistant Principal of the year!

Shawn DeRose said that faculty and staff are working to refocus the community’s attention on academic integrity. Some recent steps include: Making the honor code more visible, making the process of referral clearer for honor code violations, and revamping the referral form for teachers to give administrators more information. As administrators, we try to ensure that the consequences are consistent across assistant principals, with guidelines for action.

The homework committee is a subgroup of teachers, parents, and students, to try to get to the heart of the issue of homework. Are we asking too much of our students? Is this leading to academic integrity issues because students are just overwhelmed?
On the most recent survey, students say teachers are doing a better job of reporting academic integrity violations; teachers say they’re doing a better job as well. Cheating is a serious problem: We didn’t know how large before the fall survey. Teachers and students think it’s getting better; parents are less convinced. The survey results will be posted online.

The extended discussion of related issues is summarized below. [Note: The Honor Code and the process followed if an Honor Code violation is suspected are both available at: http://www.tjhsst.edu/abouttj/integrity/honorcode.html]

Q: What if your kid comes home and says someone was cheating off of him or her?
A: Let a teacher, counselor, or administrator know. We’re trying to be proactive and get input from students on what teachers can do differently.

Q: Anything in the guidelines on putting cells on teacher’s desk during assessments?
A: We have guidelines – some talk about putting backpacks on lockers before desks, calculators on teachers’ desks.

Q: Difference between collaboration and working in teams; what happens if a student on the team does no work? Do you expect teachers to report? Students?
A: IBET teachers have been focusing on that issue this year – the difference between collaboration and cheating.

Q: One of the issues is the amount of literature they have to read. If they’re slow readers, it take a long time. Perhaps classes on speed reading and different reading techniques?
A: Our students are so driven that sometimes it’s hard for them to ask for help. We’re telling students that they are their own best advocates, and should address concerns with their teachers. If that doesn’t work, students can talk with counselors.

**Reflections: Heidi Werntz**

Heidi Werntz organized TJ students’ participation in the National PTA’s annual arts contest, Reflections. Heidi recognized TJ’s winners in four categories of the Reflections contest: Literature, Photography, Visual Arts, and Music. There were no entrants in dance choreography or film. She also purchased prizes that were aligned with each student’s interests.

Cluster-level awards are available here: [http://www.fccpta.org/content/reformatted-results-2013-2014-reflections-awards-believe-dream-inspire](http://www.fccpta.org/content/reformatted-results-2013-2014-reflections-awards-believe-dream-inspire) All four TJ winners also received Outstanding Interpretation awards (first place) at the Cluster level!

If students want to start thinking about next year’s contest, the theme is: “The world would be a better place if…”

As Heidi’s daughter is a senior, we need a new chair next year in order to continue TJ’s winning ways in the Reflections contest!

**Principal’s report: Dr. Evan Glazer**

Q: April 7th telelearn day? Is that official?
A: Yes – to support our teachers so they can finish their grades. I know people don’t like anchor days as telelearn days, but we’ve cut back on the total number of anchor days this year because of the snow. When we lose a block day, we make the next anchor day a block day.

More updates from Dr. Glazer: We’re involved in lots of exchange programs – Japanese students now, Chinese students later this month, German schools later.

TJ summer school registration will start March 10th – it will be at Woodson again. Regular summer school registration will start in May.

We’re working on the budget situation. So far, the budget suggests that classes will be larger again. We already combine different classes and levels of classes in journalism, some language classes, and drama. IBETs have 23-24 students now; next year that will probably be about 27. People have asked about the Partnership Fund or the PTSA funding positions, but that’s not allowed. Students who take online classes make other things easier. If students are taking an online class, that creates more flexibility, opening a seat somewhere at that time.

**Treasurer’s report: Enit Lulushi**
Since January, we’ve had good activity with free money and recycling programs. Expecting income to hit our goals for Amazon and e-scrip. About $4K in income for January and February.

**Additional notes:**
Grace Becker: By joining the PTSA, you’re entitled to a free directory. If you don’t pick up your directory by freshman preview night, we will be re-selling them for $5.

The PTSA is donating 500 umbrellas so they’re available for students and teachers to stay dry while they’re going back and forth to the trailers.

Join us for the first Pi Day fundraiser at the shops at Mosaic on March 28th!

**PTSA committee and booster group reports**
Robin Hatanpää – We still need more than 10 volunteers to help proctor the French National Exam. We also need drivers to get Japanese exchange students to and from metro. We need Russian speaking judges for a competition. And we need Flow speakers.

**New business, announcements, and upcoming events**
March 15th – Pi Miler at Burke Lake Park.

Meeting adjourned at 11AM.

_The next PTSA meeting will be at 7PM on Wednesday April 2nd._