TJHSST PTSA
Parent, Teacher, Student Association

Board and General Membership Meeting
Principal’s Coffee
November 14, 2013
9-11AM, TJ cafe


The gathering began with an informal question and answer session with Principal Evan Glazer, as is traditional at the Principal’s Coffee. Topics discussed included the TJ3Sat scheduled launch, traffic issues, procedures with respect to student absences and homework, access to restrooms for students in classes in the trailers, and the ongoing update of the TJ honor code.

Call to Order: PTSA President Grace Becker called the meeting to order at 9:32AM in the café.

President’s Report: Grace Becker
- Taping the meeting approved by unanimous consent.
- Approval of October 2013 minutes: Grace presented the October 2013 minutes for approval. The minutes were approved as written.
- Harvest lunch: Sen. Saslaw, dad of a TJ alum, said TJ only receives the Governor’s School supplement from the Commonwealth for 1725 students, even though our capacity is 1980. He’ll push for full funding this year.
- Funding shortfall: Estimated shortfall for FCPS schools is $140 million for the next budget year.
- Update on effort to obtain 1.0 additional GPA weighting for post-AP courses with an AP pre-requisite: The decision is expected in November. It should be retroactive for current students.
- Directory issues: We have an on-line supplement for the freshmen whose information was missing when the first printing of the directory went to press. We also have a second printing with the full listings.

Treasurer’s report: Enit Lulushi reported that PTSA finances are pretty healthy, and thanked parents for their contributions and memberships. She also encouraged everyone to shop with Amazon through the PTSA link.

STEMbassadors: Eric Males said that the goal is to create partnerships with all 350 elementary and middle schools within TJ’s jurisdiction. STEMbassadors are doing special outreach to students at priority schools.

This past summer, STEMbassadors supported over 50 summer programs with over 200 volunteers. More than half of the volunteers were non-TJ students. We also need adults to volunteer to be liaisons with the partner schools. They don’t need to be TJ parents or even parents, especially if they know the partner schools well.
Principal’s report: Dr. Evan Glazer

Participation in performing and fine arts: Dr. Glazer pointed out that there are curricular and extra-curricular options. There are many opportunities to perform, but some roles are reserved for students taking the curricular classes.

Telelearn day: November 27th will be a telelearn day. On Monday or Tuesday of that week, teachers can ask for something to be submitted electronically on Wednesday as homework. On Wednesday, they can ask students to do something for 35 minutes that relates to the class; this assignment may or may not be electronic. Teachers can then ask for one regular homework assignment that they’d assign for an anchor day, which would be due the Monday after Thanksgiving.

Guidelines for student advocacy: are available on the TJ website at: http://www.tjhsst.edu/parents-community/ptsa/forms-docs.htm
Dr. Glazer asks that students begin by approaching their teachers, and requests that parents not get involved until students have attempted to speak with their teachers and their counselors. These guidelines address homework and grading, among other issues.

New math sequence: Dr. Glazer briefed parents on the new math sequence, which will not affect students currently attending TJ.

Student Government Association report: Dennis Kim, SGA Vice President, reported that in the past month, SGA has paid a lot of attention to One Question. Student government surveyed students about whether being able to take courses pass/fail would motivate students to take challenging courses they wouldn’t otherwise take. Most students said they might take physical education or other classes pass/fail to increase their GPA. Others said they’d use it to take challenging courses.

SGA is discussing discrepancies in the level of challenge in different sections of various classes. This fits with the One Question Issue of how to intrinsically motivate students.

More discussion with Dr. Glazer:
We’re trying to think about how to motivate students because of their passion for learning rather than just the grade. This is the topic of ongoing conversations with students and staff.

In terms of discrepancies in different sections of the same course, we’re seeking equity in expectations, but want to avoid eliminating teachers' autonomy.

Membership report: Paula Matthews reported that the latest count is 1,137 members, of whom 996 are adult members, 97 are students, and 44 are faculty members.

Safe Community Coalition: Grace Becker reported that the Safe Community Coalition has given TJ grants for the All-Night Grad Party (ANGP) and for Mauricio Velasquez (diversity speaker). SCC is also sponsoring Dr. Madeline Levine in November to talk about encouraging students to be successful without overstressing them.

Department of Student Services (DSS): Theresa Li pointed out that signup sheets for DSS coffees with parents were available at the back of the room.

Motion to adjourn: Robin Hatanpää moved that the meeting adjourn, seconded by Lisa Savage. Meeting adjourned at 10:58AM.

Next meeting: The next PTSA meeting will be December 4th, 7-9PM in Trailer 1.