Call to Order: PTSA President Grace Becker called the meeting to order at 7:31pm in the TJ Library, Room 240.

President’s Report: Grace Becker

- Approval of June 2013 minutes: Grace presented the June 2013 minutes for approval. The minutes were approved as written by Michele Gonzalez and Lisa Savage.
- Grace welcomed the freshman parents and introduced class parent liaisons.
- Update on effort to obtain 1.0 additional GPA weighting for post-AP courses with an AP pre-requisite: The request has gone to the committee that evaluates weighting. If approved, the change should be retroactive. The decision is expected in November.
- Directory issues: Despite heroic efforts, we were missing information for about 100 freshmen when the TJ Directory went to press. We will try to produce an electronic supplement that can be downloaded.

Presentation on Princeton University High School Diplomats program: Nikhil Garg and Maddy Naide described their experience at the Princeton University High School Diplomats program. More information is available here: http://www.highschooldiplomats.com/

Special presentation on Driver’s Education: Heidi Smith briefed parents on the new laws affecting teen drivers. Her PowerPoint presentation is available here: http://www.tjhsst.edu/curriculum/hpe/index.php#drivers

Faculty Report: Laura McConnaughey is the new faculty representative to the PTSA. She expressed teacher appreciation for the PTSA’s efforts, including the welcome breakfast and meals at the Back to School bash.

Principal’s Report: Dr. Evan Glazer introduced Sharon Sneed, Rick Montaverde, Betsy Sandstrom, Andrea Smith, Assistant Principal Tinell Priddy (Class of 2015 administrator); and Emily Castor (Class of 2017 administrator).

Renovation: Dr. Glazer anticipates that the additions in the front and the back will be complete by winter 2014. He encouraged families to contribute to the Partnership Fund, which is campaigning to support the equipment for the new labs, turf field, and other features that the renovation program won’t cover.

Back to School Night: BTS night is October 2nd. The police department asked us to change our format; they were concerned about unsafe driving conditions. After asking faculty and PTSA for their preferences, we came to a compromise, with two sessions. We recognize that everyone will be inconvenienced, but we have to deal with the renovation. For fairness, different classes will have the early session next year.
School goals: We plan a special focus on integrity this year. Our data on academic integrity violations is consistent with other high schools in Fairfax County. But we should also acknowledge that we don’t catch everything. Parents are welcome on the new committees focused on integrity. (Note: see p. 3 of the September Tech cetera for details on the changes to the TJ Honor Policy.)

Q&A: Questions and concerns included:
Q: When will the students start getting grades? A: Soon; interim grades will be out around October 9th. Encourage students to ask for detailed grade sheets if they don’t understand their grades.
Q: What has been the effect on arts enrollment of the new Economics and Personal Finance course? How will students meet that requirement and still participate in arts courses and band? A: There has been a decline in enrollment, but not to the extent that we’ve had to cut classes.
Q: What to do about problems with websites and student submissions of homework? A: Contact the teacher if the site is down. If the teacher’s email is down, tell him or her the next morning. We don’t want technology to be a barrier to student learning.
Q: Are you teaching math in a flipped classroom again? Do you have data on how it worked last year? A: Yes, we have six sections this year. Student performance parallels what students have done in the other classes. We’re continuing to refine the process based on student feedback and performance.

Treasurer’s Report: Enit Lulushi, Treasurer, says we’ve done well so far this year on the income side of the ledger. We’ve had a considerable increase in membership numbers, with an estimated 700 members so far. She asked parents to use the TJ portal to buy from Amazon, and encouraged families to go to the TJ website to sign up for various free money programs.

Grace presented the proposal to purchase a wet/dry vac for the custodians. The PTSA approved the purchase at the June meeting, but that model didn’t come with a service contract. The one with a service contract is more expensive. Jin Zhou moved approval of the expenditure, Garima Jain seconded. The expenditure, estimated at approximately $1900, was unanimously approved by a voice vote.

Membership report: Paula Mathews confirmed that we’re doing well on membership so far this year.

Reflections: Deepa Sivakumar reported on this arts appreciation program, sponsored by the national PTA. This year’s theme is “Believe, Dream, and Inspire.” The deadline is October 25th. Entry forms are available here: http://www.vapta.org/resources/for-students/resources-reflections.html

Faculty Allocations Committee (FAC): Grace presented the FAC-approved request to send five teachers to Google training at $219 each. Laura McConnaughey moved to approve the expenditure, seconded by Lisa Savage. Motion passed unanimously.

Academic Boosters: Natalie Goldring reported that Academic Boosters needs a new treasurer to help the group, which supports nearly two dozen academic teams at TJ.

Partnership Fund: Hilde Kahn reported that the freshman reception was extremely successful, and raised over $57,000 in pledges. “Campaign for TJ” will have its Campaign Kickoff on Back to School Night. The Campaign for TJ has a great incentive gift for families that pledge $250 per year for four years, for a total contribution of $1000.

Volunteers: Robin Hatanpaa said that we need more parent volunteers in the front “office”. She also pointed out that the volunteer coordinators are already starting to look for Science Fair judges. In addition, we need help on Thursday mornings during the Jefferson Learning Community (JLC) time so that teachers can have staff meetings.

Next meeting: The next PTSA meeting will be from 6-7PM on October 2nd at Back to School Night.

Adjournment: Robin moved adjournment. Michele Gonzalez seconded. The meeting adjourned at 8:55PM.