

West Potomac PTSA Membership Meeting: October 5, 2015

1. **Call to Order:** Sue Capper called the meeting to order at 6:37 pm. In her introductory remarks, she highlighted the upcoming school board election and the recent visit of 3 authors to share with English classes what it is like to write a book.

2. **Principal's Update:** Safety drills were held this week and the staff is focusing on students getting to class on time. This week, students who were tardy to class were required to visit their subschool offices. So far, out of 2,500 students, 187 have had more than one tardy. Interims will go out tomorrow, October 6. The new SIS is available for parents to login to see the grade book and other items. Please register for SIS if you have not already. Counselors have met with seniors to discuss their future plans. The Young Scholars program is now underway at the high school level. The Renaissance school program focused on the hockey team's senior night where they selected teachers who had inspired to them. The band and orchestra programs conducted an outreach to the local elementary schools. Tag day was a success with a record amount of funds raised to support the music and arts programs at West Potomac. High Five Fridays are underway and have been well received. Students are "high fived" by staff as they exit buses and in the hallways. The 30th anniversary fundraising campaign will kick off Homecoming weekend. Also, the Academy will be dedicated at 10:00 am, Saturday, October 17th as part of the Homecoming festivities.

A new hot topic is the consideration of ten interior cameras at West Potomac. Eighteen of the 25 FCPS high schools already have interior cameras. In Region 3, West Potomac is the only high school without interior cameras. Ten cameras for the three lobbies and the cafeteria would cost \$20,000. Were we to commit to the cameras now, it might be possible to qualify for \$10,000 in school safety grand funding from the FCPS Office of Safety and Security. The remaining \$10,000 could be funded from fees collected such as community use and parking fees. Other schools have reported that the cameras deter misconduct and that vandalism, thefts and fights decreased once the cameras were installed. Other benefits of the cameras include increased safety for students and increased security after school hours as the building often is used evenings and weekends by a variety of school and community programs. A question and answer session followed. Mr. Case will be discussing the issue with student leaders to get their reaction. He also encouraged those interested to send him an email indicating whether they did or did not support installation of the interior cameras. An update will be provided at the November PTSA meeting.

3. **Treasurer's Report:** The cash balance is \$37,089.91. Income for the period September 16-October 5 included \$1225 in donations and \$2154.50 in membership dues. Expenses for the same period included \$1,170 for magnets, \$600 for buildings and grounds, \$204 for teacher grants.

4. **Student Leader Update:** Maddy McMullin and Haley Reynolds reported that homecoming is next week. Dance tickets are on sale this week and next for \$20. The PSAT is next week for 10th and 11th graders while Seniors attend a town hall. Tuesday is the Powder puff game and a Chik-Fil-A drive through will begin at 5:00 p.m. A pep rally will be held at 2:00 next Friday. The tailgate before the game on Friday is \$5 and will run from 4:30 to 7:00. West Potomac will be playing Annandale. The homecoming king and queen will be crowned at half-time.

5. **Faculty Update:** Nancy Indelicato reviewed the teacher grants funded by the PTSA to date. Mr. Chavers purchased clickers for the interactive classroom. Ms. Gano purchased mariachi instruments for an after-school mariachi program open to all interested. Ms. McGlynn purchases topic specific books for students in her debate class.

Kazue Watlington reported that the counselors have completed their senior outreach and have begun freshman outreach.

6. **30th Anniversary:** Cindy Slone and Susan Fleischman reported that the fundraising effort for West Potomac's diamond anniversary will kick off at Homecoming and will culminate in an end-of-the-year celebration. Funds raised will go to landscaping the center island in front of the school, technology, including laptops and projectors and an athletic hall of fame.

7. **Directory Update:** Sue Bernstein reported that directory ads totaling \$5,000 have been sold so far.

8. **Volunteer Update:** Cindy Slone reported that volunteer spot is available to sign up for volunteer opportunities. Also, the math department, library and career center are looking for help.

9. **CIP/Budget Update:** Sue Genuario reported that 5 schools are slated for renovation in the West Potomac pyramid. In the Mt. Vernon pyramid, 2 new schools are to be built and 3 are to be renovated. As a result of the new school construction, boundary changes will occur. Boundary changes are expected to be announced between January and March of 2016. The CIP for the following 5 years will be introduced at the December school board meeting, with approval scheduled for January 2016. The budget tool is still open and the cuts to be made are predicted to be in the \$50 - \$75 million range. Mr. Case reported that cuts in staffing for online courses and needs based staffing are being considered and would impact West Potomac. The new proposed budget is expected in January. Cathy Hosek reported that the working group of PTS leaders and other interested parents would resume work. Major decisions on boundaries and the budget will be postponed until after the election. In light of these important issues, the school board election is particularly important for our area.

10. **September Minutes:** Upon motion duly made and seconded, the September PTSA meeting minutes were unanimously approved.

11. **Booster Update:** Rick Genuario reported that the new track has been installed and will be striped soon. This weekend is a big football game against competitive West Springfield. Silver Patron passes are on sale for admission to all games.

12. **Featured Topic - Test Prep:** Marilyn Aboff and an Appplerouth representative (Maxwell Smith) detailed the features of the Appplerouth Test Prep Program at West Potomac. First, there are mock tests and students are encouraged to take both ACT and SAT mock tests to see which they like better. 78% of students perform the same on both tests, but 22% perform significantly better on one over the other. Tenth graders should consider taking the mock tests in the Spring. The cost is \$23 for each mock. The mock tests are retired official exams. Students will have their scores within 1 week. Second, there are prep classes with 20-25 kids per class for a cost of \$270. Scholarships are available at the rate of 1 scholarship for every 6 paid spots. Students should plan on taking the SAT or ACT 3 times, twice in their junior year and once in their senior year, if necessary. Informative lectures also are featured. Jed Appplerouth spoke in September about the new SAT. A presentation on test anxiety will be held on October 22 at 7:00 pm in Kogelman. Brock Jolly will present a financial planning session later in the year, with focus also on financing college for those whose student will not qualify for financial aid. A question and answer session followed the presentation.

The meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Lynn Taylor, Recording Secretary