



PTO Meeting Minutes

March 9, 2021

The PTO mission is to support the educational experience at TJHS and to foster a stronger school community for students, parents and staff.

PTO Board Members in attendance: Brooke Bolinske, Karla Henke, Teri Hetzel, Christy Jordan, Becca Mahoney, Carrie Oss, Megan Perkins, Eileen Robinson, Julie Rubin, Marlene Talavera, John Trujillo, Janet Willson, Krista Zizzo

Total attendance: 30

7:02pm: Welcome

Eileen Robinson, PTO President, welcomed Board members and parents in attendance. The meeting was held virtually, via Zoom.

7:03pm Introduction of tonight's Speaker - Emily Lupo, TJHS Dean of Culture (Eileen)

Emily has been in DPS for five years and this is her second year at TJ. Her position was created at TJ last year, as Restorative Justice Counselor and it has grown to the current Dean of Culture position. Her mission is to decrease the "school to prison pipeline" by using restorative practices with youth.

Restorative practices are a type of conflict resolution. For example, if a teacher sends a student out of class, if there are peer to peer issues, etc. Ms. Lupo works closely with Mr. Skari, the Assistant Principal who has oversight for discipline. The goal of restorative practices is repairing the harm and making agreements on how to move forward. Last year they resolved between 72-100 behavior issues with restorative practices. With remote/hybrid learning, this year hasn't had as many issues, but to date, there have been at least 15 interventions. Results of restorative practices are improved relationships between peers, teachers and students. RP is really about human connections and truly resolving the issues, not just pushing them aside. She's seen conflicts truly be resolved as the parties have to work together.

Ms. Lupo is also on the "Student Excellence Team," which is a new title for something they put together at the beginning of the year. (Renamed from last year's "discipline team.>"). The name was shifted to better communicate what the team is all about. Team includes Ms. Lupo, Mr. Skari, and the two Restorative Practices Coordinators for the school. They created a new award to compliment SnaTraps, which is the school's PBIS program. The "Most Improved Student" award is given out every other month to recognize students who may not otherwise be recognized.

A lot of people influence culture at the school and Lupo recognizes that TJ has a great school culture. With students hopefully returning to school next school year, they are discussing how to restart school culture at TJ.

Ms. Lupo also addressed that DPS is ending its relationship with the Denver Police Department and losing the officers who have been serving as School Resource Officers. Not having TJ's SRO, Officer Cueva next year will be a huge loss. Her opinion of having police in schools was changed by seeing his relationship with the students and community. He's built great relationships with our students. Our safety and security team and the administration are going to need to come together and do some work to make sure we're all on the same page and roles and responsibilities are clear. Restorative practices are going to need to be a huge piece of this. She's hopeful that there will be a way for TJ's community to have a relationship with Officer Cueva and that he can remain an ally for our community and students. Mr. Skari and Ms. Koncz (School Psychologist) are in a DPS working group that's been working on what this will look like. There's also a parent working group for the DPS SRO Transition so please email her if you are interested. DPS wants to hear from parents as to what you would like this to look like

Ms.Lupo's contact info is Emily_lupo@dpsk12.org

7:30pm Treasurer Report (Teri Hetzel)

- The current financials were reviewed. The PTO has approximately \$95,789 in all accounts. Outside of class accounts and programs, there is about \$62,536 in available funds. Class accounts balances were reviewed. The financial report will be posted to the PTO webpage.
- Thank you to the parents of Class of 2020 for funding \$639 of the school's projection screen. The school is excited to have this for student activities and will get started using it soon!
- Our Amazon Smiles reward doubled this quarter due to increased participation! The King Soopers Community Rewards program also increased this past quarter. To sign up for Amazon Smiles, instead of using amazon.com as your launch page, go to smile.amazon.com to designate Thomas Jefferson High School Partners as your charity.
- The Class of 2022 has an event coming up on 3/25 - a virtual wine tasting. Everyone is invited, even if you don't have a student in that class. It's a 90-minute event, there are a few spaces left. The funds will be matched by a corporate donor. Please consider signing up! Information has been in the weekly school news.

7:37pm - Auction Update (Megan Perkins)

Megan gave an update on the auction. She and Becca Mahoney are co-chairs. People have asked why we are doing an auction this year. Their goal is to keep the momentum growing. Our bidder numbers (participants) have greatly increased, and they don't want to lose momentum. She has been pleasantly surprised by the local businesses that are supporting us with donations. We have 100 items, valued around \$10,500. The fundraising goal is \$5,000. She would love more help with donation procurement. If you can help get donations, the committee has an auction letter and a stock email that you can send to companies you are connected with. There is an online submission form that people can help fill out. Megan's email is megandperkins@gmail.com if you would like to email her to get those items so you can help.

7:41pm - School Updates (Eileen Robinson)

These school updates are shared in an effort to get information to parents whose students may not tell you what's going on at school...

Choice of Studies started this week. This is how students select courses for next year. The school website has a credit mapping chart on the Choice of Studies page that shows you what the sequence/progression is for the graduation requirements. There's a worksheet for each grade that you can view on the website, but students make their course selections in Infinite Campus (IC). If you have questions, you or your student can reach out to their counselor. There's also a video that tells students how to use IC to make their choices and there are also videos from each department that discuss the options. (Not accessible by parents). There was a question as to the deadline. It is possibly this Friday. At some point, IC closes, and changes or requests have to go through your student's counselor.

Testing: There's a lot of school testing in April and May, including CMAS. TJ wants every student to participate in the SAT. It's offered in person only, and each grade has its own testing day. The other grades will have asynchronous learning those days. The SAT fulfills a competency requirement for graduation. (Juniors' SAT is 4/13, 10th PSAT 4/14, 9th PSAT 4/15). If you want to opt out of the SAT, the deadline to do so (in the Parent Portal) is this Friday, 3/12. The school is working out the logistics, but on those days it will just be the specific class coming in, not the alphabetical cohort. The PSAT is a "practice" SAT. Taking it in 10th grade will prepare the student for the PSAT/NMSQT, taken the fall of 11th grade. (That's National Merit scholarship qualifying test).

College 101 Workshop: Will be held on Wednesday, 3/24 from 5:30-7:30pm. It is intended for Junior class families, but anyone is welcome to attend.

Please RSVP to Emily Webster in the Future Center - <https://forms.gle/C3VJm6tb8kzVEWXY5>

7:55pm - Senior Class Update (John Trujillo)

This week all of the seniors who expressed interest in participating in the Senior Showcase came together. They taped some fun things to be included in the event. It was a little glimpse of “normalcy” and the students who came out really enjoyed it. The taping of the “formal” portions is supposed to be this Saturday, but weather might change that. If there are seniors who didn’t participate, have them reach out to John Poole or himself and we can get them involved in the next time they tape. The April event is still TBD (in person or virtual).

Announcement - Curb Appeal Committee (Eileen)

This is a work group being formed to consider improvements to the front of the school. For example: freshening up the area to make it more attractive and usable through hardscape, not landscape. Possibilities include new banners, art, sculptures, new concrete benches, etc. Outcomes would be presented to administration and funded by the PTO and school budget. We have had a couple of parents volunteer, but more are welcome. They will assess needs then determine what is ideal. She would like to get student input as well. The committee may pitch ideas in May, do the work in summer, come back to a fresh look. However, that timeline may not be realistic with the way DPS works.

Interested parents are encouraged to contact Eileen Robinson at TJHSPTO@gmail.com.

Next meeting - Tuesday, 4/13 at 7pm. Will be approving grants at this meeting.