



PTO Meeting Minutes

September 14, 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, Wassila Hamitouche, Karla Henke, Teri Hetzel, Lisa LoJacono, Carrie Oss, Megan Perkins, Eileen Robinson, Janet Willson, Krista Zizzo

Total attendance: 50

7:00 pm – Welcome (Eileen Robinson)

Exciting to have Mr. Christoff to join us and see so many parents on the Zoom meeting. Welcome to our first PTO meeting of the 2021-22 school year.

7:05 pm – Administrator Update (Principal, Mike Christoff)

This is Mr. Christoff's 6th year as principal, 21st year in DPS, 12th year at TJ. Things are going really well. (Answering questions in the chat.)

Enrollment: 1334 projected

- 900 kids at lowest in past 12 years, but past 7-8 years uptick in enrollment, in the last few years, a lot of growth at 60-70 students/year.
- 1264 projected, 1297 actual for 2020-21.
- 1340 projected for this year. Growth is projected at 3% over next few years.
- In other parts of city, elementary is seeing smaller sizes, but not as much in SE Denver. Hopefully numbers will rebound after COVID.
- Capacity is 1400 students. Every classroom is being used. The only room unscheduled every day is the community use room. We want the school to be full of kids, so this is good news.
- Freshman class is big, projected 457, currently 400 "unique" Freshman. 100 kids currently "off track", show up as 9th graders in Infinite Campus and so they'll be on track by end of year.

New Staff: Funding from the state is by student (more students = more funds). Over the last few years, we have been able to add to Math and English, Social Studies and Science departments. This year added to electives: audio engineering, Mark Mallaney, former Spanish teacher at TJ has returned to start a new CCT program. Level 1 courses currently offered in audio engineering, and can build to broadcast games lives, build a recording studio in the building. Added an intervention teacher for credit recovery students. ½ time Spanish teacher. Currently there is a wait list for Spanish. Starting interviews this week to fill the Spanish teacher opening. SPED math teacher, SPED english Teacher, were also added, and a Health Tech Para to support the full time nurse in addition to Denver Health Clinic.

We are super lucky to be in an urban school with a low teacher turnover rate. Typically TJ teachers retire or move out of state. Teachers at TJ become part of the community which is a real positive.

First day of school, at Class Assemblies we told students that it gets hot in the building and plan accordingly with clothing. Heat release on Friday, 9/10. Building did not cool down from Thursday's heat. Temps in Friday morning 80 degrees at 7:00 am. We knew it would get into 85 to 90 degree range so not a good learning environment.

Air Conditioning will be installed summer of 2023. For now, using AC units, fans, but hopefully later September and October will cool down and temperatures will be comfortable. For now opening windows at night in mornings to keep temps down.

Questions: Percentage of vaccinated students?

Answer from Mr. Christoff: Don't know the number for students at TJ. In DPS, 97% admin, 95% teachers, 83% paras. School Board election this fall, 5 seats open.

Students have been great about wearing masks. 99% are wearing masks properly. Stairwells are busy and it's getting better every week. We go through quite a few boxes of masks every morning. Encouraging students to bring their masks.

Classes have been normal, e.g., working together in pairs, small groups, feels like regular school. Students are engaged, working, doing a nice job. Students report that "this year is so much better" and are grateful to be back and there is lots of energy, busy and buzzing. It's great to see kids being kids again.

Question: If students are exposed and quarantined, is there access to virtual classes?

Answer from Mr. Christoff: Hybrid classes are very difficult to manage as a teacher. Last year 26 kids online and 3 kids in person. This year it is opposite with 1 kid out. Only a handful of students have tested positive and/or have done preventative if a family member is positive. For now working with students on a one on one basis because we haven't had to quarantine a group of students. Staff meetings have been virtual to eliminate as much quarantining of staff. DPS is limited on staffing substitutes. We have 3-4 subs that only sub at TJ. We can continue to be smart about things, staff wears masks. The goal is to keep the school going for the whole year.

Question: As the student population is growing is there an additional coaches, tennis and golf?

Answer from Mr. Christoff: It's all based on numbers....how many kids = 1 coach. Some teams, e.g., football the coaches volunteer and are not paid. We try to give programs extra funding if we can to support programs. It gets complicated related to equity issues, Title 9 and with 22 teams. We try to be as equitable and intentional as we can. Christoff is pushing for it. Receiving CARES money, can we hire more coaches, get new equipment, improve tennis courts because the money was for engagement. We talked about the court resurfacing with the Bond money. Always trying to get the best programs. Suggest to Email Scott Balderman our district DPS Board Member, to allocate more funding toward this. As a school we received \$120,000 for Covid money. We used for intervention teacher, after school programming for off-track students to catch up and also an ELA-S teacher.

Question: Can softball field area be improved?

Answer from Mr. Christoff: DPS grounds have been disappointing with the care they are giving to the fields and grounds. DPS Grounds is supposed to take care of wind screens and toppers. We have raised money to redo girls locker room for basketball and volleyball and boys locker room. TJ puts a lot of money into athletics.

Question: Moved TJ in concrete to the Spartans sign in front, are other changes in the works?

Answer from Mr. Christoff: It would get damaged by the snow plows, so moved. Lobby done, concession stand done, cafeteria done from Bond money. Room 111 has new paint and carpet. All CCT rooms got new carpeting. Main office got new carpeting. All registration happens in the main office now. All 5 counselors are now in offices with windows. Matt Mason, internship coordinator, is with counselors. There is talk of getting new tile in the school with the bond. Likely will need to abate the building. This would happen over the summer. 300 new desks and chairs in classrooms and will acquire new desks as we can. Supply chain delays are affecting getting new furniture in the building.

Question: If a student is vaccinated and is exposed, do they need to quarantine?

Answer from Mr. Christoff: If exposure is while both are wearing masks, answer is NO. If there is doubt, call the school. There is a decision chart from DPS that helps to determine next steps. If vaccinated, go get tested 3-5 days after exposure. At South HS if you ask for a rapid test, you can get one, so possibly go there.

Question: Are Service Hours still a requirement for students?

Answer from Mr. Christoff: We still push for and encourage students to accrue them. Students will still graduate if they don't have the 40 hours.

Update on New Chromebooks: Have student walk parents through Schoology pages. Students should be able to do this, if they can't, parents should call the counselor. All teachers are using Schoology now. It helps teacher planning, it helps students stay connected. My Tech Grant allowed for Jessica Delgado to be hired to help students with their Chromebooks. She is in the building MWF in mornings, T/Th in afternoons. If students forget their device, we have some loaners. Also, there are 6 charging stations throughout the school that are locked and secure. Students are doing a good job of charging their chromebooks at night. Teachers are getting used to having them in class. It varies by department, but all are posting assignments on Schoology. Students will keep devices for the four years. We have 260 seniors and 490 Freshman, so we will need more based on that inventory.

Update on School Safety: We used to have a school resource officer, Officer Cueva. DPS board decided to do away with SROs. All of the DPS high school principals disagreed with that decision. Christoff has reached out to DPD district 3 and have a great relationship with them. We've had quite a few accidents, but thankfully everyone's been okay. We have a double entry to be buzzed in twice as a safety precaution, which was part of the lobby construction 3 years ago, to be safe as at school. We have 1 safety security officer and we'd like more but haven't been able to hire one. He is advocating for more. For the most part, the students and teachers are off to a healthy and good start.

Email is the best way to get ahold of Mr. Christoff.

Tell kids to come to the homecoming game and dance.

7:48 pm – PTO Officer Election (Eileen Robinson)

Review of Executive Board and Vote on new positions. TJ PTO Executive Board includes four officers, four at-large positions and spirit store managers.

- Eileen Robinson is 3rd and final year of president. She has a senior this year.
- Election of Krista Zizzo to be Co-President, Lisa LoJacono to be secretary. Krista Zizzo is a sophomore parent. Lisa LoJacono is a parent of a 2020 graduate, a junior and senior.
- Unanimous vote to fill both positions.
- TJ PTO needs a VP. Please consider the VP position and reach out if that is something you are interested in.
- We have more parents and staff so the more parents get involved, the stronger the community is.
- The Executive Board also includes: treasurer Teri Hetzel, Wassila Hamitouche is Asst. Treasurer.
- 4 at large members. Brooke Bolinske Class of 2022, Janet Willson, Class of 2023, Megan Perkins, Class of 2024. We need a Freshman class at-large member.
- Spirit Store Managers are in their 3rd year. Karla Henke, Carrie Oss. Spirit Store manages \$10,000 merchandise/year. They will need help and support this year to run the Spirit Store.

Additional TJ PTO Leadership Roles:

Class Sponsors who raise money for senior class activities.

- Senior Class: Julie Rubin, Marlene Talavera

- Junior Class: Christy Jordan, Catherine Porier
- Sophomore Class: Diana Spichter
- Freshman: Need a pair of sponsors to lead a committee of other parents who will jump in to help.

Committees:

- Auction, our main fundraiser: Megan Perkins, Becca Mahoney
- Food Bank: Megan Perkins, Becca Mahoney
- Hospitality (Teacher Appreciation and Community Building): Susan Dolson

Reach out to TJHSpto@gmail.com if you have any questions.

7:55pm Financial Review (Eileen Robinson)

Fiscal year runs for August 1 – July 31st

General fund is for classroom grants and to support students and staff. Each class has funds raised to support their senior class activities.

Please participate in the King Soopers Rewards Program which helps to fund the class activities. \$500 goes to each class each year and current Senior Class gets \$1000 through this program. Directions are on the TJ website to get connected so that money can be funneled to PTO.

PTO Financials are posted the the TJ PTO website after each meeting. Also included are the meeting minutes and the meeting recording.

8:00pm Other Business (Eileen Robinson)

Homecoming Week: We need help at Football game selling spirit wear. Several shifts are available. Sign up Genius will be emailed to PTO parents: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20f0d45aaab2ea13-homecoming>

8 oz. Bottles of water needed for Homecoming Dance.

Students can bring donations into the security office at the main entrance. All donations delivered to the school by Friday at 3:00 p.m

Thank you for coming!

8:05 pm - Adjournment