

**George C. Marshall PTSA Meeting Minutes**  
**January 27, 2021**

Members Present: Carolyn Keehan (President), Althea Benjamin (VP), Elizabeth Keegan (Secretary), Jeff Litz (Principal) -- via Zoom

1. Guest Speakers: A panel of 3 students attended the meeting to discuss “The Sunny Side of Social Media.” They responded to a series of questions provided by the PTSA. Q1 – how have you been able to connect with friends during the pandemic? Students said they FaceTime a lot, do homework together, have group chats. A senior said that the Zeemee app has allowed her to connect with other students applying to/going to the same colleges. Q2 - what technological skills have you learned this past year? Graphic design skills, photography, CAD and Soundtrap were mentioned. Q3 – are you interested in careers in technology? None of the 3 students were, but all acknowledged the importance of knowing how to navigate technology in any career choice. Q4 – how has technology affected dating? Students said it was important to show that you’re dating on social media for “status.” Many kids find their dating partners on social media, and dating is done in large part through technology. They said there is pressure to “curate” a perfect life on Instagram. Q5 – what do you wish your parents knew about social media? Social media is a place to share memories, connect with friends and others with similar interests. Parents should reinforce to their kids that they don’t have to be perfect. Q6 – what influencers are your favorites? Sports figures (especially those with inspirational messaging), travel bloggers, artists. One student mentioned word artist Morgan Harper Nichols as being particularly inspirational. A member asked whether the students were seeing a change in online bullying during the pandemic. They said that the political and social justice issues had created a lot more negativity online. But there was also more positive content at the same time. Another member asked how students know when to take a break from social media. The students admitted it was easy to go down the “rabbit hole” of social media and waste a lot of time. They felt they were online too much, between virtual school and social media. They recommended taking breaks to go outside, setting app limits on your phone.
2. President’s Report: Minutes from the November meeting were approved and are posted on the PTSA website. International Night this year will be a video contest consisting of 5 categories (dance, musical instrument, vocal, cooking, and other). We will announce the details next week and allow one month to solicit student videos. Teacher wish lists have been distributed; the deadline is Friday to respond. The PTSA hopes to cover everything with its \$5000 budget. The Hospitality Committee is trying to do as much as they can given the circumstances. Custodians will be treated to lunch from Lazy Mike’s; the Committee is now working on Counselor Appreciation. The last SAT bootcamp is this weekend; more will be announced in February. The next PTSA meeting is Wednesday, February 17<sup>th</sup>.
3. Budget: Marie Robles (Treasurer) was not able to attend the meeting, but little has changed since last month. We’re not taking much money in, but we’re not spending much either.

4. Principal's Report: Mr. Litz welcomed Mr. Frattali as the interim principal while he is out on medical leave. Cindy Blakely said the College Board announced that there will be no essay or subject tests on the SAT this year. Course kick off went well and participation was excellent. The sessions have been recorded if your student missed one. Juniors will meet with their counselors this week to select courses, sophomores on 2/3 and freshmen on 2/5. The second week of February counselors will meet with 8<sup>th</sup> graders. Second quarter grades will be released on Monday. Mr. Litz thanked his staff for the monumental challenges they've faced this year – virtual learning, preparing to bring students back, managing sports, etc. Approximately 53% of students want to come back to in-person school next month. He has been meeting with seniors at risk of not graduating, to intervene as early as possible. On 3/2, 9<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders will return to the building; 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> graders return on 3/9. The Governor released additional vaccine to help vaccinate more teachers. Mr. Litz does foresee some sort of graduation happening, but not at the DAR. An outdoor graduation in the stadium with the entire class is more likely. He met with student leaders and ANGC committee to discuss their options for senior celebrations. Prom is not likely, but he is exploring the possibility of having “drive by” prom pictures. He's also hoping to have a senior class drive-in movie in the parking lot. He said that the County is planning to use Zoom next year for virtual school, in the event it is needed. He anticipates kids still wearing masks next fall. Lunch has been the most difficult part of the return-to-school preparations. There will be 200 desks spread out in the cafeteria, and students can also eat outdoors. Marshall has hired 3 classroom monitors, which happen to be 3 of our coaches; 2-3 more are still needed.
  
5. Committee Reports: None

Upcoming PTSA Meeting Dates: Feb 17, Mar 17, April 21, May 19