

**George C. Marshall PTSA Meeting Minutes**  
**October 16, 2019**

Members present: Carolyn Keehan (President), Sonia Lewis (VP), Maria Robles (Treasurer), Elizabeth Keegan (Secretary), Jeff Litz (Principal)

1. Special Presentation on Vaping: Two speakers attended the meeting to discuss the dangers of vaping – Marty Joyner, a Substance Abuse Prevention Specialist from FCPS’s Office of Student Safety and Wellness, and student Bharat Kalra, a GCM sophomore who researches substance abuse issues and works with other students. Important facts about vaping:
  - One cartridge/Juul pod = 20 cigarettes, one inhalation or “puff” = 7 cigarettes. The impact of these high doses of nicotine have never been studied, particularly in younger people, because in the past it was impossible to smoke that many cigarettes that quickly.
  - A vape pen looks like a USB drive and is easily concealed.
  - Europe has imposed limits on the levels of nicotine in vape cartridges. In the US, where we have not imposed restrictions on nicotine content, our levels are twice as high.
  - Many kids use 1-2 pods a day, though some vape 8 pods a day - equivalent to 160 cigarettes.
  - Nicotine dependence happens very quickly due to high doses.
  - Mr. Litz has seen a decline in vaping so far this year, which may be the result of awareness of vaping related deaths in the news right now. There have been 26 deaths in the US from vaping to date, 1299 reported cases of illness. 70% of these cases are male and 15% are under 18.
  - FCPS generally follows similar rates of vaping as the national averages until kids reach 12<sup>th</sup> grade, at which point our rates are higher. Some attribute this to higher income levels in our area.
  - Dangers of vaping: nicotine addiction; gateway to smoking (kids sometimes use cigarettes to wean themselves off the vape); gateway to other drug use, particularly vaping THC; dangerous chemical ingredients, such as propylene glycol - the same ingredient found in anti-freeze. THC levels in a vape are significantly more concentrated as well – it’s estimated that one THC cartridge = 1 pound of marijuana.
  - What should parents look for? Mysterious aromas; unfamiliar gadgets; increased thirst; caffeine sensitivity; batteries and chargers; discarded pods.
  - Know your child’s risk: family history; mental or behavioral disorder; trauma – witnessing or experiencing; impulse control problems.
  - What FCPS is doing to address the problem: student education (in health classes), parent education (online through FCPS website), and staff education (developing curriculum). Confidential help is available to students who are battling substance abuse issues. Staff members and parents can refer a student to a substance abuse specialist. Students can also refer themselves. A student can take part in a substance abuse program regardless of whether the student has violated the regulations in the SR&R.

2. President's Report: Minutes were approved from the September meeting. Madeleine Hamilton, a sophomore, won the fleece pullover in the PTSA membership drive.
3. Financial Report: Marie Robles presented the current budget. PTSA memberships are very slow this year, about half of what they were last year.
4. Principal's Report: The Homecoming dance is Saturday, 10/19 from 8:00-11:30 pm. Students are not allowed to bring body paint into the school for class colors day.
5. Committee Reports:
  - a. International Night: Scheduled for November 14. Volunteers and donors are needed for the potluck dinner and performances.
  - b. Academic Letters: Juniors and seniors with a 3.7 GPA or higher receive the "M" letter. Seniors get a gold pin if they received a letter the year before. Letters will be presented on October 24<sup>th</sup>. Students names will be posted in the school if they are eligible to receive one.