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**Mark Twain Middle School PTA General Membership Meeting**

**October 20, 2020**

**Virtual Platform: Zoom**

President, Cori Bitterman, called the meeting to order at 7:03 P.M. A quorum was established (16 PTA members in attendance).

**Attendees:** Cori Bitterman, Nicol Lee, Chris Reese, Tali Burress, Chuck Miller, Samantha Mulvaney, Shelby Workman, Isaac Martinez, Tysen and Kathryn Perszyk, BD Jones, Olivia Torrico, Jim Dahl, Alfred and Abena Hewton, Rita Emilio, Liz Montante, Tracie Clemmer, Lisa Ritzman, Betelhem, Kacy Verdi.

*(Sign in sheet via SurveyMonkey was completed by the above 21 respondents; however, Zoom participation numbers showed 27 attendees).*

PRESIDENT, Cori Bitterman:

Called meeting to order and introduced Mr. Miller.

PRINCIPAL’S REPORT, Mr. Miller:

Many kids are struggling in the virtual environment. Survey found students have issues with managing the learning platforms, and the workload. For the workload, teachers were providing additional asynchronous work but that has stopped now and only receiving one hour per course per week of asynchronous work. Noticed students were missing work. For the week of the 26th, there will not be additional asynchronous work at all and no homework. On Tuesday and Wednesday, teachers will review the platforms with the kids, show them where to find assignments, and provide extra time to make up the work and get caught up. Another consideration is the rolling grade book this year. Not averaging four quarters together. It is a cumulative grade book and keeps going. Should help the kids in the long run since the first quarter was a struggle for some kids.

Beginning to phase kids into the school in very small cohorts. Monday will welcome back 10 students who are English language learners (Level 1) with few language skills as they are newer to the country (arrived after July 2019). Tuesday through Friday, more kids will be coming to school in another cohort who are kids that have special needs and are unable to navigate the virtual world.

The big phase in for Twain will happen at the second semester. Start to bring in students whose families indicated they wanted face to face instruction. The model will be concurrent teaching, which means it is similar to live streaming from the classroom. Kids in on Tuesday and Wednesday will log in virtually on Thursday and Friday. They have four days of synchronous activity with the teachers, instead of two days but raises some challenges in gathering technology needs and there are some staffing concerns. Some members of staff have applied for ADA accommodations due to medical issues. There is an issue with social distancing in the school. In the summer when families were polled, the school was expecting 50% families wanting full virtual and 50% wanting in person and therefore could have 25% of the children in the school at a time; however, our numbers are slightly higher with those wanting in person. There are going to be some classes where the room will be maybe 1 or 2 students over in terms of keeping 6 foot distance.

The custodials will clean high touch surfaces and have had additional training.

In terms of scheduling, in second semester, we are trying to minimize changes to the student schedules. If the families are re-surveyed for opting in for face to face then there might be some schedule changes (should many more students prefer the face to face instruction).

We are making headway. In the summer, we looked to do an alphabet split and those numbers seem to work well in the classes. A through L and M through Z come on alternative dates. Mr. Miller communicates things when he is 99% sure. The goal posts have moved several times but he will continue to communicate with us and let us know what is happening. Can email Mr. Miller with any questions.

*Questions from the Chat, directed at Mr. Miller:*

Will possible schedule changes only affect those who go back to school? Yes, those who are staying online will not have schedule changes. Schedule changes will only affect those coming into the building and those will be due to the social distancing guidelines.

Could teachers provide a total number of points per assignment? Teachers are given some flexibility with setting up grades, usually by teams; for example, Math 7 all sets their grades up the same way. Points per assignment becomes a challenge and teachers feel that certain assignments need to be weighed higher. Tests are worth a certain percentage and assignments are worth a certain percentage. With the rolling grade book, it becomes a live document where parents and students can see the children’s growth as well as any missing work.

Is it possible to know what it is out of? Is it 8/8 or 8/10? The student view in SIS has access to see total points for each assignment in their grade books. This may not be in the parent view. Mr. Miller does not see the parent view as an administrator. Mr. Miller will take note and see if teachers can provide that for parents.

Some teachers post assignments on Friday afternoon at 3 PM and it is due on Sunday at midnight. That was not the intent that the school had and teachers typically assign that work during the week. It should not be due until Monday in the evening because on Monday they have time for asynchronous work and office hours. If having an issue, please contact the teacher and if not resolved, contact the grade level administrator. Kids are spending a lot of time on the screen and it is exhausting. They get 15 minute breaks but it is not enough. School is looking for ways to give assignments that are off screen.

Suggestion to teach kids time management. All the students need help with time management Note taking is a skill, which the school is trying to teach the students. Not had enough explicit teaching with those skills. Need to see where the kids are and how to help them.

If originally decided to be virtual and changed mind to go in person, does their teacher change? That will depend. Mr. Miller does not know what the process will be for parents to change their preference from back in July. There is a greater chance for schedule changes when moving to in person.

Will kids have access to buses? The small group of kids coming in will have access to buses and will be provided the routes. There are temperature checks on the bus and when they get in the building. Want to have successful cohorts. Transport will be a challenge in the second semester as the buses will not be at full capacity.

TREASURER:

Year to date budget PDF links were shared. Budget starts July 1 and runs through June 30. Membership dues have come to $1,350 and we are under where we’d want to be budget wise but since no in-person events, this is fine. Please join the PTA using MemberHub. It is an easy way to pay dues. The budget analysis for what we proposed this year. There are no modifications to the budget at this time. Continue to raise money through sales of spiritwear and membership.

We stand in good financial shape. We have low expenses. Two great success stories:

* Chipotle Spirit Night earned $523.45. Thank you to everyone who participated.
* Spiritwear sales came to $101.94. The store offers seasonal-wear such as long sleeves, short sleeves, masks, etc.

*Question from the chat:* Is there a line item on the budget for supplies for teacher’s home offices? Not sure but we have a line item for teacher supplies specifically for their home office. It is harder to get a sense of what is needed so let the PTA know if you need anything or hear of a teacher needing something.

PRESIDENT, Cori Bitterman:

Motion to approve the minutes from the last meeting was approved. Passed with 10 votes.

Teacher of the month is Kristin Pennebaker (Algebra).

The PTA has a survey to gather activity ideas so we know what activities you would like for the PTA to organize. Please complete the survey by end of next week. Nicole suggested parents also let us know on the survey for any speakers who you’d like to see present at future PTA meetings.

The PTA is hosting a pumpkin carving contest with most creative, funniest, and scariest categories. Photo submissions are due by October 26 on Schoology. Prizes include spiritwear options, broken down by 7th and 8th grade so three winners per grade. Looking forward to seeing those photos and also if any teachers also submit photos.

**New Business**

Panera Spirit Night Eat Out is November 12 from 4 to 8 PM at the Kingstowne location.

December will be Krispy Kreme doughnut coupon book sales for $10. We will send more information and reminders on Facebook, News You Choose, and morning announcements.

Last month, Ms. Montgomery gave a presentation on the No Place for Hate campaign. Next week students will be invited to join the group. They will meet once a month and the first meeting will be in November. Stay tuned for more information on that.

Spiritwear

Spiritwear link:

[*https://1stplacespiritwear.com/schools/VA/Alexandria/Mark+Twain+Middle+School*](https://1stplacespiritwear.com/schools/VA/Alexandria/Mark%2BTwain%2BMiddle%2BSchool)

Currently WARMUP2020 code for 20% off orders over $60. Sizes run a bit small but the company has been fantastic to work with.

MemberHub

MemberHub link: *h*[*ttps://twainms.fcps.edu/get-involved/parent-teacher-association-pta*](https://twainms.fcps.edu/get-involved/parent-teacher-association-pta)

MemberHub includes featured givebacks which change and rotate periodically. You can shop at these vendors.

PTA calendar is available on MemberHub and the PTA will add items to the calendar and send out reminder emails. You can add yourself to various hubs that already exist. There are YouTube videos available to help get familiar.

If you do not know if you are a member of the PTA, you can email Shelby, the PTA membership/volunteer coordinator and she will check to see if you are already a member. Her email address is mtms.volunteers@gmail.com

Please like the Facebook page. Search Mark Twain MS PTA. This is a good way to see reminders and information.

[*https://www.facebook.com/marktwainmspta*](https://www.facebook.com/marktwainmspta)

**Next Meeting:**

Tuesday, November 17 at 7 PM.

**Meeting is adjourned at 7:53 PM.**

\* The PTA provided Chick-fil-A packaged box lunches to staff members on Monday, October 12 to thank them for their continued support of the students. This was a student holiday and teacher work day.