



**Mark Twain Middle School PTA General Membership Meeting  
February 16, 2021  
Virtual Platform: Zoom**

President, Cori Bitterman, called the meeting to order at 7:02 P.M.  
A quorum was established (17 PTA members in attendance).

**Attendees:** Cori Bitterman, Nicol Lee, Chris Reese, Tali Burress, Samantha Mulvaney, Shelby Workman, Lynda Nocera, Michael Montante, Ellen Mayer-Splain, Tysen & Kathryn Perszy, Alfred and Abena Hewton, Michelle Taylor-Spearman, Sergio Merida, Matteo Spigolon, Jim Dahl, Jacqui mckinney, Naritthisa Tran, KC Verdi, Karl, kris Morris, Farisha Ali  
*(Sign in sheet via SurveyMonkey was completed by the above respondents; however, Zoom participation numbers showed 29 attendees/devices).*

PRESIDENT, Cori Bitterman:  
Called meeting to order and introduced Mr. Miller

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT, Mr. Miller:  
Mr. Miller shared that the school started a cyber cafe last week with 30 students who were identified as having not being connected over the course of the year virtually. Twain created a base where the kids go to the school on Tuesdays and Wednesdays and get engaged with class. The school received positive feedback from these students that they feel they are able to do more work at school. Also, the school was able to test mitigation strategies such as keeping 6 feet and keeping a mask on all day.  
March 2nd, a large group of 8th graders will start in person and the following week will be 7th graders will join. Tomorrow night there is an information session for 8th grade parents of in person students and the following Wednesday will be the same for 7th grade students.  
The next two Mondays we have virtual orientation for those in person students (Monday, February 22 for 8th graders and March 1 for 7th graders). Meeting on the 22nd at 1 or 1:15 PM so that those who are being tested can return home and log in on time. The school has 130 English language learners who need to take a test (English and Academic Language) so they will be brought in and given the support they need for next year.  
Mr. Miller apologized for the meeting schedule on Ash Wednesday but it was the only night available that did not conflict with curriculum nights.

TREASURER REPORT, Chris Reese:  
The links were placed in the chat so attendees could view the files in the dropbox.

Ledos last month for Spirit Night, the PTA earned \$51, which was less than expected but still positive. For January income, we had \$250 from the Krispy Cream doughnuts. We are still owed Spirit Night revenue so Mr. Miller will keep an eye out for an envelope.

MemberHub give backs offer a central point for the PTA for members to pay for membership dues as well as buy discounted gift cards and the PTA get a kick back. It is very convenient. It offers a savings, such as Home Depot or Ulta. The offers rotate and the PTA will post them on Facebook so be sure to check that out and check back often as the offers change. The link to MemberHub was included in the chat and Chris Reese offered to help anyone who has had issues connecting to MemberHub: <https://mtms.memberhub.store/store>

Offers are promoted on Facebook page: Search Mark Twain MS PTA. This is also a good way to see reminders and information.

<https://www.facebook.com/marktwainmspta>

**Treasurer's Report** **February 16, 2021**

- Year to Date budget
- Spirit Wear Earnings to Date
- Spirit Night Earnings



**Thank You!**

- MemberHub**
  - Givebacks offer discounts
  - Percentage comes back to PTA
- Spirit Wear**
  - Year to present
  - \$1,700.50 in sales
  - \$170.05 earned
- Spirit Nights**
  - December: \$250
  - January: Ledo's (\$51)

Mark Twain Middle School  
**PTA**  
everybody makes it

PRESIDENT, Cori Bitterman:

Motion to approve the minutes from the November meeting. The minutes were approved.

Passed with 11 votes.

SpiritWear runs Monday to Sunday promotions. Recently added sweatpants to the available inventory. Be sure to check them out as they are adding more designs. The PTA asked them to offer more black and grey instead of too much bright orange.

### **New Business:**

Guest speaker Ms. Lynda Nocera

Last month, there was a successful event at Twain and Ms. Nocera wanted to share some highlights about what they did and how they would like to build on it. Three different student groups worked together to implement the Great Kindness Challenge and a virtual spirit week, Feb 1 through 5. The student groups were the National Junior Honors Society, Student Council Association, and the No Place for Hate. There were several activities to promote the Great

Kindness Challenge. All students received a checklist through Schoology and they could complete many different activities they could complete. Within Schoology the kids uploaded pictures. Activities focused on students' mental health, self-care or connecting with peers, building positive relationships, and building relationships with family.

The month of March has two focus areas of self care and anti-bullying. There are activities that the students should be completing with their families and should share these to build virtual connections. Hoping to build on February's experience and would like to continue building on this. Ms. Nocera will share a copy of the slides so parents know how to access and asked for parents to encourage their children to get involved.

### **Teacher of the Month**

Teacher of the month is Mr. Fortner, 8th grade science teacher. Will receive a gift from the PTA.

### **Possible Donation Match**

VP Nicol has been working to get donation matches from corporations to get additional funds for the PTA. The goal for the board was to figure out corporate sponsorship. Comcast is interested in potentially supporting the school. This might be a straight donation or a match. The donation will enable the PTA to buffer expenses such as activities for the students and teachers.

### **8th Grade Dance Alternative**

PTA is brainstorming ideas for the 8th grade dance alternative should we not be able to do that in May. If you have an idea, please reach out to any of the board members via email. The 8th grade dance is usually well attended and the kids are excited. We'd like to do something for them to keep the excitement going.

### **Future Guest Speakers**

Guest speakers at upcoming general meetings, such as internet safety for kids, mental health issues kids might have, etc. and PTA VP, Nicol, has reached out to various organizations. If parents have ideas, they were able to post them in the chat.

Nicol noted there are many issues we are all experiencing over the course of the past year. The PTA would like to bring subject matter experts to the meetings and share what parents should be looking at for topics that could be of concern to us as parents. One of those topics would be internet safety as kids are tied to their smart phones and devices. An expert from an organization such as the Family Online Safety Institute will share what parents should be looking for. Another speaker/topic is how do you talk to your children about race as this is a difficult conversation in our households but also really important. We are considering a speaker who could address this. Paul Rivas who will help with strategies to handle remote work and virtual calendars. The speakers would talk for 15 minutes and then there would be a 10 minute Q&A session.

We have little to no budget for speakers so if any parents have expertise to share, they can let us know.

*There was an opportunity to ask questions.*

**Additional comments/questions:**

Mr. Miller noted in the Friday News You Choose, there was an announcement about a joint event. There is a guest speaker who will talk about racism. It is on Thursday, February 25th and there is a google form you can complete if you'd like to attend. We are limited as to the number of participants per school so best to sign up soon. Dr. Williams is an Associate Professor of Counselor Education at the UVa Center of Race and Public Education in the South. Cori will send this out via email and post on Facebook.

Samantha Mulvaney, one of the spirit night coordinators (along with Amanda), thanked parents who have supported the spirit night events and noted that the PTA has tried to find a variety of places.

Edison's Black Student Union Event (from Ellen who posted in the chat):

Please join the Edison HS Black Student Union on Wednesday, February 17 from 5:00 – 6:00 PM to hear from Mr. Ahmed H. Ahmed, an educator, activist, and former FCPS student who has dedicated his life to the disruption and dismantling of systems of oppression in pursuit of equity. After graduating from Boston University, Ahmed began his career in education as a middle school teacher in Atlanta before transitioning into a career in teacher coaching and development where he has served as a Real-Time teacher coach with the Center for Transformative Teacher Training, a Dean of Students, a Dean of Instruction and, most recently, the School Director of Brownsville Ascend Middle School in Brooklyn New York.

Ahmed is now the Director of Partnership & Professional Learning at Overcoming Racism, an organization that provides intensive race and equity training and consulting services in an effort to equip schools with the necessary tools to address the reality of systemic racism both <sup>[P]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>

Meeting Link: <https://bit.ly/EdisonBSU>

Are there going to be student photos this year?

Mr. Miller said they are going to try doing this in the spring, the sooner the better through LifeTouch. The photos will need to be done via evening or weekend appointments. He would like to get this done and set up.

### **Reminders**

Please sign in using the registration SurveyMonkey link found in the chat so we can take attendance and know we have a quorum.

### **Upcoming events:**

March 16th, from 4 to 8 PM: Dishes of India, Belleview Shopping Center

April 13th, from 4 to 8 PM: Noodles and Co, Kingstowne

May and June: TBD

### **Next Meeting:**

Tuesday, March 23, 7 PM virtual

**Meeting is adjourned at 7:41 PM.**

\* From the News You Choose:

Edison Pyramid Principals have partnered with our respective PTA's to provide parents in the Edison Community an opportunity to meet virtually with Dr. Joseph Williams from UVa to discuss the benefits of talking to children about race and racism. Dr. Williams is an Associate Professor of Counselor Education and is affiliated with the UVa Center for Race and Public Education in the South. If you are interested in learning more about how to speak to your child about topics around race and culture that may be uncomfortable, difficult, or highly emotional please join us to find out about some of the recommended best practices from Dr. Williams.

Date: Thursday, February 25th, 2021

Time: 6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

If you would like to participate, please sign up using this Google Form as space is limited:  
<https://forms.gle/xvYvuNC13eqUaNEr5>

A link to the meeting will be sent to those who have registered in advance.