



MRHS PTSA Meeting Minutes
September 18, 2023, 7:00 p.m.
Zoom Link

Call to Order and Introduction at 7:02 with 17 participants

SGA Report: SGA PTSA Liaison provided an update on Homecoming activities and Spirit Week, which starts on Friday, 9/22. Dress-up themes include: Despicable Me, Barbie and the Homecoming Theme of 'Medieval' and there will be games during several of the school breaks and hallway decorations. A pep rally is planned for Friday, 9/29 at 1:10.

Staff Report (Stephanie Upson, FACS Teacher): This is Ms. Upson's second year as the MRHS Culinary Arts teacher. There are approximately 200 students in the program and their course offerings are expanding. Last year, FACS partnered with the Art Department to put on empty bowls (a fundraiser for Grassroots), with the SGA for a breakfast and catered the National Honor Society ceremony. These events give students a chance to give back and hands-on food experience. They are starting up a culinary club and are looking for board members and additional opportunities to work with groups and do fundraising.

Principal's Report:

- A major issue this school year has been transportation. Fortunately, it has been less of an issue at MRHS than at other schools; however, there are 14-15 buses that have been arriving a few minutes late each day. Staff have been available at the front doors to hand out late passes to students as they arrive. School start times are changing by 10 minutes (MRHS will be 7:50 am) as of Wednesday, 9/20.
- There are only a handful of new faculty members at MRHS this year. The school is still trying to hire staff to support the special education team and an Everyday Substitute who comes to the building every day and either takes a class or provides front office support. These positions are currently advertised.
- There is a countywide focus on attendance this school year. Pre-pandemic, MRHS had a >96% daily attendance rate and last year it dropped to 95.5%. The state of MD is measuring chronic absence and across the county there were 21% chronically absent students (16% at MRHS).
- Dr. DiPaula met with each grade at the start of the school year to discuss absenteeism, student expectations, and community. Teachers are reporting they are off to a strong academic start and students seem to be engaged and interacting.
- Dr. DiPaula thanked the PTSA for the staff kickoff luncheon in August, which was greatly appreciated.
- The school is still trying to get updated/confirmed emergency files for each student. They might need the PTSA to further advertise this need on the Facebook page.

- MRHS does not know when graduation is yet.
- Discussion regarding school yearbooks - Unlike past yearbooks, club photos were tiny and student members were not named in this past yearbook, which implies that the clubs aren't as important as athletics. Dr. DiPaula shared that students make the decisions about how yearbooks will be organized but that will raise that concern with the Yearbook committee. Yearbooks are always distributed in the Fall so that Spring Sports and Prom can be included.
- There will be an activities fair this week during lunch to get more kids involved with clubs.
- Dr. DiPaula thanked everyone for volunteering and noted that he and the school greatly appreciate everyone's time and support.

President's Report: N/A

Treasurer's Report: The PTSA came in approximately \$3,300 below budget for the 22-23 school year and ended with a budget of approximately \$23,000. The budget operates by SY (July 1 - June 30).

May Minutes Approved

June Minutes Approved

ACTION ITEMS

The [PTSA 2023-24 Budget](#) was approved with a vote of 13 in favor (no nea's) of passing the budget with the following modification:

- The mental health and scholarship line items will be combined into one larger "student support" line item. *See discussion below-*

Discussion regarding student scholarships - During the 2022-23 school year the scholarship committee had to work really hard to get students to apply to the scholarship and extended the deadline several times. Ultimately there were eight applications and the awards could not be made in time for the student awards ceremony. Given the lack of volunteer time and the lack of student applications, it is appropriate to discuss whether those funds would be better utilized elsewhere. Committee members shared that in SY 2021-22 they tried to make the scholarship program more inclusive, and that pre-Covid they would get about 20 applications a year - leading them to increase the number of awards (and decrease the dollar amount). Anecdotally committee members heard that last year's question was difficult to understand so students may have opted-out of applying. The applications may also not have been advertised as much as in previous years.

Ram Kuman Kuncha was elected to the position of Vice President 1 with a vote of 11 in favor (no nea's).

- Ram has a student who is an MRHS Freshman and has volunteered to manage the PTSA Newsletter.

COMMITTEE REPORTS - N/A

GENERAL DISCUSSION

New Business: Gift of Thanks (GoT) is an open donation during the holidays that gives parents the option to donate to teachers/staff. Donations are split up between staff/faculty and provided in the form of gift

cards. This program is done at WFES and MVMS, and the MVMS Coordinator would be willing to coordinate the GoT program for MRHS. A decision was made to not move forward with Gift of Thanks at this time because the PTSA is already challenged trying to raise funds for existing activities. This could be raised later (possibly with a parent survey) to see if there is community interest in pursuing it.

Committees and Leadership Assignments: There is no membership committee at this time. The PTSA is instead encouraging hasslefree donations. Membership will continue to be promoted in the newsletter.

Announcements: N/A

Meeting Adjourned - 8:00