

## **Poolesville High School PTSA**

### **General Meeting Minutes**

Tuesday, Feb 18th, 2025

Meeting held virtually via Zoom video Conference  
Presiding Officer Audra Dove, PTSA acting President

1. Meeting was called to order at 7:00 by presiding officer Audra Dove. A notice was given that the session is being recorded for hosting on PTSA website and an alert appeared the Zoom application. Agenda was shared.

2. PTSA President update:

Provided updates on the Post Prom event, emphasizing the need for parent volunteers. Encouraged students to complete a survey regarding their preferences for Post Prom activities. Announced the launch of the Mini Grant program, which supports student, teacher, and staff-led projects at Poolesville High School.

Speaker: Cheryl (Post Prom Committee Chair)

Gave an update on the Post Prom venue and fundraising efforts, encouraging participation in upcoming fundraising events.

4. PHS Principles Update and Q&A Mr. Carothers

Shared a link in the chat to the MCCPTA draft resolution advocating for later school start times and encouraged feedback from PTSA members.

- Academic Environments and Health in Schools

Speaker: SooAnn (PTSA Member, Resolution Advocate)

Presented a resolution to improve academic environments and student well-being, with a focus on closing the math achievement gap. Explained that the resolution is modeled after a Fairfax County Public Schools initiative and aims to enhance physical and mental health for middle and high school students. Clarified that elementary schools are not affected by the proposed later start times. Addressed concerns about transportation and after-school programs, noting that these issues will be discussed further with the relevant committees. Encouraged members to submit questions and feedback before the resolution vote at a future meeting.

- ISP Hub Work and SAT Day

Speaker: SooAnn (PTSA Member)

Discussed student involvement in the Independent Studies Program (ISP) Hub, where students participate in agricultural work and community service on local farms. Speaker: Mark (PTSA Member) Provided an update on the school's assessment testing calendar revisions, ensuring students do not have multiple major exams on the same day. Announced the upcoming SAT Day for juniors and reminded students to prepare accordingly. Mentioned ongoing professional learning sessions for educators to improve student engagement and instruction. Speaker: Poolesville (PTSA President) Praised the school's inclusive approach to student feedback and encouraged families to help students advocate for themselves.

3. PHS construction Progress from MCPS Project Team - Chris Deraleau, MCPS Project Manager

- Delays: Weather impacted construction, estimated two more weeks for south lot and main entrance.
- Gym: Walls nearly complete, increased height.
- Facility Improvements: Team room, wrestling room, and fitness room taking shape.

- Auditorium renovation includes new wood paneling, ceiling clouds, and a sound system.
- House rooms equipped with retractable seating.
- Locker rooms, media center, and cafeteria preparation underway.
- Crane arrived; steel installation begins next week.

#### 4. College Preparation and Admissions Guidance

Guest Speaker: Maggie Martin (Founder of Foundry Admissions, College Advisor)

Emphasized that there is no single "ideal" college path, and students should focus on resilience, relationship-building, and community engagement.

Highlighted key factors colleges consider in applications:

GPA and curriculum rigor (AP, IB, or dual enrollment courses).

Extracurricular involvement that demonstrates leadership and passion.

Strong essays that highlight personal growth.

Demonstrated interest in schools (campus visits, interviews, outreach).

Meaningful summer activities (internships, jobs, or projects).

Advised parents and students to start early in building a balanced college list and developing critical thinking and writing skills. Encouraged students to: Read daily to improve verbal reasoning. Maintain a structured approach to college planning. Manage technology use responsibly to stay focused. Offered free consultations and invited students to join Foundry Admissions cohorts for freshmen and sophomores.

#### University of Maryland Admissions Challenges

Speaker: Maggie Martin (Founder of Foundry Admissions, College Advisor)

Discussed the challenges of the University of Maryland (UMD) admissions process, noting increased competitiveness.

Observations from recent admissions data:

Highly competitive majors (e.g., Computer Science, Engineering) have lower acceptance rates.

GPA rigor and standardized test scores play a crucial role.

Students who clearly articulated their major interest tended to perform better in admissions.

Advised students and parents to stay organized and manage emails effectively during the college application process.

#### College Application Process Overview

Speaker: Maggie Martin (Founder of Foundry Admissions, College Advisor)

Provided a comprehensive overview of the college application process:

Prioritize student interests over simply loading up on AP/honors classes.

Consider a wide range of institutions, including community colleges.

Understand subject requirements (e.g., some engineering programs require four years of history).

Answered questions from parents and students about major selection and application strategies.

PTSA will share Maggie's presentation slides and contact information in the weekly newsletter.

#### 5. The January meeting minutes were reviewed and approved by PTSA members

Encourage students to fill out surveys and communicate with teachers and administrators.

Discuss college budgets with students before they start applying.

Help freshmen and sophomores stay on top of emails and create a professional email address.

Keep a record of extracurricular activities, service hours, and achievements for college applications. Juniors: Begin thinking about teacher recommendations for college applications.

PTSA: Distribute Maggie's slides and contact information in the weekly message and

newsletter.

Suanne Roberts (PTSA Member):

Forward PTSA members' questions and concerns about later school start times to Sandra Landis at MCCPTA.

PTSA Members:

Email feedback on the later school start times resolution to the PTSA email account.

#### 6. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

The minutes from the previous meeting were presented. A motion to approve the minutes was made and seconded. The minutes were approved by the members.

Minutes:

Minutes compiled by AI, reviewed and submitted by:

Cindy Wang, Secretary, Poolesville High School PTSA