

PTSA Meeting via Zoom  
January 20, 2021

Meeting called to order by Heather Fortner: 8:01  
Heather Fortner: Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. Bernhard: Next week is midterm week (Tues-Friday), this year, students will remain at home and midterms will be administered remotely.  
There has been a lot of discussion regarding what we can do for seniors, we are trying to collaborate with parents. The Prom is an unknown as of now, but we are hopeful. If prom does not happen then we will have alternate events.

Mr. Bernhard: I would like to provide an opportunity for parent questions.

Trish Marchese: We will be holding our first annual Senior Snowflake Ball. There is a flyer on both the Ward Melville website and the Ward Melville PTSA website. Due to Covid, we will have virtual senior scholarship fundraising this year. Instead of baskets, we are asking for monetary donations. There will be no senior scholarship committee. On the website, you can sponsor senior scholarships. There are five different levels of donations. It is customary for families of seniors to donate to the scholarship fund, and we are hoping this year's class will participate and maybe beat previous classes as far as how many scholarships we will be able to give out this year. February 12th is the deadline to donate money for senior scholarships.  
On February 14th: Prizes will be listed on the PTSA website, and people can purchase chances to win the prize until March 4th. On March 5th, Mr. Bernhard will draw the winning names and they will be contacted. Please contact Trish Marchese with any questions: email is on the PTSA website. All information is on the PTSA website.  
Please note that the PTSA does not choose the scholarship recipients, the Guidance Department makes these decisions.  
The second PTSA fundraiser is t-shirts for 2021 seniors, 2021 senior moms, and 2021 senior dads. Details will be forthcoming. Hopefully within the next month these will be up on the website.  
The lawn signs for Proud Parents of Senior Graduates will be sold in mid-May.

Angela Cornell: If a student has only four classes plus gym, is this okay? Guidance said no electives are available.

Mr. Bernhard: We are trying to add additional courses in the Spring. As long as she is meeting graduation credits that is what counts. It is okay to have 5 credits, she is still considered a full-time senior.

Amy: When and how will course request forms be given to students?

Mr. Bernhard: We will be using an electronic system instead of physical paper this year. Information will be forthcoming in the near future.

Dr. Kerman: At the last Board of Ed meeting we voted on next year's calendar, which is on the district website. Students are still in school full time, which makes us unique. We are doing very, very well. Our budget for next year is coming up soon. New York State has lowered the tax cap ceiling, so we will have to work very hard to get under that tax cap ceiling because that will take a 60% majority vote to pass that. The Board is trying to be fiscally responsible.

Sue Rosenzweig: PTA Council Report: The district-wide Anti-Racism Taskforce has met a few times so far. Working with Dr. Terrence Roberts, who will work with both district-wide and unit-wide meetings.

PVSA reminder that you should start to get signatures earlier because so few people are providing opportunities for community service.

The district has been kind enough to provide racial and ethnic breakdowns at each building per PTA request so that the PTA can make sure they are advocating for all students. New York State PTA in Albany will translate flyers for students who speak another language.

Installation of cameras on the stop arm of busses is forthcoming. There will be a warning the first time, then tickets and points will follow.

Andrea Giantinoto: Membership: Of 138 members to date, 27 are faculty. Is it possible to send an email reminder to faculty? Senior parents also need to sign up for membership to be eligible for a senior scholarship. Membership was 352 last year.

Mr. Bernhard: We will do a faculty blitz in the spring semester to encourage faculty to join. There were many other concerns this Fall because of Covid and reminders to join will go out soon.

Ava Santamaria: Student Liaison: Not available for tonight's meeting. (see below for Riley Meckley's update)

Heather Fortner: Meeting minutes: On the WMHS PTSA website the minutes from our last meeting are available. We will need to vote on the minutes. Minutes were approved.

Christine Gacovino: Anti-Racism Taskforce: Mr. Bernhard ran the first meeting for Ward Melville last week. Represented by a number of Ward Melville teachers, Mr. Bernhard, and 2 students. Anyone was welcome to join. We do have an issue with intolerance, heard different perspectives from different families at the meeting. It was an effective meeting. Mr. Bernhard has committed to us working on this for as long as we need to so that we can make changes happen. It will take a while before any real change can happen because of Covid. The next meeting will be in March. Mr. Roberts will be a speaker.

Parent question: How can I find out if I paid PTSA dues already?

PTSA: Please contact the PTSA and we will check for you. Contact information can be found on our website.

Can anyone attend the Anti-Racism Taskforce meeting?

Mr. Bernhard: The Taskforce has already been formed. A lot of people asked to be part of it. We are trying to build collegiality and camaraderie, the requirement is not only that you attend the meeting, but that you speak at every meeting. Because of this, the committee cannot get unwieldy, but if you are passionate about joining and can make a multi-year commitment please contact Mr. Bernhard. After our second meeting we will not be able to add to the Taskforce. There is both a building and district committee. If you want to be part of it please write to Mr. Bernhard. Meetings are in-person only at North Country. March 5th is the next meeting. If you want to be a part of it you have to be signed up.

Parent question: Will senior scholarships go through Member Hub?

PTSA: No, they will not go through Member Hub.

Riley Meckley: Student Government Vice President, filling in for Ava Santamaria: In December we did a food drive and we donated tons of bags of food to Meals on Wheels. Our club was happy to participate. We were also in the Electric Light Parade. We have started planning for our event Cooking for a Cause, which is usually a big chili cook-off with the teachers. However, this year we cannot do this because of Covid. Instead, members are making raffle baskets to sell to members of the community to benefit Carly Matra's family. Her parents work in the district, she is suffering from neurofibromatosis 1 (Cheryl Pedisich started a GoFundMe). In February on Facebook you will be able to see raffle baskets that you can buy. We are also writing letters to seniors at the Sunrise Senior Center. We started in November and it has flourished. We would like to begin writing pen-pal letters to them.

Parent question: When will the school start time committee begin meeting again?

Inger Germano, Board of Education: The committee has been put on hold due to Covid, until further notice. The committee will hopefully start meeting again soon when things settle down.

Mr. Bernhard: Parents of seniors should be aware that we will go above and overboard for our seniors. If you have ideas please let us know. We have to consider Covid and that it's only January and we may be able to do typical events later this year. Your ideas will be heard. Please give your ideas to Heather Fortner, who will bring them to Mr. Cereola and to me for consideration.

8:31 meeting adjourned.

Next meeting: February 24, 2021