

PTA meeting  
April 2, 2020

Minutes: submitted by Jordana Mendelson, PTA Recording Secretary

Present:

Ewa Asterita  
Yvonne Cortes  
Lawrence Rolla  
Margie Dienstag  
Padilla Raul  
Kaitlyn Stillwagon  
Tuck Melody  
Emmanuel Constant  
Mary Bethea  
Jordana Mendelson

This was the first PTA meeting since school transitioned to remote learning, and the meeting was held online. Much of the meeting was discussing the school's plans for remote learning and the supports available for teachers, staff, and students. The meeting was also used as an opportunity to discuss different ways to support students, community, and connections during this time away from the school buildings.

PTA President Margie Dienstag called the meeting to order. She discussed writing another article about the school and the experiences of our students with remote learning, to highlight some of the successes of our students and give the viewpoint of parents. The idea is to bring a positive light onto what's happening and to focus on what's possible, showing the bond between students and their teachers. This article would be published in the West View News.

Margie also reminded us that elections need to be held this spring, and prior to that an election committee should be formed to identify candidates for all PTA positions as neither Margie nor Jordana will be able to continue officially next year as officers. She made the suggestion that we might be able to announce during Ms. Asterita's Town Hall Meetings.

Ms. Stillwagon spoke about the Student Council's ideas for events online: talent show, lip synch battle, Minecraft gaming club. They are also discussing holding an art exhibition.  
<https://education.minecraft.net/how-it-works/in-the-classroom/>

Ms. Asterita spoke about using the Town Hall platform as a way to keep community together, noting that more than 100 people sign on every day to the meetings. She suggested posting birthday wishes during the Town Hall.

Margie suggested organizing a kind of “recess” or social time for the students to connect together.

Margie also suggested that the PTA might be able to help support parents during this time, with a kind of hotline or google voice number set up for the PTA.

An online photo exhibition was also suggested, with themes of interest to the students (animals, toys, etc). Ms. Asterita suggested using a simple way for submitting: [Photos@imscd.org](mailto:Photos@imscd.org)

Ms. Stillwagon also mentioned starting back up the mentoring program for the middle and high school students.

We discussed the challenges of technology and remote learning, especially in terms of student access to devices. We discussed some positive benefits of online learning: independence, using technology, and connecting with community.

Ms. Tuck and Ms. Stillwagon have been supporting teachers with 1:1 support.

We also discussed the “Remote Learning Plans” being developed for students, the role of Para Professionals in supporting students in the virtual classrooms, using AIS periods to support students who may need extra attention.

Overall everyone at the meeting expressed great appreciation for the extraordinary efforts being undertaken by the teachers, staff, related service providers, students, and their families. We are grateful for how quickly Principal Asterita organized the daily Town Hall meetings, which have provided a constant anchor for our community.