

PTSA Meeting Minutes
October 18, 2021

The meeting was held in-person and virtually and was recorded. Attendees: 5 in-person; 40 virtual.

The meeting was called to order at 7:04

I. President's introduction and report:

a. Homecoming (HoCo) and upcoming events – It was a spectacular event last weekend; great collaborative effort of parents, teachers and students; truly inclusive events with focus on addressing all students' needs. Thank you all for doing your #OneMoreForWakefield. The parents showed up to help. The Wakefield custodial staff worked night and day, always with a smile on their faces, and went above and beyond helping. The teachers also went above and beyond volunteering to help with HoCo while doing all their normal teaching duties. Parents, please tell your students to thank their teachers and tell them how much they appreciate all their support. Teachers kept things safe by making sure students kept their masks on. Prom is coming up next year; we will need volunteers to help and take the lead so let us know if you want to be involved. Thanks to Mr. Cotman for his efforts with DEI and the parents who have joined him.

b. Clubs and Athletics Rollout: Mr. Hailey is hosting an event tomorrow night to discuss winter athletics. Come ready with your questions. Remember that all Wakefield students can access sports; any sports that involve costs to the student can be subsidized by the school.

1. Nate Hailey

- The meeting tomorrow night will be held virtually on MS teams. Students have the link in canvas pages; he'll send it out again tomorrow.
- There will be an in-person meeting on October 25th at Wakefield where families can meet the coaches. The first part of the meeting from 7pm – 7:30 is for the parents; families can meet coaches directly at 7:30; no pre-registration is needed. Students should participate too. The meeting will start in the cafeteria, then move to separate rooms for team meetings. They will cover rules, guidelines, volunteers and fundraising. Booster will also be there.
- He is working on getting interpreters for the events. Materials have already been translated into Spanish.

c. Wakefield vs. Marshall game on October 29: The game begins at 7:00pm. Let's show up to support our team and #PlayFairNow. Wear your #PlayFairNow t-shirt or Wakefield shirts. Bring alumni. Let's model the best behavior for our students.

Question: Was anyone held accountable for the racist behavior of Marshall students at the game last year? Were any actions taken against the refs?

Nate Hailey: Those refs are no longer allowed to call Wakefield games. With VHSL and APS, they have done some diversity and inclusion initiatives for athletics. New rules and standards are in place on hate speech. VHSL defined "hate

speech” and specified penalties so there is no question what it is or how to respond to it. Coaches are being trained in DEI in athletics. Other legislative initiatives are still in progress.

Marshall has done things at their school to address the climate. They have been responsive and trying to work together on how to address issues. We will find and share links to the new rules if they are available on the VHSL website.

- d. Teacher Grant Applications: No grants were issued last year due to Covid. We want to support our teachers this year and get them the funds they need to provide enriching experiences for their students. Grant applications will open soon. The tentative application window is Oct. 20 through Nov. 5 with grants being awarded Nov. 18., but this may be pushed back slightly.

II. Treasurer’s Report, Beth Hicks

- a. Approval of the 2021-22 Budget: At the September meeting, Beth presented the proposed budget. She answered questions that were raised at the time and has not received any further questions.

Motion to Accept the Proposed 2021-22 Budget as written – Approved by vote

- a. HoCo Donations and Expenditures – parents really supported this effort. We received \$4,071 in donations. This allowed us to do many things from DEI standpoint: we sponsored 29 tickets for students, provided access to new or gently used formal wear, and made sure that every student could have a slice of pizza and drink. We also contributed to renting a second photo booth and spent \$1500 on decorations. We have about \$580 remaining and would like to use some of it to provide a thank you lunch to the custodians for all their work and support. Because we offered free pizza, the class of 2023 did not raise as much money selling snacks as they had planned, so we will donate the remaining funds to the class of 2023. Judith is a DEI expert and she joined the PTSA to help support students; we magnified what has been done in the past by the school. Help was available through the school in previous years, but students and parents may not have known about it.

III. Secretary

Motion to approve the September 13, 2021 Minutes as written - Approved

IV. PTSA Teacher Liaison, Christine Lively

Thanked parents for all the efforts that you’ve made this year. Kids are checking out tons of books and reading!

V. Wakefield and Washington-Liberty Boundary Adjustment Process

We are projected to have 2480 students next year. That is 100 more than this year, and we are already quite crowded. With the new space at Washington-Liberty (W-L) coming online next fall, it makes sense that they make some changes now to boundaries to relieve pressure at Wakefield.

Question: How many students will be affected next year? About 60. APS will also open the IB waitlist for next fall to any students from Wakefield, so it could be as many as 100 next year.

Presentation:

- **Objective:** Move some planning units from Wakefield to Washington-Liberty to balance enrollment and better utilize the additional space opening at the Ed Center for the 2022-23 school year
- **Proposal:** Applies as students enter high school (grade 9 or new to APS)
- Current Wakefield students will not be reassigned to Washington-Liberty but may choose to attend W-L in 2022-23.
- Focus on planning units moved from Washington-Liberty to Wakefield in the 2016 high school boundary process, which are outside the walk zones for both schools
- In addition, targeted transfers may be offered to current Wakefield students to attend Washington-Liberty for the 2022-23 school year
- Staff will directly engage with the families affected by the boundary process to ensure they are aware of the proposal. They will work collaboratively with Bilingual Family Liaisons to conduct targeted outreach to the families in affected units.

Proposal

- Reassign 10 Planning Units (46110, 46111, 46120, 48160, 48180, 48290, 46140, 48150, 48280, 48281) from Wakefield to Washington-Liberty (effective 2022-23)
- Communities Impacted: ● Penrose ● Foxcroft Heights ● Arlington View ● Columbia Heights
- Applies as students enter high school (grade 9 or new to APS) beginning in 2022-23
- Current Gr. 9-11 Wakefield students in affected planning units will not be reassigned to W-L but may attend W-L (newly assigned neighborhood school) beginning in 2022-23
- Current Gr. 9-11 Wakefield students who remain at Wakefield will be provided APS transportation via Hub Stops
- Students attending W-L will be provided transportation
- Full date and policy considerations:
<https://www.apsva.us/engage/fall-2021-boundary-process-wakefield-w-l/>

Engagement Timeline

1. Virtual Community Meetings

Joint presentation on Gunston to Jefferson and Wakefield to Washington-Liberty MS and HS processes. The same information will be presented at each meeting: overview of proposal, supporting information, Q&A.

- **Tuesday, Oct. 19: 12:00 – 12:45 pm**

Simultaneous interpretation is available in Spanish, Arabic, Amharic, and Mongolian

- **Wednesday, Oct. 20: 7:00 – 7:45 pm**

Spanish Only session; no English interpretation provided

- **Thursday, Oct. 21: 7:00 – 7:45 pm**

Simultaneous interpretation is available in Spanish, Arabic, Amharic, and Mongolian

2. Virtual Open Office Hours

To provide the community, especially those families impacted by a reassignment, the opportunity to ask questions and receive a response.

- **Tuesday, Oct. 26: 7:00 – 7:30 pm**

Simultaneous interpretation in Spanish provided

- **Thursday, Oct. 28: 12:00 – 12:30 pm**

Simultaneous interpretation in Spanish provided

- Families who communicate in a language other than English or Spanish can submit questions in their preferred language to Engage@apsva.us and a response will be provided.

Links to virtual community meetings and office hours are available here:

- <https://www.apsva.us/engage/fall-2021-boundary-process/>

3. School Board Decision Timeline

- Wed. Nov. 3: School Board Work Session to review the boundary proposals, immersion feeders, Q&A
- Tues. Nov. 16: School Board Information Item – Superintendent’s Proposal for Boundary Adjustments for the 2022-23 School Year
- Tues. Nov. 30: School Board Public Hearing – Superintendent’s Proposal for Boundary Adjustments and Immersion Feeders for the 2022-23 School Year
- Thu. Dec. 2: School Board Action Item on Superintendent’s Proposal for Boundary Adjustments for the 2022-23 School Year

4. Impacted families were contacted by APS on Friday, October 15 and received links to submit their preferences. If you live in one of these neighborhoods and did not receive any communication from APS about the boundary changes, email: apsboundaries@apsva.us

VI. Plant Sale Update for 2022: Stephen Duall, Plant Sale Chair

- Many thanks to the previous chairs, Susan Wallin and Sarita Bhargava, who have been instrumental in the plant sale in the last few years.
- If you’d like to help next year, contact Stephen: sduall@mac.com. The plant sale is the main fundraiser for the PTSA. You don’t have to know anything about plants. They need a range of talents: organization, finance, advertising, help on the day of.
- **Mark your calendars: Plant Sale is Saturday, April 30th.**

VII. Volunteers are needed in all areas. Judith thanked the parents on the crew team who are helping coordinate rides for students who would like to participate in crew but can’t get to practice or competitions on their own or who need equipment. The crew team is also involved in DEI activities with Tim Cotman and Deneen Snow.

VIII. Wakefield Equity Team: Tim Cotman, co-chair with Deneen Snow

Led by APS, Wakefield has been creating an equity team made up of students (currently 10), staff members (11) and parents. They would like to invite more parents to join as some of the participating parents from last year have graduated. They meet on Tuesdays. Parents can join alone or with your student. Over the summer they used a tool (LEAD) to assess how the school is doing. The results are being translated and will be shared with the school community. The committee will work to set up a framework to work with issues around DEI at Wakefield proactively and reactively. Please reach out with questions or concerns. They will share more details with the PTSA and we will pass them along.

timothy.cotman@apsva.us, deneen.snow@apsva.us

Judith noted that you don't have to be a person of color to participate; we all need to be engaged in this process. We all belong at Wakefield and everyone should be part of the conversation. Thanked Tim and Deneen for leading this conversation.

VIII. Principal's Report and Q & A

1. Freshman parent-teacher conferences will be held in December. More information will be sent to parents the first week of November.

2. Amazon Think Big maker space for STEAM. Wakefield has been selected to host this space and will be the first high school in the Americas to do so. Amazon provided equipment and tech for students to use. Wendy Maitland, currently the gifted resource teacher, partnered with a community member to get Amazon to bring the program to Wakefield. Amazon wants to increase diversity in STEAM, and we are the 2nd most diverse HS in VA. Ms. Maitland is transitioning to be the manager of this space and its programs. Teachers will be able to bring classes in. Students can go in on their own. It will be open at lunch and after school. We will also connect with students from other schools in APS.

3. Covid community notifications: The numbers he reports don't always align with what's on APS dashboard because the school gets notifications from many sources (students, parents, APS, public health, etc), so he may be notified multiple times for the same student. He posts whenever he is notified.

4. Phone threats about shooter in building in multiple schools. Wakefield has not experience any threats, but he wanted to explain the response process if it were to happen. The police take charge immediately. Communication to parents will come from Dr. Willmore and APS as they are available, but his first priority is to make sure students and staff are safe. Police will clear the building room by room (this takes several hours). They will direct students to exit the building with their hands up; although this may be frightening, it is a police directive and is for their own safety.

5. Walk out planned Friday at 11:00am. Students are taking a stand against sexual harassment and assault. He does not know who is leading it but is hoping to learn more. The APS policy is that they do not restrain students; they can walk out if they want to. If students return to class in a reasonable amount of time (15-20 minutes), they will not be marked absent. If the students go to Barcroft park, there is no way for staff to insure the students' safety. When there was a walkout for gun violence, students were allowed to use the stadium to gather.

6. Upcoming dates:

- Oct. 27 – early release
- Nov 1 - last day of 1st marking period
- Nov. 2 - grade prep day; no school for students
- Nov 4. – Diwali holiday, no school
- Nov. 11. - Veterans Day holiday, no school

Questions and Answers

1. Walk Out day. Is a teacher assigned to walk with students if they go to Barcroft Park? We will probably send a staff member, but they have no authority when they leave Wakefield grounds.

2. Will students be made aware of expectations? He cannot endorse a walk out, but he will make an announcement Thursday or Friday regarding the expectations for student behavior. It would be helpful if parents make their expectations clear about what they want their student to do.

3. Schedule changes for students. New sections were added for some classes to make classes smaller and students were moved to balance the numbers. If a student is having a great deal of trouble getting things to work in new class (grades from previous class aren't appearing in ParentVue, difficulty adjusting), is it possible to change the student back to their original class?

Up through the end of October, they will get final staffing to address classes being overcrowded. They try to minimize disruption of moving students, but they can't have 4 classes with 33 kids; need to create a new section to bring it down to 25 per class. He cannot promise that they can move the student back to his old class. He will help to schedule a meeting with the student, his counselor and the new teacher to make the transition go more smoothly.

4. Do grades transfer from an intensified course to a regular course? Generally "no" because it is a different class. If they do, work with the new teacher to minimize the grade difficulties.

5. How do we volunteer to help PTSA? Join the PTSA! When you join on-line, you can select areas of interest.

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSewaZCMiCIX70mUDjOtXr_I mVS3xCIp1J8R5iM4RJHRpSVneg/viewform

6. Was information on the parents drivers ed meeting happening tonight distributed? Yes, to students that were in the drivers ed class. No email was sent, but a paper copy was sent home and it was in canvas. There are two more parent meetings in the spring.

7. How short is the 2023 class fund? PTSA made a donation to cover costs of pizzas. The class will sell the leftover snacks to gain more funds. The main cost is for each class is Prom. Funds raised from tickets for this HoCo dance were for the 2022 class. Funds from next HoCo will go to 2023 class.

8. Is Prom for all students? It is for Seniors only and their guests. They can invite a guest from another class or someone up to 20 years old.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Molly DeMaret-Tahu, Secretary