



June 23, 2021

Ms. Bonnie Quin, President and Executive Board Members  
Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology PTSA  
6560 Braddock Road  
Alexandria, Virginia 22312

Dear Executive Board Members:

This letter will serve to notify Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology PTSA (TJHSST PTSA) that Virginia PTA has received numerous communications from PTSA members, community members and leaders asking for Virginia PTA to intercede on their behalf in regard to the operations of both the current and previous Executive Committee and Board.

TJHSST PTSA is organized and operates as a 501(c)3 subsidiary under the tax-exempt group umbrella of the parent organization Virginia Congress of Parents and Teachers, commonly known as Virginia PTA, and registered as the parent organization with the Virginia State Corporation Commission and for definition reference, [Code of Virginia § 57-48. Definitions](#). "Parent organization" means that part of a charitable organization that coordinates, supervises, or exercises control over policy, fund raising, and expenditures or assists or advises one or more chapters, branches, or affiliates.

The continuous lack of respect and disregard for the authority of Virginia PTA, its elected officers, our bylaws, founding principles and values is unacceptable. In a communication provided to the TJHSST PTSA on Friday, June 11, 2021, it was provided, in part:

*...Please let me know how I can assist in either moving past the stalemate that appears to exist within your association or come to some other mutually agreed upon solution as this situation has to come to a resolve immediately for the well-being of all involved...*

The call for immediate action of the executive board members is due to our ongoing concerns about the damage being done by TJHSST PTSA as previously noted. Virginia PTA continues to receive requests for state intervention from TJHSST PTSA members who do not feel TJHSST PTSA is conducting business transparently or in the spirit of member approved bylaws.

As of the writing of this letter, it remains to be continual disregard and a series of violations of organizational standards. Additionally, the challenging and disrespect shown to the current President without adequate reason – other than having a majority vote – does not signify a board that respects the PTA Mission, Values, Purposes and Principles as provided in subsidiary bylaws.

**Virginia PTA State Office**  
**1027 WILMER AVENUE, RICHMOND, VA 23227**

Virginia PTA is extremely concerned about how the current TJHSST PTSA leadership continues to imperil the reputation and viability of the association. As an association we are committed to building a collaborative partnership among families, the school staff, and the community at large for the purpose of engaging families in their child's education and creating a climate that supports the academic and social-emotional health of students. A guiding principle of our work is a commitment to inclusiveness and equity, knowledge of PTA and professional expertise. Throughout our work we respect and value the individual contributions of members, employees, volunteers, school staff and partners. As elected officers of PTA we have a shared responsibility to remain a guardian of the Mission, Brand and Association.

Failure to comply with good faith efforts, and an ongoing lack of adherence and challenge to the approved TJHSST PTSA bylaws dated June 7, 2019, and remedies extended by numerous Virginia PTA board members has brought us to the decision to move forward with the recommendation of revocation of the Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology PTSA Charter by the Virginia PTA Board of Directors. Our reasons are as follows but not limited to:

- **Failure to adhere to PTA values and principles**
  - Over the last several months the TJHSST PTSA's commitment to creating a collaborative relationship between the principal and the PTSA has been compromised by the following actions:
    - A letter issued on April 21st by the TJHSST PTSA Diversity Committee calling for disciplinary action and resignation of the principal.
    - During the week of June 14th, some members of the newly elected Executive Committee (EC) advanced a false narrative to the press claiming that the principal was trying to assert authority over the PTSA.
  - The newly elected EC is actively discussing stripping the principal of the voting rights granted under the bylaws adopted by General Membership and seeking to remove the principal from the TJHSST PTSA Executive Committee. Historically, the TJHSST principal has participated in EC meetings by providing reports, collaborating on initiatives to support students and staff, and contributed to the development of general PTSA meeting agendas.
  - Attacking the principal, calling for her resignation and then attempting to restrict her participation in the PTA is a direct violation of the values and principles cited in our bylaws and directly impedes the ability of this EC to build critical partnerships between school and home.
- **Creation of a climate that discourages parent engagement**
  - Virginia PTA has received numerous parent complaints that the TJHSST PTSA is not actively seeking volunteers and is not fostering a healthy relationship with the school.
  - Many parents are afraid to speak out for fear of retaliation against themselves or their children due to the regular FIOA requests for parent-principal communication issued by outside associations in relation to the changes to the TJHSST admissions process.
  - Parents attacking other parents on social media and in closed class level parent run Facebook pages has been left unchecked.

- **Failure to seek general membership approval for advocacy initiatives**
  - Advocacy by the PTSA on behalf of their school community should always be non-partisan, based on PTA approved Resolutions, Position Statements and Legislative Priorities and grounded in the PTA Values, Objectives and Principles described in our bylaws. As a membership organization, it is critical that local units seek membership approval for any position statement or public policy letter. On April 21st, without approval of the Executive Committee or the General Membership, the TJHSST PTSA Diversity Committee issued a complaint letter to FCPS Region 2 Assistant Superintendent Dr. Zuluaga and FCPS Chief Equity Officer Dr. Williams and other outside associations calling for curriculum changes and the resignation of the principal due to a student developed lesson on social emotional learning. The letter includes calls to action that have not been discussed or approved by the local unit membership, nor was the Diversity Committee granted authority to speak on behalf of the PTA.
- **Campaigning Conflict of Interest**
  - Candidates for the TJHSST PTSA 2021-2022 school year took the endorsement of an outside association and directly campaigned on a promise to advance a specific advocacy position. PTA advocacy positions may only be adopted following a PTA general membership vote and should never be used as a qualifications of any individual for a PTA elected officer position or a standing committee member. PTA elections campaigns should be run based solely on the qualifications and dedication of the volunteer to the school community and should never seek endorsement from outside associations.
- **Failure to follow the Bylaws adopted by TJHSST PTSA membership**
  - President Elect calling for electronic votes.
  - President Elect convening own EC meeting after scheduled meeting was cancelled by the President.
  - President Elect presiding over a meeting without an invitation from the President.
  - Some members of the Executive Committee have said they will not follow the bylaws regarding inclusion of the principal.
  - Exclusion of the Principal on the Executive Committee when calculating quorum.
  - Some members of the Executive Committee have attempted to create a committee to oversee a different 501c3.
- **Conflict of interest and inappropriate representation of values and brand to the press**
  - On June 11<sup>th</sup>, several elected officers of the TJHSST PTSA condoned a misrepresentation of facts and direct attacks on Virginia PTA to the press and additionally used a cancelled Executive Committee meeting for personal gain and grandstanding by inviting members of the press to a live streaming of an executive committee meeting.
  - On June 12<sup>th</sup> without a membership vote or approval of the President to speak on behalf of the members, several TJ PTSA Executive Committee members appeared in a news article asserting that their personal views and the positions of an outside association which several EC members are affiliated with represented the views and opinions of the TJHSST PTSA membership.

- **Bullying of elected officers and members who hold different views.**
  - During the week of June 14, 2021, the President Elect attempted to censure the President for an accurate interpretation of the bylaws. Aggressive emails have been sent by members of the Executive Committee challenging basic PTA processes and bylaws and questioning any support or help offered by the Virginia PTA. This has created a hostile volunteer environment and detracted from accomplishing any PTA work normally undertaken to transition to a new Board and prepare for the new school year.

The net result of your actions has not been to work in partnership but cultivated a hostile volunteer environment that prevents members from performing their elected duties. Therefore, as outlined in TJHSST PTSA Bylaws Article 4: Relationship with National PTA, Virginia PTA, and Constituent Associations. Section 15., a recommendation has been made to revoke your Charter. Virginia PTA Board of Directors reserves the right to revoke a constituent association's charter, with notice, if the constituent association violates the ethics, policies, or principles of PTA or in any way jeopardizes the tax-exempt status or endangers the good name/good will of Virginia PTA.

As provided in Virginia PTA Bylaws Article 4: Relationship with National PTA, Virginia PTA, and Constituent Associations. Section 4., you are afforded the opportunity to respond to this notice. Your response is required in writing, addressed to the Virginia PTA Board of Directors, and sent certified mail receipt to Virginia PTA, Attention: Pamela B. Croom, President, 1027 Wilmer Avenue, Richmond, VA 23227 no later than Wednesday, July 7, 2021.

Sincerely,



Pamela B. Croom  
Virginia PTA State President

SENT VIA EMAIL and CERTIFIED MAIL

cc: Dr. Ann Bonitatibus, Principal  
Dr. Fabio Zuluago, Assistant Superintendent, Region 2  
Dr. Scott Brabrand, Superintendent