



RHS HOME & SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

Meeting Agenda

Tuesday, May 16, 2023– 7:30 PM

RHS Learning Commons + Zoom

In Attendance (in-person and ZOOM):

Valerie Auyeung, David Bailey, Amy Beiersdorf, Lynn Benson, Sheila Brogan, Kelly Buchsbaum, Anson Choe, Keith Cook, Alyssa Fiol, Carolyn Holt, Medha Kirtane, Maureen O’Conner Martin, Julie Mchedlishvili, Laura McGrath, Mary Micale, Jeff Nyhuis, Sandy Pires, Andrea Rackow, Karen Schoenherr, Alison Stephens, Colleen Tansey, Danielle Wood

*Other callers participated in the ZOOM but their names were not registered

I. Call to Order/Approval Past Minutes/HSA Report: Carolyn Holt

Carolyn Holt called the meeting to order at 7:36 PM. Meeting information was made available via eNews, emails and GroupSpot post. All virtual attendees were accepted through ZOOM meeting. A motion to approve the April minutes was made by Sandy Pires and seconded by Laura McGrath. Meeting notes were unanimously approved.

Carolyn Holt thanked all who helped and donated to make the teacher appreciation breakfast a great success this past week. It was great to see the teachers come together.

Carolyn Holt asked all to consider donating to the Friends of RHS campaign. Any donation big or small helps to contribute to staff appreciation breakfasts, speakers and equipment to enhance RHS.

Kelly Buchsbaum shared the slate for the 2023-2024 RHS HSA executive board that was announced at the April meeting. A motion to approve the new slate was made by Amy Beiersdorf and seconded by Maureen O’Conner Martin. The new slate was unanimously approved this evening.

RHS HSA Executive Board 2023-24

President - Mary Micale

2nd Vice-President - Kelly Nakasone

Treasurer - Alison Stephens

Assistant Treasurer - Yana Rubin

Communications Chair - Laura McGrath

Recording Secretary - Laura Waisnor

Development Chair - Valerie Auyeung

Assistant Development Chair - Mandy Roth

II. RHS Student Reports: Sarah Bronstein

No new student reports at this time.

III. RHS Athletics Update: Keith Cook

Mr. Cook, Ridgewood Athletics Director, gave an update on athletics.

Mr. Cook thanked the community for the success of the Freshman, JV and Varsity teams that play at RHS. All of the spring programs are experiencing great success right now.

Mr. Cook shared there are always scheduling conflicts with such a large district and many sports teams that play well into the postseason. Mr. Cook explained they are looking for ways to advance the scheduling system.

Mr. Cook shared he is working with the district to look for ways to continue to improve the upkeep of fields, upgrade of turf, irrigation and the equipment used to maintain the sports playing areas.

This past winter Brookside Field was used to experimentally find ways to prepare the fields and protect them during offseason using turf blankets and aerating. They are looking to expand this process to other fields across the district as it was a great success in maintaining the field conditions for easier use in the spring.

Master Library is a new platform that is being used for field allocation. The town is also participating in this program so that it will be easier for groups to secure fields and facilities. This has been used since last August to make field use and building use more transparent. RHS athletics has priority of facility and field use around the town from 3:30 to 6:30 PM for practices and games. Coaches have access to the live schedules to accommodate time and location changes through the Master Library.

Coaches are available to hold practices up to three times a week this summer. Fitness center hours will be 9:00 to 11:00 AM and 3:30 to 5:00 PM to accommodate student's summer plans to be able to use the equipment. Students are also allowed to hold captain's practices throughout the summer.

IV. RHS Faculty Reports: Medha Kirtane

Ms. Kirtane thanked the HSA for the teacher appreciation breakfast. It's nice for the teachers to get together outside of their departments.

The final Maroon Awards were given out to 18 students last week. A celebration of all the Maroon honorees this past year was also held. Students receive this award for the positive contributions they make to RHS. Mrs. Brogan attended the Maroon Awards ceremony.

A Celebration of the Arts will take place on May 19th. Many faculty and staff will be participating in performances and art shows on Friday and a reception will be held Thursday night.

Lauren Hellman, school guidance counselor, received the educational professional services of the year award for RHS.

Mike Troy, teacher and boys varsity basketball coach, was awarded RHS teacher of the year.

“Our Town” was recently performed by the New Players Company at RHS and was a great success.

The color guard recently performed at the color guard showcase in a new elite division.

DECA came out of the national finals with many students placing, including many freshmen. Ms. Kirtane shared the success of DECA is due to the strong mentorship of the program.

In sports, the girls flag football team is currently undefeated. Playoffs begin next week.

The girls lacrosse team beat Northern Highlands in the Bergen Girls Lacrosse Tournament. This is their 18th straight county title.

Boys golf won their 2023 Sectional Title.

Boys and girls track and field teams won the Bergen County Championships.

The tennis team won division champs and will move onto counties.

The faculty is very appreciative of the new parking lot set-up with cones and dividers to ease traffic through the lot. It's made the parking lot safer and reduced traffic issues.

College recommendations are beginning for next year. Juniors are meeting with guidance counselors to identify teachers to ask for recommendations.

Ms. Kirtane thanked the HSA in advance for the faculty luncheon taking place on Thursday, May 18th.

V. RHS Class Reports / Introductions:

Senior Class Report (Sara Beinstein, Pamela Lobosco, Sandy Pires): Sandy Pires shared college t-shirt day will be held May 18th. The year book signing will take place June 9th. The prom will be held June 2nd. A sign-up genius will be going out for donations and volunteers for the build. Any parents looking to work on the Project Graduation build are encouraged to meet at First Presbyterian School on Tuesday and Thursday evenings 7-10 PM and Wednesdays mornings 9-12 PM. Other times to help with the build are Wednesday nights 7-10 PM and Saturday and Sundays 9-3 PM at the Saddle Brook warehouse. Installation begins June 17th. Sandy showed some of the items from the ongoing apparel sale. RHS class of 2023 T-shirts, flannels, shorts and sweatshirts are currently being sold.

Junior Class Report (Carla Sullivan, Suzanne Tripp): Carolyn Holt reported on behalf of the junior class. This is the last week of the WECO meals fundraiser. 10% of all orders are donated back to the class of 2024.

Sophomore Class Report (Lauren Radossich, Daria Linnington Katie Diamond): There are no updates to report at this time.

Freshman Class Report (Meghan Agatep, Kim Cadaret): There are no updates to report at this time.

VI. RPS Board of Education Report: Sheila Brogan

Ms. Brogan congratulated the new RHS HSA board.

Last night there was a meet and greet at RHS of about 50 parents to meet the new superintendent, Mark Schwarz. He held a question and answer session which was also recorded and is available for viewing on the district BOE website. He will be meeting with administrators and teachers for the first time this week.

Ms. Brogan shared that Mr. Schwarz stressed the importance of communication and he plans to hold ongoing meetings and zoom sessions to share information with the community once he is officially in district July 1st.

Ms. Brogan commended the New Players production of "Our Town".

The BOE voted on the final school budget for the 2023-2024 school year. There will be a property tax increase of 2% which is within the state cap guidelines.

There are many additions to the budget based on the recommendations of Dr. Fitts, the interim superintendent. The new budget will accommodate new staff in the district. Two world language teachers will be hired for the district to enhance language in the elementary schools. Two P.E. teachers will be hired to be compliant with the numbers of minutes required at each of the elementary schools for P.E. classes. Three special education teachers

will be hired to allow for an inclusion special education teacher at each of the elementary schools for collaborative teaching in grades 1-5. A part time theater teacher will be hired for RHS as well as an elementary supervisor of special education.

There are positions at the BOE that will need to be filled. Replacements for a new business administrator as well as an assistant superintendent will be hired. Mr. Schwarz will be actively participating in the hiring of these positions.

May is mental health awareness month. On May 18th, the Ridgewood Stigma Free committee along with the Ridgewood Health Department will host a presentation by Matt Bellace, a psychologist and comedian. He will give an inspirational talk to students and parents about finding something you're really good at instead of relying on drugs to get a high in life. The presentation will take place at the Ridgewood Library.

Ms. Brogan acknowledged the June 8th senior awards night is a great celebration of the students and teacher relationships that exist at RHS.

The Ridgewood Teacher Appreciation Ceremony will be held on June 6th at BFMS to celebrate the teachers and staff being recognized in the district.

VII. RHS Vice Principal Report: David Bailey

Mr. Bailey shared that May is Mental Health Awareness Month. The staff and students have been discussing the three ways to increase happiness through sleep, gratitude and helping others.

Mr. Bailey shared a poll from last year that students and faculty at RHS participated in on "Good Things at RHS". The biggest takeaway from the poll was the importance of the people and connections at school.

Testing is winding down. Over 1,100 AP exams have been given and makeups are currently taking place now. May 22-25th, the NJSLA science test will be administered to eleventh graders. May 22-25th the NJSLA ELA and math regular tests will be given to ninth graders. There will be a delayed opening for non-test takers.

Mr. Bailey said the NJGPA test that was administered in March to the junior class is required for graduation as of right now. The state will make any testing announcements and/or changes in August. This test was waived last year for the current senior class.

May 18th Randy Levin will be holding a virtual session on "College Essays-How to Stand Out and Get In". He will share how to avoid common essay mistakes and write stand out essays to those that have signed up for the session.

May 31st the senior survey will be given to students. The data from the survey will be shared with the community in July. There will also be a senior assembly on this day geared to the students on anticipating freshman year at college.

June 8th is the senior awards ceremony.

Mr. Bailey shared the final exam schedule which has been shared with the RHS community.

Ms. Woods shared prom forms are due by May 19th. Students will need to indicate their transportation method and can select tables for seating at the prom. All staff are invited for hors d' oeuvres.

Ms. Woods is working with Club exCELL students to collect prom photos from staff which will be displayed for seniors on June 2nd.

Ms. Woods shared that graduation information letters will be sent this week with all of the information on graduation dates and forms.

VIII. RHS Principal Report: Jeff Nyhuis

Mr. Nyhuis shared details of the planned "Pizzuto Palooza" on June 9th in honor of Basil Pizzuto. It will be a field day as well as a student congress planned spirit week leading up to the 9th. The grades will be participating in various activities throughout the day. There will be field day activities run by the P.E. department with blow up inflatable games, spike ball, can jam and cornhole. There will be a trivia competition led by Mr. Kase. The seniors will also receive their yearbooks and be participating in signing the books. Tim Shoemaker will speak on connectivity. Approximately 20-25 students will be assigned to a staff member to move throughout the day as a group.

As part of the planned themes for spirit week, there will be an 80's day theme and students will participate in a no phone use day. The purpose is to encourage connectivity amongst the community and to be present. Tim Shoemaker will be speaking on connectivity during the speaker presentation on June 9th. Students will be encouraged to leave phones at home or turn them off.

Plans are still being developed for the logistics and events of the day. A minimum day 1 schedule will be followed in the morning with the field day activities starting later in the day. Parents will be notified of the plans for the day.

Mr. Nyhuis thanked the RHS HSA for generously giving \$7,000 which they received from Federated to be used for Mental Health initiatives to be used for the day's events.

Mr. Nyhuis gave an update on the Later Start plans for September. The new schedule has been developed and shared with the community.

Mr. Nyhuis shared how the schedule was developed incorporating teacher and student feedback. There were various positions on the length of the school day periods and Mr. Nyhuis used the data from survey results to guide the development of the schedule.

After having conversations with a majority of students in the FOCUS groups and health classes, a survey was administered to the students. There were 832 responses.

The questions on the survey were geared to give feedback and data Mr. Nyhuis needed to help develop the new schedule.

One of the survey questions asked if the non-testing period policy is being followed. The purpose of this policy is that there are no more than six assessments in any given day. 67.2% of students said the policy is followed. Mr. Nyhuis will be discussing with the teachers the importance of adhering to this policy.

The survey results indicate that with the current school start time only 26.6% of surveyed students are going to bed before 11PM.

Another question showed around 50% of students are spending 1-2 hours on homework on average per night.

About 85% of students surveyed feel the 8:20 AM start time will be a positive change.

Around 50% of students utilize period 9 each week and this is a reason to keep this period as a resource for the students.

The most preferred length of class time is 50-70-50 minutes followed by 57-57-57 minutes and 50-60-50 minutes being the least preferred. The preferred schedule for the later start time is the 50, 70, 50 minute time block.

The overall feedback is that more students will eat before school with the later start time.

The staff data varied by department with the class period preferences. 98% of the staff responded to share their preferred schedule options.

The use of the 25 minutes of time in the morning with the later start time is still being developed. At least one of the days will be used for students to meet with teachers. Another day will allow teachers and departments to meet and collaborate. This is still a work in progress and will continue to be developed.

If the state mandates the later start time for all schools, Mr. Nyhuis feels RHS will be in a good place with the schedule options that have been developed in anticipation of the new start time. If the start time gets pushed back to 8:30 AM, the schedule can adapt to this time.

The new schedule for next year will be 50-70-50. Mr. Nyhuis shared the new schedule by time periods.

IX. Questions/Discussion/Adjournment:

Carolyn Holt thanked Katrina Dudley for her efforts in coordinating the teacher appreciation breakfast and lunch.

Amy Beiersdorf shared information on the ongoing food drive the schools and the Federated HSA are participating in with the YMCA for the "Run For Hope Foundation". RHS is currently collecting coffee, tea, paper goods and cookies. Amy Beiersdorf and Mary Micale are collecting at their homes. Please reach out to them if you'd like to donate to the food drive.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:44 PM. Minutes respectfully submitted by Colleen Tansey, Secretary

*Next RHS HSA meeting: **Tuesday, June 13, 2023- 6:00 PM** - RHS Learning Commons + Zoom*