



RHS HOME & SCHOOL ASSOCIATION Meeting

Agenda Tuesday, June 13, 2023 – 6:00 PM RHS Learning Commons + Zoom

In Attendance (in-person and ZOOM):

Tara Adams, Valerie Auyeung, David Bailey, Amy Beiersdorf, Lynn Benson, Sheila Brogan, Sara Bronstein, Kelly Buchsbaum, Dawn Calvetti, Alyssa Fiol, Aidan Holt, Carolyn Holt, Cheryl Isorabella, Chloe Kaczmariski, Kyungeun Kim, Siobhan Langa, Brendan Lintner, Medha Kirtane, Maureen O'Connor Martin, Dana McCarren, Laura McGrath, Mary Micale, Jeff Nyhuis,, Sandy Pires, Kristen Plumley, Anna Salerno, Karyn Shoenherr, Bill Sorabella, Alison Stephens, Stacy Strohmenger, Colleen Tansey, Nora Train, Danielle Wood

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

I. Call to Order/Approval Past Minutes:

The meeting was called to order by Carolyn Holt at 6:04 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 May minutes was made by Sandy Pires and seconded by Alison Stephens. Meeting notes were unanimously approved.

Carolyn Holt shared that even though Pizzuto Palooza was canceled last week, the scheduled presentations on connectivity were still held and were very valuable to all the students. The seniors also took away a lot from the senior presentation on college safety tips presented by Timothy Shoemaker.

II. Panel Discussion with RHS Graduates on First Year of College: Moderated by David Bailey

Mr. Bailey moderated a panel with RHS alumni from the class of 2022 to share their freshman year experiences. Below is a brief summary of the questions and answers.

The panel of Alumni: Aidan Holt (Lehigh University), Chloe Kaczmariski, (University of Tampa), Brendan Lintner (University of Colorado-Boulder), Nora Train (Clemson University)

What is the difference between managing your time in high school vs. college?

Alumni shared they felt schoolwork was similar between RHS and college which helped to keep up with the college workload/expectations.

A big difference in college is that the professors don't stay on top of students as much as they do in high school. Students really need to initiate when to study and how to review for exams.

There is no balance of tests and course workload in college from the professors so there could be several tests in a day at college whereas at RHS the tests were more balanced and spread out.

Budgeting time, extracurricular involvement and job responsibilities are all on the student at college to manage and no one is watching you as they did in high school. Using a Google calendar makes it easier to balance and keep track of schedules.

What advice would you give to seniors in the middle of the application process right now?

Students should start researching schools early and making college visits so they aren't rushed when it's time to apply.

Getting college applications done by October so that students can enjoy the school year and make more college visits after the pressure is off from the application process.

Making time to talk to students at different colleges to learn information about the schools from different perspectives allow you to get a good feel for the colleges.

Everything works out in the end the way it's supposed to. Sometimes the "dream" schools don't happen and the alternative schools become a better fit.

Sometimes students don't like to talk about the schools they are applying to with peers during the application process but looking back it would be helpful to have conversations with others to see how people are feeling and dealing with the pressures of the college application process.

How did RHS best prepare you for college?

Being a part of clubs and balancing time between classes at RHS was important to manage time more effectively in college.

Alumni are finding they do well in writing assignments because of the level of writing

expected at RHS.

Public speaking is easier in college because of their presentations and public speaking experiences at RHS.

Time management learned at RHS made it easier to adjust at college where it is all up to the student to figure out their schedules.

What is the one thing you wish you brought to college with you?

The string laundry bags are the best for laundry to carry clothes and not lose items! Other alumni suggested getting laundry baskets with wheels to make it easy to cart laundry.

Not bringing an Xbox the first semester was important to connect with friends and keep out of being isolated in the dorm room even though you might love gaming.

Having an air purifier was important to keeping the dorm room clean and helping to prevent sickness.

How do you make friends? How did you choose your roommate?

Alumni shared that finding friends is hard and no one prepares you for the social challenges when going away to school.

Some colleges have social media sites that allow students to connect with others before going to school. Finding a roommate through social media allows opportunities to talk with people before going to school and finding a good match.

Some colleges have club meetings at the start of the year which is a great opportunity to meet other freshmen and upperclassmen.

Some colleges offer match sites that allow students to connect before going to school and choose a roommate.

Being open-minded when talking with people before going to school helped to connect with people that they may not have connected with otherwise.

Some colleges assign roommates and want you to take an active role in being open to meeting new people you are matched with.

What does RHS do well? What can we do better here?

Having midterms and finals at RHS helps students feel prepared for taking them in college. Since Covid, many RHS students did not have finals or midterms and they felt they lacked this preparation for college testing.

Some alumni felt it would be great to have more contact and guidance from RHS guidance counselors to help find more backup college choices and identify different college majors through the application process.

It would be helpful to have an essay writing course at RHS to help with writing the common app and essays.

It's important to get to know your guidance counselor so they get to know you and can be more helpful when it's time for preparing college applications.

It would be beneficial to learn more about how to balance finances in life at RHS so students are more prepared in college.

RHS allowed students opportunities to juggle sports, activities, academics and it prepared them to be more independent in college.

What is one lesson you learned at RHS and if you can share who taught you that lesson?

Alumni shared that it's important to build a relationship with the teachers and professors. Mr. Yanonne stressed the importance of forging relationships with teachers.

Alumni stressed the importance of having good manners helps with interacting with students and teachers in college.

An english teacher at RHS had a lesson on how to write an email to a teacher and it's been helpful when reaching out to professors.

Mr. Troy taught students to take the jump and push yourself even when you don't think you can handle it. This has helped students to push through challenges in college. Facing challenges at RHS helped students to persevere and paved a path to do this in college.

Dr. Shaefer taught everything happens for a reason. If something doesn't happen the first time for them or the way students want it to, it usually works out in the end for the better.

Who did you rely on during freshman year if you felt homesick?

Alumni shared that relying on family was very important during their first year. Phone calls to old friends, siblings and family were comforting.

When you're lonely, talking to new friends or connecting with someone you went to high school with who is at your college that you may not have been friends with at RHS.

When feeling homesick and wanting to go home, having parents encourage you to stick it out and stay at school is important to adjust.

III. RHS Student Report: Sara Bronstein

Sara shared the recent celebration of the Arts event at RHS allowed students and faculty to highlight their talents around the school.

The engineer club placed second and third at their national competition.

The student council elections were held for the 2023-2024 school year. Sara congratulated the new council.

The senior prom was recently held.

Sara shared finals are about to begin with the final exam review day, two days of testing this week and two days next week.

Students are picking up their underclassman yearbooks this week.

Spirit Week was a big hit and there was more participation this time around than during the fall. The juniors won the spirit week.

The Japan and Switzerland trips were recently announced for next school year.

Mike Troy was recognized as Teacher of the year for RHS.

Sara gave her thanks for serving as the student representative this past school year. Sara will be the BOE representative for the high school next year.

IV. RHS Faculty Reports: Medha Kirtane

Ms. Kirtane shared that teachers want parents to know that the final exam review day is important for students to ask questions to their teachers. This is an opportunity for student self-advocacy. The power of collaboration is vital in studying for exams. Student group studying is encouraged to review material. The high school offers many studying areas during finals week.

Ms. Kirtane reminds juniors heading into senior year that they should be asking for teacher recommendation letters now.

Ms. Kirtane thanked the HSA for all their support this year, especially during a difficult year for the faculty with the passing of Basil Pizzuto.

V. RHS Class Reports:

Senior Class Report (Sara Beinstein, Pamela Lobosco, Sandy Pires): Sandy Pires shared the senior sunrise will take place the day before finals begin. A breakfast is planned on the front lawn and a scholarship will be awarded to a student in attendance. The sign-up genius for parent volunteers has been out and it's all hands on deck for graduation. It's go time! All graduation information is posted on Groupspot, emails and Facebook.

Junior Class Report (Carla Sullivan, Suzanne Tripp): Anna Salerno reported a class of 2024 PG meeting is being held after the HSA meeting for volunteers to sign up for committees next year.

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 Representative: Sheila Brogan

Ms. Brogan shared Mark Schwarz, the new superintendent, will officially begin working in the district after July 4th. He's been involved in hiring the new business administrator and working out some curriculum issues.

The interim business administrator will be leaving after giving 60 days notice and a new interim business administrator has been hired until a permanent business administrator is found.

The applicants for a new assistant superintendent didn't bring in a strong pool of

candidates. As a result, the decision was made to hire an interim assistant superintendent until a permanent assistant superintendent is found.

Mr. Orsini, the BF principal, has resigned and will be leaving in late July/early August. The position for a replacement principal at BFMS has been advertised. It is expected a new principal will be appointed in the fall.

Ms. Brogan shared that a wonderful senior award ceremony was held at RHS and she thanked all who contributed to the scholarships.

Ms. Brogan shared she is looking forward to the upcoming graduation festivities at RHS.

The BOE is currently contracting for the roof repair project for the science wing at RHS.

The staffing for the summer school and the extended school year program was passed.

The plan for the world languages program in the elementary schools with three teachers to be hired to teach three different languages did not pass by the BOE vote last night. The plan will need to be further evaluated.

The BOE approved the school calendars for the next two school years. There were changes to the proposed calendars to incorporate the state mandated Juneteenth observance. Graduation for the class of 2024 is now on June 19, 2024. Graduation for the class of 2025 is June 19, 2025. There are varying break times in the school calendars due to when holidays fall throughout the school year.

VII. RHS Assistant Principal's Report: Dave Bailey

Mr. Bailey will share the senior survey results in the next few weeks.

VIII. RHS Principal Report: Jeff Nyhuis

Mr. Nyhuis thanked the RHS HSA board and outgoing president Carolyn Holt for a great school year. He always appreciates the transparency and communication between the parents and administration.

Mr. Nyhuis reflected on a few thoughts from the student panel discussion. He shared everyone needs to remember as a freshman that they're all in the same boat and in the same place as everyone else when going off to college. He shared his daughter is great friends with an RHS student she connected with at college that she wasn't friends with in high school as an example of how college connections happen.

IX. Questions/Discussion/Adjournment:

Kristen Plumely shared information on the Friends of music annual songwriting contest taking place now through December 1st. . The winner will be announced in January 2024.

Kristen also shared information on the upcoming K-12 summer music academy being offered this summer.

Friends of Music awarded three scholarships to RHS students.

The RHS band is continuing their mattress sale fundraiser.

Information on all of the above can be found on the Friends of Music website.

Adjournment: Meeting was adjourned at 7:13 PM. Minutes respectfully submitted by Colleen Tansey, Secretary.

Thank you again for making 2022-2023 a great year! Have a wonderful summer!