



RIDGEWOOD
HIGH SCHOOL

RHS HOME & SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

Meeting Agenda

Tuesday, March 14, 2023– 7:30 PM

RHS Learning Commons + Zoom

In Attendance (in-person and ZOOM):

Melanie Amores, Valerie Auyeung, David Bailey, Amy Beiersdorf, Lynn Benson, Ondrea Bertie, Tara Briganti, Sheila Brogan, Kelly Buchsbaum, Valerie Caffrey, Marissa Carr, Anson Choe, Alyssa Fiol, Carina Guerrero, Carolyn Holt, Julie Mchedlishvili, Lana Kiesleurch, Medha Kirtane, Susan Madison, Tim McCarthy, Rose Mary McCotter, Chris McGrath, Laura McGrath, Mary Micale, Jeff Nyhuis, Sandy Pires, Kristen Plumley, Bob Rottinger, Alison Stephens, Colleen Tansey, Laura Waisnor, Danielle Wood, Sun Young

*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 7:33 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 February minutes was made by Mary Micale and seconded by Alison Stephens. Meeting notes were unanimously approved.

Carolyn Holt thanked the Project Graduation class of 2022 for their generous donation of remaining graduation funds to purchase a whirlpool hot tub for the fitness center and six digital microphones for the Little Theater.

II. RHS Student Reports: Sarah Bronstein, Matthew Carver

No new student reports at this time.

III. RHS Faculty Reports: Medha Kirtane

Ms. Kirtane shared the eleventh graders are taking the eleventh grade NJGPS state test this week.

There was a faculty staff development day that took place at RHS on March 13th for staff members that didn't participate in the summer professional development session.

At the most recent faculty enrichment day the staff participated in the third session of teacher cohort meetings focusing on special areas such as sustainability, celebration of the arts, grading policies, portfolios and cultural development.

The faculty is currently working on course scheduling and putting together the classes for the interdisciplinary special programs for next year.

The Asian Festival was held on March 3rd and there was a great turnout with over 170 students participating. Thanks to the custodial staff for their work covering this event and Super Science Saturday, back to back weekend events.

Super Science Saturday took place on March 4th at RHS and was a great success. Sheila Brogan will share more highlights of the event.

Luke Dolby and Charles Appel facilitated an enriching discussion between RHS students and students in Malawi. Luke Dolby was on site in Malawi while Charles Appel was in a conference room at RHS. Together with participating students at RHS and Malawi the discussion focused on what matters most in their respective communities.

DECA students participated in the NJ DECA states conference in late February and students placed well in several categories.

The Girls basketball team won the Big North Freedom Division Sportsmanship Award. Ms. Kirtane shared a story about team sportsmanship when one of the RHS players helped out an opposing player after falling on the court. This act of sportsmanship was also tweeted by the opposing school's administration to their community.

Tessa Randleman won first place in the State Individual Fencing Championships.

The summer sports non-contact period is set for July 29th through August 6th.

The spring sports season begins this week, March 13th.

The fall sports season begins for football on August 9th, tennis on August 16th and all other sports August 21st.

The next Maroon and White concert will be held March 16th at 3:45 PM at RHS.

The band concert will be held March 28th at Westside Church.

RHS Choir will perform on April 19th at Westside Church.

The Maroon and White music only concert will take place on April 27th.

The New Players will have five performances of "Something Rotten" the weekend of March 17th at RHS.

Ms. Kirtane thanked the HSA for providing the coffee at enrichment days.

IV. RHS Class Reports / Introductions:

Senior Class Report (Sara Beinstein, Pamela Lobosco, Sandy Pires): Sandy Pires shared the Fashion show was held last weekend and was a great success. Sandy thanked the participating senior students and junior parents for volunteering. The valentine lunch fundraiser was a great success. Kelly Buchsbaum shared there are some auction items from the fashion show to still bid on. Please reach out if you're

interested in graduation parking, interior design sessions and ACT/SAT tutoring prep. Class of 2023 graduation lawn signs and felt banners are going to be on sale. There are still some outstanding baby pictures that need to be submitted for some seniors. Any parents looking to work on the Project Graduation build are encouraged to meet at First Presbyterian School on Wednesdays mornings, Thursday evenings and weekends.

Junior Class Report (Carla Sullivan, Suzanne Tripp): Carolyn Holt reported on behalf of the junior class. The class had a successful parent social on February 8th at Park West Tavern. There is a Chestnut Deli no-cook fundraiser coming up on March 29th as well as a food delivery service fundraiser. Look for more details coming soon.

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): Carolyn Holt reported on behalf of the freshman class. The first parent social was held at Stumpy's Hatchet House. There is a freshman Disco Dance being held on March 24th at the student center. Future socials and apparel sales are being planned.

V. RPS Board of Education Report: Sheila Brogan

Ms. Brogan updated where the BOE is with the successor superintendent search process. Ms. Brogan shared the search firm, Hazard, Young and Attea, was hired to guide the district in identifying qualities of the next superintendent through surveys and panels to begin the search process for the district. Once the position was advertised, resumes were submitted and the consultants reviewed the applications to identify nine candidates that fit the criteria established by the district. The nine candidates were interviewed and an offer has been made to a successor. While Ms. Brogan couldn't share more about the candidate at this time, she said she is confident a new superintendent will be in place in July and more information will be shared when it can be made public. There are many reasons for strict confidentiality through the interview process as candidates have a lot at stake if it becomes public knowledge they are interviewing in another district. The BOE has respected the privacy of the candidates through the interview process and want the public to understand the reasons for the confidentiality.

The audit report was presented at the last BOE meeting. Budget planning for the next school year is beginning with identifying capital projects across the district. At the high school the leaking science building roof will be repaired. There will be upgrades to the ventilation in the woodshop and makerspace rooms.

The Late Start Initiative proposal was voted on by the BOE on February 13th to proceed for September 2023 with implementation plans outlined Jeff Nyhuis.

Super Science Saturday took place at RHS on March 4th. Ms. Brogan praised the RHS students in the engineering club for participating and sharing their innovative projects. The robotic team shared great inventions. The Project Interact group made flubber and helped kids make egg cradles for the egg drop. Ms. Brogan is grateful to the participating RHS students in making the event a great success.

Ms. Brogan shared the Tim Shoemaker presentation on social media and internet usage by middle schoolers was riveting. There is also an upcoming presentation on April 25th at 6PM at GW for parents. Tim will presenting to parents the dangers of vaping which has been an increased problem with students at RHS. Ms. Brogan encourages parents to attend.

VI. RHS Vice Principal Report: David Bailey

Mr. Bailey shared the junior class is currently taking the NJ State Graduation Proficiency Assessment March 14th through March 17th.

Mr. Bailey shared RHS is bringing back the college fair for the first time since 2019. The fair will be held March 23rd in Gym 1 from 7-9PM. There will be between 60-75 colleges and technical schools participating in the fair. Sophomore and juniors are encouraged to attend. A future college fair at RHS is being planned for the Fall 2023.

Mr. Bailey shared there will be a Bergen County College Fair at Ramapo College sponsored by the Bergen County Directors of Guidance on March 15th from 6-9 PM. Over 200 colleges will be participating in the fair.

VII. RHS Principal Report-Later Start Q&A: Jeff Nyhuis

Mr. Nyhuis shared that parents and students should attend the upcoming college fairs but students are encouraged to meet the representatives and speak to them to make a connection.

On the April 14th enrichment day, the staff is planning a sustainability day at RHS. There will be opportunities for students to participate in activities to raise awareness of sustainability and promote recycling.

There are over 75 applicants for the assistant principal position. Interviewing will begin next week with staff and parents on the interview panel.

Mr. Nyhuis shared Super Science Saturday was such a great event at RHS. The event brought back former students with their families. It truly is a community event.

Mr. Nyhuis praised the Fashion Show chairs and volunteers for planning such a successful event for the senior class.

Mr. Nyhuis shared an experience this week he had with the band when Mr. Haas called him down to the band room to watch as students played a musical piece by a composer who was on a screen in the classroom. He said it was exciting to see the interaction that occurs with students, teachers and technology on a daily basis in the classroom.

Mr. Nyhuis addressed parent submitted questions relating to the proposed Later Start at RHS in September 2023. Laura McGrath shared the questions collected from the community. Below is a summary of the questions and answers.

How are you determining the new schedule? Will you solicit teacher and student feedback on a proposed schedule?

Mr. Nyhuis has started conversations over the last three weeks with the faculty to get a feel for what different departments are thinking about the proposed schedules. He's spent a great deal of time specifically with the science department. Mr. Nyhuis has put together a survey for student feedback and is currently meeting with eleventh grade health classes to talk with students about the different schedule options. Peer leaders in freshman focus classes have discussed the proposed schedule options with the freshman students and they were surveyed for their feedback. Mr. Bailey has also met with students in the sophomore focus classes. Surveys were also used for student feedback on the scheduling options. There are plans to push into the sophomore health classes as well to discuss the schedule options.

Can you share the new proposed schedule or schedules? Will there continue to be 80 minute periods? Are 90 minute periods still being considered? (*comment from a parent - Sitting in a lecture of classroom for 90 minutes cannot be beneficial for quality learning or teaching*) Will Science Labs change? How?

Mr. Nyhuis said there are four different schedules that are being looked at for next year to align classes to the new start and end time of school.

The first option is very similar to the schedule in place now. Currently there is a rotating drop schedule (similar to the current 50/80/50 period schedule) which proposes a 50/70/50 minute class time frame.

Another option is a 57/57/57 class schedule which is similar to what was in place before the current schedule was put in place. Some faculty members have asked for this schedule to be considered to provide consistency with class period times. The AP science classes would still have a double lab period in their schedule.

The third option is a combination of 50/60/60/60/50 minute classes. The first and last periods in this schedule would be non-testing periods.

A final proposed schedule is an 80/80 in the morning and 60/60/60 in the afternoon. Mr. Nyhuis wanted to incorporate the 80 minute block period because some teachers and students do prefer having the longer periods.

The feedback has varied on the different options but most preferred the 50/70/50, 57/57/57 and 50/60/60 schedules.

Will we still have Period 9?

Period 9 will still exist. 3:05 -3:30 PM.

Will we still have Enrichment Days?

No, there will not be enrichment days.

What will happen to the instructional minutes that are no longer in the schedule? You mentioned at the BOE presentation, there may be teacher hours during school - if so how will that work? Will teacher hours be made available to athletes or other students that may have after school commitments during the scheduled period 9?

Mr. Nyhuis has been working with Mike Yanonne and the REA to make sure the proposed schedules align with the contracted teacher hours. Mr. Nyhuis has also talked to teachers to get their input on how the 25 minute staggered start time will impact the day. Teachers will be coming in at 7:55 AM and students at 8:20 AM. One idea was to call this time period a zero period for kids that need extra time to meet with teachers on an as needed basis. There is a need to keep teacher prep periods and student free periods. Some of the extra time in the schedule could be used for office hours for students to meet with teachers throughout the day.

How will the schedule for sports be impacted? Will the athletic department consider pushing back practice start times to accommodate period 9? There is a concern that student athletes may have to choose between seeking academic help or being late to practice.

When Mr. Nyhuis has discussed scheduling and after school sports with Mr. Cook, the athletic director, it's important to note practices currently begin around 3:30/3:45 PM. They don't want to push practices back at this time. Looking more long term, it is probable that the later start will become state mandated and all schools will be in the same place with timing of after school activities. For now, students will be encouraged to go to period 9 and coaches will be told they are to respect students that come to practice with a pass when they attend period 9. If this becomes a broader issue with many more students using the period 9 time causing widespread practice conflicts, it will be addressed and start times could be pushed back.

How will students who take the bus be impacted? Bus times and what students? Will MS be with HS students?

The middle school and high school bussing are expected to be separate but the District is waiting to hear back from the bus companies. Mr. Nyhuis has been told the bus drop off in the morning at RHS will be pushed back by 30 minutes. Pick up time will be after period 9 at 3:30PM. After the BOE approved the later start time, the bus bidding went out for next year and he is hopeful the timing and routes that RHS needs will work out.

For working parents who may drop their children off at school earlier or students who may walk and arrive early, has a zero period been considered to use the extra time in the morning for educational purposes?

At this time there are paid staff members that arrive at 7AM to supervise students that arrive early to school and they are able to use the Campus Center, the Learning Commons and the Cafeteria. Mr. Nyhuis said he may need to shift the staff supervision time to accommodate the new start time. These same areas will be open and staffed in the morning for parents that need to drop off early. Mr. Nyhuis polled around 300 students to find out if they eat breakfast at home with the current start time and the number that do is low. When asked if students plan to eat breakfast at home with the later start time, about 80% said they would eat at home before coming to school because there will be more time which he expects will also be better for their learning preparedness.

Do you anticipate teacher attendance to be impacted by the change in schedule?

Some teachers are more concerned about after school hours and needing to get to their own family commitments. The mornings are not a concern at this time. Staff will have an easier time arriving to park in the morning because the drop off congestion will be alleviated. Mr. Nyhuis shared a story of an old RHS High Times article he recently came across addressing the parking issues at RHS in the 1970's. Mr. Nyhuis said this article is still relevant today because of the parking issues with staff parking and students arriving at the same time in the morning. The staggered arrival time with the later start will time will greatly reduce this problem.

Some parents have expressed concern that their student already have "a lot of free time" especially when teachers are absent along with their lunch and free periods it can add up. It may be worth talking about the reason why all students have a free period and why we don't have subs for those parents who are not familiar with the school's philosophy.

Mr. Nyhuis shared currently, it is difficult to get substitutes. Teachers spend a lot of time planning replacement lessons and assignments when they are absent. One lesson from teaching during Covid is that when teachers are going to be absent, the time they put into planning for lessons and assignments when they are not present, are as good as if they are there. Most students work on the assignments during that class period. It does happen that students can have blocks of free time if the same teacher is absent for more than one day and it lines up with their free or lunch down but students are encouraged to use the space around the school to complete class assignments. In addition to the indoor spaces to do work like the Learning Commons, Campus Center and the Cafeteria, the HSA has purchased lawn furniture outside to accommodate more areas for students to work when the weather permits.

For students that meet before school for activities such as band practice, sports workouts and other musical groups rehearsals, how will this time work into the proposed later start schedule?

Mr. Nyhuis doesn't want to discourage these groups from using the time they have agreed upon to rehearse or practice but he doesn't want them holding these practices every day or doing both in the morning and night but once a week wouldn't be an issue.

VIII. Questions/Discussion/Adjournment:

Kelly Buchsbaum spoke on behalf of the RHS HSA nominating committee. There are open positions on the nominating committee and the executive board for next year. Please reach out to Kelly Buchsbaum or Carolyn Holt if you are interested.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:39 PM. Minutes respectfully submitted by Colleen Tansey, Secretary

*Next RHS HSA meeting: **Tuesday, April 18, 2023- 7:30 PM** - RHS Learning Commons + Zoom*