



RIDGEWOOD
HIGH SCHOOL

RHS HOME & SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

Meeting Agenda

Tuesday, April 18, 2023– 7:30 PM

RHS Learning Commons + Zoom

In Attendance (in-person and ZOOM):

Valerie Auyeung, David Bailey, Amy Beiersdorf, Lynn Benson, Tara Briganti, Sheila Brogan, Sarah Bronstein, Kelly Buchsbaum, Anson Choe, Carolyn Holt, Hyewon Jun, Medha Kirtane, Maureen O’Conner Martin, Anne McCaskin, Laura McGrath, Mary Micale, Kelly Nakasone, Sandy Pires, Yana Rubin, Anna Salerno, Alison Stephens, Colleen Tansey, Laura Waisnor, 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 7:34 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 March minutes was made by Mary Micale and seconded by Sandy Pires. Meeting notes were unanimously approved.

Kelly Buchsbaum spoke on behalf of the RHS HSA nominating committee to present next year’s slate.

Proposed 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

Carolyn Holt thanked the nominating committee for putting together the new board. Next month there will be a vote to approve the new slate.

II. RHS Student Report: Sarah Bronstein

Sarah spoke about yesterday’s school lockdown. She explained while it was a scary event to the students, they felt protected by the staff and police who quickly reacted to make students feel safe and secure throughout the event.

Sarah said juniors are looking forward to the planned semi-formal this Thursday, April 20th. It’s been fun to plan and will be a great opportunity for kids to have fun and relax.

Sarah shared students are ready for the upcoming AP testing in May.

Now that next year's schedules have been submitted, some students are working through the appeals process for classes that weren't teacher recommended.

Students will be running and voting for next year's student congress in the coming weeks.

III. RHS Faculty Reports: Medha Kirtane

Ms. Kirtane shared the school sustainability day was held on Friday, April 14th. It was a school-wide success planned by the faculty at recent enrichment days with the help of the lead custodian at RHS. There were opportunities for students to participate in activities to raise awareness of sustainability and promote recycling. The Green Club put together a video on recycling and new color coded recycling bins were placed throughout the school.

On Saturday, April 15th, the Green Team and some RHS faculty members planted ten trees on Stevens Avenue. There were several panels of discussions held throughout the day involving faculty and community members. There was a dumpster dive to raise awareness of what is thrown out at the school each day. There was also a recycling scavenger hunt to round out the day's activities.

On Saturday, April 15th, RHS hosted a national history and geography bee that was run by a former RHS alum.

RHS choir has a concert on April 19th at 7:30PM at the Westside Church.

On Saturday, April 22nd, the RHS orchestra will hold a carwash at RHS.

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

A dance Maroon and White concert was recently held.

The choir will host a carwash on May 7th at RHS.

In sports, the girls lacrosse team held a game last weekend at RHS to raise money in honor of Morgan's Message which promotes mental health awareness.

The boys lacrosse team honored Basil Pizzuto with lacrosse sticks and his initials on their uniforms following in the footsteps of many of the other RHS sports teams.

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

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

Ms. Kirtane shared the faculty is looking forward to welcoming Danielle Wood as the next Assistant Vice Principal of RHS.

IV. RHS Class Reports / Introductions:

Senior Class Report (Sara Beinstein, Pamela Lobosco, Sandy Pires): Sandy Pires shared there will be a PG 23 meeting to discuss plans and information for the end of year events. Details on location will follow.

Junior Class Report (Carla Sullivan, Suzanne Tripp): Carolyn Holt reported the class will be kicking off a food delivery service fundraiser through WECO. Dinners will be delivered each week and 10% from each dinner is donated back to the class. Anna Salerno shared there will be a junior class parent social to kickoff PG 24 on May 5th. There will be a band and information will be shared on PG 24 at the social.

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.

V. RPS Board of Education Report: Sheila Brogan

Ms. Brogan shared Mark Schwarz has been hired as the next superintendent of Ridgewood schools. He has signed a five year contract with the district. He comes from the Madison school district and is set to begin July 1st. He has started conversations with the board and will be involved with the hiring of the new business administrator. A tentative reception has been planned for May 15th for parents and the community to meet Mr. Schwartz.

Ms. Brogan shared she attended the recent Ridgewood Arts Foundation dinner where RHS bands and Jamboree parents performed to celebrate music in our community.

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.

On April 25th, the Municipal Alliance and the Ridgewood Federated HSA are sponsoring a presentation by Timothy Shoemaker on the dangers and trends of vaping.

The Ridgewood Health Department has received a grant to bring the movie and toolkit for the movie "Angst" to the district. The goal is to address anxieties at the schools through presentations, health classes and any opportunities that administrators can find to use these resources.

The BOE had previously approved the preliminary school budget at 3.1%. The BOE is reworking the budget with the interim business superintendent to keep it at 2%. The BOE is able to use the reserve accounts and improve efficiencies in the budget in order to keep current staff and not make any cuts to the budget. This will also allow the BOE to appoint new staff in the district. A theater teacher will be hired for RHS.

Two world language teachers will be hired for the district. Three special education teachers will be hired to allow for an inclusion special education teacher at each of 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.

Ms. Brogan encourages the community to attend the May 8th BOE meeting to hear the budget and give any input, questions or concerns.

VI. RHS Vice Principal Report: Dave Bailey

Mr. Bailey introduced Danielle Wood who will be appointed as the new Assistant Vice Principal at RHS. Ms. Wood was selected from a pool of over 75 applicants. Teachers, administrators, parents and students were part of the interviewing process. Ms. Wood started at RHS as a special education teacher in 2003 before transitioning to supervisor of secondary special education.

Ms. Wood shared she had a 2020 RHS graduate. Her various experiences in the district in special education and at RHS has prepared her for this role. She is looking forward to interacting more with students and becoming a fulltime faculty member on July 1st.

Ms. Wood shared she will be chaperoning the junior semi-formal on Thursday, April 20th.

Mr. Bailey addressed the lockdown that took place on April 17th at RHS. He thanked the police, staff, students and everyone involved during this threat. He shared a timeline of the lockdown to emphasize how quickly the police and school reacted. The lockdown began at 11:41 AM. Within 12 minutes of the start of the lockdown, the police determined the threat wasn't real and the staff was notified. At 12:15 PM a modified lockdown began and again the staff was notified of the current situation. At 12:36 PM the police sent an all clear and the modified lockdown was lifted. By 12:55 PM a letter from the RHS administrators was sent to the community.

Mr. Bailey emphasized the first 15 minutes of a lockdown are the most important for everyone to stay quiet and keep silent, including phones. Students were texting each other, parents and staff to feel safe but unfortunately it does also spread panic through rumors and misinformation. He stressed he understands having the phones does provide comfort but that it can also create more anxiety in these situations. The school will always focus on following the police orders and keeping everyone safe. The school will communicate on school incidents when the situation is deemed safe and proper information can be shared with the community.

Ms. Kirtane shared her experience with her class and how well they handled the lockdown. She shared she debriefed with her classes the next day and students felt the drills that are held really prepared them for the incident that just took place.

Ms. Wood shared how impressed she was with the quick reaction of students and staff. She said there was also a lot learned from this experience and ways to improve to make lockdowns even more efficient.

Mr. Bailey shared Mr. Rich Friedman will be assisting the administration at the school through graduation.

Mr. Bailey shared guidance department updates. Schools are closed on Friday, April 21st for EID.

Mr. Bailey shared the Spring Testing timeline:

March 14-17- were the NJ State Graduation Proficiency Assessment for 11th graders

May 1-12- AP Exams

May 22-23- NJSLA Science Administration for 11th graders

May 22-25- NJSLA ELA and Math regular spring Administration for 9th graders

On May 9th, there will be a virtual college speaker series to discuss the latest trends in college admissions.

On May 18th, Randy Levin will present to students on the top 10 mistakes students make on their college application essays.

On June 8th, the senior awards ceremony will take place at 7:30 PM in the campus center.

Mr. Bailey shared local scholarship information. The second part of scholarship applications are due May 2nd.

1,839 scholarship applications were submitted this year. This is up over 324 from last year.

48.8% of seniors applied for at least one scholarship.

23% of seniors applied for need-based scholarships.

Mr. Bailey shared the final exam schedule. June 14th will be the final exam review day. Exams will be held June 15th-June 21st in the reverse order from the midterm schedule.

Mr. Bailey is collecting college data from this year's class as it comes in. The college deposit day is May 1st and after student make their commitments more college data will be collected. Overall, there are more deferrals and the waitlist numbers are up this year.

The guidance department is having discussions with peers, college admission representatives, traveling to schools and researching how to best advise students and families in the college process.

The guidance department is looking to update the transcripts at the school to make them easier to read for college admissions.

Senior survey data will be shared at the June HSA meeting and a complete report will be shared with the community in July when it's available. College trends from this year will be shared to advise the next senior class.

Mr. Bailey shared some of the early take aways on this year's senior class from the college acceptances being self-reported. 93% of the class applied under an early plan (EA, ED, rolling admissions, priority). Final data will be determined in July.

VII. RHS Principal Report: Jeff Nyhuis

Mr. Bailey presented later start student survey results on behalf of Mr. Nyhuis who was unable to attend tonight's meeting.

Mr. Nyhuis and Mr. Bailey have been meeting with students in Freshman FOCUS, Sophomore FOCUS and health classes to talk with students on the later start schedule options.

After talking with the students, faculty and reviewing the collected survey results, Mr. Nyhuis will present a proposed schedule for next year by the first week of May. The school day will be 8:20 AM to 3:05 PM with period 9 ending at 3:30 PM.

The survey results indicate that with the current school start time most students are going to bed after 11PM, around 50% of students are spending 1-2 hours on homework per night, a little less than 50% of students utilize period 9 and overall 85% of students feel a later start is a positive change.

The most preferred length of class time is 50 minutes followed by 60 minutes with 80 minutes being the least preferred. The preferred schedule for the later start time is the 50, 70, 50 minute time block.

One positive feedback item is that more students will eat breakfast before school with the later start time which the administration believes will be beneficial to their learning experience throughout the day.

VIII. Questions/Discussion/Adjournment:

Carolyn Holt shared there will be a new kickoff for the Friends of RHS campaign. Past donations have allowed the HSA to fund guest speakers, student programs, guidance counselor travel trips and upgrading the sound system in the campus center. The goal for next year is to further upgrade and improve the campus center.

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

*Next RHS HSA meeting: **Tuesday, May 16, 2023- 7:30 PM** - RHS Learning Commons + Zoom*