



RHS HOME & SCHOOL ASSOCIATION Meeting Agenda Tuesday, March 15, 2022 – 7:30 PM RHS Learning Commons + Zoom (Audio)

In Attendance (in-person and ZOOM):

Valerie Auyeung, David Bailey, Kevin Bosch, Sarah Bronstein, Sheila Brogan, Kelly Buchsbaum, Hui Chun Chang, Nicholas Cho, Kelly Krumenacker-Choong, Saurabh Dani, Alyssa Fiol, Christie Fitzgerald, Aidan Holt, Carolyn Holt, Hyewon Ju, Liam Kahan, Leila Kamel, Brady Kaczmarski, Medha Kirtane, HyunJu Kwak, Maureen O'Connor Martin, John McGoff, Laura McGrath, Carla Merlino, Mary Micale, Jeff Nyhuis, Grace Oh, Reese Oh, Ruth Parks, Ariya Patel, Basil Pizzuto, Kristen Plumley, Anne Robinson, Anna Salerno, Bella Salerno, Karen Schoenherr, Audrey Shin, Devyn Siverson, Allyson Sklar, Alison Stephens, Cathy Stillwagon, Colleen Tansey, Krish Tulsidas, Vaibhavi Mistry Udeshi, Jill Vigliotti, Ann Burton Walsh, Jill Williams

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

I. Call to Order/Approval Past Minutes:

The meeting commenced at 7:33 PM with Dave Bailey beginning the student panel discussion. Meeting information was made available via eNews, emails and GroupSpot post. All virtual attendees were accepted through ZOOM meeting. A motion to approve the June minutes was made by Mary Micale and seconded by Alison Stephens. Meeting notes were unanimously approved.

II. RHS Student Panel Discussion: Dave Bailey and RHS students

Dave Bailey moderated a student panel on life at RHS now and the past couple of years. Below is a summary of the questions and answers.

The panel of students by grade: Aidan Holt (12), Liam Kahan (12), Nicholas Cho (11), Ariya Patel (11), Sarah Bronstein (10), Brady Kaczmarski (10), Bella Salerno

(10), Devyn Siversen (10), Reese Oh (9), Krish Tulsidas (9)

What's it like to be a student at RHS in March 2022?

Seniors are feeling its celebratory with the end of the year coming and activities and plans in place. They are happy to be back in-person and connecting with students and teachers again in classes.

Juniors are feeling more stressed with AP exams and ACT and SAT testing ahead.

Sophomores are feeling more engaged in school with teachers, peers and friends. It feels more like what the high school experience should feel like compared to last year. It feels like the first normal year since eighth grade for many of the students.

Freshman are happy to be starting high school in person and to be able to connect with new peers and teachers.

What have you learned most about yourself the last two years and how have you grown?

Seniors learned they are more interactive learners after being remote. Being able to work with other students definitely helps you to learn more. Seniors learned to be more flexible and to be able to cope with what comes at you when the learning environment changes.

Juniors realize to not take anything for granted anymore after going through remote learning and needing to shift from school to home. They feel you can do better in school when in person. Being in person is so important to build relationships and experience high school life.

Sophomores felt transitioning from middle school to high school during Covid was difficult. School is easier when you can interact with teachers and peers.

Freshman realized how much school means to them after not being able to be in person and have the normal interactions that come with being in school. They never realized how much they "wanted" to be in school after being remote.

The best part of RHS?

Seniors feel the staff treats them as adults with the open campus and free periods. As a result, a trust between teachers and students exists. They feel having the freedom that they are given at RHS will allow them to know what it will be like in college and how to manage better as a student.

Juniors feel the period nine opportunity really helps students learn and figure out issues they have in classes. They enjoy being able to plan their own schedules and have flexibility with taking classes that focus on their interests.

Sophomores feel the free periods help with building time management skills and to develop a good work ethic. They feel having a great relationship with the teachers makes them feel they can go to them and ask questions. The open campus and free periods have been great opportunities to meet new peers. Communication between the school and students is important and supported.

Freshman feel the free period and open campus teaches responsibility.

What ways can the teachers/school do to improve your experience at RHS?

Seniors feel that if you are a music student for example, it's hard to fit in all of your classes with the class requirements and music periods. It doesn't always leave many options for fitting in required classes or ones that are of interest. Allowing students to take classes that aren't always for specific grades would also afford more flexibility with class schedules. Students felt teachers reached out to students more individually during Covid to check-in and it would be great if this happened more frequently now that school is back to normal.

Juniors feel the schedule with classes and activities is very busy compared to the last two years with Covid. The 80 minute periods are long and it's hard to stay focused for that amount of time. The ability to take certain classes during different grades has been a drawback.

Sophomores feel a later school start time could be beneficial because after school activities and homework keeps students up late. Students have also seen with the later start this week due to the junior testing schedule that they are more alert and less tired. Students feel getting more assistance with planning electives for

the four years in high school would make the selection process easier. Students feel changing the schedule to eliminate the long block periods would be beneficial.

Freshman would like to see a later school start time. The transition from middle school to high school was difficult adjusting to a heavy class load, juggling athletics and activities.

Thoughts on Final Exams in June?

Seniors feel the finals are valuable but most just want to pass the class and get an acceptable grade to graduate.

Juniors feel many students have not experienced because they've been canceled the last two years so it's hard to know what to expect and how to prepare. It's going to be tough preparing for finals and AP exams.

Sophomores question how much the finals measure academic success because there is a disconnect in studying for them.

How has communication changed ?

Seniors feel most teachers communicate well and want you to do well so they keep you informed and on track. Some feel going to period nine is hard because you don't feel comfortable seeing them one on one after being remote. The absence list for teachers being posted has helped students feel prepared for the next day and what to expect.

Juniors feel many teachers wait to put grades in Skyward until the night before the quarter ends which is difficult for students to know how they are doing in the class. In these instances, students don't always know how they are doing on tests and assignments before the end of the semester. Teachers need to understand that students have more than one class when assigning homework so students are not overloaded in one class. Teachers should communicate more with each other so the homework doesn't pile up on students.

Sophomores feel there is more trust between teachers and students because when it was remote it was hard for teachers to trust students weren't cheating on

tests when they were given remotely. Communication has also gotten better with not wearing masks. The pizza lunch organized by Mr. Pizzuto was a nice way to show community between the staff and students. Sometimes classwork and tests pile up at the end of the quarter and that's hard on students.

From your perspective as seniors, juniors, sophomores and freshman, what are you most looking forward to coming up at RHS?

Seniors are excited for graduation, prom and college. Knowing next year probably won't have as much uncertainty going into the next school year is something to look forward to. The last two years haven't given as much opportunity to connect with students so it's nice to be able to do that now.

Juniors are happy the sports are back with regular seasons after shortened and canceled seasons the last two years. They're excited to see all the hard work that was put in this school year and see it pay off at the end of the year. Students are excited to begin the college process next year.

Sophomores are excited to get their drivers permits. They are happy to have normal spring activities that aren't virtual or socially distanced. It's a nice time to enjoy being a sophomore before college preparations pick up next year.

Freshman are looking forward to the next three years of what's ahead at RHS and the summer.

III. RHS Faculty Reports: Medha Kirtane, Ruth Parks

Ms. Parks reminded parents to check Skyward as we are half way through the third quarter to view any outstanding grades/assignments and progress to date.

Ruth reported the successful Super Science Saturday program that took place earlier this month.

Ms. Kirtane discussed the concerns of students participating in online "mask

fishing”. This is a platform where students rate masked student faces online and again after they are taken off. This was a discussion amongst students/teachers as masks have recently come off in school and there are new challenges students are facing after two years of masking.

Thanks to the HSA for the refreshments at the staff enrichment days.

Youth Art month is occurring at the BOE through April 4th. March 23rd is a designated evening viewing time to see RHS student artwork that is displayed.

The “Maroon and White” exhibit is taking place on March 24th. The dance exhibit will be held on April 7th.

The Asian Festival will take place on April 1st.

New Players presents “9 to 5” the weekend of March 19th in the Little Theater.

In athletics, the Boys Varsity Basketball team won the state semi-finals for the first time since 2005.

The Boys and Girls Track Team won the state sectionals.

The competitive Cheer Team took first place in their recent competition.

The Girls Flag Football team will be starting this spring.

The second quarter Maroon Awards were given out to 14 students across the grade levels. This award is given to students that exemplify and embody what Ridgewood High School is about through simple gestures. These students have done great things in the school and reflect what RHS wants their graduates to look like.

IV. RHS Student Reports: Audrey Shin

Audrey Shin reported the seniors are thankful for the opportunities the staff and parents have made to celebrate their senior events. The time and effort

everyone put into making the fashion show memorable for the seniors is felt by all. It's been great creating memories for the end of their senior year.

The seniors celebrated 100 days until graduation by handing out M&M candies to students to commemorate this special milestone.

The upperclassman will participate in RHS Rap alumni events to learn more from RHS graduates and their experiences in an effort to guide students in their future endeavors after graduation.

The senior class has been having pickle ball tournaments during lunch time. It's been fun for the students and staff.

V. RHS Class Reports:

Senior Class Report (class of 2022): Kelly Buchsbaum reported for the senior class. The fashion show on March 13th was a great success. The PG 22 group is currently working on their build for this year's PG event.

Junior Class Report (class of 2023): Kelly Buchsbaum reported for the junior class. The class will be holding a social on May 21st. Details to be announced.

Sophomore Class Report (class of 2024): Collen Tansey reported the sophomore class spring parent social will be held on April 22nd at Park West Loft from 8-11 PM. RSVP now.

Freshman Class Report (class of 2025): Kelly Buchsbaum reported for the freshman class. The class has a spring social being planned. Details to be announced.

VI. RHS HSA Executive Board Reports: Kelly Buchsbaum

Kelly Buchsbaum reports that Jamboree was a huge success and record breaking funds were raised to send RHS students to college.

Carla Merlino reports the Friends of RHS campaign is over half way to their goal of \$20,000. Thank you to all who have donated. There's still time to donate. Funds raised go towards funding authors/speakers and replacing

materials/equipment at RHS.

VII. RHS HSA Committee Reports:

There were no new committee updates at this time.

VIII. Nominating Committee: Mary Micale

Mary Micale announced the slate for the 2022-2023 RHS HSA executive board.

President: Carolyn Holt

1st Vice President: Jeff Nyhuis

2nd Vice President: Amy Beiersdorf

Treasurer: Tara Briganti

Assistant Treasurer: Alison Stephens

Secretary: Colleen Tansey

Communications Director: Laura McGrath

Development: Maureen O'Connor Martin and Valerie Auyeung

Kelly Buchsbaum thanked the nominating committee for putting together the new slate to be voted in at the April meeting. Thank you to this year's nominating committee members: Mary Micale, Laura Johnson, Daria Linnington and Kristin Shechter.

IX. RPS Board of Education Report: HyunJu Kwak

Ms Kwak praised the Jamboree production for their dedication and funds raised. The production felt like watching a Broadway show.

At the BOE special meeting held on March 14th the business office presented the preliminary 2022-2023 school budget.

Governor Murphy presented the state budget on March 8th. On March 10th RPS received their state aid of 5.93 million. This is a small increase from last year. The main components of the aide are slated for transportation, security and special education.

The district has been able to build up some reserves to absorb any reductions that the state has assessed the district under Chapter 44. This reduction impacts areas such as healthcare. The district is appealing the numbers. Regardless of the appeal, the district will not need to do any cost cutting because of the reserves.

This information is all preliminary based on the outcome of the appeal and the final numbers will be presented in mid to late April.

The Late Start committee is working on getting the word out to all the schools to learn the impact at each level. The committee has paused the survey to tweak the way it is presented to parents in a way that outlines the impacts of the times and scheduling that will change with the late start.

X. RHS Principal's Report: Jeff Nyhuis

Mr. Nyhuis thanked Jamboree for the large amount of funds raised and for a great show.

Project Interact raised over \$6,000 for the Ukraine. One student dropped off ten \$100 bills. There's also a collection of medical supplies and baby items currently underway.

The last teacher enrichment day was notable in that each department was able to share highlights of class happenings, student events, organized activities and celebrations.

Mr. Nyhuis noted he has been working with Ann Robinson for over 12 years on

the Late Start initiative. Together they created a video to highlight how the high school is ready to start and implement the late start. There are different schedules with varying instructional times that are possible ways to implement the late start.

XI. RHS Assistant Principal's Report: Basil Pizzuto

Mr. Pizzuto shared it's now been two years living with Covid and the students have adjusted to all of the challenges and changes that have been made during this time. Students are happy the way school has shifted to more normalcy.

Whenever there is a drill held at RHS, parents will now be notified it took place.

Mr. Pizzuto is happy to report all end of year activities are on. The prom is being held on June 3rd. Next year the prom will be changing venues and will not be held on a boat to accommodate student sports/activities schedules.

The sophomore class has missed many of the usual grade activities since they started at RHS so they will be planning and participating in a series of class activities to promote team building.

The freshman class had a movie night.

Lauren DePinto and Mr. Pizzuto hosted a webinar to discuss mental health in the schools.

Sophomore FOCUS has allowed the students get to know the administrators.

The Switzerland trip was a great success and went off without any issues. The Central Europe trip is still on and will be adjusted if necessary based on what develops out East.

XII. RHS Assistant Principal's Report: Dave Bailey

The juniors are currently taking the NJ State Graduation Proficiency Assessment.

The freshman will take the NJSLA ELA test the week of April 25th-28th with a delayed opening for the other classes.

The juniors will take the NJSLA science component April 25th-26th.

AP exams will be given May 2nd -13th.

The teacher class recommendation appeals process is ongoing through April 8th.

Sophomore FOCUS was a great success getting to know the students and administrators. There were five different sessions in the series and hopefully students found it helpful.

XIII. Questions/Discussion/Adjournment:

Kelly shared Green Ridgewood is hosting an event on Sunday, April 10th for Earth Day and a daffodil festival.

Adjournment: Meeting was adjourned at 9:10 PM. Minutes respectfully submitted by Colleen Tansey, Secretary

*Next RHS HSA meeting: **Tuesday, April 19, 2022** - 7:30 PM - RHS Learning Commons + Zoom*