



RIDGEWOOD
HIGH SCHOOL

RHS HOME & SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

Meeting Agenda

Tuesday, October 5, 2021 – 7:30 PM

RHS Learning Commons + Zoom

In Attendance (in-person and ZOOM):

Ann Alvarado, Valerie Auyeung, David Bailey, Amy Beiersdorf, Sara Beinstein, Lynn Benson, Tara Briganti, Sheila Brogan, Kelly Buchsbaum, Hui-Chun Chang, Kelly Krumenacker-Choong, Saurabh Dani, Elizabeth Frers, Shulamit Gershenson, Elizabeth Gifford, Hayley Gluck, Joan Guerrero, Julie Hamon, Isabella Harellick, Alison Harris, Susan Harrison, Joseph Haskins, John Hofman, Carolyn Holt, Andrea Hutchins, Laura Johnson, Cris Kaufman, Oksoon Kim, Medha Kirtane, Stacey Kliesch, Karen Kundig, HyunJu Kwak, Nicole Liu, Joseph Madison, Susan Madison, Muhammad Mahmoud, Erin Mannion, Maureen O'Connor Martin, Lilia Martinez, Anne McAskin, Liz McCarthy, Laura McGrath, Caroline Meier, Carla Merlino, Mary Micale, Jeff Nyhuis, Christine O'Meara, Ruth Parks, Diala Pharaon, Mary Pilla, Sandy Pires, Basil Pizzuto, Lisa Sands, Mike Scali, Kristin Shechter, Alanna Shevak, Audrey Shin, Karyn Shoenherr, Alison Stephens, Cathy Stillwagon, Alina Swanson, Colleen Tansey, Jen Tesseyman, Lee Tomoko, Laura Yachimski, Kate Yates

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

I. Call to Order/Approval Past Minutes:

Kelly Buchsbaum called the meeting to order at 7:32 PM. Meeting information was made available via eNews, emails and GroupSpot posts. All virtual attendees were accepted through ZOOM meeting. A motion to approve the June minutes was made by Mary Micale and seconded by Sandy Pires. Meeting notes were unanimously approved.

II. RHS Faculty Reports: Medha Kirtane, Ruth Parks

Students and faculty are happy to be back and in-person for all classes this year.

There have been a few events taking place in the Learning Commons. First, Banned Books Week featured a curated collection of books that have been censored/banned over the years and provided discussions in the English classes. Hispanic Heritage month (September 15th-October 15th) features books celebrating Hispanic heritage. Students have participated with faculty to make displays for these events.

A really exciting outdoor Club Fair took place on September 3rd to allow students to learn about the various clubs at the high school. There was a great turnout from the student body.

There was a 911 remembrance with students participating in discussions in social studies classes. The Learning Commons also hosted a panel of remembrance through photos and text.

The Marching Band had their family showcase (9/18) at Kenilworth field and have been playing at the football games and placed fourth in the recent Band Competition at MetLife Stadium.

In sports updates, students and faculty are happy to have the turf field repaired. The first football game (10/1) and Super Soccer Saturday (10/2) were able to take place. Boys soccer is going to hold their upcoming senior night. Girls tennis won their quarter final and the girls volleyball team won the Mustang Invitational. The cross country team swept all levels at their home opener at Darlington.

III. **RHS Student Reports: Audrey Shin, Isabella Harellick**

Audrey Shin is currently a senior and a returning HSA student representative. She reports the student body is happy to be back in-person. The student government is prioritizing student mental health to help make the transition from virtual to in-person learning. They have partnered with the organization Stigma Free and distributed stress balls and pencils to bring awareness to student mental health.

Isabella Harellick is currently a senior and returning HSA student representative. She reports that volunteer and outreach clubs are all in full swing and students are actively participating in activities in school and in the community.

IV. **Special Guests: RPS Board of Education candidates:**

Sheila Brogan, Chris Kaufman, HyunJu Kwak, Susan Madison and Muhammad Mahmoud are all running in the upcoming RPS BOE school election. The candidates each spoke for five minutes and can be viewed on the recorded ZOOM meeting. Please remember to vote on November 2, 2021.

V. **RHS Class Reports / Introductions:**

Senior Class Report (class of 2022): Susan Harrison shared the history of Project Graduation and updates for the Senior Class. PG is a substance-free event held on graduation night with a dinner dance and themed event at BFMS. It also raises funds for an alumni brunch in November and organizes a "White Dress Closet" to loan graduation dresses to future students. The PG kick-off meeting is on October 20th in the Learning Commons and a parent social is planned for October 28th at Park West Loft. A spirit wear sale was held earlier this year and future no-cook nights and a holiday boutique are being planned.

Junior Class Report (class of 2023): Sandy Pires reports that there will be an upcoming apparel sale in October and a junior parents Kentucky Derby themed social is being planned for May 7, 2022. There are future plans for no-cook nights and they are selling current inventory of RHS masks.

Sophomore Class Report (class of 2024): Colleen Tansey reports a spirit wear sale is planned for October with delivery before the holidays. A Thanksgiving flower arrangement fundraiser is planned for November with Piece and Pollen.

Freshman Class Report (class of 2025): Lauren Radossich reports the Freshman Class parent social will be held at her home on October 14th. A no-cook fundraiser will be held with Catchy Café for dinner trays in October and November. There are future plans for a spirit wear sale.

VI. RHS HSA Executive Board Reports:

Kelly Buchsbaum thanked the parents for donating funds for the welcome back barbecue that was held September 3rd. She thanked Basil Pizzuto for planning this special welcome back event for the students and faculty.

Kelly introduced the 2021-2022 RHS executive board:

1 st Vice President	Jeff Nyhuis
2 nd Vice-President	Amy Beiersdorf
Treasurer + Assistant Treasurer	Nicole Liu and Tara Briganti
Secretary	Colleen Tansey
Communications Director	Carolyn Holt
Development	Carla Merlino and Maureen O'Connor
Martin	

Kelly encouraged all to sign-up for GroupSpot. It is free to download the app. To help the HSA provide special events and activities for RHS, please pay your \$30 dues which also gives you access to the school directory. Access to the directory begins in October so sign-up now.

Kelly announced the financial report will be shared at the November meeting.

Kelly shared two scholarship committee opportunities. The College Club is open to women in town to help North Jersey young women earn scholarships. Jamboree is an annual show put together by high school parents to fundraise for scholarships. They are currently conducting tryouts. \$206,000 was raised last year. They provided 39 scholarships to high school students and 1 memorial scholarship.

VII. RHS HSA Committee Reports:

Kelly introduced the following committee chairs and shared updates:

RHS Cares: Nancy Kennedy and Lisa Faris are this year's chairs. Any staff member or student's family needing assistance in times of crisis, please reach out. Meals, errands and anything else needed besides financial support.

Hospitality: Katrina Dudley will chair this committee.

Booster Calendar: Caroline Oddy is chairing. Calendars are available for presale now for \$12 and will be ready for distribution in a few weeks.

VIII. RHS Principal's Report Jeff Nyhuis:

High School Homecoming weekend is taking place the weekend of 10/8 with tours of the building for reunion classes.

Jeff shared some faculty and staff learned more about the history of Irwin B. Somerville (former principal and superintendent) and his impact on the district from visits with his grandchildren this past month at RHS.

Jeff thanked the HSA for providing coffee on staff enrichment days.

There have only been 3 cases of COVID in RHS. Protocols are working, staff and students have been compliant.

Alternate schedule meetings are taking place to gather information. Looking at schedules and how to best incorporate a later start time that meets the needs of the students.

IX. RHS Assistant Principal's Report Basil Pizzuto:

Thank you for the support for the welcome back student barbecue. It was a great success and tied in well with the club fair. Thanks also to Pomptonian and the custodians for their roles in making the event a success.

The student life hub is still available under student resources on the school website.

The student government is in full force with freshman elections. Meetings are back in person.

The senior prom is being planned. Students are involved with touring alternate venue locations.

The sophomore class would like to hold a class event to bring them together since they didn't have many experiences freshman year.

Thanks to Audrey Shin for her work behind bringing Stigma Free to RHS. She designed brochures and brought in resources.

Working on keeping the mental health model up to date. Kevin Feeley will be working with RHS students on crisis counseling and Laura DePinto will be coordinating all K-12.

ID cards are delayed because of an ink shortage and hopefully students will have them soon.

Rod Bolton is the new school photographer contracted this year for student pictures. They take several photos at the sitting rather than offer retakes. Currently, retakes are only offered at their office.

Lunch service has been delayed because of a staff shortage. Trying to find ways to help alleviate the lunch delays. The courtyard will be opening soon for additional lunch space for students.

International trips update: The China trip is not being organized right now due to COVID. The German exchange will take place next year. The French exchange is being planned for this year with the French most likely visiting here. The summer Global Challenge is not planned as of yet because of reorganization at the company. The Switzerland STEM and Central Europe trips are set to go this year.

Vaping alarm occurrences have dropped drastically since students are back in school full-time.

Thanks to parents for staying out of the parking lot and alleviating a lot of congestion around the school.

X. RHS Assistant Principal's Report David Bailey:

Guidance update: 472 seniors are beginning the college application process. The senior FOCUS class offers attention and time to work through the college application process and review local scholarships.

A senior parent night was held on 9/23 and a financial aid meeting on 9/28.

The SAT was held on 10/9

Upcoming dates:

10/17 PSAT

10/23 ACT

10/28 junior parent meeting

The guidance website is currently being updated to be clearer and organized for parents and students.

The college counselors goal is to allow them to tour 500 schools in the next 5 years to be able to better guide students and families in the college selection process.

XI. RPS Board of Education Report Sheila Brogan:

There have been 36 positive COVID cases since start of year. None have been transmitted in school.

The BOE authorized purchase of HEPA air purifiers for cafeterias, gymnasiums and nurse's offices. Some are mobile for large group use.

The BOE has contracted with Wellcare to provide COVID testing for staff and students. A mobile unit will begin testing October 18th. Governor Murphy has mandated staff be tested weekly if not vaccinated and parents can choose to have students tested.

The new apartments in town and the impact on enrollment has seen 16 new students which is less than the 21 predicted. There may be an increase after the Sealfon's building is complete but it seems less families are occupying these buildings.

Brookside, RHS stadium and Stevens fields are up and running for sports, P.E. classes and events. Concern over cost to refurbish the fields has been explained that the BOE's insurance covers expenses after the \$50,000 deductible is met and the BOE has also applied to FEMA for assistance from the damage caused by Hurricane Ida.

In November paperwork will be submitted for how the funds for the American Rescue Plan will be used by the district.

The BOE is addressing how students are doing emotionally, socially and academically. Start Strong Assessments are being conducted to assess students in all schools.

District goals have been set and are very student-centered to track learning progress, incorporate diversity, equity and inclusion in the curriculum.

The BOE will also continue to evaluate the alternative school schedule.

Answers to questions previously submitted from parents (presented by Carolyn Holt) Jeff Nyhuis answered questions:

What is the status of the fields? All of the school fields are back up and running at this time.

Will field trips happen this year? Field trips are being planned and as long as it's safe to travel, they will happen.

Why are Juniors not taking the Start Strong testing? They will be tested in the Spring.

How is data on testing going to be used? Data will be returned within 30 days so we can help students sooner and help with class placement for next year. Students are tested on last year's standards.

Are there plans for other FOCUS classes? Sophomore FOCUS is starting this year to meet with students and a possible junior FOCUS class could be in the future.

Do you see a trend of less kids registering for SAT because of less colleges requiring them since COVID? PSAT registration is down. More students are taking the ACT. More students who are not strong test takers are opting not to take the tests.

XII. **Adjournment:**

Meeting was adjourned at 9:17PM.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Colleen Tansey, Secretary