

**Ridgewood High School
Home and School Association
Meeting Minutes for November 11, 2014**

In Attendance: Jennifer Hamlet, Joan Gaidimas, Kelly Gioia, Annette Testa, Kim Lucky, Laurie Jordan, Tom Gorman, Jeff Nyhuis, Basil Pizzuto, Gina McDade, Kristie Stuart, Mercedes Vidal, Maggie Holland, Joanne Trattner, Cristy Sippel, Rosemary Chersi, Lori Weil, Keri Hwang, Jennifer Bottiglieri, Helen, Dolan, Jeanne Johnson, Tina Telesco, Laura Miller, Colleen Trevisan, Betty Eng, Kate Mancini, Nicole Tedesco, Harry Bourque, Amy Bourque, Allison Rogers, Enid Joseph, Jay Klatsky, Kristen Walicki, Maureen Chiaramonte, Hema Chaurasia, Sheila Brogan, Bethy Clay, Anneke Meinardi, Kate Mancini, Cathy Stillwagon, Mitra Basu, Kate Yates, Catherine Venturini, Ruth Parks, Angele Ekert, Kathy Marshall, Kim Reis, Lynn Granski, Ann Cabay-Walsh, Peter Goldberg, Nadine Macolino, Jill Feeney, Debbie Jacobs, Jennifer Ban, Pauline Cooper, Pat Inlander, Brett Inlander,

Welcome: Jennifer Hamlet called the meeting to order at 7:12 pm and welcomed all attendees. Thank you to Learning Commons committee for their vision and hard work. Jean O'Toole will speak about scholarship tips.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes from the October 7, 2014 meeting were submitted and approved. First approval by Lori Weil and second by Mitra Basu. In an effort to save paper, multiple copies of the HSA minutes will not be printed. HSA minutes will continue to be posted on our website and sent through eNews.

Class Reports:

2015 Project Graduation

Joan Gaidimas reported on behalf of co-chairs, Tara Callaghan and Rosie McCooe. Next meeting will be held on Thursday, November 13. 50/50 raffle winner be pulled. Selling Innisbrook wrapping paper for holidays. School code is 103094. They are looking for build out space closer than last year's warehouse in Rutherford. Space is needed from February - June 19. We pay insurance.

2016 - Junior Class

Cristy Sippel reported that they are planning a parent cocktail party for this winter.

2017 - Sophomore Class

Kate Mancini reported that a parent social is being planned. Fundraiser has been postponed.

2018 - Freshman Class

Helen Dolan reported that banner sale is finished and went well. On January 23, 2015, there will be a parent social at Park West loft space.

Student Liaison Report: Sam McCarthy and Will Holland

Learning Commons is a great space and constantly filled. Being used by classes. Student government holding Thanksgiving Food Drive for Social Service Association of Ridgewood. Hoping that each student will donate at least one can of food. Chromebooks are working well. More teachers and students are incorporating Google classroom and Google docs.

Principal's Report – Tom Gorman

Learning Commons has been open for 2 weeks. Still a lot of punch list items. 99% complete. 200 students can use Learning Commons. Open from 7:15 am – 4:15 pm.

One third of Chromebooks are being used at one time. Teachers and students trying to find balance.

Theater - *Light up the Sky* just completed. *A Christmas Carol* will be in production in December. *Shrek the Musical* will be produced this spring.

RHS athletics had great season. Almost every team made it to the states and progressed at various levels. Cross Country both boys and girls have won state sectionals for 22 consecutive years.

First quarter ended. Second quarter started on Monday.

Assistant Principal Report – Basil Pizzuto

Policing policy of single period absences. Some students may be missing a class in order to miss taking a test. If going to a doctor's appointment, student should bring in a doctor's note. Parents should let GA know earlier when student will be missing a class. RHS has wonderful daily attendance but has to report data to state by period. A reminder about single period absence policy will be sent to parents and students

Discussed possibility of hiring Dr. Michael Fowlin, a psychologist, dramatic theater actor and poet, to address RHS students. Hoping on financial assistance from RHS HSA to pay for speaker. Dr. Fowlin met with peer counselors this past summer and they were quite impressed with him. Peer Counselors think it would be beneficial for Dr. Fowlin to speak with entire school.

Besides Thanksgiving Food Drive for SSA, RHS also buys gifts for SSA families. Trying to get our students more involved.

Assistant Principal Report – Jeff Nyhuis

Financial aid meeting is Thursday, November 20. Speaker discusses how to complete FASA form. College application update - RHS has processed 2050 transcripts or an average of 4.4 per student. 700 teacher recommendations have been completed. 312 seniors are applying to a 4-year college. 100 seniors have applied Early Decision with 25 to Ivy League schools. Seniors have applied Early Action to 244 schools.

Faculty Report – Catherine Venturini

Learning Commons allows for studious relaxation. It's very different from the old library.

Students should work on dossier outlining wonderful things you have done which helps when teachers write recommendations

This year, there's been a lot of sharing between faculty members. There's a lot of energy and it's an exciting time to teach.

Guest Speaker: Jean Fedora O'Toole

Scholarship Strategies – Finding and Winning the Money You Need

Her business web site is www.connections101.com

There are over 150,000 scholarships nationwide. Scholarships are not only available for academics and athletics. Scholarships are available for every grade level. For example, Google offers a scholarship starting in kindergarten.

There is no cap in scholarship money.

Your student should set a number of scholarships he/she will apply for. It's a numbers game.

Apply for different scholarships. Dig out every essay and poem that you have written in the past

on which you had received a B or higher. College essays can also be used to apply for scholarships.

Create a search engine list. Go to Barnes & Noble with this list. Look through scholarship books in College Search section. Write down information for scholarships using the index.

Find scholarships that take work to complete because less students apply for these scholarships. Start local when applying for scholarships followed by state and lastly national.

December 3 – RHS students are meeting with counselors to discuss local scholarships. List is available on Naviance.

Make a list of every family member and have your child call to let family members know that he/she is looking for scholarships.

Committee Reports:

Jamboree

Laurie Jordan spoke about how Jamboree gives over \$100,000 a year in scholarship funds to RHS students. Some scholarships are based on need. Parents do not need to participate in Jamboree in order for students to apply for scholarship.

Smart Balance

Lori Weil reported that Smart Balance Initiative was created to address and try to mitigate the stress felt by our high schoolers.

Kids struggle with a tremendous amount of stress and pressure, have lots of homework and very little free time, struggle to balance extracurricular activities with schoolwork and don't have enough time for sleep or family time

Anne Robinson, who is a parent and a pediatrician, has worked with the district and RHS administrators for many years trying to educate our community about the health requirements of our students and to create policies that will benefit the entire school community.

Some of the policies include homework free breaks, sleep-in or enrichment Wednesdays and most recently, the summer black out period and a 3-hr time limit on after school activities

Committee has been trying to move forward with a 2-week summer black out for all sports and activities. An overwhelming number of families are asking for 2 weeks, especially families with 2 sets of parents. Given that our kids lose their February break and gain a week in the summer, parents were hoping for the 2 weeks

Disappointed that one of the weeks given this summer is final exam week – don't really consider that "free" or "family" time.

Many parents are concerned about the wishy-washy policy surrounding homework free breaks.

April break should be homework free, especially as kids no longer have February break.

A new initiative we have been discussing that came from the students, is shortening class time and adding minutes onto period 9 at the end of the day. Students are frustrated they can't get the extra help they need in 15 minutes, or feel rushed to get to a practice, and it would be great to extend period 9

Principal's Advisory Group has asked for more time in period 9. Perhaps shorten class periods from 61 minutes to 59 minutes in order to make period 9 longer. When polled, the majority of teachers favored this idea. Can period 9 rotate with the schedule?

Discussed issue with student athletes feeling stressed that they had to be ready and on the field prior to the official start of 3:30 pm practice.

There's a conflict with academics and sports. Students who attend DECA and AMSTUD trips are often penalized for missing practice. Games should not be scheduled same days as SAT and ACT testing dates.

Discussed that athletes who miss PE due to a meet or game have to make up the run even though they are running in their game.

If RHS had 2-week summer black out for all sports, we could lead the way for other districts!

Board of Education Report:

Sheila Brogan reported that district has a new business administrator, Alfredo Aguilar

Nick Scerbo is retiring

Parents should attend Community Outreach Programs at BF from 7 – 9 pm:

November 18 – Battling the Prescription Drug and Heroin Epidemic

January 13 – Social and Emotional Learning and Gender Issues

March 5 – Exercise and the Brain

April 21 – Raising Financially Literate Children

May 26 – Special Education Learning Issues

Reminder to be sent out to parents. Suggested recording event and allowing parents to watch from a link.

Executive Board Updates:

President – Jennifer Hamlet

Thank you to directory committee – Bonnie Cornell, Ajanta Kumar, Erin Ades and Karen Feder

Thank you to Janice Mazzo, Emily Downes and Ellen Seaver for hosting the Faculty Breakfast

Executive Board earmarked \$20,000 in reserve HSA funds for campus center improvements, 2 fitness equipment, science equipment and fund speaker

Ridgewood Library is offering a free online test prep program for PSAT, SAT, SAT II, ACT and AP

Treasurer's Report – Kelly Gioia

2014-2015 RHS HSA budget was discussed.

Directory sales amounted to \$19,030 which includes ad sales

Development – Laurie Jordan

Project Interact students and Laurie will help sign up shoppers to RHS account at Stop & Shop

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm

Respectively submitted by Annette Testa