

Ridgewood High School Home and School Association

Meeting Minutes for November 9, 2010

In attendance: Arlene Sarappo, Ines Bunza, Carol Rapaport, Vicky Herbert, Joyce Suss, Beth Freed, Arty Freed, Jane Stone, Jaime Federick, Carol Olson, Mindy Dauber, Aurelie Frey, Joo-Ae Kim, Tara Callaghan, Shari Seroka, Theresa Callaghan, Tracy DuBois, Kate Douglass, Tracy Autera, Sara Erwin, Linda Tarzian, Gina McDade, Beth Holmes, Diane Nathanson, Linda Weisberger, Betty Eng, Terry Caliendo, Jane Lum, Melissa Elliot, Christine Eckels, Mary Casale, Barbara Kuhn, Kathy Goodman, Elizabeth Resnick, Emily Young

Welcome and Approval of Minutes: Arlene Sarappo, HSA President, welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order. At tonight's meeting, we will first hear the Administrators' Updates and then view the video presented by the Global Learning Project. A discussion led by Jeff Nyhuis and Dr. Anne Robinson, pediatrician and parent at RHS, will follow the video. Arlene also reported that Jack Lorenz was making good recovery after knee surgery.

The minutes from the October 12, 2010 HSA meeting were voted upon and approved.

Administrators' Updates: Jeff Nyhuis said that about half of the RHS families reviewed their children's mid-quarter progress reports which were available online through Skyward. A letter will be sent home this week to all families to inform them that report card grades would be posted on Skyward only; no hard copies of report cards will be mailed. Student test, quiz, and homework assignment grades will also become available for parents to review on Skyward later on in the school year. Student tardies and absences are being recorded on Skyward and are available online.

Basil Pizzuto said that RHS faculty continues to explore ways to improve dialogue among students and teachers. Michael Fallon, who has been well received by RHS students in previous years, will present a program in December on bullying. A plan for school spirit t-shirts for every student at RHS is also underway. Basil said that the misbehaviors by a small group of students at the last school dance has served as a reminder that there is more work to be done by teachers, families, and students.

Guidance Update: Jeff Nyhus reported that 57.5% of the senior class has already submitted college applications online through edocs and 1,452 requests for transcripts have been requested. He also gave a summary of the changes in the report card grading system, which was modified to give a more accurate and consistent report of student performance. Quarterly letter grades will now include "+" and "-". Final grades will be determined by averaging the quarterly numerical grades and will be reported as a letter grade. Parents will be notified about the changes in a letter from Mr. Lorenz.

Jeff also said that open grade book on Skyward will be available to parents in mid December. Parents will be able to review their children's grades on assignments, tests, and quizzes. It is hoped that the availability of this information will promote conversation and discussion among students and parents.

Faculty Update: Diana Capetola thanked parents for the Faculty Breakfast on November 1. She also said that RHS '99 graduate Christopher Heaney had met with students today to discuss Cradle of Gold, his book about Machu Pichu. Mr. Heaney donated a copy of the book to the school library.

Board of Education Report: Laurie Goodman summarized some of the issues from the most recent Board of Education meeting. There is discussion to move the Board of Education election to November. If moved, it would eliminate a budget vote in April if the budget is at cap. The Board also discussed Governor Christie's proposal to place a cap on superintendents' salaries in New Jersey. Progress continues on the installation of field lights and completion of landscaping on Stevens Field. Once completed, testing will be done to ensure that light levels are in compliance with street light levels. The BF track is nearly complete, with sod and bleachers installed. The final layer of surface material on the track will be applied in warmer weather.

View Global Learning Video Report on Ridgewood High School: A group of international students from the Global Learning Program visited RHS last year as part of their study of several different schools around the world. The video highlights the tremendous pressures experienced by many RHS students to succeed at school and go to college.

Discussion and response to video: Jeff Nyhuis noted that what had begun initially for him as a study on the amount of homework assigned by teachers at RHS has since evolved into a broader and more complex discussion of our children's overall well-being and the values placed by our community on school success, grades, learning, extra curricular activities, family time, and socialization with peers. Helping our children to live truly healthy, balanced lives will require dialogue and effort among teachers, administrators, parents, and students.

Two students present at the discussion commented on the difficulties of managing the demands of schoolwork, sports, and clubs, and expressed frustration at not having sufficient time in their lives to relax with family and friends. Dr. Robinson emphasized the critical importance of sleep in the lives of young people in order for them to maintain health and function optimally during school.

In addition to watching the Global Learning video, RHS faculty will also view the documentary, [Race to Nowhere](#). The documentary will also be shown to any interested parents on December 6 at George Washington Middle School with a discussion to follow. Jeff and Basil expressed their hope that viewing these two films will create opportunities for further discussion in our schools. Ann commented that the goal is to bring our culture of achievement to a healthier place.

Executive Board Updates:

Sara Erwin reported that the RHS directories have been mailed out to families. Directories and family dues raised a total of \$19,845 for HSA. A big thank you to the volunteers who contributed to this effort!

PG 2011: Arty Freed said that senior class parents have responded positively to the many PG fundraisers. The gift wrap sale was a great success and yielded nearly \$3000. Casino Night is scheduled for Friday, November 19, and the cost is \$75 per person to attend. Please see the Project Graduation (www.pg2011.rhshsa.org) website for more details.

Class of 2012: The first shipment of t-shirts for Juniors has arrived with another shipment expected as email orders are placed.

Hospitality: RHS is pleased to announce that Tracy Autera and Carol Rapaport will head up the Hospitality Committee.

RHS Cares: Please go to the website www.lotsahelpinghands.com if you would like to sign up to contribute meals to Ridgewood families in need.

Ridgewood Education Foundation: Liz Gordon said that teacher grants would be announced at the next Board of Education meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:25 p.m.

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 11 at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Emily Young.