

Ridgewood High School Home and School Association
Meeting Minutes for January 11, 2011

In Attendance: Don Bushell, Adele Bushell, Vicky Angus, Elisa Cerrina, Theresa Callaghan, Carol Rapaport, Gina McDade, Tracy Autera, Maria Wong, Bamini Pillai, Lorraine Reynolds, Mary Barnes, Donna Pierce, Linda Weisberger, Christine Eckels, Maryam Alsop, Cathy Jacobson, Virginia Benson, Melissa Bourn, Shari Seroka, Dan Brodtkin, Robert Milo, Anila Milo, Beth Lorenz, Xin Luo, Becky Simpson, Carol Olson, Denise Rizzo, Ricki Lowy, Rob Goodgold, Jocelyn Dreier, Dolores Parks, M. Umer, Sana Raza, Donna Hansen, Barb DelVecchio, Kathy Orlando, Arlene Sarappo, Ines Bunza, Emily Young, Tina Telesco, Catherine Chriss, Rola Baddoura, Audrey Fink, Cristy Sippel, Bronwyn McElroy, Shannon Andrews, Amy Davidson, Liz Crowley, Beth Sokota, Alaine Neville, Judy MacLennan, Jack Lorenz, Jeff Nyhuis, Mark Ferreri, Patricia Hans

Welcome and Approval of Minutes: Arlene Sarappo, HSA President, welcomed everyone to the meeting. The minutes from the November 9, 2010 meeting were approved.

Principal's Report: Mr. Lorenz gave an update on the fire which took place recently in school, praising students and teachers for responding quickly to vacate the building safely. Mr. Lorenz said that investigations were being made into the cause of the fire, and that the person(s) responsible would face appropriate consequences.

Beginning in the 20th week of school, "open gradebook" on Skyward will be available to parents, permitting them access to their children's homework assignments, attendance, and test and quiz scores.

In response to recent data linking academic success to completion of class and homework assignments, RHS will replace the 7:15 a.m. detention period with an afterschool academic study hall, designed to help low achieving students complete their schoolwork. Teachers will refer students requiring this additional study time to grade administrators, who will then notify the students and their parents.

A group of international students from the Global Learning Program will visit RHS beginning January 18. They will stay in our community for several weeks. An RHS group of students will travel to Sweden as part of this program in June.

Mr. Lorenz encouraged parents to visit the impressive display of RHS alumni artwork in the student gallery.

Guidance Report: Mr. Nyhuis, Director of Guidance, gave an update on college acceptances by the senior class. To date, 421 seniors have received 335 acceptances, with more than 50% of the class receiving acceptances by at least one college or university. Forty students have reported early decision commitments.

Course selection for next year is set to begin on Skyward after midterms. Teachers may recommend up to 3 courses for each student. Students, after discussion with teachers, parents, and guidance counselors, will then have the option of choosing among the courses recommended by their teachers. (Please note that the initial schedule listed on Skyward will include all courses available to the student, and the student will select courses by eliminating the ones that s/he has elected not to take.)

NBC reporter Amber Payne visited the school on January 7 to discuss the homework-free break and the district's showing of the film, Race to Nowhere. Mr. Nyhuis welcomes feedback on either topic from parents, who can email him with their comments. He also plans to visit Freshman Focus classes to hear responses from students. Mr. Lorenz added that the response to the no homework break has been extremely positive thus far. RHS Counselors will visit GW and BF to meet with 8th graders. Parents are invited. Mr. Nyhuis introduced Mark Ferreri, Supervisor of Humanities, and Ms. Patricia Hans, English teacher for the American Studies Program.

American Studies, AHLISA, and RAHP Programs: Mr. Ferreri outlined the options available to RHS students beginning in 10th grade. Informational meetings for 9th graders on each of the special programs will be held in the next few weeks. Each of the programs has an application and specific selection process, which includes recommendations by at least 2 teachers in English and History. About 40-50 students are accepted into the American Studies Program each year, while AHLISA accepts 25 students per year, and RAHP has 40 spaces available. Applications for the special programs are due in mid February. More information may be found in the RHS Course Catalogue on the school website.

American Studies is a two-year program based on a thematic rather than chronological approach to American history and literature. The course content of the program is similar to the content included in US History I and II Honors and English 10 and 11 Honors. Ms. Hans added that students in the American Studies program study from primary sources and attend field trips to learn about politics, religion, and culture, as well as history and literature.

A presentation of the AHLISA Program (American History and Literature with Integrated Study in the Arts) was made by an RHS student currently enrolled in the program. This honors level, interdisciplinary course integrates the study of fine and performing arts with a strong academic focus on history and literature. Students participate in the program for two years.

RAHP (Ridgewood Academy for Health Professions) was presented by an RHS student who is currently enrolled in the program. RAHP is an academic, three-year program in partnership with Valley Hospital and Bergen Community College, and is designed for students who are interested in pursuing careers in the health and medical fields. The program includes hands on learning through field trips, mentoring, and internships.

In addition to these presentations, a short testimony was presented by one of the RHS HSA student representatives on his positive experience in the 10th and 11th grade Honors English and History classes.

Board of Education Report: Laurie Goodman reported that the calendar for the 2011-2012 school year has been approved and is available for viewing on the Board of Education website. Results from the homework survey that was given in June, 2010 are also available on the website. Administrators are currently working on their building budgets.

Executive Board Updates:

Hospitality Committee is currently seeking volunteers to donate baked goods for the February 7th faculty meeting. Please contact Carol Rapaport or Tracy Autera.

A talk on the hazards and rise of chewing tobacco among teens will be presented on January 18.

A town hall meeting will take place with Governor Christie at the Paramus Elks Club on January 13. Those interested must sign up online to attend.

Orders for the Project Graduation Cookbook may be made on the PG 2011 website.

Ines Bunza, HSA Treasurer, reported that dues and directory income for this year saw an increase of \$3000 compared to last year's directory sales and dues. Spare directories are still available for sale. Please contact HSA for more information if you would like to purchase one.

Development Chair Tina Telesco is seeking volunteers to help to raise funds for the new Learning Commons at RHS. A detailed outline of this new study space will be presented at the next HSA meeting on February 8. Please contact Tina if you are interested in joining a committee to help move this project forward.

The Curriculum Committee is continuing their on-going review of the district's Science curriculum. Four members from the Ridgewood community who are also scientists shared with the Committee their opinions and ideas about what is needed for students to become successful scientists. The panel members agreed that student learning should not be limited to knowledge of specific topics, but rather, students should develop skills to ask sophisticated questions, to think creatively, and to problem solve. The panel's recommendations to strengthen the district's science curriculum include developing corporate partnerships, encouraging inspired, hands-on lessons, and supporting students to learn scientific vocabulary, math, and computer science. The next Curriculum Committee meeting will convene on March 9 at 7:30 p.m. in the Ed Center.

Jamboree co-chair Rob Goodgold reported that tickets for Jamboree will go on sale January 12. Performances will be held February 9-12 with all proceeds of the show

going to need-based, college scholarships for graduating RHS seniors. Please consider making a donation to the class ad campaign!

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

The next meeting will be on Tuesday, February 8 at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Emily Young.