

# Ridgewood High School Home and School Association

## Meeting Minutes

February 10, 2009

### **Welcome and Approval of January 13 Meeting Minutes** – Elizabeth Resnick, HSA President

Elizabeth welcomed all to the meeting and proposed the January 13, 2009 HSA Meeting Minutes be voted on for approval. The Minutes were approved by all those present.

Enhanced communication is the focus of the HSA this year. Trying to get information out to the parents, via enews, and fostering greater interaction between the Administration and parents are steps toward this goal. With the idea of increased communication of what is going on at RHS, academically, interscholastically and socially, the HSA has tried to feature a different aspect of RHS at each of the HSA meetings.

Tonight, a brief overview of the three interdisciplinary programs at RHS will be presented by instructors from the RAHP, American Studies, and ALISA programs.

### **Interdisciplinary Programs** – Jeff Nyhuis

#### RAHP – Lucy Fern & Jane Blakeley

The Ridgewood Academy for Health Professions (RAHP) is a three year program that has been developed at RHS in coordination with Valley Hospital and Bergen Community College. Freshman students can apply in early winter for the program which begins in sophomore year. The RAHP program has received national recognition and was recently awarded “Model Academy” status which is the highest level and is unique for a program which is so new.

English, health and science are infused throughout the curriculum for this program. For instance lessons on disease, muscle groups and psychology are curriculum based and combined with the goals of the Academy. Sophomore year is referred to as the “Exploration Year”. The students are exposed to the wide array of occupations that are available in the medical field. In their junior year the students partake in internships where they spend 3 days in each of the 4 areas of study they have chosen. For instance, a student may spend time in the operating room, the stroke center and the in-vitro fertilization department. In their final year, the students do a Senior Project that is then presented to the hospital staff and high school faculty.

The beauty of the RAHP program is that students are able to connect their learning to a hands-on experience. It is also a unique exposure for high school students to see what the life a medical doctor is really like.

### American Studies - Mark Ferreri

The American Studies program is a two year honors program with an interdisciplinary teaching of American History and American Literature. Students enter the program as sophomores. There are 2 sections of American Studies per grade and the students remain with the same section for the two years of the program which creates a unique bonding experience. The class is geared towards group discussion and several overnight field trips are taken each year.

### AHLISA – Mike Yannonne

The American History and Literature with Integrated Study in the Arts (AHLISA) program is an interdisciplinary course that combines the study of fine and performing arts with a strong academic focus on the study of both literature and history. This is also a two year, honors level program with one section of sophomores and one section of juniors. The class is structured to have the one hour history and one hour English classes taught back to back. A fine arts teacher and a performing arts teacher are also involved in the program.

The AHLISA program is for serious arts students who have a passion to learn more about theater, dance or art. Field trips are an important component of the class. For instance the class may go to a museum and look at a portrait of Paul Revere and look at it as a document of history, which will lead to a discussion of the American Revolution and then the class will look at the painting as a piece of art studying its use of line, shading and medium. A student does not need to be an honors student as a freshman to apply as a sophomore. It is imperative that the student be able to work well in groups, both large and small.

All three interdisciplinary programs at RHS follow the NJ State Education Curriculum Guidelines. The RHS History and English Departments have department wide requirements, such as writing a term paper, which the interdisciplinary programs adhere to as well.

### **Student Behavior at School Sponsored Events** – Basil Pizzuto, Assistant Principal for Administration and Student Services

It is the philosophy of the RHS Administration that high school is where the students really grow up. The students learn at RHS and they also make mistakes here, which is all part of the growing up process. They come in as freshman “kids” and leave as senior “adults”.

Last night, the RHS Student Congress hosted the annual Senior Citizens Dance. This is actually one of the highlights of the Student Congress’s year. There is incredible interaction with the students and the senior citizens and plenty of dancing for all.

RHS does sponsor class event dances. There is a Freshman Class Dance at RHS in the fall, there is a Sophomore Semi-Formal at RHS in the spring.... The RHS Student Congress has wanted to have more school-wide sponsored dances to foster school spirit.

The school wide Halloween Dance held recently in October had a greater number of incidences with kids who had been drinking alcohol. In the past, there have always been a few kids whose behavior has caused concern. It is important to keep in mind that over 700 students attended the dance in October and that quite a bit of hype seemed to be generated by the “techno” theme. The RHS Administration will handle chaperoning, lighting, location of check-ins and the timing of school wide dances differently as a result of the Halloween dance.

The Administrators do have a Breathalyzer test, but if they do use it, there are tremendous legal implications. If the Administrators are suspicious of someone being under the influence of drugs or alcohol, they need to have the student sent to Valley Hospital to be evaluated by a medical professional. RHS and the Board of Education have a zero tolerance of alcohol and illegal drug use. Vital in keeping our students safe, is the need for parents to have discussions with their children about drugs, alcohol, and peer pressure which was what prompted Jack Lorenz to send home the letter and questionnaire to all RHS families to encourage discussions to begin.

The students who were found to be under the influence of alcohol at the dance, each needed to serve a three day in-school suspension and meet with the trained school counselor. Each of these students is aware of the mistake he/she made and has learned from the experience.

If you have any suggestions as to how to deal with student dances, which will continue to be held at RHS, Basil would appreciate your input. You can email or call Basil or Jack Lorenz.

Jack Lorenz – RHS Principal

It is important for the students to want to come to school and have fun. He and the other administrators want to encourage more spirit filled, age appropriate activities for the students such as school wide dances.

The letter and survey he mailed out to each family was to prompt a conversation with your kids that is often hard to have.

They are considering having a “ Code of Behavior” for all students to individually sign and adhere to, similar to the Extracurricular Code of Behavior required for RHS athletes.

## **Principal's Report – Jack Lorenz**

Midterms have been completed. These tests cause anxiety for many students, but most kids learn to manage it. The students are in the process of registering for their 2009/2010 classes. For parents, it is important to look at the Course Catalog and see the incredible variety of choices available for the students, particularly those in their Junior and Senior year. The variety of courses is aimed for a wide array of students who have different interests and are different types of learners.

The school is in the process of re-registering its students. A letter will be sent out shortly to all parents of incoming freshman requesting that the data on file be verified. This is a means of insuring that all students are in fact Ridgewood residents. Re-registration will occur as a child enters a new school i.e. kindergarten, 6<sup>th</sup> grade and 9<sup>th</sup> grade.

The scholarships available for Seniors are for the most part need-based scholarships. The application for these scholarships requires that a FASA form be filled out. The Scholarship Committee is very thorough as to what needs each student who applied has.

Regarding the deployment of technology at RHS, criteria have been developed to evaluate the needs of the teachers and students. What is considered is:

- 1) Make it equitable so that all the student population is exposed to technology upgrades
- 2) Place technology where it will get the greatest use i.e. RHS Library
- 3) Place technology in class rooms where the teacher will use it and knows how to use it effectively
- 4) Look for teachers that have integrated technology into their curriculum
- 5) Place technology in classrooms that will get maximum utilization. For instance, the Smart Boards cannot be moved, thus they will be located in the classrooms that are scheduled with the most classes and the most teachers throughout the day.

As many of you know, the Pfizer Corporation donated 25 laptops and 25 computers to RHS. Nine computers have been put in the language lab and some have been placed in the Supplemental Room where outdated models were replaced.

Extensive training does come with the purchase of the Smart Boards.

Lastly, in light of the Ridgewood BOE budget deficit for the upcoming year, Jack and the other Administrators are looking at things in the daily operation of RHS that can be trimmed back that

will not impact the instruction of the students. One of the cuts that will be made is the elimination of the Summer School Program which was not cost effective.

#### **Teacher's Report – Ruth Parks**

The entire RHS staff would like to thank the HSA for the Valentine's Day Reception that was provided at the recent staff meeting.

As a foreign language teacher, she uses technology such as the LCD player in her classroom each day to create a dynamic learning environment for her students.

#### **Board of Education Representative – Laurie Goodman**

On Tuesday, March 3 the BOE is hosting an "Open Communication Forum" at the Education Center. The Board is hoping to reach out to people they usually do not hear from. The purpose of the Forum is to discuss the school district's communication with the public.

Regarding the schedule for the proposed BOE Budget, on February 25 the Board will be discussing the budget for the first time. In late March public hearings will be held on the Budget. On April 21, the proposed School Budget will be on the ballot. There will be a vacant seat on the Board with Bob Hutton's departure at the end of this term. Anyone interested in running for the Board seat can pick up a packet at the Ed Center on Cottage Place.

#### **HSA President – Elizabeth Resnick**

Federated HSA is looking into the possibility of hosting an educational forum for parents on drugs and alcohol.

An article on Global Learning featuring Jack Lorenz and the program at RHS has been published in the Villadom Newspaper. From February 21 through March 14 nine students and a principal will be in Ridgewood as part of the Global Learning program. Terri McAteer is the host family coordinator. Two more host families are needed, if you are interested please contact Terri.

#### **HSA Vice President – Rola Baddoura**

The revised RHS HSA Constitution and By-Laws will be posted on the website on March 23. Everyone is encouraged to read over the updated By-Laws. Anyone who would like to meet with Rola and other representatives from the committee who reviewed and revised the By-Laws will be welcome to come with their questions and/or concerns on Tuesday, March 3 at 7:30 p.m. in the RHS Library/Media Center. The Constitution and By-Laws will be voted on at the RHS HSA General Membership Meeting on Tuesday, March 10 at 7:30 p.m. at the RHS Library/Media Center.

**Treasurer's Report – Wendy Wong**

There are 200 RHS 2008/2009 Student Directories available for purchase. If you have not yet bought a directory or need an additional copy please contact Wendy.

**Communications/Webmaster – Sara Erwin (absent, Lynn Granski reported)**

The HSA has been able to reach out to 1,400 RHS families via email with enews updates and reminders of the HSA meetings in its continued effort to enhance communication with the RHS community.

**Development Committee – Katie VanSaun**

To date, 230 families have contributed to the 2008/2009 Development fund. This number is up from 150 families last year. Each Smart Board that is being purchased with the money raised costs \$4,800. This figure includes installation and training.

On Friday, March 6 a RHS Parent Mixer will be held at the Elks Club on Maple Avenue in Ridgewood. Tickets will cost \$30 per person and can be purchased at the door. This low-key fund raising event will feature the band, The Shards, and soda, beer, wine and snacks will be available. All parents are invited to attend this event to raise money for the RHS Development Fund.

**Junior Class Parent Representative – Leesa Manderano**

Over 100 RHS Class of 2010 sweatshirts have been sold to date. Order forms are available via the RHS HSA enews.

**Senior Class Parent Representative – Lisa Diss**

All the 2009 Project Graduation volunteer coordinators are busy with their committees planning for the many activities sponsored for the Senior Class. The next fund raising event features The Pampered Chef being hosted by Michele Lenhard on Thursday, February 12 at 7:30. All are invited to attend.

**Hospitality Committee – Amy Scher and Nancy Stewart**

The HSA hosted a Valentine's Day reception at the recent RHS faculty meeting. Thank you to all those volunteers who provided home baked items. The teachers and administration greatly appreciate the thoughtfulness and generosity.

**RHS Cares – Kate Douglass and Anne Zusy**

RHS Cares has been established to provide community support for RHS families in crisis, typically due to severe illness. A contact person stays in close touch with the family and offers coordination of volunteer cooked meals. If you would like to volunteer to provide a meal as needed, please contact Kate and she will add your name to the list.

**Jamboree – Dixie Taylor**

The Jamboree held over the weekend was very successful. This endeavor raised \$55,000 for scholarships for the Class of 2009. Those who participated experienced the incredible sense of camaraderie that is one of the many benefits of this volunteer effort. Parents do not need to be performers, or be on stage to be involved. Plans have already begun for next year's Jamboree.

**Nominating Committee – Patty Mullen & Carol Rapaport**

If anyone is interested in a RHS HSA position for the upcoming school year, or if you would like to nominate someone, please contact Patty Mullen or Carol Rapaport. The Nominating Committee is beginning to compile the 2009/2010 HSA slate that will be presented and voted on at the May 12th HSA meeting.

**Ridgewood Public Library – Arlene Sarappo**

The Ridgewood Public Library has purchased "Tutor.com" which is available for free for those who have a Ridgewood Public Library card. "Tutor.com" can be found on the library website, and tutor support can be accessed from 2 – 9 pm. Tutor.com is a tremendous teaching tool which enables the student to instant message with a tutor.

**Ridgewood Town Council – Anne Zusy**

The proposal put forth for the improvements at Graydon has fueled a lot of dynamic discussions within the community and the Council. The Town Council would appreciate hearing your thoughts on the Graydon proposal. You can contact the Council representatives on the website.

The Council is working in partnership with the Ridgewood Board of Education regarding the management and maintenance of the sports fields throughout the community. One initiative that is being undertaken is "Carry in, carry out" which will encourage all users to be sure to carry out all the containers and trash they have brought onto the field with them.

**The meeting was adjourned at 9:40 p.m.** The next RHS HSA meeting will be a “General Membership Meeting” held on Tuesday, March 10 at 7:30 p.m. in the RHS Library. At this meeting all present will vote on the RHS HSA Constitution and By-Laws.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynn Granski, HSA Secretary

**In attendance:**

Annalise Marcus, Vicky Herbert, Maryam Alsop, Terri McAteer, Laurie Goodman, Daniel Schwalm, Rose Boniello, Arelene Sarappo, Lou Sarappo, Lynn Knight, Lisa Mayisoglu, Jack Lorenz, Basil Pizzuto, Ruth Parks, Jeff Nyhuis, Michael Yannone, Mark Ferreri, Jane Blakeley, Nick Aynilian, Jacob Levitsky, Karen Lorenz, Linda Swyhun, Christine Shippee, Cristy Sippel, Michele Lenhard, Leah Sonnick, Catherine Chriss, Denise Smith, Margie McKeon, Janice McFadden, Jamie Frederick, Carol Rapaport, Elizabeth Shadbolt, Patty Mullen, Dixie Taylor, Katie Van Saun, Elizabeth Resnick, Wendy Wong, Lisa Diss, Lynn Granski, Rola Baddoura, Liz Soriano, Nancy Stewart, Amy Scher, Cheryl Sabath, Audrey Fink, Linda Tarzian, Leesa Manderano