

RHS HSA Meeting May 13, 2008

In attendance: Rola Baddoura, Lynn Granski, Vicky Herbert, Dixie Taylor, Carol Rapaport, Eileen Haynes, Terri McAteer, Suzanne Willis, Lisa Diss, Tim Brennan, Joseph Vallerini, Ruth Parks, Jack Lorenz, Peg Loonam, Sara Erwin, Wendy Wong, Elizabeth Resnick, Frances Ekblom, Hilary Jones

Welcome and Introduction

Frances Ekblom opened the meeting with an introduction of Tim Brennan, our interim Superintendent of Schools.

Dr. Brennan referred to a workshop he attended this past weekend at Princeton University. He spoke about how he came to arrive in Ridgewood this past year. Though we have older facilities, he loves how thriving and full of life we are here. Although he is not at liberty to name the superintendent that has been found by the search committee, he said that he is just the right person for RPS.

He went on to list 2 challenges which we face. Our first challenge: NJ is in terrible financial shape. Brennan stated that the state has their eye on districts like ours and they keep constricting us. Our next big challenge is math; he hopes that our university partner will help us raise the bar next year. The US is lagging behind in math education. We have a number of 8th grade teachers currently rewriting the math curriculum for next year. We also have major needs in reconstruction, capital improvement, and expansion. Small group instruction rooms, more gyms and fields are needed. Probably the most important thing he can tell us is that we need to do these deferred projects—now. Brennan stated that the kids and the town are great—it has been a real pleasure serving Ridgewood Public Schools.

Principal's Report-Jack Lorenz

There is an opportunity to host 6 visitors from the Shetland Islands from May 28-June 1. Email Jack if interested.

Charlotte's Web was a wonderful production put on by the New Players recently.

Facilities-wise—the cupola must be replaced again, as the newly-delivered one was built too small. The roof is holding very well—with no leaks. Our contractors are among the finest in the area—they have restored the original copper gutters, slates, etc. They are doing a fabulous job.

The hiring process is taking place a bit later than would be optimal. We are in the process of hiring an Assistant Principal-Guidance and K-12 Art Supervisor.

As far as the budget is concerned, a significant amount of technology money has been built in. Our phone system is antiquated and Jack has advocated for a computer for each teacher so the parents and teachers can communicate better. BOE supported that and each teacher will next year have his or her own laptop. We are also increasing the number of

ceiling- mounted projectors. The monies raised by HSA have been put to very good use. Science projectors are also installed.

Municipal Alliance—shifting strategy from intervention to what is driving kids to drugs and alcohol use. Alcohol EDU—126 students volunteered to participate. Some were leery of the survey. Jack needs better marketing for next year to sell it to the students; students need to be encouraged to take the survey. A team has been formed to help “get our ear to the ground”—parents are starting to come forward and help out with information. Recently, they helped crack a major drug case, identifying a distributor. So, good progress is being made, but we must keep at it.

08-09 Calendar construction is taking place now—RHS will be meeting with the Middle Schools next to avoid conflicts next year. They are putting in blackout dates for field trips to avoid kids having to miss crucial end –of-quarter review sessions.

Regarding the absence policy next year, a maximum of 12 absences for year-long courses, 6 for semester-long courses will be allowed. School-related absences will not count toward that total. New courses are being created for next year—there will be additional year-long courses.

They are now planning for graduation. Jack will have a new secretary; she will be starting at the end of May. For final exams, seniors with an A- or better are exempt from taking the final in that specific course.

Guidance Report--Peg Loonam

We seem to be “winding up” in terms of everything—not down! Putting the calendar together is like putting an enormous puzzle together—we are trying to avoid conflicts. End-of-course Biology testing will take place next Monday; this is something new from the state this year. At RHS, this test will be taken in 9th grade, or whenever Biology is taken for the 1st time. The good news is that the Biology Test is not going to count for graduation; but 95% or better must participate in the test for the district. It’s important for the kids to take it seriously. We are moving in the direction of the NYS Regents’ Testing.

Tuesday following the Bio test there will be a 90 minute performance assessment. Individual score reports will be sent home. RHS will get the reports online for Peg and Jack to view. Testing will be done in the Campus Center and Gym 3.

Hiring is ongoing in guidance. The Master Schedule is almost ready to be put together and finalized; we will then be able to see the conflicts.

Jack added that Stevens Institute of Technology and BCC are working on a 5 yr. grant—it is designed to prepare engineering students to teach. This grant is designed to partner graduate engineering students with a HS teacher—both parties will be helped. RHS and Bergen Academies will have 2 graduate engineering students for 10 hours/week next year helping out.

President’s Report—Frances Ekblom

Frances gave the Federated report. The crossing guards were honored at the last Federated meeting. There was a teacher appreciation ceremony. Frances thanked everyone for their work this year. Frances introduced Rola Baddoura and Lynn Granski who will be joining the Executive Board next year. Frances has tentative plans for a light lunch at her home on June 10th for Board members.

Frances spoke on the rewriting of the HAS By-Laws and Constitution.

Vice-President's Report-Elizabeth Resnick

Elizabeth spoke about the rewriting of the By-Laws. She will have them for us later this year to present. Elizabeth asked people to get in touch with her if interested in a board position next year. She encouraged parents to please give feedback, input—feel free to call anyone on the board.

Treasurer's Report-Wendy Wong

Wendy gave the financial report. All Class Reps should bring their financial statements as of Dec 07 to Wendy for the next meeting in June so she can get all of the financial records for the year to our accountant.

Faculty Report-Ruth Parks

Ruth spoke on the recent trip to Germany which she made with a group of RHS students of German. Our kids made a good impression; the German parents really appreciated them. Ruth is planning a trip for next year—both for their kids and ours.

Class Reports

Project Graduation

The PG committee had their final senior parent meeting last week—Basil Pizzuto spoke. He reviewed the timeline for Graduation. At the meeting, parents paid for the class dinner dance and family dues. David Bolger and Bob Hutton have given PG space in which to work.

Freshman Class

Terri McAteer spoke about the Freshman fundraiser; the group is selling mini-umbrellas—they are \$20 for 1 or \$35 for 2.

Sophomore Class

Their class fundraiser—keychains--are for sale.

Junior Class

Lisa Diss spoke. They have put together a letter for the entire class. They held a bake sale at LAX Day which raised \$612 for the class. They would like to have another in the fall. Mango Jam has photo albums for sale, another class fundraiser. On June 1st, Goffle Brook Farm is giving a % of proceeds of sales that day if one brings in an ad.

On June 8th, Mango Jam is holding a fundraiser for the class: 20% of sales that day will be returned to the Junior class. The PG 09 meeting will take place on June 2 in the Campus Center. To support the class of 2008, class of 09 organizers are planning to be helpers for the graduation ceremony, the BF party and provide wrecking ball help. There will be a PG 2009 kick-off party for parents at Robert and Susan Wilson's on Friday Sept 12th. The collection of baby photos and dues for PG 2009 has already begun. There is a PG 2009 website person already in place. Lisa thanked the past PG chairs for all their work in helping them to be ahead of the game for next year.

Development Committee

Vicki Herbert spoke; \$16,000 was raised, and subsequently, 16 laptops were purchased. Jack thanked her for this—he said that this has been very helpful for RHS. There is a total of \$700 seed money for next year's Development Committee.

Safety Chair

Rose Bonilla was unable to attend. Frances spoke on her behalf.

Board of Education Report

Joe Vallerini of the BOE gave the report. The Board has reorganized. Laurie Goodman is the new Board member and Sheila Brogan was reelected. There was overwhelming support for the budget. They are working on Communications—there is a great need to ramp up communication with the community.

The Board is looking to find someone who can communicate better what is going on in the district with math. There are massive \$\$ needs for facilities work. There needs to be input from the community—what do we see as important for our schools? How to move forward on our facility needs?

Recently, there is bad news out of Trenton—the State Education committee voted a number of bills out of committee, e.g. No.815—school boards will be elected in November and we will have no ability to vote on our school budget. The state will dictate the budget without community input. If this passes, the last vestige of local control will be taken out of education. We may well get partisan politics involved if this happens, with the potential to cause significant changes in how we educate our students. The state sees this as a way to streamline the electoral process—to increase participation—as more people are likely to vote in the November election.

Our Board poses the following dilemma: how are we supposed to know how much money to ask for for the following year? There are a lot of potential problems with this. We are victims of our own success—a lot of what we have done in the past may be diluted. Frances thanked Sheila Brogan for all her work on Advocacy.

Hospitality Committee

For the June 2nd staff meeting, bakers are needed (2 dozen finger desserts are needed/baker). Dixie Taylor and Carol Rapaport spoke about how grateful the teachers have been for the hospitality this year.

REF

No report.

Frances thanked Denise Sivulich and Chris McCullough for their presentation last month on the arts at RHS.

Jamboree

No report.

Curriculum Committee

Eileen Haynes gave the report. The district-wide committee will be meeting this Thursday to discuss performance-based assessment.

Frances Ekblom called for a vote on next Year's Executive Board slate: seconded and passed.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Hilary N. Jones