

# Ridgewood High School Home and School Association

## Meeting Minutes

October 14, 2008

### **Welcome and Approval of Sept. 16 Meeting Minutes** – Elizabeth Resnick, HSA President

Elizabeth welcomed everyone to the meeting and proposed the September 16, 2008 HSA meeting minutes be voted on for approval. The Minutes were approved by all those present.

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

Jack first wanted to recognize the academic accomplishments of some of the RHS students. Callie Trautwein was a finalist in a nationwide writing contest. Nine students qualified as Merit Semi-Finalists.

Jack has been working with a group of freshmen parents as to how to better communicate to parents of 8<sup>th</sup> graders regarding course selection at Ridgewood High School. The RHS administration is busy rewriting the Course Book including revising the text regarding drop/adds and course descriptions.

The RHS Student Council will be hosting a Halloween Dance for all grade levels on Thursday night, October 30. On Wednesday night, October 29, the RHS Film Club will be sponsoring a "Horror Movie Night". The annual RHS Halloween costume contest and parade at will be held on Friday, October 31. Parents are welcome to view the parade from the football stands.

Ridgewood is one of the school systems in New Jersey that has been selected by the Federal Government to administer an assessment of students in Math, Reading and Science. The assessment will be given at the 12<sup>th</sup> grade level. Parents will be sent a letter to further explain the testing.

Jack attended the Hall of Fame Induction at the Brownstone Inn with Dr. Fishbein on Sunday, October 12. In attendance were members of the 1922/1923 RHS Girls' Basketball Team. Most impressive was that the team had placed second in the State Basketball Tournament. Remember this was well ahead of the Title 9 ruling. The Hall of Fame display is outside Gym 1.

The students will be participating in a mock election in November. Many classes, as you can imagine, have been closely following the candidates' campaigns and polls. This has been a very dynamic teaching opportunity for our kids.

### **Assistant Principal's Report – Jeff Nyhuis**

As a reminder, there is a meeting tomorrow night, October 15, for the parents of all seniors sponsored by the RHS Guidance Department. Parents will meet with their child's guidance counselor to learn more about the college application process including transcript requests, teacher recommendations and deadlines. A reminder phone call was made via Sassy today.

The College Speaker Series, which is funded by the Ridgewood Education Foundation, will have a presentation on October 22. The speaker will be Lisa Angeloni from The College of New Jersey. Lisa will talk about the college application process. All are invited to attend.

The PSAT's will be administered this Saturday, October 18 at RHS. Over 670 students have registered, primarily juniors, and about 60% of the sophomores. The students should bring calculators and #2 pencils. The PSAT is great practice for the SAT that most students take later in their junior and senior years. Dates for the upcoming SAT and ACT are listed in the RHS Booster Calendar.

As requested by the HSA Board, Jeff gave an overview of the SAT versus the ACT. Handouts were circulated comparing the SAT and the ACT. The main question parents always have is whether their child should take the SAT or the ACT. A nationwide study was done recently and one-third of the students did better on the SAT, one-third did better on the ACT and one-third scored comparably on both.

The SAT is a "reasoning" test and is strategy based. The ACT is more of a "knowledge" test and is fact based. Students are used to being tested on facts and thus many feel more comfortable with the ACT format. The SAT test is popular with colleges and universities in the Northeast. The ACT test is predominant in the rest of the country. Some students take the ACT in lieu of an SAT II subject test.

The Guidance Department recommends students take both the SAT and ACT to see on which test they perform better. With the ACT score, the student has a choice of whether to send the results to selected colleges. Starting in March 2009, students who take the SAT will have a choice of sending the scores from the test dates they select. For instance, beginning next year, a student can send their June SAT test scores and not their March test scores. In years past, when a student had their SAT scores sent, all of the student's scores were sent, now the student will have a choice from which test dates they want their scores sent. This change in reporting will also allow students to choose whether to send or not send their SAT II subject test scores. These changes in the SAT reporting will alter how the Guidance Counselors will advise their students. It will be advantageous for the students to take the SAT II subject tests

and see how they score. There will no longer be the risk of scoring poorly and having colleges see that performance. It is important to clarify that when a student selects the date of the SAT scores he wants sent, that all his test scores taken that date will be sent. A student can sit for up to three SAT II subject tests on one day, for that situation, the student would be able to choose which scores he would want sent.

Most colleges today accept SAT or ACT scores. There is no longer a bias towards one or the other. It is strongly recommended that students take both the SAT and ACT. The tests address two different learning styles. The SAT is based on problem solving and abstract thinking and one is penalized for guessing. The ACT is fact based and straightforward and there is no penalty for guessing.

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

Ruth will alternate attending the HSA meetings with the other Teacher Representative Donna Antonellis. She and the students are looking forward to the German students' visit to Ridgewood in April.

#### **Board of Education Update- Joseph Vallerini**

The driving force of the Board and the Administration is to sustain the standard of Ridgewood High School. RHS is a very high performing school and despite budget cuts and federal and state mandated programs that are often not funded appropriately, RHS has continued to sustain its exceptional performance. That being said, it is critical to support the elementary and middle schools so that they continue to feed strong learners to RHS.

Dr. Fishbein has quickly become familiar with each of the schools and the necessary facility upgrades at each. He, the Board and each of the school Administrators are closely evaluating what capital improvements need to be made to the aging facilities and prioritizing the upgrades needed, to keep up with the changes in technology and contemporary teaching methods. Much time and energy is being spent tailoring the proposed Referendum to insure its approval when presented to the voters.

The Curriculum Communication Forum will consist of two representatives from each of the elementary and middle schools and four representatives from RHS. These parent volunteer representatives will serve as the conduit for communication. The first Curriculum meeting for the selected parent representatives is October 23, 2008. The focus of the meeting will be the district math program. It is the intent of the Board to have a uniform math program selected for all the Ridgewood schools.

The RHS Curriculum parent representatives are Maryam Alsop, Jessica Butler, Elizabeth Resnick and Cheryl Sabath. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the math program please contact them so that they can bring your input to the meeting.

There will also be a community wide meeting regarding the math program on Monday, October 27 at 7:30pm at the Ed Center, 49 Cottage Place. All are welcome to come share their ideas about what they think is important in a district-wide elementary mathematics textbook/program. Four questions will be posed by the math planning team at the meeting. The panel is looking forward to the feedback that is gathered. Responses to the four questions can also be emailed to Kathleen Kiedaisch, the Superintendent's assistant at [kkiedaisch@ridgewood.k12.nj.us](mailto:kkiedaisch@ridgewood.k12.nj.us).

The Math Panel will be looking at textbooks and workbooks to determine which will be used by the Ridgewood school system so that it will be unified at each of the schools. The State of New Jersey determines the curriculum, this is not the role of the Panel.

#### **HSA President's Update – Elizabeth Resnick**

- A. Update from Federated HSA – Dr. Daniel Fishbein discussed the expansion plans being proposed for some of the Ridgewood schools and the ensuing referendum. Also addressed by Dr. Fishbein were the problems that arose this year in trying to produce the school directories using the Community Pass System. They are working out the glitches and putting changes in place so that things run more smoothly next year. The issue of residency of students attending the Ridgewood Schools has been brought up by many. The Board of Education believes it is an issue that needs to be addressed. Dr. Fishbein has suggested that a paper re-registration be done which is not as cumbersome and expensive as a complete re-registration of all students. RHS will begin the paper re-registration process with the Junior class. Paper re-registration will also be conducted for all students moving from 5<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> grade and 8<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> grade.
- B. Brainstorming Feedback – This summer the RHS HSA Executive board carefully reviewed all the feedback gathered from the Brainstorming exercise that was done at the June HSA meeting. It was determined who could best address each of the concerns, i.e. Jack Lorenz, Basil Pizzuto, Jeff Nyhuis, the HSA.....and assignments were given to everyone. In response to the feedback relative to the HSA, the Executive Board set forth three goals: Communication; Development for educational enhancements; HSA meetings – post monthly agenda, start on time, highlight different aspects of RHS at each meeting, increase attendance.
- C. Parent Suggestions – As announced at Back to School Night, the HSA and Jack Lorenz want parents to share their thoughts and suggestions to help make RHS all that it can

be. As a result of this request, many great ideas have been brought forward including:

1. Selling artwork done by our students to help raise money – this is being pursued by the HSA Development Committee.

2. Providing more comfortable furniture for the library, so our kids have an “inviting” place to quietly study or read – this is being considered for the media center and/or campus center.

3. Posting lists of required school supplies on the RHS website prior to the start of school – Jack is looking into having Gilby’s Corner, the school run store, sell the required school supplies, thus the kids could purchase the supplies while at school. The profits from Gilby’s benefit DECA, and the Administration is interested in increasing the role of Gilby’s Corner.

#### **Vice-President’s Report – Rola Baddoura**

Rola is reviewing the HSA By-Laws to insure that they are current. A number of amendments will need to be made to establish the Development Committee as a longstanding committee on the Board, to set forth the RHS Cares Committee that was established this year and to add 2-3 possible positions to the HSA Executive Committee. Anyone interested in working with Rola to review the By-Laws and to draft the amendments should contact her. The proposed revisions will be presented at an upcoming HSA meeting as well as posted on the website before being voted on at a General HSA membership meeting.

#### **Treasurer’s Report – Wendy Wong**

HSA Membership Dues have been collected from 746 families. There are currently over 1300 families at RHS. If you have not paid your dues, please do so as soon as possible. The HSA budget is dependent on the dues collected.

#### **Secretary – Lynn Granski**

The Meeting Minutes from the monthly HSA meetings will be posted on the website. We, the HSA Executive Board, are trying to reach as broad an audience as possible, please utilize the HSA website and pass the word onto others. Again, one of our goals this year is Communication! The agenda for the monthly HSA meetings will also be available on the website and will be posted the day before each meeting.

#### **Communications/Webmaster – Sara Erwin**

The RHS HSA ENEWS will be posted twice a month. If you did not receive an RHS HSA enews yesterday, then you are not signed up. Please do so by sending an email to [listserv@ridgewood.k12.nj.us](mailto:listserv@ridgewood.k12.nj.us) and in the subject line type: subscribe rhshsa.enews

Directory Update – the RHS student directory is moving along. As you are aware there were some glitches in gathering the information from the Community Pass system. The RHS directory is the most challenging of all the schools because of several factors, including the large student body. The directory will be ready for proofing by the beginning of next week. Rosemary Chersi will coordinate the volunteers who offered to help proofread. Ridgewood Press is patiently waiting for the final copy of the directory so that it can turn it around as soon as possible.

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

RHS Cares is a new HSA committee that will help provide support to RHS families and staff in time of crisis. HSA Cares will coordinate volunteers to provide cooked meals, help with driving and will try to accommodate any other needs of the family. HSA Cares will not provide financial support to the families but will try to direct them to the appropriate agencies for assistance. The privacy of the family will be of the utmost of concern and each case will be handled according to the family's wishes. Kate and Anne are still collecting names of volunteers. If you would like to sign up to cook a meal or help in any other way, please email Kate at [kated1@optonline.net](mailto:kated1@optonline.net)

**Development Committee – Theresa Callaghan and Katie Van Saun**

The Development Committee will be sending out a campaign letter by the beginning of November. The HSA is sensitive to the financial stress many families are feeling at this time. It is the intent of the Committee to sponsor a "low-key, inexpensive" fundraising effort in the spring such as a social and/or selling student artwork.

**Freshman Class Representatives - Audrey Fink and Arlene Sarappo**

The sale of RHS blankets with the Class of 2012 written on them is going extremely well. Due to demand, the blankets will also be sold without the Class of 2012 on them. The order forms are available on the RHS HSA website.

**Sophomore Class Representatives – Lisa Gibble, Terri McAteer and Cristy Sippel**

The social for all parents of sophomores will be held this Friday night, October 17 at 7:30 p.m. at the Gibble home. All families of sophomores should have received an invitation. If you have any questions please contact Cristy Sippel.

**Junior Class Representatives - Cheryl Alterman and Leesa Manderano**

The information for the upcoming sweatshirt sale will be available shortly. Keychains are still available, please contact the class reps if you would like to purchase one.

**Project Graduation – Lisa Diss and Patty O’Herlihy**

The co-chairs for the countless Project Graduation committees are almost all in place. If you have not volunteered to help, please contact Lisa or Patty.

**Hospitality – Amy Scher and Nancy Stewart**

As a way of expressing appreciation to our RHS staff and teachers for all they do for our students, the HSA hosts a coffee at four of the RHS Staff Meetings throughout the year. The HSA depends on parent volunteers to provide baked items and beverages. The first HSA sponsored reception was on September 2 when teachers and staff were back preparing for the start of the new school year. Countless thank you notes have been received from the teachers saying how much they appreciated the warm welcome and how they look forward to each of these HSA hosted coffees. The HSA will be doing a Halloween breakfast on October 31 in the faculty room. Volunteers are needed to provide a baked item or fruit platter. Please contact Amy or Nancy if you would like to help.

Elizabeth thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m. The next HSA meeting is Tuesday, November 11, at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynn Granski, HSA Secretary

**In attendance:**

Elizabeth Resnick, Rola Baddoura, Wendy Wong, Sara Erwin, Lynn Granski, Jack Lorenz, Jeff Nyhuis, Ruth Parks, Joseph Vallerini, Laurie Goodman, Michele Lenhard, Annie Zusy, Kate Douglass, Jacob Levitsky, Brenda Flood, Amy Scher, Sherry Frank, Steve Frank, Sean McCooe, Christine Shippee, Maryam Alsop, Terri McAteer, Beth Freed, Theresa Callaghan, Patty O’Herlihy, Lisa Gibble, Margie McKeon, Leesa Manderano, Audrey Fink, Carol Rapaport, Cathy Shea, Maria Saltalamacchia, Mark Kelly, Liz Gordon, Elizabeth Shadbolt, Frances Ekblom, Cristy Sippel, Cheryl Sabath, Nancy Stewart