

RIDGEWOOD HIGH SCHOOL HOME AND SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

Meeting Minutes For February 12th, 2013

Attendance: Lori Weil, Tom Gorman, Tara Callaghan, Jaime Frederick, (Absent: Lynn Knight), Carol Olson, David Zrike, Basil Pizzuto, Jeff Nyhuis, Nick Scerbo, Chuck Johnson, Ruth Parks, Sheila Brogan, Gina McDade, Tracy Autera, Jane Stone, Hema Chaurasia, Elizabeth Jastrzebska, Joan Gaidimas, Kim Reis, Mary Ellen O'Keefe, Anne Brabant, Annette Testa, Loren Mularz, Peggy McGinley, Bamini Pillai.

Lori Weil called the meeting to order and welcomed all attendees. Motion to approve minutes for January was called and duly approved.

Student Representatives Report: Student liaisons were not present.

Student Presentation: Elizabeth O'Keefe talked of the movie "Girl Rising" which will be screened at the Ridgewood Public Library on March 19th only for RHS students. This is a documentary highlighting the importance of girls' education in the developing world. She showed a trailer of the movie and spoke about bringing awareness about causes and issues. Lori thanked Liz for her efforts for bringing this film for the exclusive viewing of RHS community.

Learning Commons Update: David Zrike reported that the Gala was a great success and thanked the community for their generosity. They raised over \$325,000 that night and in total have about \$900,000. The project is on target and is able to proceed with the plans of having a brand new Learning Commons at RHS by September 2013. The initial cost of project did not take into consideration the technology updates as that was not known. They are continuing to raise funds and are working hard to make sure the project is completed on time.

Principal's Report: He reported that quarterly letters are being sent out informing parents of school happenings. Third quarter is underway and mid terms went well and school will be in session April 11th & 12th. January 16th was the open house for the 8th grade parents with over 400 parents in attendance. As far as security is concerned he assured the parents that the school is taking every measure possible to ensure the safety of the students. They are diligently working with the police and also Basil Pizzuto attended a FBI training/seminar. The measures in place at the HS are very satisfactory and all "red flag" issues have been looked at very carefully.

The New Players Theater will be staging "AIDA" and sports are halfway through the season and entering playoffs.

Coach Watson achieved his 100th victory in coaching wrestling. Also the St. Anthony's basketball game raised \$8K for Coaches Vs Cancer.

In addition to extra tutoring being offered prior to HSPA testing with 8 sessions of math and language arts from 7am- 7:45am, a new initiative is being introduced on

the days of HSPA testing to promote a healthy life style. The morning of the tests students are being offered calming exercise routine like Yoga and stretching exercises to prevent stress and anxiety. Right now the juniors taking the tests can come into school at 7am and have the option of taking part in any of the activities provided and will also be offered a healthy snack.

Basil Pizzuto: He reported that the student government members are organizing a Senior Citizens dance this evening and are making all the arrangements on their own. He also talked of his experience at the FBI training and was satisfied with the fact that the HS has in place most of the measures that were discussed. Jeff and Basil along with some of the high school students attended the George Washington Middle School second annual meeting with the 7th grade parents to provide information about the HS to ensure parent/students have the relevant information for the high school placement decisions. He was pleased with the outcome and hope to continue to do so every year. The parents and students were exposed to why and how they do things differently from some of the private schools.

Jeff Nyhuis: He also reiterated the fact that RHS compete with most of the private schools in all other activities as well. The ACT was postponed to March 2nd due to the snowstorm. He informed of the National Assessment of Educational Progress testing that would take place on Thursday. During the upcoming week a filming will take place in the school by a former student of RHS, Emma Parnez (2004 graduate). She works for a production company and was proud to show case her HS in one of their brochure/year book. Most of the filming will be done on hallways with and without students. On Saturday some of the students from filming and new players will be participating on the project as well.

Junior parent meeting is scheduled on the 13th as a kick off for the college application procedure. On February 27th a brief presentation of the Special Education Program offered at the HS will be discussed.

HSPA testing for the juniors will be on the 5th, 6th, & 7th of March and the kids in 9th 10th & 12th grades will come into school after the test times. The school needs the space for testing.

A question was asked about collaboration day and Basil answered that about 10% come in and use the common areas assigned and teachers have benefitted greatly with prep work and going over the curriculum. Kids have used it as a “sleep in” and have greatly appreciated it.

On answering a question on whether there is a district’s policy on “no homework” during breaks, Jeff clarified that there is an understanding that teachers try not to give them work over breaks that is due when they return.

Special Presentation: The topic was “Exercising the Brain”. Nick Scerbo Athletic Director and head of health & wellness Dept. did a presentation of the benefits of exercising and the relationship of brain cell function. Studies have shown

stress hormones are reduced by exercise like yoga and meditation etc. Also adequate sleep and proper nutrition increases the brain activity and students seem to perform better. Benefits were discussed at length and he recommended two books on these topics, "Brain Rules" and "Spark".

Chuck Johnson further elaborated on what they will be offering before the HSPA testing. There will be an aerobic dance activity in the studio, open gym in gym 1; new gym will have low intensive activities and yoga. They are hoping the teachers will encourage students to participate voluntarily and hope to receive positive feedback.

On a question asked whether this would be offered to other tests like finals and midterm etc. Nick Scerbo did say that they are hoping to expand it if the students show an interest in these activities.

An extra credit or a free homework pass was suggested as caviar.

A letter will be sent to junior parents regarding these programs closer to the exams.

Faculty Report: Thanked the HSA for the refreshments and also reminded the parents to check the skywards for grades as it's a new marking period.

Board Of Education Report: Sheila Brogan informed that they are still working on the parking spaces and the Village Council will be deciding on it soon. The BOE have done two resolutions during the past month. One is change on gun control favoring changes to laws and on access to guns and funding for mental health. The second is the issue of the Superintendent's salary cap, whereby asking the School Board to study the issue, which is creating a brain, and talent drain on experienced Superintendent.

Also she talked of the proposed housing/apartment complex, which could have adverse effects on our school system if all the details were not carefully looked into. She encouraged parents to contact the planning board with any questions or comments.

School budget is being prepared and will be presented on February 25th and public hearing at the end of March. Election will be on April 16th.

Also Senate has passed a bill to establish a task force to look into all aspects of the special education program in NJ.

On answering a question about the zoning changes of the proposed complex, Sheila answered that they are still working on the plans and have not decided on the zoning yet.

Tom also pointed out the proposed complex will bring in revenue for the town but as the school tax is capped they will not get any additional funds but will have to absorb the increased number of students anyhow.

President's Report: Lori informed of the topics discussed at the federated meeting and asked the community to stay on top of the issues that may arise if the

proposed building does materialize keeping in mind Ridgewood have always attracted people due to the school system. Emails will be sent out regarding salary caps.

She asked for volunteers for the hospitality committee for next year and informed that Christine Eckels is keeping a list of all the volunteers. She also asked for volunteers for RHS cares as Dawn Yardis is looking for volunteers to help with cooking meals for a family in Ridgewood. A fundraiser with Regent cleaners is being offered. If anyone is interested being on the HSA board or wanting to nominate someone, they should contact Tracy Autera for available positions. Directories are still available if anyone wants a copy.

Vice President's Report: Nothing to report.

Treasurer: Lynn Knight was not present and Lori Weil presented the financial report. She confirmed the directory dues are around the same as last year, which is the main source of income. HSA has decided to set aside funds to send some guidance counselors on road trips to visit colleges and meeting with admission offices. The Board will vote on setting aside \$250 for Learning Services. She also mentioned how the Federated gets a kick back from TD bank from having an account with them.

Class Report: PG 13-Tara Callaghan reported on the fundraising for project graduation and said they are planning on the 50/50 raffle. Class of 2014- Carol Olson reported on the second parent information session at the Konto's resident and thanked her for hosting. Banner is being sold as a fundraiser. She also informed of the parent social on March 2nd at the Thurstons. Class of 2015-n/a. Class of 2016- Kathy Marshall informed that they are starting the fundraiser after the February break and right now are busy with the Cambodia Project thanked all who donated.

Other Business: David Zrike informed of the sock hop and on March 9th will be having a talent night with 15 different acts and encouraged all to attend. It's a \$5 dollar admission fees with prize money for 1st, 2nd and 3rd place.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by Bamini Pillai