# RIDGEWOOD HOME AND SCHOOL ASSOCIATION Meeting Minutes For March 12 ${ }^{\text {th }}, 2013$ 

Attendance: Lori Weil, Tom Gorman, Carol Olson, Lynn Knight, Tara Callaghan, Jaime Frederick, David Zrike, Basil Pizzuto, Jeff Nyhuis, Tracy Autera, Hannah Fogg, Joan Gaidimas, Maureen Burke, Catherine Chriss, Jin Lee, Jane Stone, Suhi Suh, Keri Hwang, Kim Reis, Hema Chaurasia, Beth Holmes, Shinyoung An, Kim Lucky, Jackie Szymanski, Karen Feder, Anne Rosinjo, Lesli Meyer, Sharon Simoncini, Annette Testa, Randi Constant, Elizabeth Jastvzebska, Niena Jardee, Jia Liu, Sheila Brogan, Mark Ferreri, Greg McDonald, Chris McCullough, Diana Capetola<br>Lori Weil welcomed the attendees called the meeting to order and requested motion to approve February meeting minutes, which were circulated. Minutes were approved by Sharon Simoncini and seconded by Suki Suh.

Student Representative Report: Student liaisons were not present.
Principal's Report: Tom Gorman informed that the new players are ready to stage "Aida" next week from March $21^{\text {st- }} 24^{\text {th }}$ and the spring sports have started their season. The sophomore semi formal was well attended with about 175 students and he was glad to encourage the students to participate in the dances.

Basil Pizzuto: The matter of taking and posting inappropriate pictures on phones/devices were discussed and talked of how serious the actions of such activity were discussed at length. Tom encouraged parents to continuously have conversations with their kids about the dangers/consequences of such activity. The school will take appropriate measures to educate and make the students aware of the dangers of such actions.

Jeff Nyhuis: He accompanied the students for the DECCA state competition at which 35 students qualified to go to the Nationals ( 7 more from last year) and said it was an amazing experience. This also gave him the opportunity to get to know the students better. HSPA was completed last week with very few absences and the make-ups are being given during this week. The Financial Aide meeting for juniors will be on the $14^{\text {th }}$ at $7: 30 \mathrm{pm}$ in the campus center. On March 20th the College Night will be held in Gym 1 with about 100 colleges being represented.
He also thanked HSA for sponsoring two RHS counselors to visit Northwestern, University Of Chicago, Perdue, Indiana University and Notre Dame. With the information in hand the school is able to guide the students to more colleges and look beyond the usual comfort zone.
On the subject of college admissions he reported that about more than 3076 transcripts have been sent out with 790 recommendations. As of now they have about 203 acceptances out of a class of 412 . About 48 early decisions are confirmed.

The Special Education presentation to $8^{\text {th }}$ grade parents was well attended with about 50-60 people.

Special Presentation: A Q\&A was presented with department chairs and administrators. Lori Weil summarized the many questions/queries/concerns that parents have had over the course of this school year and presented to the panel and circulated with the meeting agenda.
Tom Gorman introduced the heads of the various departments and asked them to spend about 2-3 min on each questions so as to have time for any follow up questions as well.

Mark Ferreri addressed the question regarding "Literary World Views" Vs. English 9. He said that kids with strong writing skills are recommended for this course and the rigor of the course is more teacher driven. He said although these courses are honors courses, they have never been given Honors GPA weighting. A program review of the Social Studies/English is being done presently and a survey will be sent to parents shortly.
As for the English writing skills he said that they are working towards NJ common core regarding reading/writing requirements keeping in line with HSPA and SAT. Diana Capetola confirmed her assistance in working with students with research and writing with $10^{\text {th }}$ and $11^{\text {th }}$ graders.
Mark Ferreri also circulated the power point presentation on kinds of writing taught in school, which is also available on the district homepage under curriculum. Jeff Nyhuis also said as the $9^{\text {th }}$ grade is a transition stage and an even playing field for English and Social Studies would benefit for better placement for higher-grade levels and an honors level course would place more stress on kids as a freshman.

Greg McDonald answered the question on Algebra II honors and gave statistics on how many kids are taking the course and the grades obtained. He agrees that this is one of the hardest classes and Basil Pizzuto also confirmed that the district would be looking into the rigor of the course to come up with a solution.
On answering if colleges look into the classes the kids take during their high school the general consensus was yes the colleges are aware of what is being offered at RHS.
Lori also confirmed that she had about 25 parents querying on this subject and asked the administrators to look into the matter to make it more acceptable.

Tom Gorman answered the question on teachers tutoring at RHS. He believes that there is a demand for tutors in upper level courses and our teachers fill a valuable need helping students that are struggling.

On Financial Literacy requirement Jeff Nyhuis explained that the $2 \frac{1}{2}$ credits is a state
requirement and for those who take 4 yrs of music this becomes a sticky wicket as they don't have time to fit the course in their schedule. However there are several
options like taking the course at the summer school approved by RHS and or taking micro and macro economics, global economy, stock market, consumerism in the Senior year will qualify the requirement.

As the head of Music Dept. Chris McCullough was not available Basil Pizzuto answered the question on music/choir elective. The philosophy in Ridgewood is that the district has a robust music program and in order to allow kids to take halfyear music program would hinder the quality of the music program. The music programs are intermixed with grades and students sometimes have to make choices as many of this afterschool music related activities like marching band/jazz are competitive and the co curricular programs are intertwined.

Tom Gorman spoke on the question regarding teacher absences. He confirmed that there was no district policy but finding long term replacement is very difficult as its hard to find teachers to cover on short term basis and combining classes is not possible due to scheduling and lack of classroom spaces. He confirmed that teachers were made available for any questions the kids may have during that period. He also addressed the question on athletic practices and commitment. At present there is no policy regarding practice schedule but its up to the coaches. The teams feel the need to compete with what the schools around the county are doing, so they set the schedules accordingly.

David Zrike and Basil Pizzuto asked the community/parents to come forth and make a change towards sports practices.

Lori at this point thanked everyone for coming to this session and observed that this speaks to the culture of the community and noted that nothing was off-limits between parents and administrators.
Tom and Jeff addressed a question on HSPA testing regarding not having space to have the entire school in session while testing is in progress. Tom also confirmed the some kids did make use of the healthy alternative that was offered during the HSPA.

Faculty Report: Diana Capetola had nothing to report.
Board Of Education Report: Sheila Brogan informed that Dr. Dan Fishbein would present the budget report at the next HSA meeting. If parents need clarification or have any questions she informed that the board members would be available for a "coffee and conversation" on April 3 rd at the Ed center. April $16^{\text {th }}$ will be the voting on the board seats and the budget.

President's Report: Lori had nothing to report.
Vice President's Report: Carol Olson that they are working on the donor wall for the Learning Commons and have sent out letters confirming patrons donations
and also have extended the time till the end of April. Lori welcomed anyone interested in donating as a group or as individuals to contact her or to visit the website.

Treasurer: Lynn Knight circulated the financial statement as of 3/8/2013 and confirmed the major potion of it is from the LC.

Development: Jaime Frederick informed of the long meeting with the furniture designer/consultant and the architect and are pleased with the plans. Lori also informed of having some funds available for the technology updates as well. The LC committee is anticipating going out to bid for the various aspects of the project soon.

Committee and Liaisons Report: Nominating Committee chair Tracy Autera mentioned the positions on the HSA board and asked if anyone was interested or wants to nominate someone to please contact her and she also stated that it is a wonderful way for the freshman and sophomore parents to get involved with the school. She will present the slate in April and voting will take place in May. Lori also said it has been quite rewarding being on the board and would gladly talk to anyone who is interested in being part of it about the commitment that entails with each position.

Class Report: Carol Olson reported on behalf of class of 13 and said they have now found a space in Allendale for PG13 construction and asked to check on face book for updates on time and dates to begin putting together the props. The Fashion Show is on April $21^{\text {st }}$ at the Sheridan Cross Roads and is in need of donations. Also they need donation of dresses for graduation and proms. Kim Lucky reported on class of 14 and said the parent social was well received and thanked the Thurston for hosting. She also talked of the fundraiser for the banner and also said if any other year is requested they need a minimum of 12 orders. Sharon Simoncini reported on class of 15 and said flyers will be sent out for the sales of stadium seats and next fall or spring are planning on a Bingo Night. Karen Feder reported on class of 16 and said will be selling fleece blankets with class ring logo. She also mentioned about the movie "Girl Rising" which is being screened at Hawthorn Clear View cinema on March $21^{\text {st }}$.

Other Business: David Zrike reported on "Backwoods" event. The high school students came up with 17 amazing acts with 300 people in attendance. The next events will be the trip to great adventure and then the dance. The dates of the future events TBA.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:32pm.

