

Ridgewood High School Home and School Association

Meeting Minutes for September 8, 2009

In Attendance – Erin Ades, Theresa Anovick, Rola Baddoura, Rose Boniello, Nancy Bigos, Ines Bunza, Tara Callaghan, Ed Catto, Angela Chang, Mindy Dauber, Michael DeZaio, Sara Erwin, Karen Feder, Sally Ann Felsenstein, Audrey Fink, Yvonne Francis, Jaime Fredrick, Beth Freed, Lisa Gibble, Suzanne Golabek, Laurie Goodman, Liz Gordon, Lynn Granski, Beth Holmes, Suneui Hong, Margaret Kelly, Lynn Knight, Dorothy Kostin, Tom Krenn, Kyurin Kyung, Michele Lenhard, Jack Lorenz, Karen Lorenz, Annalise Marcus, Margie McKeon, Linda Lewis, Nick Lewis, Jeff Nyhuis, Deborah Ou, Jennifer Parsekian, Maureen Paternoster, Basil Pizzuto, Jenny Rabinowitz, Elizabeth Resnick Jim Roth, Mary Roth, Arlene Sarappo, Christine Shippee, Cristy Sippel, Alane Steinacker, Jane Stone, Dixie Taylor, Tina Telesco, MaryAnn Weston, Linda Zwyhun

Welcome and Approval of Minutes - Rola Baddoura, RHS HSA President, welcomed all to the meeting and thanked the parents who are new to the RHS community for attending the first meeting of the school year. Rola pointed out that we are fortunate to be a part of one of the strongest high schools in the nation. Rola also gave credit and thanks to the RHS administration and teachers for maintaining the level of excellence.

The HSA meeting minutes from June 9, 2009 were presented and voted upon by all those present. The minutes were approved.

Principal's Report – Jack Lorenz

Jack thanked the HSA for its support. The school year is off to a smooth start. A few kinks are being worked out with the many upgrades that were made over the summer including those with the new phone system. The new RPS website software "School Fusion" has incredible capabilities, the teachers and staff are being trained to utilize all its features. The new student information system "Skyward" will be replacing Sassy and will be implemented in early 2010.

Nearly one million dollars in repairs and upgrades were performed at RHS over the summer including roof repairs, and upgrades to the guidance and administrative offices. Jacobsens Landscape Contractors has the new contract for maintenance of the Ridgewood Public School grounds. A noticeable improvement has been seen on the RHS grounds in just a few weeks including weeding, edging and mulching. Jack is very pleased with the effort Jacobsens has put forth. GCA is the private custodial service that RPS uses for its buildings. The RHS administration has been very happy with their work in keeping the building clean.

RHS welcomed 426 freshmen to the school. The new SAIL Program is off to a great start. Jack is very glad to be able to keep these students with special learning needs at RHS.

Jack and Jeff Nyhuis have been working very hard to fine tune the IEP Program. They do not want any student to “fall through the cracks”. Every three weeks they are checking in with each student to see how each is doing and making appropriate adjustments.

The Service Learning Project will be a new feature for the incoming freshman, sophomore and junior classes. By the time the Class of 2013 graduates they will each have a Digital Portfolio of the work they each completed during their four years at RHS.

In response to a question about Blackboard and how many RHS teachers utilize it, Jack replied that out of approximately 158 teachers about one third of them use Blackboard to post the class assignments and dates for tests. The training needed for Blackboard users is fairly intensive. With the new School Fusion site, RHS will have a comparable blackboard capability within the next year. This feature is the second part of the website package. RHS is working hard towards having all of its teachers be accessible on the RHS website for students and parents alike.

Vice Principal for Guidance Report – Jeff Nyhuis

Important upcoming dates for tests being administered at RHS are October 10 for the SAT’s and October 17 for the PSAT’s. All College Board test dates are listed on the RHS website. It is important for all RHS parents to familiarize themselves with the RHS website with all its features and particularly its calendar of events.

New to RHS this year is EDU Docs which is an electronic transcript service. This service will save the Guidance Office time and will provide better documentation of what high school transcripts have been sent and received. On the RHS website is a new Transcript Request Form that students (primarily seniors applying to colleges) can download and fill out. Many colleges are “Edudoc” schools meaning they accept electronic transcripts. It will be up to the student to determine which of the schools they are applying to will accept electronic transcripts versus those that need to have the transcript mailed to them.

There is a Parent Meeting for all parents of freshman on September 16 at 7:30 p.m. in the RHS Campus Center.

The Freshman Class “Club Fair” hosted last week was well attended and was an opportunity for all freshmen to be exposed to the many clubs and activities RHS offers in addition to athletics.

The main message given to the freshman class on their first day of school was “you are all starting off with a clean slate, this is a tremendous opportunity for each of you to be all that you can be!”

The College Speaker Series will be hosting Peter Van Bursick on Thursday, October 8 at 7 p.m. in the RHS Campus Center. This speaker series is sponsored by the Ridgewood Education Foundation and the RHS HSA. Peter is a dynamic speaker and author of the Admissions Game. Students, particularly Juniors and Seniors, and their parents are encouraged to attend this worthwhile interactive presentation.

The College Representatives who will be visiting RHS this fall are now posted on Naviance. Seniors who are interested in meeting with particular college representatives must sign up on Naviance. Naviance is an amazing tool that students and parents use to look at data gathered about college admission statistics, test scores...

RHS has instituted a new policy regarding adding and/or dropping classes. This new policy states that students have 20 days to drop or add a full year class and 10 days to drop or add a semester class starting from today, September 8. This policy does not pertain to those who are dropping down a level, i.e. from an honors level class to a regular level class.

Jeff pointed out that class sizes in English at RHS have been reduced so that teachers can spend more time with each of the students and focus on their writing.

Vice-Principal for Administration/Student Services – Basil Pizutto

The morning announcements at RHS have been eliminated. This is a big change intended to increase students' class time. All announcements are on the RHS website with a link on the left hand column entitled "Daily Announcements". Parents and students can see what clubs are meeting and when. It is imperative that students check the announcements on the website. It is also important to know that any forms a student may need at RHS are also available on the website.

The RHS Student Council's representatives to the RHS HSA are Hannah Cohan, Carl Legg and Kelly Boylan.

The Attendance Policy at RHS was overhauled last year resulting in a significant reduction in the number of student absences! This data is going to be presented to the BOE. The policy effectively changed students' behavior and positively impacted classroom attendance. The RHS Attendance Policy is available in the RHS Student Handbook and on the RHS website.

The Freshman Mixer that was held last Thursday night was very well attended. The kids seemed to have fun.

A new Code of Conduct has been adapted by RHS for all Extracurricular Activities, similar to the Code of Conduct that the RHS Athletic Department has had in place for many years. This new Code of Conduct is being adapted so that all students, whether involved in New Players, RHS Bands, RHS sponsored Clubs or RHS Athletic Teams are all held to the same leadership standards. This a big change and will ideally have the same positive impact on our students' behavior as the change in the Attendance Policy did!

Regarding the Attendance Policy, it is important for parents to call AVS if your child is going to be absent from school.

Teacher Report – Basil Pizutto spoke for Ruth Parks who could not attend the meeting

The RHS teachers and staff would like to thank the HSA and all the RHS parents who provided baked items for the “Welcome Back” reception held on September 2.

Board of Education Report – Laurie Goodman

As Jack mentioned the BOE oversaw many repairs to RHS over the summer. The BOE encourages all Ridgewood residents to watch the BOE Meetings which can be viewed live via the RPS webcast. Please visit the BOE website to learn more about the Ridgewood Board of Education.

On December 8, 2009, Ridgewood voters will be asked to vote on a bond referendum. A fact sheet on the referendum will be sent out by the Board of Education within the next two weeks. The BOE will be hosting open forums so that Ridgewood residents can come ask questions and give their input on the referendum.

The new Ridgewood Public Schools website is still in transition. Thanks to the public’s input the RPS website has been greatly improved over the years and continues to be fine tuned. Please utilize this site to learn more about the RPS and the BOE. The Board of Education members have their email addresses listed on the website and they are eager to hear from their constituents.

HSA President - Rola Baddoura

The Ridgewood Municipal Alliance is hosting a program entitled “Parental Guidance for Teens” at George Washington Middle School on September 21 at 7 p.m. All are welcome to attend this free event.

HSA Vice- President – Arlene Sarappo

Arlene will be meeting with all the HSA Class Parent Representatives regarding fund raising efforts each class is planning. Part of the discussion will be on the best way of communicating to the parents of each class.

HSA Treasurer – Ines Bunza

All of the RHS HSA tax forms for the academic year 2008-2009 have been completed. Changes will need to be made regarding the HSA’s accounting in the upcoming years. Each Class will need to submit receipts and expenses for all monies collected and all monies paid out. Documentation will be very important to maintain for all HSA Committees. The HSA and the Class Representatives will not be able to issue checks or payments without a disbursement form. The disbursement forms are available on the RHS HSA website (www.rhshsa.org)

Ines presented the Proposed 2009/2010 HSA Budget. The proposed budget was voted on and approved by all those present.

Communications Coordinator – Lynn Granski

All RHS parents should have received a letter from the Ridgewood Public Schools regarding updating their family emergency contact information on Community Pass. If the contact information is correct, please be sure to press “submit” before you log off from Community Pass. The deadline for updating the emergency contact information on Community Pass is September 14. The information gathered on Community Pass will be used for the Student Directory unless you chose to “opt out” where indicated. An email reminder from RPS to those families who have not updated their information will be sent out prior to the September 14 deadline.

Also enclosed in the envelope from RPS was a letter from the RHS HSA regarding membership and an order form for the RHS Student Directory. The Student Directory form can also be found on the HSA website. Thank you to Sara Erwin who spent much of last spring and this summer coordinating the Emergency Contact Update Form and the HSA membership letters with all the Ridgewood schools’ HSA’s and the RPS.

Those families who would like to receive the RHS HSA enews, and have not done so, should be sure to sign up on listserve. The first HSA enews for this school year was sent out last week. Reading the HSA enews is a wonderful way to stay informed. If you have information that you would like to have included in the HSA enews please be sure to email Lynn at lgranski@aol.com.

Development – Tina Telesco

The Development Committee is meeting with Jack to discuss potential projects for a fundraising campaign.

Webmaster/Directory - Linda Willk

The RHS HSA does have its own designated website www.rhshsa.org. On the website you will find a listing of the HSA Board Members and their contact information, HSA meeting dates, the HSA Meeting Minutes, and information regarding each of the class fundraisers.

Directory Membership – Cheryl Sabath

To date 227 families have sent in their HSA membership dues totaling \$5100. Please write your child’s name on the memo line when sending in your check for the HSA membership, there are quite a few RHS families with the same last name. If you have not sent in your membership form, it is not too late. Your RHS HSA membership includes one copy of the RHS Student Directory that will be mailed directly to your home. The membership dues collected sponsor educational opportunities for our RHS students including helping underwrite the cost of the College Speaker Series.

Senior Class Parent Representative – Theresa Anovick

The parents of seniors are selling Innisbrook Gift Wrap with all proceeds going towards Project Graduation 2010. Please go to the RHS website to learn more about the gift wrap and placing your order.

On Tuesday, September 15 there will be a Senior Parent Meeting at 7:30 in the RHS Campus Center. This is an extremely important meeting for parents to learn more about the events being planned for the Senior Class. Please attend this meeting and take the opportunity to sign up for one of the parent committees to help make your student's senior year a memorable one!

Junior Class Parent Representatives – Beth Freed, Lisa Gible, Cristy Sippel

The parents of the Junior Class are hosting a Raffle Dinner to be held on Friday night, November 20 at the Ridgewood Women's Club. Only three hundred tickets will be sold for the event. Each \$100 ticket includes dinner and an opportunity to win the Grand Prize of \$10,000. In addition ten other ticket holders will win \$500 each. Invitations to this Dinner Raffle were mailed to all RHS parents. If you did not receive an invitation or want to learn more about the event please go to the HSA website.

Freshman Class Representatives – Yvonne Francis, Beth Holmes

RHS Class of 2013 t-shirts are being sold. Have your freshman student show their support by buying their class t-shirt. Order forms are available on the HSA website and will also be available in the Campus Center at Back to School Night.

Hospitality – Sally Ann Felsenstein and Maureen Paternoster

Thank you again to all the parents who provided items for the HSA sponsored Welcome Back Reception for the RHS teachers and administration held on September 2. A sign up to provide baked items, paper products and beverages for the Halloween Breakfast is being passed around. The RHS faculty greatly appreciates the HSA's hospitality and the Halloween Breakfast is always a special one.

RHS Cares – Kate Douglass (update given by Lynn Granski)

If you are interested in signing up for the Distribution List for RHS Cares, a sheet is being passed around to have your name added to the list. Being on the RHS Cares distribution list means information will be emailed to you about meals or other help that is needed on particular dates. If you are available to provide a meal on a particular date, you can sign up accordingly. Being on the distribution list does not mean you are committed to provide a meal every time a need arises, you can sign up according to what fits your schedule.

Jamboree – Tom Krenn, Linda Lewis, Nick Lewis, Elizabeth Resnick, Dixie Taylor

100% of the profits raised from the Jamboree production is given to need based senior scholarships. Last year Jamboree made \$55,000. It is the intent of this year's Jamboree to get even more RHS parents involved with the production. Auditions are October 7, 15, and 20. For those parents who may not want to be on stage but want to be a part of this wonderful effort, help is also needed with sets, costumes, music, selling tickets, or coordinating the program for the show. There are countless ways for parents to be involved. Jamboree encourages everyone to buy ads for the show's program, an easy but very worthwhile way to help. Jamboree is a wonderful community effort, come join the fun, meet new people and partake in a worthwhile cause!

Ridgewood's Youth Center – Nancy Bigos

The Youth Center at the Ridgewood Village Hall is open every day after school and on Friday nights for middle school and high school students to stop in. The Youth Center hosts socials for each grade level throughout the year. Rita Muzio is the full time Youth Center Coordinator. She is always open to suggestions for new programs and events to attract the youth of Ridgewood. "Perfectly Me" A Mother/Daughter Evening is being hosted by the Youth Center and will take place on Thursday, October 15th from 6:30-8:30. For more information about this event and others hosted by the Youth Center please go to www.ridgewoodnj.net

The Youth Center is available for rental. Please contact Nora Muzio for further details.

Ridgewood Education Foundation – Liz Gordon

The REF gives grant money to the Ridgewood Public Schools. Last year the REF awarded \$21,000 in grants to the Ridgewood schools. RHS received \$5,000 of the grant money that went towards sponsoring a program on Shakespeare, purchasing cameras for the digital photography classes and buying cellos for the RHS Music Department.

The REF also helps support the College Speaker Series and Super Science Saturday. The money the REF raises is from its membership and an endowment. If you are not yet a member of the REF please go to the REF website www.ridgewoodeducationfoundation.org to learn more about the organization and how you can help support it.

The REF in conjunction with the Ridgewood Chamber of Commerce is sponsoring a Community Dog Show on Sunday October 18 from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. The REF is also looking for trustees to join its Board, please talk to Liz if you are interested.

The President adjourned the meeting at 9:20 p.m.

The next RHS HSA meeting will be Tuesday, October 6 at 7:30 p.m. in the RHS Library/Media Center

Respectfully submitted by Lynn Granski