

**Federated Home and School Association
Meeting Minutes
August 13, 2020**

Welcome: August Special Meeting

Kelly Buchsbaum welcomed everyone to the meeting at 9:15am via Zoom.

In attendance:

Kelly Buchsbaum (Federated President), Colleen Tansey (Federated 1st VP), Amy Gill (Federated 2nd VP), Valerie Auyeung (Federated Secretary/Treasurer), Kathy Marshall (Federated Member-at-Large), Dr. Fishbein (Superintendent), Mike Lembo (BOE President), Mary Micala (RHS), Juliane Cho (GW), Carol Waldman (BF), Mayumi Harada (BF), Christine Malloy (Travell), Jess Vartughian (Travell), Jimmy Judge (Orchard), Francesca Parker (Somerville), Sarah Traband (Somerville), Ashley Minetti (Ridge), Lauren Dunleavy (Willard), Kelly Ashford (Hawes), Jen Giammarella (Hawes), Jamie England (LSHSA), Elena Croy (RED).

Guest Speaker: Joanna Hanrahan---Sustainable Ridgewood

Board of Education Update:

Dr. Dan Fishbein, Superintendent

- Working on return to school plan all summer. State has delayed guidance on plans, with few details provided. RPS district plans were submitted but state did not provide guidance or checklists as promised. District is not expected to receive any feedback now from state, but they just wanted to have plans from schools
 - As of yesterday, state announced that districts can go remote, but RPS district feels prepared to move forward with in-person
 - Approximately 1,000 students (approx. 17-18% school population) will be all-remote learning.
 - District is rescheduling classes based on all-remote students and those teachers who are opting not to teach in-person due to healthcare and childcare reasons.
 - Some teachers are taking a leave of absence for the year, and district is working to fill those positions.
 - 500 Elementary students not returning: They may collapse classes and reschedule/shift classes. The ability for families to opt in/out will complicate this: if kids return for in-person learning, they will have to see if they will be able to staff with teachers.
 - Ashley Minetti (Ridge): Can there be a sounding board from parents to evaluate how this goes? Dr. Fishbein: Yes, we want parent input.
 - Dr. Fishbein concerned about seeing schools in other parts of the country open and needing to quarantine, but RPS feels prepared. We see kids not socially distancing and having parties. We understand

people are tired of doing this, and we are up against a lot if people aren't following guidelines.

- Mayumi Harada (BF): Will there be any testing? Dr. Fishbein: We talked to Dr. Yankus, and the advice is that a test won't tell us much, because the test is just a "point in time" and there is no rapid test. Things change daily, and they aren't accurate on a day-to-day basis.
- Carol Waldman (BF): Parents think they can switch their kids between in-person and virtual/remote anytime, even as soon as the next day. Dr Fishbein: No, some districts are making families wait a month or 6 weeks before being able to switch, but RPS will have a quicker turn-around.
- Mary Micale (RHS): Will there be job actions as NJEA says it is not safe to open? Dr. Fishbein: Teachers can speak their minds, both publicly and privately. The REA has been asking a lot of questions, and district is working it out with them.
- Kelly Ashford (Hawes): If a kid is sick in class, what happens to siblings and the kids in the class? Dr. Fishbein: Not sure yet what the protocols will be. There's a lot of information being evaluated and looked at by county and state. Dr. Fishbein will be in touch with Dawn in health department to work on contact tracing.
- Kelly Ashford (Hawes): Will there be another parent survey? Dr. Fishbein: Not anticipating there will be one soon.
- Kathy Marshall: On Facebook and social media, parents are forming learning pods. What are thoughts? Are they officially on their own? Dr. Fishbein: Teachers are required take attendance and will report if kids are not accounted for on daily attendance. Parents can officially withdraw their children from the school system.
- Kelly B: Is there any advice to give to teachers in the district if they are doing this? Dr. Fishbein: We have a tutoring policy, and he has talked to REA. Teachers are not allowed to privately tutor any students or siblings in the subject(s) they are teaching. The policy is very detailed. Kelly B. advises parents to be cautious, and HSA should not discuss this or express their standpoint or view on this.

Mike Lembo, Board of Education

- The focus of the BOE is to get the school year off to a good start. Parents all have different thoughts about the school year, and there really is no good answer on what is right for everyone. The priority of the BOE is to get kids to school and safely. News changes every day with different guidance, and BOE trying to make decisions based on these changes. The pulse of parents is important to guide these decision – parents help inform the BOE. This is why the Federated HSA is important – keeping him and BOE informed. BOE meets with parent groups—aware of pods being organized and wants to offer enough for the kids. Parents should feel free to reach out to the BOE with any concerns or questions.

- Kelly B: Has the BOE had to add any extra meetings? Mike L: No special meetings planned unless there is a big change.
- Mike L: BOE is working on other planned summer projects, and they are coming along, including Orchard Field and RHS Stevens turf, which is almost finished. There are other projects that are going on but BOE's focus has been on school.
- Kelly B: Any news on the budget not passing? Mike L: Roughly 700 votes not counted, and lawsuit filed. Working on the budget and found some items that could be cut. BOE trying to avoid cutting programming and teachers.
- Mary Micale (RHS): There must be added costs now with COVID protocol--- where is this money coming from? Mike L: Government is providing money for COVID expenditures (eg hand sanitizer, markers, Playdoh and other things that need to be constantly replaced). Some state aid was cut so BOE is trying to balance. Grants being used to purchase Chromebooks for K and 1st grade students. These will all be costs going forward.

Guest speaker: Joanna Hanrahan: Somerville Green Team, Sustainable Ridgewood (contact info to be shared with HSA presidents)

- There is a certification program for schools that want to go green. There is also a new NJ grant to support schools, and 10/30 is the deadline to apply.
- There is a Green team at Somerville with parent and faculty volunteers
 - Initiatives for this year: annual tree planting for incoming K kids
 - Green Pledge taken by students
 - Goal to have green fan by spring
 - Arbor Day activities
- Working on banning plastic water bottles at HSA events, classrooms; also working with Village Fresh to collaborate with. Pomptonian is long-term lunch provider for 30 years, and Sustainable Ridgewood may be able to leverage relationship to make changes.
- Working with Shade Commission and Ridgewood Green teams to bring these organizations together
- Also want to connect schools and keep everyone in the loop with projects each school is doing
- Working on website: SustainableRidgewood.org
 - Non-political
- Mary Micale suggested reaching out to Jeff Nyhuis Asst Principal at RHS to connect with interested students and clubs; may be able to bridge town activities with the school

President's Update:

Kelly Buchsbaum, President

- **HSA Fundraising efforts**
 - HSAs may elect to carry over funds into new school year as fundraising may be limited; please meet with principals before school starts to find out needs of the school
 - Make sure requests are not already covered by RPS district

- Schools should fundraise to their own school families and promote to own families. By sending fundraisers beyond individual schools, it may take away from other schools' fundraisers. Specifically, vendors may try to be helpful and send fundraiser info to an outside list, but each HSA president should promote only to your school, not to other schools or their mailing list or to the town
- Jen Giammarella: Can clothes collection fundraising be advertised widely to town and other schools? All elementary schools agreed to stagger their dates and promote each other's dates.
www.Clothingdonationservices.com Ridge held the fundraiser at the end of the school year; raised \$1500. Kelly B reminded everyone to double-check this and all other charitable companies before tying into a fundraiser; i.e. make sure to look where the funds go that the company will earn by working with our HSAs.
- **Federated HSA projects**
 - In place of convocation breakfast this year, Dr. Fishbein would like to plant the state tree of New Jersey - Northern Red Oak (total 11) at each school and at Ed building
 - Consider involving Shade Commission or RHS students
 - Invite local nurseries to donate in exchange for advertising in HSA Directories
 - Plaque commemorating 2020: HOPE (George Floyd, COVID-19)
 - Each school could also place additional signage if desired
 - Federated will work with Joanna Hanrahan
 - New trees need 15 gallons of water per week for the first few years
 - At Somerville, landscapers agreed to water
 - Can also use gator bag---slowly releases water; used by Shade Commission
 - Gary from Village Landscaping responsible for watering trees at the train station
 - Federated does not want to burden individual schools with cost of trees esp during this time---will try to ask for support from vendors with relationships we already have

Vice President's Report:

Colleen Tansey, 1st Vice President

Amy Gill, 2nd Vice President

- Alternate Wizards dates (Colleen): April 27 and 28 at 7pm (Jan 21 and 22nd initial dates); both sets of dates are booked with the option to cancel or reschedule again
 - Kelly B: Federated is not a fundraising organization; Wizards game is the only fundraiser
 - Kelly B: Varsity Hues mask sales eblast was a surprise benefit to Federated and not a planned fundraiser; Varsity Hues has been a longtime supporter and Wizards Gold Sponsor; kind of them to think

- of Federated, but we do not want to take away any fundraising opportunities from the schools
- Elena: Where are other schools getting masks from? Kelly: Varsity Hues; Printology; VistaPrint; Ferrier sports in Wyckoff (Willard)
 - VistaPrint did not send samples
 - Disclaimer that these are not healthcare grade
 - Varsity Hues offers 100% cotton but only certain colors; did not have green for Willard
 - HSA Events process (Amy)
 - Event space request needs to be done for any event happening on school grounds
 - Form on district site needs to be filled out and submitted electronically---will be confirmed by district
 - Hawes tried submitting a few weeks ago but district not accepting; will try again to send to Ms. Russo
 - Wizards request accepted
 - Christine Malloy: What are schools requesting space for? Fifth Grade Circus, International Day, etc.
 - Kathy Marshall: Note: District should not charge for any HSA sponsored event so make sure that your HSA is not charged a fee

Treasurer's Report:

Valerie Auyeung, Secretary/Treasurer

- Account with Columbia Bank opened; will switch account from TD Bank to Columbia Bank.
- Stripe fees payments submitted by all schools except Orchard
- Accountant is starting to prepare tax returns: treasurers should make sure accounts have been reconciled and QuickBooks has been updated. If more time is needed to update QuickBooks, let the accountant know.

Member-at-Large Report:

Kathy Marshall, Member-at-Large

- Reminder of insurance procedures if insurance is needed
- Directory (GroupSpot – powered by Kohort Technologies)
 - Chair committee names for each school were due in this week
 - Next meeting at August 19th at 12 PM for HSA presidents and directory chairs to receive training
 - Mark Kossick, Kohort owner, offering 1 hour 1:1 sessions; will help set up administration; has already done for 2-3 schools
 - Mark working on developing directory admin guide
 - Please RSVP for meeting---need at least 1 rep per school
- Skyward registration postcard delivered this week
 - Need to re-register
 - Has info for parents on process for paying HSA dues: schools can collect dues individually from families, not dependent on GroupSpot

- Carol Waldman (BF): How are different schools collecting dues?
Kathy: Venmo, Community Pass, Paypal, school's own website
 - Last year through Stripe because of MobileArq requirements
- HSAs should send enews reminder for Skyward registration process and deadline; make sure all contact info is up-to-date
- Kathy will send info for Aug 19 meeting

Open Discussion:

- Kelly B: Pleased to introduce a community organization, RAG (Ridgewood Ambassadors for Global) Citizenship - antiracism initiative:
 - Kelly B will send mission statement and contact names/emails of RAG founders Lynn Benson, Grace Kang, Miyuki Tsukada, Anne Burton Walsh
 - Community Reads program: Ridgewood Public Library to choose a book – RPL also working with Glen Rock and Fair Lawn in coordinated community read
 - RAG meeting with Dr. Fishbein and Dr. Gorman this afternoon
 - Jimmy Judge (Orchard): Could this become political due to election and timing of events? Kelly: All activities will be approved by Dr. Fishbein first
- Mary Micale (RHS): What is ask from individual HSA? If principal has an initiative, HSAs should support principals without voicing political opinions.
- Christine Malloy (Travell): What are other elementary schools doing for enrichment to keep kids off screens?
 - Travell has one idea: Tactile kits for kids to do at home as a family or on their own or via Zoom. These will replace TLC (Travell Lunchtime Courses) formerly held during lunch time.
 - Jimmy (Orchard): Common Sense media has some good ideas-- managing screen time; virtual back-to-school night
- Elena (RED): Any district info on Back to School Night?
 - Mary Micale: RHS will be virtual.
 - Sarah Traband: Virtual at Somerville; videos from teachers with links provided

Meeting adjourned at: 11:15 pm

Next Meeting: Thursday, September 17, 2020 at 9:15 am—Location TBD

Respectfully submitted by Valerie Auyeung, Secretary/Treasurer