

**Federated Home and School Association  
Meeting Minutes  
September 17, 2020**

**Welcome: September Meeting**

Kelly Buchsbaum welcomed everyone to the meeting at 9:20am via Zoom.

**In attendance:**

Kelly Buchsbaum (Federated President), Colleen Tansey (Federated 1st VP), Amy Gill (Federated 2<sup>nd</sup> 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), Todd Rothman (Orchard), Francesca Parker (Somerville), Sarah Traband (Somerville), Ashley Minetti (Ridge), Lauren Dunleavy (Willard), Kelly Ashford (Hawes), Jen Giammarella (Hawes), Jamie England (LSHSA), Liz Kempey (RED Program), Paul McCarthy (REF)

**Guest Speakers:**

- Lynn Benson, Grace Kang, Miyuki Tsukada and Anne Burton Walsh -- Ridgewood Ambassadors for Global Citizenship (RAG)
- Mark Kossick -- GroupSpot/Kohort Technologies

August Meeting minutes approved

**Board of Education Update:**

**Dr. Dan Fishbein, Superintendent**

- Opening of schools went well
- Some people did not receive medical questionnaire yesterday
- Another parent survey will be released late next week regarding changes in schedule to see if school day can be expanded
- RHS case of COVID---all received emails; contact tracing will be done; all encouraged to comply with contact tracing
  - Freshman and JV soccer teams involved
  - Working with Dr. Yankus and school officials
  - Families encouraged to follow the protocol and not send kids into school if they are sick or have symptoms of COVID; remain home until symptoms resolve
- Kathy Marshall:
  - Status of Superintendent position? Dr. Fishbein to meet with Mr. Lembo today to discuss
  - Details of COVID case? Dr. Fishbein: Student was not in the building prior to practice for several days; kids involved with practice will be quarantined

- If kids are in quarantine due to symptoms or in contact with someone who may have COVID, can they attend remotely? Dr. Fishbein: Kids will be going remotely--should not be counted as absent for now
- Kelly B
  - Turnaround time for request to switch learning models? Dr. Fishbein: For 10- day turnaround to hybrid or vice versa, the change will happen as soon as possible
    - Kathy M: Two (2) daughter's friends at RHS were able to accommodate request the next day
- Todd R (Orchard):
  - October 8<sup>th</sup> Targeted day for Phase 2?
    - If moving forward to Phase 2, will not meet much resistance
    - When moving to Phase 3, what input is needed from HSA boards as BOE/Superintendent make the decision to move to next phase?
      - Dr. Fishbein: Dependent on many moving parts eg. vaccine, herd immunity, NJ state mandates
      - Will not be a local decision
      - Oct date was prematurely decided on/announced
      - Small blip of families going remote after RHS case
- Mary M (RHS):
  - Special RHS HSA meeting with Mike Lembo, Sheila Brogan, and administrators tonight to discuss updates at the HS level
- Todd R (Orchard):
  - Google form at Orchard for parents to discuss issues--comments and questions will be passed on to pandemic response team anonymously
- Kathy M:
  - For survey and RHS, open campus will cause concerns for parents esp having to stay in school for lunch, etc. Dr. Fishbein: schedule will be included in survey; lunch will be grab and go; will not be able to leave building; 2 lunch periods scheduled
- Ashley M (Ridge)
  - How can parents provide feedback upwards?
  - Survey: can parents on Federated see survey before it goes out? Dr. Fishbein to ask Stacie Poelstra since she is developing survey
  - Parents do not feel they have a voice in decisions. Kelly B suggests sending to Dr. Fishbein, Mike Lembo
- Dr. Fishbein: What are some of the concerns with expanding the day?
  - Kathy M: RHS students feel they are not at the same HS they were before the pandemic because they are not allowed to leave during the school day
    - Can HS students be included in survey? Dr. Fishbein: Input of HS students will be included.
  - Mary M (RHS): Depends on whom you talk to. Kids do not want to go to school if they can't leave. Parents may be concerned about

increased risk. Working parents may have different perspective.  
Difference between preference and what needs to be done.

- Ashley M (Ridge): Elementary school parents are ready for max time in school for kids
- Amy G: Agrees with Ashley; parents want to know what full day will look like (eg lunch). Dr. Fishbein: schedule will be embedded in survey; social distance at lunch---some in cafeteria, others in classrooms

### **Mike Lembo, BOE**

- Appreciate the work of Federated HSA
- Working on Phase 2 of reopening plan as well as before and after care for elementary schools
- May be overly ambitious to have Thanksgiving date for Phase 3
- Asking for patience with the process
- Traffic decreased around schools
- Issues should be brought up to school presidents
- Everyone worked quickly to get the word out about the case at the HS
  - Still need to take precautions with handwashing and masks
- Recognized Kathy's concern of HS students
- Policies to come out; all are posted on website; middle school will have financial literacy classes; function of board to set policies
- Kelly B: Some of the Board of Ed members ask how parents can get questions answered -- Chain of command should be their principals first and then HSAs. These are avenues that should be taken for parents to voice their concerns
- Some parents may not comfortable with HSA or unable to make meeting--- should be easier now with Zoom meetings
  - BOE is not asking for surveys to be sent to public every week
  - Working relationship with HSA and Principal is paramount; issues should be brought up to the lowest level not to the top first (i.e. discuss w Principal before going to Superintendent or BOE members)
  - Mary M (RHS): Requests Mr. Lembo ask BOE members for suggestions on how to better reach parents and make people more comfortable with HSA
    - Kelly B: Families are still members of HSA even if not paying dues
    - Kelly B: If language is a barrier there are additional groups to join such as Korean HSA (very active at BF; works w BF HSA on events and some outreach)
  - Kathy: When 1000 petition Board to push back for school model, that is roughly only 600 students (10%) and almost same amount pushed for the other extreme; 80% want hybrid but board continues to speak about the 1000 parents who are in the minority. 80% should not be ignored just because they did not petition. Need to understand chain

of command---go to classroom teacher first with issues then principal at school then proceed to superintendent. Lines of communication are open. When BOE placates one group who is in the minority, ignoring the majority, and gives that group the louder voice, that is a problem. Mike Lembo: BOE only met with group one time and has met with Federated more than that. Majority of group were elementary parents. The group was directed to HSAs.

- Kathy M: Should be directed to principals
  - One board member keeps referring to 1000 people and point of view was repeatedly addressed by board member; people will be afraid to go to principals and go directly to BOE instead
  - Kelly B: Remind BOE members to direct issue to Principals first
- Todd R (Orchard): Signed the petition; product of vacuum of communication that happened this summer
  - Recognized layers of plan
  - Nothing was filtered from the Board or Dr. Fishbein to address issues with Principal
  - Encourage BOE to come up with line of communication that is structured and filtered down to chain of command so that people feel like they are being heard
- Emails being received by BOE are not school-specific---Board is filtering emails to appropriate people
- Mary M (RHS): Calendar committee---select some non-HSA parents to participate; may have to offer broader communication channels
- Kathy M: Does BOE have a position on election and policy? Political representation--similar to free speech. Board's position will come from Dr. Lembo or Dr. Fishbein. Stating their own position should not be affiliated with BOE.

**Guest speaker: Ridgewood Ambassadors for Global Citizenship intro and overview (Lynn Benson, Grace Kang, Miyuki Tsukada, Anne Burton Walsh, co-founders/co-chairs of RAG)**

- Nonpartisan group formalized in wake of George Floyd
- Engaged with community organizations (Ridgewood Public Library, RPS, YMCA, inter-faith clergy in Ridgewood, and other groups to enhance Global Citizenship)
- Goal - work w HSAs to collaboratively promote multicultural perspective in district. RAG views HSAs as cultural backbones of schools.
- Mission statement: Expand students' knowledge of US history and society; build understanding of Black American contributions, as well as other marginalized communities
  - Enhance learning and understanding of systemic and institutional racism
  - Address any racism and bigotry within school system

- Advocate for greater representation of People of Color (POC) in schools and community leaders
- Create community partnerships to make changes in most collaborative way possible
- Approach:
  - Curriculum: advocate for representational curriculum update
  - Enhancing connection for the district schools: assemblies and activities connecting elementary, middle, and high schools
  - Diversity equity and inclusion: Lifting voices and introducing different views throughout
  - Art: Art and performance-based experience; working with TicToc and New Players; meeting with district art coordinator to discuss school involvement
  - Community engagement: assisting and promoting community events that explore different perspectives; meetings all are invited to attend
- Discussed meeting held by Dr. Fishbein (Listen and Learn) invited RAG, other community groups, and faculty/HS principals to discuss how to improve curriculum, be more inclusive in schools. RAG member reread letter from Dr. Fishbein at meeting
- Jimmy J (Orchard): Previously helped residents of S. Bronx with technology; concerned that current presentation may be too political; stresses need to ensure the other viewpoints are also heard
  - Kelly B: Encouraged Jimmy and others to work with RAG to have viewpoints represented

**Guest Speaker: GroupSpot (Mark Kossick)**

- GroupSpot app will not replace e-notices – it will supplement enews
- 8 out of 10 of schools are live as well as LSHSA. Ridge will collect dues first then go live
- Mark thanks Federated and all HSAs for making this commitment. It is a 9-month process as we build and go
- Discussed designating roles for managing the app for each school
- Worried there wouldn't be content due to COVID but actually there are a lot of activities, especially for RHS, BF and GW
- Screen share presentation to show components of app and how schools are using it to promote Back to School Nights, school picture days etc.; encourage using pictures/images to get attention
- Reviewed membership by school: Hawes has biggest number of members joined to date
- Reviewed how to grow numbers---new content, provide reasons to open app
- For mobile directory, waiting on district data. Kathy Marshall says Georgia has Skyward data ready. Hopefully data file will be out today
- Directions on turning on directory to come once data is set and ready to go live. Contract says they have 3 weeks from data received to going live and they expect to meet that.

- Kelly B. is really happy with how it's all going, great communication tool -- shout out to schools for getting the word out and getting more parent members
- Kathy M. asked everyone to keep track of how dues are going this year so we can track this for next year's reference

**President's Update:**

Kelly Buchsbaum, President

- Request for HSA 20-21 meeting schedules from all HSA presidents
- Request for HSA presidents to promote Superintendents' Coffee

**Vice President's Report:**

Colleen Tansey, 1st Vice President

Amy Gill, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President

- Will be arranging elementary and middle school HSA presidents meetings in the next few weeks

**Treasurer's Report:**

Valerie Auyeung, Secretary/Treasurer

- Reminded schools to submit payment for Federated dues for 2020-2021 (\$1085)
- Remaining balance from TD Bank account transferred to Columbia Bank account in preparation to close TD Bank account
- Taxes filed for Federated HSA by accountant

**Member-at-Large Report:**

Kathy Marshall, Member-at-Large

- Reminder to allow KM extra time to arrange for insurance coverage for events if needed

**Open Discussion:**

- Christine Malloy: Has not been able to obtain refund from educational trips cancelled last year and was wondering if other schools have had the same issue----Independence Hall is closed but the company is refusing to refund the payment of over \$900
  - Kelly B. would like to have this looked into further

Meeting adjourned at: 11:45 am

Next Meeting: Thursday, October 8, 2020 at 9:15 am—Location TBD

Respectfully submitted by Valerie Auyeung, Secretary/Treasurer