

**Federated Home and School Association
Meeting Minutes
November 12, 2020**

Welcome: November 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 2nd VP), Valerie Auyeung (Federated Secretary/Treasurer), Kathy Marshall (Federated Member-at-Large), Dr. Fishbein (Superintendent), Mike Lembo (BOE), Mary Micale (RHS), Juliane Cho (GW), Carol Waldman (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), Jamie England (LSHSA), Elena Croy (RED), Paul McCarthy (REF)

Special guests: Joanna Hanrahan (Somerville Parent Volunteer / Sustainable Initiatives Coordinator), Christine Amundsen (RPS District Energy Specialist), Mark Kossick (GroupSpot)

October minutes approved.

Board of Education Update:

Dr. Dan Fishbein, Superintendent

- Thanked everyone for the tree gifted to him from the Federated Board on his retirement
- COVID-19 case reports
 - None have been linked to the schools - ie not transmitted through school and therefore have not had to close school
 - Fortunate to have own health department in Ridgewood
 - Separate distinct cases in last letter (not linked)---may be due to Halloween, teacher convention week
 - For kids who come home from college, they should not test for 5 days; should quarantine from people at home
 - Rumors about closing after Thanksgiving and going virtual are false: some districts have not opened yet and may decide to do this
 - For districts that are open already, cannot close based on assumption that something will happen; must follow state guidelines
 - If governor closes all schools, then district must close
 - Spoke with state education dept yesterday, and no truth to rumor that schools will close after Thanksgiving
 - Ashley M: Requested that Dr. Fishbein address phase 2; Dr. Fishbein regrets giving a date for phase 2 but eventually phase 2 will be full day

- Dr. Fishbein showed numbers of cases lately----over 3000 positive cases yesterday; numbers increasing dramatically
- Mary M: Learned that school nurses are trained in contact tracing; Dr. Fishbein offered to help Valley Hospital in the spring with contact tracing by offering services of school nurses; helpful now in schools

Guest speakers: Christine Amundsen (RPS energy specialist) has been working in district for 6 years---reporting on Sustainable Jersey for Schools grants, etc.

- Monitor energy consumption by Synergistic
- Dr. Fishbein: have light sensors and other tools to monitor system to save energy and money
- Village at Silver level; program opened up to schools about 6 years ago
- 91 different actions that can be taken by schools toward Sustainable Jersey project
 - Once a certain level is reached, school can be certified
 - District cannot be certified; only individual schools can be certified but district can do certain actions that can be credited to all schools
 - Schools only need to have a Green team
 - Somerville received a grant
 - Hawes received a grant a few years ago
 - Additional grants are in the works
- **Joanna Hanrahan** is coordinator of Green team at Somerville and working with BF and other schools on implementing programs
 - Encouraged all schools to form Green team
 - Encouraged all HSAs to promote program either Green Club or Sustainable Jersey for clubs
 - Encouraged each HSA to pursue program at their school and apply for grant---easy to do
 - Working on RPS district-wide grant w Federated (KB)

Mike Lembo, BOE

- COVID-19: Reiterated that Ridgewood is fortunate to have own health dept
- A tweet stating that Governor Murphy announced shutdown was fake news and debunked quickly by Dr. Fishbein
- Resolution to pass at next BOE meeting to make it official that Dr. Tom Gorman will be acting superintendent
- Dr. Gorman will still be principal of RHS---will return to job when permanent superintendent is found
- Special session yesterday to review firms to consider new Board attorneys; potential firms were asked how they would transition current open cases to new attorneys without added costs and seamlessly
- Special session today to interview Architect of record; along with 6 other firms
- REA negotiations started last night: Ms. Kwak and Ms. Brogan will handle negotiations with REA (Mr. Lembo recused due to personal conflict)

- Scott Bisig (new RPS Business Administrator) to start officially on Jan 1, 2021; assistant BA to take on duties in meantime
- Attended RHS HSA meeting via Zoom last night---good turnout, and hopefully will more parents will continue to attend
- Search firm R-PAT Solutions hired to conduct new superintendent process; based locally and founded/run by a former superintendent and assistant superintendent
 - Survey to be sent to parents, community members - invited to provide feedback and help determine RPS district's needs
 - Application deadline is Dec 7, 2020 to narrow down choices
 - Web services now available to make it easier to obtain info

President's Update:

Kelly Buchsbaum, President

- Email on building use: no events on school grounds until after January
- Jennie Smith Wilson started scholarship in honor of Dr. Fishbein. The Daniel A. Fishbein Scholarship Fund will grant \$1,000 per year for 17+ years to an RHS senior
 - Federated HSA will be lending nonprofit status
 - Currently at \$17,450
 - New account will be opened for scholarship fund; Federated HSA Treasurer will be signer
 - Federated President will serve on scholarship selection committee with RHS administrators

Vice President's Report:

Colleen Tansey, 1st Vice President

Amy Gill, 2nd Vice President

- Officially canceled Wizards game for January since school facilities cannot be used
- Still have April dates scheduled (4/27, 4/28)
- Todd R: Has a virtual event been considered if April Wizards game cannot be done? Example: Trivia night with schools vs each other or online Family Feud
- Wizards offering a virtual option----Wizards FitKids; will be a fundraiser
 - Todd R: Reluctant to do a virtual Wizards event; much effort for little reward; may not get a lot of participation; may not be as good as live option since they don't specialize in it
 - Consider sharing demo at Dec meeting if worthy of considering
- Possible enrichment alliance request: Grant request for \$1,500 for speaker to address vaping – speaking to both GW and BF communities
 - Marijuana use---another possible program to educate now that marijuana will be legalized
- Meeting with secondary school presidents scheduled after this meeting
- Amy: Had meeting yesterday with elementary school presidents; exchange of many creative ideas

Treasurer's Report:

Valerie Auyeung, Secretary/Treasurer

- Opened nonprofit Columbia Cares bank account for the Dr. Daniel A. Fishbein Scholarship Fund under Federated's 501c(3) number
 - Received many donations already and will far exceed the original goal of \$12,000
 -

Member-at-Large Report:

Kathy Marshall, Member-at-Large

- Directory update: Requesting schools to send update on dues to compare from last year
 - All directories have launched
 - Continue to encourage everyone to sign up for GroupSpot
 - Can update partner posts and pin to top of feed
 - Since it is an HSA product, only communications that abide by district enews policy should be posted (eg should not post parent socials involving alcohol)
 - Mary: RHS executive board made decision---if cannot go in enews, cannot go in GroupSpot; has a dedicated GroupSpot person to handle the app; has been easy to make changes to directory
 - At first overwhelming to approve people who paid and grant them access when there are many who purchase all at once
 - Todd: Difficult to find directory on app; should be a featured option at the bottom
 - Kathy advised directory chairs to include directions on how to access directory when families pay their dues

Paul McCarthy (REF)

- Continuing close discussions with key district personnel to consider and identify educational initiatives where REF support would be beneficial
- Will reach out to each HSA president to request to attend HSA meetings in Dec or Jan to introduce REF members and provide updates
- NJ Governor formally signed legislation to ban plastic and paper bags---REF selling reusable bags; will be sold by Midland Park Acme (Acme will donate \$1 to REF for every \$3 bag sold)
- As President of Friends of Ridgewood Public Library as well - requesting all to donate to current fundraising campaign RPL
 - Kelly B expressed appreciation for the services provided by the library during the pandemic

Elena Croy: RED HSA

- Karen Price is retiring from Glen School
- Would like to create a video from current and former students and families to wish her farewell
- Will also collect for a gift; checks to RED HSA

- Will ask Jamie to reach out to LSHSA
- Will possibly organize a drive-by car parade

Jamie England: LSHSA

- Fundraiser at Chipotle this week
- Thanked everyone for supporting last fundraiser
- Survey sent out to parents regarding Special Programs
- Virtual socials will start tonight preK/elementary
 - Next week for middle and high schools

Special Guest: Mark Kossick (GroupSpot)

- Federated HSA leaderboard, total 2,180 as of 11/12/2020
- Added event reminders to app so notifications can be sent; can send push notifications as well that can be customized when it is sent before the event
 - Kelly A: Can reminders be used for subgroups? Mark: Has not been formatted yet for automated message but can do now manually using the app if subgroups are already formed in the app
- Web platform being requested---may be available in 2021
- Upgrading calendars on app; also photos on app
- Security: 2 factor authentications of signup of new member---can be turned on as an optional feature
- Can email class/grade---will be implemented
- Exchange search capabilities across directory
- Adding views capability for ads
- Kathy M: Overall debrief Zoom in January requested
 - Some parents have old platforms on phones and cannot use apps---is there a workaround? Mark will work on a solution.

Open Discussion:

- Christine M (Travell): DEI committee at school requesting own FB/Twitter account
 - Kelly B: No guidance currently regarding social media separate accounts
 - DEI will be under guidance of Dr. Fishbein, Stacie Polestra, and principals; ensure direction and communication all come from principals
 - At this time, respectfully discouraging DEI to have own FB/Twitter account
 - Mary: At RHS, every class has own FB page but do not want to put volunteers in position to monitor FB page

Meeting adjourned at: 11:10 am

Next Meeting: Thursday, December 10, 2020 at 9:15 am—Location Zoom

Respectfully submitted by Valerie Auyeung, Secretary/Treasurer