

**Federated Home and School Association  
Meeting Minutes  
January 7, 2021**

**Welcome: January 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. Tom Gorman (Acting Superintendent), Mike Lembo (BOE President), Juliane Cho (GW), Christine Malloy (Travell), Jess Vartughian (Travell), Jimmy Judge (Orchard), Todd Rothman (Orchard), Francesca Parker (Somerville), Sarah Traband (Somerville), Ashley Minetti (Ridge), Kelly Ashford (Hawes), Elena Croy (RED), Paul McCarthy (REF), Mayumi Harada (BF), Jen Giammarella (Hawes), Marguarite Carmody (LSHSA), John Park (Willard), Mary Micale (RHS), Jamie England (LSHSA)

**Special guests:**

- Lauren DePinto, LCSW, District Coordinator/Mental Health
- Jeffrey Nyhuis, RHS Assistant Principal

December minutes approved.

**Board of Education Update:**

**Dr. Tom Gorman, Interim Superintendent**

- Will be meeting with the Health department later today; 11 positive COVID cases confirmed earlier this week; another 4 will be reported out today; some parents displeased with going remote for first 2 weeks after break but it was the right decision based on the number of cases reported after break
- First responders in town currently receiving vaccines
- Protocol being developed to use shared school equipment safely
- Superintendent search started this week with interviews beginning; possibly Feb for a decision
- Athletics start next Mon for HS sports; parents not allowed in gymnasium; everyone will be masked inside; possibility of livestreaming events from HS gyms
  - Kelly B: When will tryouts occur? Gorman: Tryouts for winter sports will be staggered. Spring sports starting later and ending later. Other extracurricular activities will also restart on Mon.
- Mary: Has new RPS Business Administrator started? Scott already started and will have him come to one of the Federated meetings.
- Events of last night in DC will be addressed district-wide in SS classes and will be age-appropriate; letter will be sent to the community

**Guest speakers: Lauren DePinto LCSW (RPS District Coordinator of Mental Health Services), Jeffrey Nyhuis (RHS Assistant Principal), Anne Robinson, Lynn Benson, Lori Weil, Jennifer Hamlet—Smart Balance/Later Start Time**

- Smart Balance: Mr. Nyhuis has been working with parents to develop this program; developed advisory group of students---meet 2-3 times per month to discuss issues at RHS and to promote healthy balance in the lives of students
  - Outcomes: Schoolwork-free break; blackout week in summer; enrichment mornings (“sleep-ins”); extended period 9 from 18 to 25 min; removed decile ranking off the transcripts; worked on homework status with staff
  - Presented Healthy Clock slide: Important for school to provide 9 hours of sleep to students as recommended by CDC and AAP; sleep from 11pm-8am and having school start at 8:30-3:30. For activities, sports practices should be no more than 2 hours---have been discussing with Athletic Director Keith Cook. Family (dinner) time from 7-8pm. Homework should also be no more than 2 hours per night---kids should not be overscheduled. Downtime between 10-11pm.
    - Schedule has been changed 3 times since September. Need to have a plan for when things return to normal, hopefully next fall.
    - Delaying start of school from 25-60 min corresponds to additional time sleeping---students will use the time to sleep if given the time.
    - Anne Robinson in discussion with BOE members to create a committee to discuss later start time.
    - Mary Micale: Many students made the decision to return to school all remote in order to have longer time to sleep
    - Anne R: Students are benefitting from later school start times from all aspects
    - Kathy Marshall: College practice times are much shorter than HS practice times; more attuned to students’ well-being; Ridgewood should set the tone for other schools in the county; should not use athletics and sports as an excuse to make a change to improve the well-being of students
    - Lauren D: From mental health perspective, need to look at prevention. When return to “normal” we need to focus on balance and well-being.

**Special Guest: Lauren DePinto**

- Video Project: School-based mental health team is developing Mental Health and Wellness Speaker video series for all school levels (Elementary; Middle; High School) with panel discussions; based on 4 habits of learning and how it pertains to mental health

- Already completed for RHS; videos being developed for other schools at grade-appropriate levels
- Kelly B: Will there be a video developed for parents of children with special needs? Lauren: Will eventually be developed.
- Kelly B: Have questions already been formulated for elementary schools? Lauren: Want parent voice to develop the questions. Jeff N agreed that parent perspective is important.
- Now have school-based mental health website
- Elena (RED): Difficult for PreK to have any educational instruction virtually due to difficulty with using chrome books at that age; currently doing a lot of crafts online
- Marguarite C (LSHSA): Many parents would like to know how to handle increased arguing/fighting among kids--possible topic for video; Lauren made a note to address this issue
- Mary M: Sibling rivalry is a constant issue---may be relevant for all ages
- Kelly B: (Posing question from Todd R) What are ways to support families who have had a loss during this time? What are ways to support teachers? Lauren: Teacher wellness is extremely important. Trauma-informed care (using effective language to approach behavior---“what happened” instead of “why did you do that”) has been used at different departments to educate the staff.
- Kelly B: Requested HSA presidents to ask executive boards and other parents for questions to send to Lauren for videos.

### **Mike Lembo, BOE**

- BOE will be meeting with Smart Balance to discuss later school start times
- Superintendent search: interviews started yesterday; over 2200 responses from survey sent to parents; R-PAT also visited other groups (REA, teachers, etc)
  - 20 applicants (15 males); from different states and with varying backgrounds
- Continuing to work with Health department
- BOE meeting agenda for Mon---audit will be discussed; will be a short meeting

### **President's Update:**

Kelly Buchsbaum, President

- Encouraged everyone to support RHS Jamboree
  - Jamboree funds raised will be donated to scholarships for seniors
  - Journal this year will be digital with links
  - Anyone is able to purchase ads in the journal; in the past HSAs have purchased ads for their parent alumni and are encouraged to do so again
  - Schools will be asked to promote show on GroupSpot
  - 50-50 Raffle drawing will be live on Facebook Feb 5

- Show dates: February 4, 5, 6
- There will also be a link in the journal to buy tickets for the event (\$25 each)

### **Vice President's Report:**

Colleen Tansey, 1st Vice President

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

- Nothing new to report since Wizards game has been postponed to the spring
- Kelly B: Wizards game is Federated's only fundraiser; in the past, funds have been used to support the Well-Being Speaker series; Federated has not been asked by Stacie Polestra for funds for speakers this year

### **Treasurer's Report:**

Valerie Auyeung, Secretary/Treasurer

- Scholarship fund: over \$17k collected and will most likely reach \$20k

### **Member-at-Large Report:**

Kathy Marshall, Member-at-Large

- Directory debrief to be scheduled possibly after next week
  - Mark Kossick grateful for the help from the Ridgewood families; found a rental house
  - New features of GroupSpot app (eg video capabilities, etc)

### **Jamie England (LSHSA)**

- Dr. Fenwick will be attending upcoming meeting
- Reminder that LSHSA reps available at all schools

### **Paul McCarthy (Ridgewood Education Foundation - REF)**

- REF currently working on month-long fundraising series called Winterfest (eg virtual wine tasting, cookie decorating, etc); requesting anyone who is interested in donating services to contact REF
- Thank you to all HSAs for allowing REF reps to attend meetings to explain to community the purpose of REF--already attended BF meeting and will attend Hawes meeting tonight

### **Open discussion:**

- RED program: Upcoming No Cook Night
- Hawes: No Cook Night on 1/28 with Kimchi Smoke
- BF: No Cook Night on 1/15 with ParkWood
- Somerville: will be doing similar fundraising as Ridge with *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* and One Book/One School
- GW: R Strong spirit wear fundraiser; donations used to fulfill teacher wish lists of items to be used in new teaching model
- Orchard: Cookbook; upcoming virtual bingo night; make your own pizza with Francesca's in Glen Rock; mascot visited all kindergarten students over

- break; challenging to keep parents engaged and hard to continue to ask for money
- RHS: Each class is running its own fundraisers; also Friends of RHS is asking for donations; participating in the Stop and Shop A+ program as a school
  - LSHSA: Build Your Own Pizza night in Feb with Chestnut Deli
  - Ridge: Researching different types of fundraisers; considering notecard fundraisers using students' art and looking for vendors; Kathy suggested asking Printology and will follow up with additional sources
  - RHS: Developing a resource for the community to promote/request referral for services or offer donations of services/goods for those in need

Meeting adjourned at: 11:11 am

Next Meeting: Thursday, February 7, 2021 at 9:15 am—via Zoom or Education Center, 49 Cottage Place, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor

Respectfully submitted by Valerie Auyeung, Secretary/Treasurer