

**Federated Home and School Association
Meeting Minutes
September 9, 2021**

Welcome: September Meeting

Mary Micale welcomed everyone to the meeting at 9:24am

In attendance:

Mary Micale (Federated President), Amy Gill (Federated 1st VP), Todd Rothman (Federated 2nd VP), Valerie Auyeung (Federated Secretary/Treasurer), Amy Beiersdorf (Federated Member-at-Large), Dr. Tom Gorman (Superintendent), Mike Lembo (BOE), Paul McCarthy (REF), Jimmy Judge (Orchard), Patty Leung (Orchard), Nancy Joachim-Ventura (Travell), Angela Lee (Hawes), Jennifer Pisani (Hawes), Anna Crane (Willard), Christine Lear (Somerville), Jean Whitehead (Ridge), Mayumi Harada (BFMS), Carol Waldman (BFMS), Tasneen Patrawala (GW), Kelly Buchsbaum (RHS), Jamie England (LSHSA), Dan Forman (RED)

June minutes approved.

Superintendent's Update:

Dr. Tom Gorman, Superintendent

- Voluntary vaccine survey was very positive: 98% RHS students vaccinated, 66% eligible middle school students vaccinated
- Returned to school full-time with lunches; some schools have put out new lunch procedures since school started
- Flooding occurred at BF, Ridge, RHS; had to cancel the 2nd day of school due to flooding
 - District is down 6 fields: Brookside and Maple still wet; need to get RHS and Stevens up and running—may take 4-6 weeks
- Excitement amongst students in classrooms and schools
- Jean: School lunch question—parents upset about outdoor lunches; not possible to go home for lunch or to eat outside
 - Dr. Gorman: Logistically difficult to have kids pulled out just for lunch and not for recess; more kids than expected being pulled out; asking parents to pull kids out for the entire lunch and recess period
 - Parents cannot eat on school grounds due to safety concerns so they are eating in cars; some districts doing outdoor tents for lunch. Is it possible in Ridgewood?
 - Dr. Gorman: Outdoor eating space is only available at Ridge where there is a large lawn area. Not a long-term solution. Emphasized that kids should keep masks on until they start eating and back on when finished to keep exposure at a minimum.

- Mike Lembo: Lunch is safe for the students; if parents want to choose to take students out, it is not the district's responsibility to try to find them a space to eat.
- Nancy: Have there been discussions with other districts with what they are doing and why those options do not work for RW?
 - Gorman: Yes—other districts are much smaller and can distance their kids better than in RW. Not enough volunteers to have kids eat in classrooms. Kids are already staggered between 2-3 different lunch periods
 - Nancy: Recommended that the district communicate safety concerns with parents from the perspective of their children instead of perspective of staff
 - Christine: Would you consider not allowing parents to pull kids out for lunch? Parents should have trust that the schools are doing everything they can to make it safe for kids to eat lunch in school. May actually not be fair to kids who remain in school to have other kids pulled out—disruptive to kids for kids to be going out and in during the day.
 - Dr. Gorman: Trying to accommodate everyone; only the 4th day of school and kinks are still being worked out; there continue to be bussing issues as well
 - Kelly: The role of HSA presidents is to support the principals and communicate to parents but HSA board members should not feel they need to defend or fight the battles for the principals. If parents have issues with what is being communicated by the principals/admin, they should direct these questions to the principals.
 - Tasneem: Already hearing about Covid cases—any guidance about max number before schools switch to virtual?
 - Dr. Gorman: Dependent on individual situations; may need to switch a classroom to all virtual; most likely not the entire school due to high vaccination rates but unable to predict due to new variants; will depend on how numbers trend
 - Numbers may trend downward now that everyone is back from vacation
 - Primary concern is with elementary students since they are not unvaccinated
 - Lembo: Important to remember that vaccinated people can still get sick and transmit the virus; must continue to mask, stay distanced, and continue with handwashing.
 - Dr. Gorman: Seems that cases due to school transmission are low because precautions are taken;

many cases are due to out-of-school transmission—need to follow the same in-school procedures

- Todd: No option for virtual if parents do not feel it is safe; 6th graders are still not vaccinated—-not safe to have them in a cafeteria with other unvaccinated kids; need more outdoor options for unvaccinated; can still have outdoor option for the next few months—-would extend the amount of time to decrease transmission; also need a place for parents to eat with kids at school
 - Gorman: Not enough aides to assist with lunch; logistically can only have parents pull parents for the entire period, not just for lunch and return for recess; difficult for aides to leave their class to pick up kids from their parents or drop off to parents in the middle of lunch/recess
 - BF changing lunch procedure by spreading kids out to gym
 - Some kids need help with lunch (opening containers, etc), and there are not enough aides
- Amy G: Can district ask for parents to volunteer for lunches?
 - Dr. Gorman: We advertised multiple times over the summer but can advertise again but need consistency of parents and commitment to ensure adequate staffing every day
- Dr. Gorman: HEPA filters for lunch room and gym areas being worked on; 6 fields still wet and not useable at this time
 - If tents are outside, kids are still sitting together with masks off; still need contact tracing and quarantine if exposure occurs
- Christine: At Somerville, HSA reached out to other parents and provided the principal with a list of parents willing to help out with lunch; many were former teachers who are already certified
 - Dr. Gorman: Volunteers do not need to be certified to be lunch aides; only need to be certified if left alone with kids
- Amy G: Do parent volunteers need to show vaccination status?
 - Gorman: Only if volunteer hours exceed 21 hours
- Nancy: Are tents still an option?
 - Gorman: Will discuss with principals—-need to figure out funding, where tents would go, etc;

would also need extra aides for outside; may take away outside play areas for kids esp on rainy days if using basketball courts when field are wet

- Jean: What are the hurdles for the tents?
 - Gorman: Cost, aides, contact tracing still needs to occur; exposure still occurs with kids sitting close together
 - There were numerous calls for help from parents to assist during lunch hours over the summer with minimal response
- Kelly: HSAs should allow Gorman to speak to all principals and BOE to see if feasible before it becomes publicized that having more tents is an option

Board of Education Update:

Mike Lembo, BOE

- Parents have been helping out with crossing guard duty and as aides/substitutes
- BOE starting to formulate goals for next meeting

President's Update:

Mary Micale, President

- Introductions made by all board members
- Joanna Hanrahan (slated special guest from Sustainable Jersey for Schools unable to attend meeting)
 - Email sent from Johanna to Mary: Sustainable Jersey for Schools is an outreach program. There is a Green Team at each school. Somerville, Hawes, Ridge, Travell and BF awarded bronze status
 - Hydroponic towers installed/being installed at Somerville and BF
 - Reach out to Joanna (joannahanrahan@gmail.com) if questions and how to apply for grants. 2 grant cycles this year – deadline for the first is 10/29.

Vice President's Report:

Amy Gill, 1st Vice President

Todd Rothman, 2nd Vice President

- Wizards game 2022 updates: Planned for January 27 and 28, 2022
 - Backup dates in the spring being considered since elementary kids may not be vaccinated by January
 - Volunteers needed for both nights—may need to ask Executive board members from each school to help out
 - Also need to ask teachers to sign up to play
 - Looking for performers to sing the National anthem for both nights

- Working on snack ideas
- Also looking for sponsors for games
- Will continue to have separate meetings for elementary school presidents (Amy) and for middle and high school presidents (Todd) to discuss issues and questions specific to those schools
 - First meeting will be after the Oct Federated meeting; second one will be in the spring
 - Good way for schools to share ideas with each other

Treasurer's Report:

Valerie Auyeung, Secretary/Treasurer

- Invoices sent out for 2021-2022 Federated dues and GroupSpot directory fees---reach out if any questions; payments can be sent to BOE office or brought to Oct Federated meeting
- Reach out to Stephanie Healy (accountant) if 2020-2021 QuickBooks are completed to submit tax return if HSAs have not already done so
- Return signed receipt of policies form via email or bring to Oct Federated meeting

Member-at-Large Report:

Amy Beiersdorf, Member-at-Large

- GroupSpot timeline for directory sent out; data dump from Skyward will be sent tomorrow to each school's directory chair by Georgia at BOE office
 - RED program does not have a profile---reach out to Amy if interested
 - Christine: If info submitted sooner, will it be turned on sooner?
 - Amy: Yes, GroupSpot will turn on as soon as all data submitted. Timeline is individualized for each school.
- Mary: Suggested that HSAs start collecting dues as soon as possible

Open discussion:

- Tasneem: Parent asked to redesign logo for GW---any restrictions or guidelines?
 - Kelly: Needs to be changed on all websites, directory, etc; needs to be approved by principal, BOE; may be better to use the time to design things that are not official ex spiritwear
 - Mary: Ask Director of Communication for RPS what the official logo is for each school and where it appears
- Kelly: RHS football will be playing in Montclair on Sat at 2pm ---supposed to be a home game but unable to use home field; encouraging parents/students to support the team in Montclair
- Jean: Received an email regarding a free lunch program that is open to all students---how can parents access this?

- Mary: Should ask principal and BA office; Ridgewood is not participating in federal program and has their own program that more students can benefit from

Meeting adjourned at: 10:55 am

Next Meeting: Thursday, October 7, 2021 at 9:15 am at Education Center, 49 Cottage Place, 3rd floor

Respectfully submitted by Valerie Auyeung, Secretary/Treasurer