

**Northern Highlands Regional High School Home and School Association, Inc.,
(HASA) Minutes of the General Meeting Held on Wednesday, October 12, 2022**

In Attendance:

Katie Devitt, Anne Kay, Christine Ferrarie, Kathy Travers, Thao Groenewald, Jennifer Moodie, Sonia Agarwal, Lisa Mundy, Julie Cornacchia, Jess Carlin, Jill Frank DeLuise, Liz Batenhorst, Christine Stecker, Anita Altinbas, Deidre Dunne, Anna Maria Pochatko, Lorraine Reichert, Angelica Degenaaars, Cyrus Pavri, Lisa Ellison, Yunha Bang, Grace Perruzzi, Audrey Flynn, Christi Yu, Mia Roewe, Anna Feygin, Alex Paolillo, Lisa Kelly, Myndee Males, Lynn Tullett, Lisa Halperin, Stella Piccinich, Susan Esserman

School Administration in Attendance:

Dr. Scot Beckerman, Joseph Occhino, Dr. Tony LaRocca, Christine Wegert, Robin Knutelsky, Kimberly Hayes, Thomas Walsh

HASA President – Katie Devitt:

Katie welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 9:00am.

Superintendent's Report - Dr. Beckerman:

We're just starting budget season. Much of my time will be spent on the 2023-24 budget.

Reminder about the Town Hall meeting next Monday, October 17th. Mr. Occhino, Mrs. Ferrarie and I will be there. Please stop by the Auditorium and we'll answer any questions you may have. You can share questions ahead of time.

Referendum: I'm still waiting for the Department of Environmental Protection to get back to us with a definitive date of our Appeals hearing. We were denied our initial application because we didn't include a natural heritage letter with background about the endangered species that's on the property. We need to do research about the Red Shouldered Hawk. Application earmarked to be submitted to DEP by Friday. Hopefully we will have a definitive date of when our appeal will be heard by DEP by the next HASA meeting.

Field house: visited several other locations. Our RFP to go out in November. We visited Ramsey's. Their referendum was over 3 years ago and they are only 75% complete. Theirs will take 4-5 years to complete. Hopefully ours is nowhere near that long, but I was very surprised to hear how long it's taking.

Public tennis courts: The courts will be closed for the next week. We had repairs that were scheduled for June which are finally starting tomorrow. Should take a week or two. All tennis courts shut for 7 -10 days. Even though they are only 2 years old, they started to crack; so they need to be repaired and repainted.

Still struggling with cafeteria staff. Two staff just left; one for medical reasons and one resignation. We're down four or five cafeteria employees. Other than that, staffing is solid, including transportation.

Parent Question: *Is tennis court repair being done by the original company?*

Dr. Beckerman answers: I don't trust the original company. We were going with a second company who bailed on us after making us wait 5 months. This is actually our 3rd company because the other company wanted us to wait until next summer. This company can squeeze us in now so cracks don't expand any further. It's a little more expensive but they will get the job done before the winter. They have a very good reputation.

Parent Question: Do they warranty their work? Did original company?

Dr. Beckerman answers: The original company warrantied their work for 12 months from day they started work. But they took a year, so by the time they were done, the warranty was expired. This company also warranties for a year, but job should only take a week. The winters are very tough, and the way ground settles is very tough on the courts. These cracks may not be the fault of the original company.

Principal's Report – Mr. Occhino:

I'll start by following up on a letter to parents, seniors, and staff with respect to drop off and pick up in the morning and afternoon. We have a huge problem with number of parents dropping off children in the morning. We have fifteen school buses coming in, teachers and seniors all arriving in the morning. For everyone coming up the W. Maple Ave. extension at top of driveway, the cones diverted to the right but it caused a huge problem – log jam of cars and very dangerous. Now cones are straight. At top of roadway, you can continue straight. But all drop-offs must be in the front of the school. Not at the side of school. Only at the front. In the afternoon, please don't park along the curb line when you come into the property. There are cones. If you're parked there, it makes it difficult to navigate the turn. Also please don't park along curb line in front of the new tennis courts.

Upcoming events:

- Saturday October 15: Highlands Marching Band Festival. National Anthem at 4:50pm.

- Saturday, October 29: Highlands Open House. In person! No more virtual. 11am – 2pm. This gives us an opportunity to really showcase our facilities. Pomptonian is providing a BBQ lunch
- Sunday, October 30: DECA's Trunk or Treat, 1pm in Lower parking lot. At 2pm DECA will be hosting a Corn Hole tournament.

Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment - Dr. Robin Knutelsky:

We finished the Start Strong testing. We were able to accomplish it all within the regular school day. We're done with standardized testing for a few months.

One of our school goals this year is Connectedness. The staff is working very hard on interdisciplinary lessons. For example, World Language is working with Social Studies in world cultures. The Guidance Counselors are working with Success 101 and Pathways students to develop resume building and interviewing skills. Our Geophysics teachers are working with the Freshman Seminar teachers to use actual geophysics data from science classes in the Excel unit. Spanish and Art teachers are working on a project for Day of the Dead.

We are moving up the opening of Summer Academy to early January. A lot of parents are thinking about vacations and other summer activities then and need the information to make their plans. We'll continue to offer Geometry for advancement, Biology Honors, Chemistry Honors, Algebra II and Trigonometry and Financial Literacy in person.

Special Presentation about Career & Academic Pathways – Kim Hayes and Tom Walsh

Ms. Hayes and Mr. Walsh shared a detailed overview of the many offerings of Career & Academic Pathways. Tom Walsh recently joined the program to oversee the Senior Internships. Their presentation can be found through the below link:

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1fj3qaZSW6_w8BXAzz7MaJIIEqvalr-M3GiK6jQ3u5JE/edit?usp=sharing

Parent Question: how does the after school option for internships work?

Ms. Hayes answers: After school internships are usually about 5-6 hours per week. Students earn 3 high school credits as opposed to 7.5 with the half-day internship. Students get the same experience but don't get the same credit.

Mr. Beckerman added that if your child has a special interest that wasn't covered, please feel free to share it with Ms. Hayes. Part of the philosophy of the program is to develop a specific program to meet each student's needs. We will build a program for your child.

Assistant Principal of Student Affairs - Dr. LaRocca

We had a great showing at the Activity Fair at the end of September with student led clubs and activities. A lot of Freshmen were there and signed up. Clubs have already started. It's great to see the clubs back up and running in person.

On behalf of Wellness Department, I'd like to share information about the upcoming Parent Academy and Speaker Series (NH PASS). On October 26 there will be a presentation on new trends in substance use and abuse with respect to marijuana and edibles. In the future, there will be presentations about:

- Social media use and teens
- Standards & pressures teens face
- Teen dating violence
- Best practices for parenting student athletes
- JED Foundation

All presentations are at 7pm either live or via Zoom.

Director of Guidance – Christine Wegert

School Counseling launched our first Instagram page. We'll advertise it more for parents and students. It's a good resource to learn about what we have to offer. We distributed our first Student Services Bulletin last week. It's also available on our website.

Look out for a revamped website within the next couple of months. Freshmen parents should have received the information about Freshman Parent Evening on Tuesday, October 18. Parents and students are invited to meet the counseling department and Boomerang Ambassadors.

We have a special presentation on Tuesday, October 25 for Junior parents to talk about ACT and SATs and Test Prep with guest speaker Jay Casale.

Thirty-three percent of seniors have already submitted college applications. October 15 is first deadline. Large percentage applying for November 1 or 15th deadline.

Assistant Principal of Athletics - Kathy Travers on behalf of Mike Koth.

As of this call:

- Field Hockey remains undefeated.
- Football on rebound; won 3 in a row.
- Boys & girls soccer had tough weekends.
- Girls tennis began state tournament play yesterday. They won last night and will advance.
- Volleyball won opening county game and then lost in round of 16.
- Cross Country is having a banner season.
 - Autumn Ritter won two individual titles and nominated for Runner of the Week by Northjersey.com

- The first Positive Coaching Alliance meeting was on Sept 30.
- Winter Sports sign-ups start today; all forms due by Oct 26
- This Thursday the boys and girls soccer teams will have a double header in memory of Riley Boyle. All proceeds from gate go to Riley Boyle Memorial Fund. Please consider attending.

Sports Association – Kathy Travers

We held our Oktober Fest fundraiser on October 1st and raised close to \$12,000! Last Thursday night, we hosted the pep rally at the field. We used the brand-new score board and served pizza and ice cream. It was lots of fun for kids. Finally, last Friday, we hosted a Staff Appreciation lunch for the staff.

Board of Education – Christine Ferrarie on behalf of Maggie Liljegen

We met last night. We have workshop this month so we won't meet again until Monday, Nov 7.

HASA President – Katie Devitt

Next week is our Town Hall on Monday October 17 in the school Auditorium at 6pm. We are very happy to be able to host this event in person. It'll be an informal evening. You can ask about anything. The administration will be there, and you can ask questions. You can ask questions in person or email them anonymously. We know our meetings are always during the day so we wanted to do something in the evenings that would give other folks a chance to attend.

Our Membership Drive is still ongoing. We are very close to our goal of 300 members. As of today, we're at 293 members. We'd like 7 more members to hit our goal. Please consider joining if you haven't already. The money HASA raises helps to fund: Scholarships, Welcome Breakfast, Teachers' Luncheon, Equipment for the TV studio, refurbished Wellness Center and Faculty Lounge, planetarium movies, water at Back to School Night and Graduation, and many other initiatives for the school community. We greatly appreciate your support.

I'd like to take a moment to thank Audrey Flynn for her years of chairing the Membership committee, as well as Linda O'Brien for stepping in to help at the start of the school year. Ali White has taken over this role and is already hard at work.

HASA Recording Secretary – Anne Kay on behalf of Patrice Duker

I'd like to ask for primary and secondary motions to approve the September meeting minutes. Thao Groenewald motioned for approval and Katie Devitt seconded the motion.

HASA Vice President – Anne Kay

We've made a lot of progress on the Raffle since our last meeting. HASA's Holiday Raffle is HASA's largest fundraiser of the year. It'll be Thursday, Dec 1 from 11 – 1pm in the Cultural Arts Center. There is no formal invitation and no charge of admission. It's a casual fun event, with a light complimentary lunch. There will be tricky tray baskets. We have a small but mighty group of volunteers soliciting for donations now. You can buy those tickets on site during the event.

We'll also have Grand Prizes Raffles. Here is this year's list:

- Gucci Soho Small Leather Disco Crossbody Bag (retail value \$1,500)
- DeLonghi Espresso Maker (retail value \$1,400)
- iPad Air 2022 (retail value \$900)
- Hermes Clic Clac H Bracelet (retail value \$720)
- Trio of Fine Dining Gift Cards (retail value \$600)
- Broadway.com Gift Card (retail value \$500)

Each Highlands family will receive a book of Grand Prize raffle tickets in the mail by early November. Tickets are \$10. Those winners will be drawn during the raffle, but you do not need to be present to win.

We will also be raffling off 2 Junior parking spots for current Juniors. A constant contact will be sent just to Junior parents by the end of October/beginning of November. You do not need to be present to win.

We've had a nice response to our call for Sponsors. We've been promoting them on the HASA website and on Facebook. Thank you to all the businesses and families that have already sponsored the event.

Lastly, we could still use some volunteers. We have a SignUp Genius which we will post on the chat and on the HASA website. Thank you in advance for your help.

HASA Treasurer – Thao Groenewald

As of today, our Operating Account balance is \$27,021.27 and our Money Market balance is \$58,121.38.

HASA Newsletter – Katie Devitt on behalf of Shantala Kaikini:

The September newsletter just came out. Deadline for the October newsletter is October 18. It will be published on November 7.

MPAA – Grace Perruzzi

- The Marching Band came in first in Group 2A at the competition at Ramsey two weeks ago. The Band also performed strong at MetLife this past weekend in the US Band Competition.
- It's senior night for the band at Friday night's football game. All middle schoolers are being invited to perform with the band in the stands. Arrive at 5:30pm. That is the last home football game for the regular season.
- Northern Highlands is hosting the Marching Band Festival on Saturday, Oct 15.
- Marching Band needs funds for many instruments. For example, to replace the drum line costs \$10,000.
- The Jazz Band is having auditions this month. Rehearsals will be on Wednesdays.
- The A Capello groups now have 36 students between the three groups: Harmonics, Belles, and Voices. Competitions begin on January 28 at 3pm at Northern Highlands.
- The Freshman play will be in May.
- Next MPAA meeting is Nov 1 at 7pm in Teacher's Lounge.
- For another fundraiser MPAA is selling cowbells. Should be a table at Friday's football game. \$12 each.

HASA President – Katie Devitt

Katie thanked everyone and then adjourned the meeting at 10:30am.