

Northern Highlands Regional High School Home and School Association, Inc., (HASA)
Minutes of the General Meeting Held On October 13, 2021

Attendance:

Lisa Kulick, Lorraine Dario, Tamara James, Kelli Moss, Naomi Ono, Kathy Travers, Audrey Flynn, Shantala Kaikini, Thao Groenewald, Jane Bodnar, Amy Hesse, Denise Branca, Joan Clifford, Lisa Halprin, Andrea Pennington, Donna Iannazzone, Sonia Chadha Agarwal, Susan Esserman, Grace Paolilla, Kathy Glynn, Julie Cornacchia, Christi Yu, Rachel Milston, Jill Deluise, Anne Kay, Bob Males, Barbara Lobo, Kristen Tsarnas, Lorraine Reichert, Teresa Chalfin, Katie Devitt, Ying Yen, Rima Prajapati, Grace Perruzzi, Lisa Comninellis, Roewe Maja, Yunha Bang, Mary Parmelee, Despina Anastasopoulos, Dipti Chauhan, Renee Lardieri, Lynelle Tedesco, Annalisa Anderson, Nadira Khan, Maureen Mamunes, Angelica Degenaars, MaryAnne Arber, Dina Deana, Diana Missaghieh, Christine Giunta, Lisa Mundy, Christine Ferrarie, Jess Carlin and Donna Sardanopoli.

School Administration in Attendance:

Scot Beckerman, Joe Occhino, Mike Koth, Jose Madhavasseril, Robin Knutelsky, Kelly Peterfriend.

HASA President - Lisa Kulick:

Lisa welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 9:02am.

Superintendent's Report - Dr. Beckerman:

NJQSAC (Quality Single Accountability Continuum), is a process for monitoring school districts to determine the extent of efficiency in all aspects of education. Northern Highlands will be monitored for this on January 7, 2022, we will be the 2nd district to be monitored this year by the DOE. We've done a self-assessment in preparation and feel confident that we will perform well, which is usual for Northern Highlands.

We have heard back from the architect on the referendum for March, we were a little concerned that the referendums have been taking over a year. But we have been assigned a case manager with DOE and hope to get an answer back within a month or two. Once we have that approval from DOE, Dr. Beckerman said he will reach out to the NH community and let them know about the items on the lower field that will be cause for discussion.

We have started our six month budget process, and the budget will be presented some time in the Spring.

An update on the shortages we are dealing with as a school district:

- Still short three cafeteria staff, we did close the faculty line to allocate an extra student line.
- There's plenty of food, but Mondays are a challenge because of staffing, scheduling issues, we are short 5 workers on Mondays.
- Busing – still several buses short due to driver shortage.
- In most cases, buses are on time, all but 1 has been departing campus on time.
- We've added one security staff member to compensate for departure of Frank Miller who is out this year and extra bodies outside to relieve parking lot congestion in the mornings.

Overall, we are very satisfied with development and management of the year so far at the High School.

Question asked by parent: Can you explain the assessment QSAC? Answer: It basically assesses everything about the school district like health and safety, curriculum, policies, etc. It's a long process DOE comes in every three years and this is our year to be audited. DOE has more information on QSAC on their website.

Principal's Report - Joe Occhino:

Our virtual Open House is on Saturday, 10/23, a link will be posted at 11:30 am on that day. It's virtual again in effort to limit large crowds on campus.

Student behavior at NHRHS has "been suspect" right now. Freshmen and Sophomore's have been displaying atypical behavior. They have been challenging authority, being disruptive in classrooms, we are seeing this unusual behavior with the younger students. It's not systemic, but there has been a rise in unruly behavior. Perhaps it is a fallout from COVID schooling, but we are trying to resolve this situation and students at this age should know right from wrong. Parents, please speak to your children about respectable behavior. I have spoken to more groups of children in last four weeks than I have in four years.

Currently, there is also a monthly TikTok challenge that encourages vandalism and graffiti in school bathrooms, while being videoed. September's challenge was to destroy a bathroom. At NH, there have been issues like soap dispensers being pulled off the wall. Other districts around the country have experienced a lot worse. Our school has reacted by shutting down certain bathrooms to better monitor the comings and goings. October's challenge was to slap a teacher. This has not happened in our school, but behavior like this will not be tolerated at Northern Highlands.

Graduation Gowns - traditional Northern Highlands Gowns have been Red for girls and Black for boys. As you know, over the last few years there has been a shift in gender terminology, equality and fluidity. To better serve our students and families, for acceptance and support, we have decided to go with a one color gown. We have spoken to surrounding school districts and they have already moved to one color gown. Students will get to choose whether it will be red or black and the style. The process is currently on hold until the gown company can send the two styles. A letter will go out in a few weeks with regard to that.

Question from parent: Why didn't a survey go out to students to decide whether they want to go with one gown or not? With one color and style gown it makes everyone the same. Answer: It's a difficult decision but we've been in discussions with other school districts who have already gone to one color, we felt it better to go with one united class and one color gown. Some may not be ready to make a choice. Students will get to choose which color and style.

Question from Parent: I think it would be a good idea for additional security behind the stands during football games, I have been told that drinking among the younger student population at the football game under the bleachers was quite bad. I have also heard of harassing Band members in the bleachers - such as fan spitting on instruments and disrespecting property.

Mr. Koth's response: Custodians have not reported any incidences of drinking in the stadium or under the bleachers. We have four officers at each football game, one of whom is our class III officer who is in the school and gets to know the students well. Students are searched at the entrance for open bottles and controlled substances, but due to this latest report of drinking behind the stadium stands, staff will be alerted and will be much more aware of potential for trouble at the stadium. Mr. Occhino's response: we will take the necessary action by adding additional security and have a greater presence behind the bleachers.

Assistant Principal of Student Affairs - Dr. Tony LaRocca: Not in attendance.

Director of Guidance - Kelly Peterfriend:

Guidance has been busy supporting college applications, starting with deadlines as early as October 15.

Counselors will start to meet with 9th graders in groups to forge stronger relationships with the 9th graders, this is starting earlier than in previous years.

We will be sending out flyers for some programs this month:

- 10/26 Standardized Testing – in person.
- 10/27 College Success Night – remotely hosted by Harlon Cohen.
- Dates TBD - 9th Grade counselors will be meeting with the freshmen and their parents in small groups - In person over 2 nights.

Parent Question from Donna Iannazzone: what other programs are being offered to the sophomore class? They seem to have missed out on much of the introductory programs of usually offered in freshman year.

Dr. Beckeman response: many of the traditional freshman programs were run in person this year and sophomores were included in all the those programs. Parents do not need to wait for a program to be offered if they feel the need to meet with guidance.

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

The Start Strong assessment is finishing up now. We have ELA and Math completed. Students were tested in their classroom, and it was completed during the class period. Grades 9 & 12 are currently testing on Science. The initial results are back already.

This is not a proficiency assessment; this is test assessment to look for any gaps in learning that students may need to be addressed this year due to pandemic learning last year.

State assessment for Grade 11 is being developed again, no details available yet. We will announce dedicated testing days when they become available. Not sure what will be included, whether ELA, math and science or any portion of that. However, the ELA portion maybe given sometime in March.

Title one tutoring is available to our students in need of additional help in English, Math, Science, World Languages and Social Studies:

- Tutors will be available two hours a week, schedule is posted on the website.
- Students can be recommended for tutoring, by teachers, by parents, etc.
- Available after school or on Zoom, depending on the time.
- More information is available on our school website, Go to Our School, then Info for Students and then look for calendar for title one tutoring.
- Calendar for the month will be populated two weeks prior.

- Teachers conduct the tutoring.
- Starts November 1.

Parent question: Who are the tutors?

Response: They are the teachers from our school. You can go to the teachers for after school help, but if you need more intensive help, you can go to the tutors.

Assistant Principal of Athletics - Mike Koth:

- Boys Soccer County Quarterfinals is on Sunday 10/17 at 4:15pm. They're going in as #2 seed.
- Football team is currently unbeaten. They will play on Friday, 10/15 at home at 6:15pm vs Old Tappan.
- Girls Soccer, get to play Ridgewood and Ramapo this week and will qualify for State Tournament.
- Girls Field Hockey: Won every game except 1 in which they tied. Next game is on Sunday, 10/17 at 11am @ Westwood HS against Riverdale in the County Semi-Final
- Volleyball, won first 2 games and plays Ridgewood Saturday, 10/16 at 4:15pm at Old Tappan.
- Cross Country Boys placed 4th at Shore Invitational Conference and the Girls placed 3rd place.
- Tennis wrapped up their season and finished 11 and 4. Lost to Ramapo in the State Tournament semi-finals.

Some players have achieved Player of the Week: Jeff Song, Ty Pennington, Ben Scrivanich some names are missing, but we are very proud of them.

Winter sports are on the horizon, tryouts and meeting coaches have began already. All medical forms are due now by October 20.

Positive Coaching Alliance:

- First meeting is Wed 10/27.
- Coaches nominate two Juniors in the fall, two sophomores in the winter, and two freshmen in the spring. These athletes demonstrate positive characteristics on and off the field.
- Want to rotate so no one is nominated twice so we can include as many as possible throughout the years.
- First meeting topic: Respect the team, respect each other, respect the game.

Vice President's - Kelli Moss and Tammy James:

Tammy announced that HASA's largest fundraiser is our Holiday Raffle and it will take place remotely at 11am on December 2nd.

There are eight Grand Prizes including:

- Louis Vuitton Noe Bucket Bag \$1,800
- iPad Pro with keyboard, pencil \$1,147
- Hermes Clic Clac H Bracelet in Black & Gold \$690

Lisa showed the three above gifts to everyone. Every ticket purchased for the grand prize will automatically be added into another raffle for a chance to win other prizes.

Some of the extra prizes are donated, some are purchased by sponsorships.

Committee members are graduating this year along with their seniors, if anyone is interested in running this fundraiser next year, please reach out now so you can go along for the ride and learn on the job with this year's co-chairs!

HASA members will come together in USR at Tammy's house to help with stuffing envelopes with raffle tickets. This will be the week of Oct 25. Please consider joining the effort. Mailings will be in the mail by November 1.

Kelly announced that HASA decided to finance the raffle prizes this year with sponsorships instead of soliciting asking for donations from local vendors and business leaders due to hardships that businesses are dealing with due to pandemic.

Thank you to those who have already sent in money for sponsorship. For every \$25 donated through sponsorship, sponsors will receive an additional ticket for "other prizes".

Any questions please email Kelli at Hasaholidayraffle@gmail.com.

Treasurer - Naomi Ono:

As of October 13, 2021, there's been little change since last report in September. Our Money Market Account balance is \$58,092.00 and the Operating Account balance is \$37,382.00.

Lorraine Dario - Secretary:

Motioned for approval of the **September, 22 2021** minutes, approved by Jane Bodner and seconded by Audrey Flynn.

Membership - Audrey Flynn:

We currently have 274 members, we are down on last years membership. This is one of our fundraisers and your annual dues not only help HASA in our support of the school, but also give members access to our password-protected online student directory. The cost of HASA's annual membership is \$35 and payment can be made by check or PayPal. Go to our page on the school website at www.northernhighlands.org/joinhasa. If you have any questions please dont hesitate to contact Audrey 917-715-9305 or hasamembership@northernhighlands.org.

Newsletter - Shantala Kaikini:

Submissions for the Newsletter are due by October 18, 2021, for the November 1 publication. Past Newsletters available to read: <https://www.northernhighlands.org/Page/6748>.

TD Bank Fundraiser - Jane Bodner:

TD Bank has a sponsorship program that contributes to HASA's fundraising efforts. TD will make a donation to HASA whenever a TD account is linked to HASA through this program. HASA has just been given a dividend check of \$3715 for this past year.

- Harut Berberyan, is the Managing VP at our local TD Bank and can be reached at 201-825-1011.
- If you are a customer of any TD Bank you can call and ask to link your account(s) to the Affinity Program for HASA.
- This will be at no cost to you and will benefit our fundraising efforts tremendously.

Board of Education Liaison - Lisa Halprin:

The BOE has interviewed the first of three candidates for the open board position in USR. This position is for a one-year term. On November 1, the Board will interview the other two candidates.

Grace Peruzzi - MPAA:

Our first meeting is Oct 5, and we are looking for board members. There are usually about 80 members in a normal year. Last year it dropped to 40 members. This year, we only have 20 members. Please consider joining if your child is interested or involved in music at the school: <https://www.northernhighlands.org/site/Default.aspx?PageID=3908>

Our meetings are via zoom, on the first Tuesday of each month. Next meeting is November 2, 7:30pm.

- Freshman Play is well underway and will perform November 12 & 13.
- Auditions for the HS musical, "Something Rotten" will be held on November 10.
- Acapella group has started rehearsing.
- Marching Band has performed several times at home football games and recently placed 2nd in recent US Band Competition.
- There is a band competition this weekend 6:30pm at Northern Valley, Old Tappan.
- Musical director is brand new this year, please lend your support
- There is a cheesecake fundraiser now going on that ends this week on Friday, October 15. Cakes will arrive by Thanksgiving.
- Please show some appreciation for the band at half time at football games.
- Please support the Music Department anyway you can.

Q&A: Is there going to be a jazz concert this year?

Answer: We will update this information on our website as soon as it becomes available.

Q&A: What is the date of musical?

Answer: Not finalized yet, will try and get that information to HASA newsletter for November issue, if not, we will have it by the next HASA meeting.

Q&A: Are freshmen allowed to audition for musical?

Answer: Not sure, but I think they should be able to.

For more information, please contact Tiffany Hogue at thogue@gmail.com

Sports Association - Kathy Travers and Frank Paporozzi:

The Junior Parking Spots raffle tickets were picked by Mike Koth at the pep rally and the winners were:

- Rourk Family of HHK.
- O'Connell Family of Allendale
- Lisa Halperin of USR

The Sports Association hosted the Pep Rally which included a DJ, pizza and even the ice cream truck. It was a great night for the student body. The Ocktoberfest was held at the Red Barn and we had a great turnout. It was a fun night for all who attended this fundraiser, which raised over \$10,000.

For more information, please contact Kathy Travers at kgtravers6@gmail.com or Frank Paporozzi fpaporozzi4@verizon.net

HASA President - Lisa Kulick:

Lisa thanked everyone in attendance and adjourned the meeting at 10:10 am. The next HASA meeting has been scheduled for November 10, at 9:00am and will again be conducted via Zoom.