

**Northern Highlands Regional High School Home and School Association, Inc., (HASA)  
Minutes of the General Meeting Held on Wednesday November 10, 2021**

**In Attendance:**

Lisa Kulick, Tamara James, Kelli Moss, Naomi Ono, Kathy Travers, Thao Groenewald, Shantala Kaikini, Jane Bodnar, Audrey Flynn, Jess Carlin, Jennifer Moodie, Julie Cornacchia, Angelica Degenars, Grace Perruzzi, Lynelle Tedesco, Lisa Comminellis, Kristen Tsarnas, Catherine Shaw, Julie de Jesus, Lisa Mundy, Lisa Halperin, Anne Kay, Grace Paolillo, Kim, Katherine Lynch, Gabrielle Jens, Inna Moor, Lorraine Dario, Andrea Pennington, Sonia Agarwal, Karina Ferrales, Lisa, Jean Hom, Karen Mueller, Laure Redling, Rachel Milston, Yunha Bang, Katie, and Despina Anastasopoulos

**School Administration in Attendance:**

Scot Beckerman, Robin Knutelsky, Dr. Jessica Verdicchio

**HASA President - Lisa Kulick:**

Lisa acknowledged the unexpected absence of key members of the administration (Scot Beckerman, Joe Occhino, Tony LaRocca, Mike Koth, Jose Madhavasseril and Kelly Peterfriend), welcomed everyone, and called the meeting to order at 10:05am.

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

A survey will be sent to students to gauge interest in expanded Summer Academy class offerings. The last time we spoke of Summer Academy options, parents had expressed an interest in CAD as a possible offering. While the school will continue to offer courses for advancement such as Biology Honors, Chemistry Honors, Geometry and Financial Literacy, the administration hopes to also offer micro-courses, such as CAD or Ceramics, etc., for students to fulfill their fine arts requirements.

We have finished our Start Strong assessments and are analyzing some very valuable data gathered from the assessments. We are still waiting on some composite data from the State, and I will present our findings at the next Board meeting. For State testing in the spring, we will

have testing for our 9<sup>th</sup> grade students with the NJSLA, we will also have the graduation assessment for our 11<sup>th</sup> grade students.

Parent question: Do you plan to have CAD classes, will we see the full list of class offerings when you send it?

Robin: We plan to survey the students to see if there are any courses they might be interested in that we are not thinking of. We do plan to offer a mix of arts classes and academic classes, and once we have gauged student interest, then we will start building our program.

Additionally, we have a few courses that we introduced yesterday to the Curriculum Committee for the next school year:

- *Sports & Media Broadcasting*: students can research sports history, major athletes, our own NH athletes, etc. to learn how to be real-time sportscasters and media casters. This course will take student literacy skills to a higher level as students learn how to research, read, and speak in real time as they call an event.
- *Robotics & Design Thinking Course*: the former robotics teacher left NH, and we are excited to bring back robotics next year.
- *Science Fiction and Fantasy* – we currently have 5 sections of this course and hope to bring an honors level to this course.
- Rutgers dual-enrollment course on *Scientific Principles of Nutrition*.
- Music – three new courses:
  - *Music & the Movies* - semester course on musical scores.
  - *Guitar Jams and Rock Bands* - semester course, a guitar lab for non-musicians to learn guitar.
  - *Rocking Through the Ages* - a study of music by the decade and the impact music has had on community and society.

### **Supervisor of Wellness & Special Projects at NH – Dr. Jessica Verdicchio:**

The Wellness Center is new, this is our second year in existence, but this year, with the generous donation from HASA, we were able to furnish the Center and make it much more open, welcoming and warm for our students and our staff who utilize the Center. The Wellness Center has three office spaces: My office, which is also used for general or department meetings, and two other offices for our Student Assistance Counselors, which include comfy couches in a nice space for them to meet the students both individually and in group settings. A few doors down, we have a Mindfulness Room which is open before school and during lunch where students have access to massage chairs, yoga mats, and mindfulness cushions. The Mindfulness Room is also open after school for meetings of the Wellness Club, Students Against Destructive Decisions club, or the Yoga Club, and other similar groups. We invited

members of the BOE and HASA Board members to the Wellness Center on Monday this week for a tour and unveiling and to express our appreciation for this generous gift to the school and students.

#### **Board of Education – Lisa Halperin:**

Justin Tyler Kearl was elected for the Allendale Board of Education seat and James Mulvey has been appointed by the Board for the remainder of Robert Wei's term for the USR seat. The term will be through the end of next year when Bob's seat would have expired as well. We wish Bob success and thank him for many years on the Board.

Our next Board meeting will be on November 15.

#### **Board of Education – Christine Ferrarie:**

The referendum has been approved!

More information will be coming, but plans do include a two-story multi-purpose field house with public bathrooms, classroom renovations, library renovations, art room renovations, TV production renovations, turf fields, and many other updates and improvements. The vote will be in March, we will get a lot of information distributed before then, and I hope we will have HASA's support.

#### **Superintendent's Report - Dr. Beckerman:**

Dr. Beckerman starts by explaining that Mr. Occhino will not be in attendance at the meeting this morning due to an on-site crisis that will be explained soon in an email from Mr. Occhino's office to the NH community.

The DOE has finally approved for the referendum to go out to the public in March, and the BOE approved it as well at the last meeting, so the BOE will begin to disseminate information in preparation for the March 8<sup>th</sup> vote.

This process will be only for USR and Allendale residents as those are the two towns which directly pay the taxes that the referendum will affect.

The Community Newsletter, which is managed by the Communication Committee of the BOE, and which was stalled during the pandemic, will be restarted with the referendum featured on the first page.

We will make formal presentations at all parent organization events, at town council meetings in Allendale and USR in December, at K-8 BOE meetings in January, and will hold a remotely delivered, all-district meeting available to all four quad district towns to learn about the referendum.

Core areas of the Referendum include:

- Repair of drainage on main fields,
- Turfing of baseball/softball fields,
- Construction of a 7,000 sqft field house with public bathrooms and a second-floor fitness center,
- Creation of 2 large-scale classrooms for freshman seminar courses, which will free up 4 standard-sized classrooms in the school and help with the anticipated increase in student population in the next decade,
- Rebuilding of entire media center, including changing the library stacks to meeting and quiet rooms, adding e-books to the collection,
- Renovation of the TV Production room, art room and ceramics room
- Updating of planetarium, including updating of projection equipment donated by HASA 12 years ago to more digitally enhanced equipment.

We received \$1m from State funding and will use \$500k of our capital reserves to partially finance the almost \$8.8m project cost. With the offsetting science wing bonds which mature June 30, 2022, we expect that taxes will not increase at all for this project.

A full presentation will be offered with drawings and plans, and we will also make a full presentation to HASA before the March 8 vote.

NJQSAC (Quality Single Accountability Continuum) is still scheduled for January 8, 2022. All materials have been submitted for the audit. (NJQSAC is a process for monitoring school districts to determine the extent of efficiency in all aspects of education).

Our budget is being developed; we are considering several projects which will be budget-based as opposed to referendum-based, such as replacement of the scoreboard on the main field in time for graduation 2022, and renovation of the woodshop, which will be funded from the General Budget.

Parent Question: Will the media center be available for use during construction?

Answer: We will do our best to complete the media center and all projects in phases, with special emphasis on timing to meet the needs of the district. The turf fields will be done during the winter months when they are not in use, the media center has 3 areas, so we will plan the work so some part of the library will remain open during the different phases of construction. There will be disruptions to student usage during construction, but we will keep some areas accessible to students during construction.

If you go to town council meetings, there will be presentations in December with more specific cost data by town. Keep in mind that with the bonds from the science wing, there should be no net tax impact from the referendum.

We've completed \$25m in projects in the past 7 years with no net tax impact. We did the auditorium, both gymnasiums, the tennis courts, redid the turf field, redid the track, added all 13 lights with help from the Sports Association, added solar panels, added new patrol systems, added a new HVAC system so every classroom is now air conditioned at MERV-13, which is the highest rating available. This is a very impressive feat and is the result of the tremendous team effort by the Board, the architects, general attorney, administration, Lisa Gorab our bond attorney, parent groups, and all the different parties who have collaborated to make this happen.

### **Special Report on NHTV - Andrea Pennington:**

Lisa Kulick thanked the NH parent community for their support, which contributed to HASA's ability to update equipment for the NHTV studio. Andrea Pennington continued with a full update on the NHTV studio.

Andrea thanked HASA on behalf of everyone at NHTV for the new production equipment for the studio. Last Friday November 5<sup>th</sup> was the first time in school history that a live production and live stream were done. The effort involved 25 students and their teacher to put on the live performance at Northern Highlands.

The production crew set up equipment for the live broadcast of the entire football game last Friday. The crew started with 4 hours of initial preparation and planning work after school on the previous day, they had to learn how to use the new replay equipment, they did a commercial sponsored by the Mahwah Bar & Grill and the Allendale Bar & Grill, ran a live broadcast of the football game, gave play-by-play commentary, ran replays during the game, broadcast on-field interviews, halftime interviews, pregame interview, professional graphics, had some tech challenges and glitches, had NHTV Crew Shirts, will repeat Friday at 6:15pm vs Mt Olive. There were over 1000 views. The broadcast is available on YouTube, can watch on smart tv, mobile phone, or other devices (search for NHTV and select NH vs Mt Olive game). HASA should be proud of the \$ invested toward this project. The crew is part of an after-school

club, the kids all volunteer their time after school to manage this project, this is not part of any NHTV classes.

**Vice Presidents - Kelli Moss and Tammy James:**

Tammy announced that Mr. Occhino has approved 2 parking spaces for 11<sup>th</sup> graders to be raffled at our HASA Holiday Raffle to be held on December 2<sup>nd</sup>. Information will be emailed on Thursday November 11 to all parents of junior students on how to purchase raffle tickets. The parking spots will be reserved for juniors only and are not transferable.

The deadline for all sponsorships of our Holiday Raffle is November 22, 2021.

Raffle tickets for the grand prizes are due by Monday November 29, 2021. Please do not mail any tickets or payments after Sunday November 28, 2021.

We thank all the sponsors for their support toward our prizes and toward the support of our local businesses. We are using some of the sponsorship money to support the local businesses that have supported us in the past by buying gifts from them.

Lisa added a request for baskets – if anyone has unused baskets that we can use to make our raffle baskets, we would be glad to receive them. Please drop off at Lisa’s house (14 Coach Lane in USR) or Katherine Lynch’s house (18 Autumn Court in USR).

For sponsorship donations, please venmo @KelliMoss97 and specify your family name.

For any questions, please email Tammy and Kelli at Hasaholidayraffle@gmail.com.

**NH Sports Association - Kathy Travers for the Sports Update:**

Congratulations to the boys cross country team on being State Sectional Champions.

Girls cross country team placed 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Field Hockey are league champions and county champions.

Football team’s semi-final round is this Friday vs Mount Olive.

Coach Russo was named NJ Jets High School Coach of the Week.

Today, we honored 9 student athletes who signed LOIs to play D1 & D2 colleges.

Winter sports forms are due very soon; Many of the tryouts for winter sports begin on November 21.

Boys hockey team left for Boston today for preseason practice, team building, and a Boston Bruins game. The NH Sports Association was happy to partially fund this trip.

Our upcoming Pasta Mania fundraiser is tentatively scheduled in February before our game vs Ramapo.

All our aluminum sponsors' signs are displayed in the stadium – please help patronize those individuals and businesses in appreciation of their generosity and support of our school.

For more information, please contact Kathy Travers at [kgtravers6@gmail.com](mailto:kgtravers6@gmail.com).

### **Membership – Naomi Ono on behalf of Audrey Flynn who had to leave the meeting early:**

We currently have 282 households, which is light in comparison to last year's membership.

The lower membership number may be partially attributable to the remote nature of this year's Back to School Night, an event which has historically gained HASA 60-70 new members.

Our membership is always open, it is one of our fundraisers and your annual dues not only help HASA support the school and students, but also give members access to our password-protected, app-based online student directory.

The cost of HASA's annual membership is \$35 and payment can be made by check or PayPal.

Please join us by visiting our website at <http://www.northernhighlands.org/joinhasa>.

If you have any questions please contact Audrey at (917) 715-9305 or [hasamembership@northernhighlands.org](mailto:hasamembership@northernhighlands.org)

### **HASA Treasurer - Naomi Ono:**

As of November 10, 2021, our checking account balance is \$19,187.45 with the variance from last month largely due to expenses related to the Wellness Center.

Our Money Market account balance is \$58,094.77.

## **HASA Recording Secretary – Thao Groenewald:**

Lisa announced the resignation of Lorraine Dario due to personal reasons and the Committee's decision to accept Thao Groenewald to the position of Recording Secretary.

Lisa then asked for approval of the **October 13, 2021** minutes, which was approved by Kathy Travers and seconded by Jane Bodner.

## **Newsletter – Lisa Kulick on behalf of Shantala Kaikini, who joined other parents to provide a sumptuous meal to NH staff and administration today to celebrate the Indian holiday Diwali:**

Submissions for the December 1, 2021 Newsletter are due by November 17, 2021.

Past Newsletters are always available to read at <https://www.northernhighlands.org/Page/6748>

## **TD Bank Fundraiser - Jane Bodner:**

No updates

## **MPAA - Grace Perruzzi:**

Our membership numbers are down this year compared to last year.

Memberships start at only \$25 for the Booster level and can be purchased at:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdISUMwF8SOVuSux3g0mMfAYm7gqTevNYv6Fo41OXhHaDGc2Q/viewform>

- The Marching Band just finished performing at US Band nationals, Allentown, PA.
- November 27 band dinner will be at Biaggio's.
- Freshman play will be on Friday November 17 & Saturday 18 at 7pm.
- Winter concert December 8.
- The MPAA will be selling poinsettias as fundraiser.
- The three acapella groups continue to meet regularly.
- Spring musical is "Something Rotten."
- An interest meeting about auditions will be held on November 15 and auditions will start on November 29.
- MPAA meets on the 1st Tuesday of each month at 7:30pm on Zoom.
- Our next meeting will be on Tuesday December 7.



Lisa asked about the timing of the Freshman play, Grace replies that the play will be on Friday November 12 and Saturday November 13 at 7:00pm

**HASA President - Lisa Kulick:**

Lisa thanked everyone in attendance and adjourned the meeting at 11:10 am.

The next HASA meeting has been scheduled at 9:00am on Wednesday December 8, 2021 and will again be conducted via Zoom.