

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

September 22, 2021

In Attendance

Lisa Kulick, Lorraine Dario, Tamara James, Kelli Moss, Naomi Ono, Kathy Travers, Audrey Flynn, Shantala Kaikini, Thao Groenewald, Jane Bodner, Dina Deana, Inna Moor, Nadira, Lisa Halperin, Sonia Chadha Agarwal, Lainie Miller, Christine Ferrarie, Grace Peruzzi, Bob Males, Julie Cornacchia, Lynelle Tedesco, Liz Batenhorst, Lorraine Reichert, Kerry Yates, Lisa Comninellis, Robin Clementi, Sungwon Beek, Tammy Bingham, Amy Hesse, Kim DeGooyer, Nicole Vans Oehler, Lisa Mundy, Renee Lardieri, Angelica Degenars, Annaliesa Anderson, Jennifer Moodie, Mary Kate Granas, Luisa Garcia, Andrea Pennington, Julie Dello Russo, Liz Willkomm, Elenor Reilly, Jess Carlin, Diana Norian, Susan Easerman, Yunha Bang, Ying Yen, Diana Missaghieh, Amy Shulman, Jill Frank, Grace Paollio, Barbara Lobo, Laure Redling, Dipti Chauhan, Karen Mueller, Luz Terranova, Jean Weng, Caroline G, and Caryn Beswick

School Administration In Attendance

Dr. Scot Beckerman, Mr. Joe Occhino, Mr. Michael Koth, Mr. Jose Madhavasseril, Mrs. Robin Knutelski

HASA President: Lisa Kulick

Lisa thanked everyone for attending and called the Zoom meeting to order at 9:00 am.

Superintendent's Report: Dr. Beckerman

The administration is hopeful to get last year's referendum to renovate the turf baseball field, softball field and planetarium going in March 2022 and into the summer. However, right now it is in limbo because of delays. There are currently only two architects in the whole state that do this work, usually there are 7.

Question: If the referendum is passed, what date are we looking at for the work to be completed?
Answer: The new tennis courts were completed this past summer and were projected to take only two months, but they actually took four months to complete. The bond issuance is late March or April 2022. Hopefully the project will be completed next summer, but there is no definitive date as there are too many variables that are out of our control.

Dr. Beckerman stated that current sophomores didn't have the normal experience that they would have had as freshmen last year. About 50% of the school procedures are new to them. The Activities Fair will be open to them, as well as the current freshman. Dr. Beckerman addressed the long lines during lunch at the cafeteria. Due to a staff shortage in the cafeteria, they will shut down lines for the teaching staff in order to put more workers to assist with the student lines to reduce build up. He also mentioned the truck driver and supply shortage and how it has reduced the variety of food offered in the cafeteria. There is food for the students to purchase, but the variety is more limited. In regards to bus issues and traffic, the bus companies had to combine their routes, because of the limited number of drivers. Therefore, with less bussing, there are at least 100 more cars at arrival and dismissal. It is difficult to get in and out of the parking lot safely, as well as in a timely fashion. Hopefully, these issues are temporary, and will be worked out over time with improved numbers of staffing.

Regarding the teaching staff, all teaching positions in our school are full, although there will be a few retirements mid-year. We are lucky as other districts are having to combine classes because of such a shortage of teachers.

The Board of Education is looking for a new member from Upper Saddle River. There has been a resignation and this position will be posted till the end of the month on the website. The position is for one year and three months, until next January. Those who are interested should put in an application on the school website. As always you can reach out to Dr. Scott Beckerman at extension 503.

At this time there is no firm date for freshmen receiving new devices due to a chip shortage. Jose has reported a ship date of November 30, 2021, but it looks more likely to be the end of December.

Principal's Report: Mr. Joe Occhino

The administrators and staff are thrilled to see everyone back in person. The Welcome Back Breakfast for parents that was held outside at the Red Barn was a wonderful way to start off the school year.

Friday, October 1st will be the Activity Fair typically for freshmen, but will also be open to sophomores, as this was not offered last year when they were freshmen. It is held during the school day in period 7 for freshmen and period 8 for sophomores. This is a chance for those students to become familiar with clubs and activities. All students are encouraged to participate in at least one club or activity.

The update on Covid: the transition back to school this year has gone very smoothly. Our mask mandate is in position for all staff and students inside the building and while riding buses. Masks are not mandated while eating. Please remind your children of how to properly wear the mask covering the nose and mouth.

There is an optional vaccination survey on Genesis. There have been 400 responses. Although this is an optional survey, it really helps to determine how many students are vaccinated, which in turn will help with our contact tracing. Please complete this survey to help us better serve the school.

The guidelines are very clear on the mask mandate as well as no optional virtual schooling. If someone is exposed they are to stay home for 10 days unless the PCR test is negative then the student can come back after seven days. If a student is exposed and must stay home then that student will receive a virtual link from their teachers. Students who are virtual can listen and participate in what is going on in the classroom, but the teacher is teaching to the class and not the individual who is virtual. The link will be on the teachers' canvas page.

Weekly Covid update is sent on Friday afternoons and is divided by three categories: one for staff, the second is for students and the third is for support staff. Support staff do not necessarily have contact with students. We are very fortunate to be in school and will continue to navigate through these times.

Question: Will there be virtual learning if there is a snow day?

Answer: The county superintendent says there will not be virtual school on snow days. The New Jersey commissioner of education has not given permission as of now, so snow days will remain as snow days.

Question: If students are wearing masks are they considered exposed if they are near a positive student?

Answer: When all involved are wearing masks, are 3 feet apart for less than 15 minutes, they are considered not exposed, therefore they would not need to quarantine.

Question: Will parents be contacted even if your child has been exposed, but has been vaccinated?

Answer: Yes, parents will still be contacted.

Assistant Principal of Student Affairs: Dr. Tony LaRocca

Not in attendance

Assistant Principal of Athletics: Mr. Michael Koth

This past summer Northern Highlands hosted a Social and Leadership program in conjunction with Harlem Lacrosse. Parent, Jim Mulvey, organized this 501 C3 program in which NH hosted 60 students from Harlem to provide opportunities in the classroom and on the field. Our NH Lacrosse players helped to facilitate the program. It was a beneficial experience for all and we would like to continue to host and provide this opportunity in the future.

Northern Highlands participates in the positive coaching alliance. This is a program in which student-athletes who display positive coaching leadership skills are recognized.

Our Fall sports teams are in full effect and off to a great start. We are happy to see the fields packed and the students busy. Football team is 4-0; Girls soccer is 2-3; Cross Country is off to a great start; Volleyball 4-0; Field hockey is undefeated; Tennis is looking to qualify for the States.

The Homecoming Pep Rally has been rescheduled for Thursday, September 30 at 7:00 PM. All Northern Highlands students are to be reminded that this event is not limited to athletes and all students are welcome and encouraged to attend.

Sign-ups for winter sports will be soon and will be posted on the website. In person meetings will take place on October 7, for those interested in finding out more information regarding each sport.

Question: Can there be a push to revive the Spirit Club to help promote the less attended sporting events?

Answer: Yes, we will talk to the Student Council regarding a Spirit Club and possibly have a Spirit club on social media. Dr. La Rocca can be contacted as well as the Student Council regarding the Spirit club.

Director of Guidance: Ms. Kelly Peterfriend

*not in attendance

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

NH ran our first "class" of the Northern Highlands Summer Academy. The courses we ran were the following:

- Financial Management (that fulfills the graduation requirement for Financial Literacy)
- Geometry for advancement
- Honor Biology for advancement
- Honors Chemistry for advancement

We are looking to add courses to the Summer Academy in the arts. A suggestion was to also offer CAD. We are looking to conduct a survey of students in the winter to determine what other courses would be of interest for the Northern Highlands Summer Academy.

We also ran a THRIVE series for both parents and students (in separate sessions) on the following topics:

- Fixed vs. Growth Mindset

- Mindfulness and Gratitude
- Recognizing Strengths and Positive Self-Talk

We are hoping to run both the Northern Highlands Summer Academy as well as the THRIVE series next summer.

Start Strong Assessment :

- We are required to give the Start Strong Assessment in the following areas:
- English Language Arts in grades 9 and 10
- Mathematics in Algebra I, Algebra II, and Geometry
- Science in grades 9 and 12
- Each assessment is meant to assess the previous grade standards.
- It is measuring if there are gaps in learning or learning loss due to the pandemic and its impact on schools.
- It is not measuring proficiency or advanced proficiency, instead, it measures levels of support students may need.
- It is a 45-60 minute, computer-based assessment. It will be given during the regular school day in the classroom on the following days:
 - o Math: 10/5 and 10/6
- English Language Arts: 10/7 and 10/8
- Science: 10/12 and 10/13 (10/14 will be reserved for 12th-grade students who do not have a science who are still required to test)

Vice Presidents: Kelli Moss and Tamara James

The holiday raffle is the annual fundraiser for HASA. Kelli and Tammy are the co-chairs of this event. It will be held virtually on Thursday, December 2nd at 11 am. Raffle tickets will be sent out in early November via mail and those who would like to participate should return their tickets along with payment. The cost is \$10 per ticket and you will receive a book of 10 per family. There will be eight grand prizes, and many other prizes as well.

In the past, HASA had reached out to local businesses to contribute to this fundraiser. This year rather than solicit local businesses, we are looking for sponsorship. If you are interested in sponsoring, please see the email information that will be sent out this afternoon.

Treasurer: Naomi Ono

As of September 22, 2021, Our Money Market Account balance is \$58,089.91 and our Operating Account balance is \$41,381.32. Approximately \$25,000 is earmarked to purchase furniture for the Northern Highlands Wellness Center (this was budgeted for fiscal year 2020-2021 but the Center has not been completed so a payment has not yet been made).

Secretary: Lorraine Dario

Motioned for approval of the **June 2, 2021** minutes, Approved by Kathy Travers and seconded by Audrey Flynn.

Membership: Audrey Flynn

The cost of HASA's annual membership is \$35. Payment can be made by check or PayPal. Click on this link if you want to join now. <https://www.northernhighlands.org/site/Default.aspx?PageID=2056>

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.

Directory Spot Student Directory: Thao Groenewald

Our 2021-2022 Directory Spot is live! Directory Spot is a third party app available as a web-based directory or an app on your Apple or Android device. The online student directory is password-protected and available to all current members of HASA.

- If you are an existing or past user of Directory Spot, you can log off and then log back on again to see the current year's student directory. In rare cases, you may have to delete the app and reinstall it to access current student data.

All new users should have received an email directly from Directory Spot with instructions on how to set up your new account, secure your account with a password, and install the app on your device. Please note that this emailed invitation expires after 7 days. Should this happen, you can still use the link in the emailed invitation, select "**reset password**" on the login page and enter your email address in the "**Username**" prompt. You will then receive another email invitation granting you a new 7-day window to establish an account.

Please reach out to Thao Groenewald with any questions at hasadirectory@northernhighlands.org

Newsletter: Shantala Kaikini

September's newsletter will be published October 1, and is packed with lots of useful information. The Newsletter for October, submission deadline is October 18, with a publication date of November 1. Past Newsletters available to read: <https://www.northernhighlands.org/Page/6748>

TD Affinity Program: Jane Bodnar

We were very pleased to receive a check from TD Bank for \$3,715, from last year's fundraiser. TD has this great program that you can be part of. It's similar to 'Smile' on Amazon.

- TD will make a donation to HASA whenever a TD account is linked to HASA through this program.
- 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: Lisa Halperin

On behalf of the Board of Education, Lisa stated they were happy to have the students back in school. Additional members in attendance were President Christine Ferrarie and Rachel Milston. See our website for information regarding the vacant Board of Education position. The next meeting is on September 27th, 7:30 pm, in person, in the NH Library.

MPAA: Tiffany Hogue/Grace Peruzzi

MPAA supports music and performing arts at Northern Highlands. The next meeting is October 5th at 7:30 via zoom . Please join MPAA as they are always looking for new members and help.

More information is on the clubs and activities page, or contact Tiffany Hogue at thogue@gmail.com or Grace Peruzzi at gperuzzi@gmail.com.

Sports Association: Kathy Travers

The Sports Association supports athletes and coaches. To become a member visit the school website. The cost of membership is \$50, which provides members with 4 passes for all home games for football, basketball and wrestling matches, for the entire school year.

The annual Oktoberfest fundraiser will take place on Friday, October 1st, at the Red Barn. There will be a corn-hole tournament, food, 50-50 and live music. It will be a fun night out for all who

attend. Tickets are still available.

The SA is hosting the pep rally on Thursday, September 30th for all students.

The junior parking spot raffle tickets are on sale. There are three spots available. Tickets will be sold outside of the high school on Tuesday 9/28 and Wednesday 9/29 between 2:30 - 3:30 pm.

Please come out and support the field hockey team tonight.

The next meeting will be held on October 8. For more information, please contact Kathy Travers at kgtravers6@gmail.com or Frank Paparozzi fpaparozzi4@verizon.net

HASA President Closing Remarks: Lisa Kulick

The Welcome Back Breakfast for parents was well attended and a big success. Lisa thanked the Administrators, the Sports Association, MPAA and TD Bank for being available to provide valuable information to those who attended and new to Northern Highlands. Lisa also thanked Audrey Flynn and Judy Conoccio for helping with this event.

As previously mentioned there is an open board of education spot from Upper Saddle River. Anyone interested should contact Christine Ferrari to let her know, or visit the website for more information.

Very important: There are many emails you will receive from Northern Highlands and the Parent Associations from Constant Contact. Please do not unsubscribe, if you do, you will be unsubscribed from all important information coming out of Northern Highlands.

Lisa thanked everyone in attendance and adjourned the meeting at [10:14am](#).

Next Meeting

The next HASA meeting has been scheduled for Wednesday, October 15th, at 9:00 am, and will again be conducted via Zoom.