

## **Northern Highlands Regional High School Home and School Association, Inc., (HASA) minutes of the general meeting held on September 23, 2020.**

**Present at Meeting:** Joy Wenberg, Lisa Kulick, Linda O'Brien, Kelli Moss, Felicia Bechtel, Kathy Travers, Jane Bodnar, Jean Onufrak, Jess Carlin, Naomi Ono, Christine Ferrarie, Christy Soell, Yasmin Pavri, Grace Peruzzi, Lynelle Tedesco, Brian Gershengorn, Diana Tulman, Ray Cornacchia, Barbara Lobo, Susan McDermott, Lorraine Reichert, Andrea Pennington, Jennifer Clinton, Michele Murray, Katherine Lynch, Joann Meyer, Stephen Andersen, Audrey Flynn, Priya Prajapati, Debbie Cinquemani, Deborah Monagle, Linda Fisher, Mike Flom, Natalie Capone, Zoya Weisensel, K. Riker, Lannie Miller, Lorraine Dario, Chloe Tsaunas, Christine Kearney, Emily Kaufman, Eve Mode, Joan Clifford, Nicolas Branca, Mark Dabagh, Christa Paolillo, Lisa Ingrassia, Edward Reding, Jose Madhavasseril, Amy Hesse, Tracie Weiner, Staci Klonsky, Bob Males, Thomas Connors

**Staff Present at Meeting:** Dr. Scot Beckerman, Mr. Joe Occhino, Mr. Mike Koth, Ms. Kelly Peterfrend

**HASA President - Joy Wenberg:** - Joy called the meeting to order at 9:01am. Welcome everyone to our first HASA meeting of the 2020 school year.

**Superintendent - Dr. Beckerman:** -

All Teachers and staff are having Covid-19 testing on site today. Our focal point has been re-entering the school year. We had 30 people on the re-entry team and 12-13 on the pandemic team. The first three weeks have gone very well and we're very excited with where we are at this point of the start of Phase I. The full phase plan is on the website, although it is always evolving. At present we have four phases. We will do our best to give two weeks notice before advancing into the next phase. No notice will be given if we go backward or if we have to close down because of positive cases. The tennis courts are behind schedule because of the pandemic.

Our wellness program added a second SAC and a full-time Supervisor of Wellness. The Wellness Center is just being finalized, the air conditioning units are installed. We've added a second first class officer. He is retired and has been hired by the school. He is armed and provides security. We hope that all the students feel comfortable with the return to school and feel safe entering the building.

Question: With regard to phase 2, when will that happen and when students can come in more? - Answer: We are not sure as yet. It will remain 1/3 for a while. But I hope to be able to modify it to increase students and times soon. With Phase 2, if we do include lunch, as is in the plan now, we will have less instructional time, so not sure if that's the best way to go. Also not sure of the date either yet. We really want to get to 50% of students in school as soon as possible. 280 Special-ed students are coming in everyday. Next week we are resuming conversations about the next phase.

Question: Also with the Covid-19 positive numbers ticking up mostly in the southern part of NJ due to the summer, what authority do you have locally to make decisions? Answer: The only time I don't have authority is when the Governor issues a mandate (an Executive order). At the moment the transmission number is 1. If it increases and gets over that to maybe 1.2- 1.3, I'm concerned that Governor Murphy will shut everything down again statewide.

We are working closely with Bergen County and Allendale Board of Health.

Question: A curricular concern - Are the students getting all the instruction they normally would get? How are you going to meet curriculum needs? Answer: Mathematically, we may be a little under, but a lot of time was spent modifying the curriculum to fit everything in, but courses will all be met by the end of the year. We are actually providing more curriculum than most other districts with synchronous as opposed to asynchronous. Previously, classes met 3 out of 4 days, now it is 2 out of 3, but with longer class time.

Question: The block in the afternoon, 12:30- 2:30, doesn't seem to be being utilized as well as it can be? Answer: The goal is to increase instructional time, but at the moment the classes are going to go fast, so it will give students a chance to have extra instructional time if they missed anything during morning classes, without having to prep or clean desks. This downtime is important to teaching staff. Many have taken on extra sections to cover for teachers on leave so we do not have to utilize substitutes.

Question: With regard to clubs, in particular DECA and Fed Challenge, when are they going to start up? Answer: Clubs are a difficult one at the moment because they will have to be virtual and not all clubs can be virtual. We have spent well above our budget on being able to open the way we have. We need to assess the budget at the end of the year and have to be cautious with the money we use. We will get some proposals from teachers to see the feasibility for the clubs. But clubs are not cancelled or cut; they are just on hold until we can review feasibility and where the district stands financially.

### **Principal - Mr. Occhino:** -

Welcome back everyone - Over 50 people on the call today great turnout. Prior to this morning's meeting, I was in class speaking to some of the seniors all wearing masks. I miss seeing their smiles, but it's great to have the students back in school. Back to School Night is going on tonight, but will be a virtual event. Links to all the Zoom conferences will be on the school website by 6:50pm tonight - all teachers listed by department.

Dr. Jessica Verdicchio, our Supervisor of Wellness and Special Projects has created a wellness video that you can watch about her department and you can also have a conversation with her.

The Covid-19 form which has to be completed every morning to enter school is going well, but it's too much paper and handling, so we are looking into an electronic form which will be put into Genesis. A green circle will appear for verification for entry each day. The verification code is unique to NHRHS. A red button would appear if the form is filled out and temperature of 100.4 or above was recorded, this would not allow entry into the school.

Question: With regard to Gym class, are they supposed to be doing anything if they are on virtual? Last year the students had to record some form of exercise. Answer: Yes they should be doing something. I will speak to the Department Head to confirm. (Editor's Note: A physical education activity sheet example was later provided to HASA and is linked [here](#)).

Mr. Occhino thanked the parents for the support during these crazy times and for the faith you have in us.

Question: Regarding the Emergency call I still don't get them even though my information in Genesis is correct?. Mr. Occhino answered to email him and he will look into it.

### **Assistant Principal - Mr Koth:** -

Welcome - There are things that we couldn't anticipate with the return to school. In particular, attendance. Students are only marked present if the student is in class when they are supposed to be, whether it's their in-person day or whether it's their virtual day. They will be marked absent if they do not come into school when they are supposed even if they go on and do their class virtually. It will show on Genesis as absent, but if appealed we will look on it kindly. If they decide they want to go full time virtual just let us know. Students can't just come and go as they please.

Question: On the first day my son couldn't log on, so he was marked absent. Answer: That is correct, technical difficulties are always taken into consideration and we add a note in genesis. We don't want people taking advantage of the situation though.

Question: My son has study hall as his first period so he doesn't have to sign in? Answer: With study hall during the first or last period of the day, student's may arrive late or leave early. No course credit is given for study hall. They do need to go to the attendance office to sign in when they arrive in school, since attendance is now taken at first period class.

Question: Are you still able to log on virtually if you are at home due to quarantine? Answer: yes they can, but we must be notified so they can be transferred to virtual to avoid being marked absent and then go back after their quarantine to join their cohorts. Also, parents that travel out of state to one on the travel ban list, this also applies to children living in the same house, not being able to come into school for two weeks. But doesn't apply if they've only been there one day. For any anticipated extended absence for any reason, please notify the school to go 100% virtual.

Parking is currently open to Juniors and Seniors during this time. A form has to be filled out to notify us that the student will be parking. Upper and lower parking lots open but they will be assigned a spot. A form is available at school and on the website.

**Director of Guidance - Kelly Peterfrend:** - We are currently meeting with Seniors and Freshman virtually, or by Google Meet and some are in-person. Senior parent night will be done by video to parents via email and will be found on our website. We are trying to make sure all information sent out will be on the website, so everyone has access to it when needed. We are trying to make everything as easily accessible as possible.

9th Grade Family Night is on October 7. Parents and students will meet with their counselor, this will all be done virtually, parents will receive a link.

Standardized testing is still scheduled to be done, but the date not finalized yet. ACT & SAT haven't nationally cancelled anything as yet. All a little confusing at the moment with colleges changing the way they are doing things. Some colleges are test optional. PSAT deadline was September 11, too late to order tests now. Guidance will meet with Juniors and 10th Graders when finished with Seniors and Freshman. But counselors are available for appointments if needed, virtually or in person.

Thank you for the feedback on the flyers. It was really helpful.

Question: The process regarding submitting forms for colleges, my son wanted to go early action which needs to be in by October 15. What is the process this year? His counselor is out on leave and he hasn't been assigned another? Answer: All students will be making requests electronically on Naviance. This has been

explained to all students within the first couple of weeks of school. It's also in detail in the senior packet. There are also "how to videos" for seniors on-line for them to access. Mr Stone will return next week.

Question: Will there still be Standardized Testing offered to the students? Answer: We are going to be providing testing for our students. We have to consider safety for the students and proctors and we are still in the process of figuring it out, but we want to be able to provide them this fall. Question: Can you focus on both ACT & SAT or just one? Answer: Both testing companies have their own rules, we are not choosing one over the other.

Question: SAT II's will they be happening? Answer: Those will be a different animal this year. The higher tier schools will understand that they aren't able to get the test date. You can look for a test center and also ask the school if they require it.

Question: With regard to submitting their test scores to schools that are optional, if they don't submit would they be at a disadvantage, would you recommend them to send? Answer: If the scores are on the upper end they couldn't hurt, but if lower end they may want to leave them off. Don't put them in the common app because then everyone will see them.

#### **Vice Presidents - Felicia Bechtel & Kelli Moss:** -

Felicia - The Holiday Raffle which we have every year will be a little different this year. The event will be December 3, and the raffle drawing will be done live from Northern Highlands. All the logistics are still being worked on. The raffle tickets will be sent out in October, books of ten. We ask that unsold tickets be returned to us. The prizes we think are exciting this year for example there's a Louis Vuitton Bag, and Apple items. This year we didn't think it would be appropriate to go door to door to our local stores like we have in the past due to these extenuating circumstances of Covid-19. But we will do our best to make this event fun.

**Treasurer - Linda O'Brien:** -As of September 22, the Operating Account Balance is \$18,350 and the Money Market Account balance is \$67,994.

**Secretary - Lisa Kulick:** -Motioned to approve the minutes from June's 2020 meeting. It was approved by Kathy Travers and seconded by Linda O'Brien .

**Directory - Christy Soell:** - We have switched to an online directory. When you join HASA you will receive an email with instructions to download the Directory Spot App. Allendale PTO should be very familiar with Directory Spot. You can reach out to Christy if you have any questions about the directory. Joy mentioned to please be patient with the corrections in the directory, as the webmaster at Directory Spot was very overwhelmed, so we appreciate your patience. Allendale parents may not have received an email because it may show up if you already have an account. The Directory Spot email will go to the email account on file with the school, not the email used for PayPal.

**Membership- Linda O'Brien:** - Got off to a late start due to unprecedented times, but we have 287 members so far. We now have in place a very easy way to join and pay through PayPal. You can go to our link [www.northernhighlands.org/joinhasa](http://www.northernhighlands.org/joinhasa). The cost of membership remains the same at \$35 for the 2020-2021 school year.

**Grocery Cards- Naomi Ono & Audrey Flynn:** - Last year we sold a total of \$40,700 in grocery cards, mostly for ShopRite. We received 5% of what we sell and made \$2,035 for HASA. We have ShopRite Grocery cards in denominations of \$100, \$50, \$25. Purchasing a card will be no cost to the user. We deliver to your mailbox. We accept checks.

**Newsletter - Jean Onufrak** - The newsletter is being redesigned this year. You'll notice a different format. We are trying it using a link to existing material on the website in an effort to keep the articles shorter and encourage people to scroll to the end. We are also publishing it monthly rather than every other month to keep pace with everything that's going on. The first issue will be published and emailed around October 5.

**TD Affinity Program - Jane Bodner:** - The Affinity Program from TD Bank can link your accounts to HASA. This will be at no cost to you. TD Bank then gives HASA a small donation, just from linking your account. I emphasize this doesn't cost you anything. We appreciate you taking the time doing it and appreciate the donation TD Bank give us.

**Board of Education - Christine Ferrarie:** -

Thanked HASA for the great job they do. I am the Board of Education liaison for HASA. If you ever have any BOE questions I'm always here. We've been extremely busy during the summer and everyone worked very hard. Board Of Education Trustee, Barbara Garand, stepped down as of July 31. Barbara served on the Board for 20 years, and served as president for 13 of those years.

We welcome Rachel Milston, who was appointed to fill the USR vacancy until year end. BOE meetings have now gone back to in-person, although we are responsibly 6ft apart. September 29th is the next meeting.

Question: Will there be a virtual link as well? Answer: There will not be at the moment. We are in the auditorium now for our meetings, so there is a lot of space.

**Sports Association - Kathy Travers:**- We are excited to announce we are having a fundraiser - Octoberfest at The Red Barn in Crestwood Lake on October 17. Come and support the coaches, athletes and all the sporting community. Any questions you have contact me [kgtravers6@gmail.com](mailto:kgtravers6@gmail.com)

Other Business: - Grace Peruzzi mentioned that the marching band has been practicing throughout the summer and will be at football home games but will not be traveling away.

**HASA President - Joy Wenberg:** -

The virtual Freshman breakfast went well. Thank you Audrey Flynn and Julie Cornacchia for helping with that. Unfortunately, it was not recorded. Please visit [northernhighlands.org/hasa](http://northernhighlands.org/hasa) for more information on the programs discussed in the meeting. The minutes from today's meeting and all past meetings are posted there. Meeting was adjourned at 10:34am.

