

Northern Highlands Regional High School Home and School Association, Inc., (HASA) Minutes of the General Meeting held on Wednesday, February 8, 2023

In Attendance:

Katie Devitt, Anne Kay, Angelica Degenaars, Anita Altinbas, Christine Ferrarie, Kimberly Ripps-Weiner, Lisa Mundy, Barbara Lobo, Lorraine Reichert, Luz Terranova, Lynelle Tedesco, Maggie Liljegren, Shantala Kaikini, Anna Maria Pochatko, Grace Perruzzi, Jess Carlin, Sonia Agarwal, Thao Groenewald, Kathy Travers, Patrice Duker, Kristen Tsarnas, Jennifer Moodie, Deirdre Dunne, Hunter McCrossin, Julie de Jesus, Maja Roewe, Rose Layme, Anna Kalinkina, Audrey Flynn, Christi Yu, Inna Moor, Jean Hom, Jill Frank DeLuise

School Administration in Attendance:

Dr. Scot Beckerman, Mr. Joe Occhino, Dr. Tony LaRocca, Ms. Christine Wegert, Dr. Jessica Verdicchio, Jose Madhavasseril

HASA President – Katie Devitt:

Katie Devitt welcomed everyone and thanked everyone for joining. She called the meeting to order at 9:03 am.

Superintendent's Report - Dr. Scot Beckerman:

Dr. Beckerman provided the following updates.

- The district is finalizing the budget for the 2023-2024 school year, and he hopes to present the budget in tentative form next month.
- The district awarded the field house portion of the referendum in January. 11 bids were received and the first phase of the construction on the field house will begin with the tearing down of the old tennis courts on Saturday, February 11, 2023. The building is expected to be completed by late March/April 2024. This is due to issues related to receiving some of the components of the building (i.e., electric panels and Orange and Rockland setting new electrical poles).
- The field house is expected to be overbudget due to the increase in building costs and overall inflation. The district will absorb the costs interior to the budget as the project will serve generations of Northern Highlands students and the community for years to come.
- The district is finalizing the bid of the internal projects associated with the referendum (i.e., the art rooms, planetarium and library).
- The district is still awaiting to hear back from the Department of Environmental Protection Agency on the red shoulder hawk issue despite numerous follow up by the district.
- The district is moving forward with other school improvement projects, outside the projects associated with the referendum. These projects will be completed over the summer (installing sidewalks, repaving the parking lot by the turf field).

Principal Report – Mr. Joe Occhino

Mr. Occhino provided the following update:

- Junior and Senior proms:
 - The Senior prom is historically held the first Friday in June due to graduation-related event.
 - Due to conflicts with spring sports, the school decided to move the Junior prom into March approximately 10 years ago and place it between the Spring musical and the start of spring sports to avoid any major school conflicts. For 2023, the date for the Junior prom is Friday, March 17, 2023.
 - The issue the school is facing related to both the Junior and Senior prom is that venues are only allowing schools to book a year in advance and no longer providing the option for multi-year bookings. There is also limited availability on dates in future years.
- On March 14-15, 2023 juniors will be taking the NJGPA. This is a graduation requirement. Juniors only should arrive prior to 7:45 am while all other students should arrive at 9:45 am.
- The NJSLA will be administered on May 15-16, 2023
- More information on the NJGPA and NJSLA standard testing days will be emailed to parents.
- As a reminder, Monday, March 13, 2023 is a delayed opening for students as it is a professional day for the faculty. Students are to arrive at 9:45 am.

Student Affairs Report – Dr. Tony LaRocca

- Northern Highlands will be conducting the New Jersey School Climate Improvement survey in association with Rutgers University on the quality and experience of being a part of the Northern Highlands community in March. The last time this survey was administered was five years ago.

Director of Guidance – Ms. Christine Wegert

- School counselors finalized visits to the quad middle schools and completed their meetings with current 8th graders regarding Northern Highlands course selections for 2023-2024 school year.
- The guidance office also held two parent nights for 8th grade families to discuss course selections and the transition to Northern Highlands.
- The 2023-2024 scheduling season is continuing throughout February and March. School counselors are meeting with current juniors and will then be meeting with sophomores and freshmen.
- In collaboration with Private Prep, Northern Highlands will be hosting the webinar: *College Admissions and the Testing Landscape* on February 23, 2023 at 7:00 pm. The webinar will provide a step-by-step guide on which test is right for your child and a practical breakdown of the new digital SAT. The webinar is open to 9th through 11th grade families. You can register [here](#).
- The guidance office will also be partnering with the Princeton Review and offering an in-person program on Thursday, May 4, 2023 with the editor-in-chief of the Princeton Review on finding the best college. More information is forthcoming.

Wellness Department - Dr. Jessica Verdicchio

Dr. Verdicchio highlighted the following two programs:

- On February 15, 2023, the fourth Northern Highlands Pass Program (NHPASS)

will be *Teen Dating Violence & Consent* via zoom at 7:00 pm.

- On March 8, 2023, Dr. Jarod will be presenting to all Northern Highlands students on the mind of the student and importance of sleep and nutrition as it connects to attention and performance in school. He will also be presenting to parents on Zoom on March 8 at 7:00 pm on the topic of the mind of a student athlete and how parents can support the mind of a student athlete.

Board of Education – Maggie Liljegen

Maggie Liljegen stated that the board held a workshop meeting on February 6, 2023, and received outstanding reports from the curriculum, negotiation and finance committees. In addition, they also received great presentations from the student representatives. The next Board of Education meeting will be Monday, February 27, 2023 at 7:00 pm in the Northern Highlands library.

HASA President – Katie Devitt

- January was a quiet month for HASA. HASA will be meeting with Mr. Occhino in the next couple of weeks to review allocations and determine how best HASA can help the school community.
- HASA is always looking for volunteers who would like to get involved. HASA is looking for a new Treasurer for the 2023-2024 school year. Ideally, this person will be familiar with QuickBooks and possibly held a treasurer position on a different board in the past. If someone is interested or would like to find out more about this, please reach out to Katie Devitt or one of the HASA Board members.

HASA Recording Secretary – Patrice Duker

- Patrice Duker asked for primary and secondary motions to approve the January meeting minutes. Kathy Travers motioned for approval and Thao Groenewald seconded the motion.

HASA Treasurer – Thao Groenewald

- Thao Groenewald reported that as of February 8, 2023, the Operating Account balance is \$47,573.30 and the Money Market balance is \$58,292.90

HASA Newsletter – Shantala Kaikini

- Newsletter submission can be sent to shantalakaikini@yahoo.co.uk

Northern Highlands Sports Association (NHSA) – Kathy Travers

Kathy Travers provided the following update:

- The **Hockey** team is having an outstanding season. They suffered their first loss to Bergen Catholic on February 7, in overtime. They recently won against Seton Hall Prep & defending New York state champions, Suffern. The win against Suffern was during their Hockey Fights Cancer fundraiser, which was a very successful event. The Hockey team is currently ranked #3 in the state by NJ.com, the top ranked public school. They are the #2 seed in the County tournament.
 - Dan Moor was nominated for North Jersey.com 3 stars of the week.

- **Wrestling** qualified for the state tournament and won their first state match in the last decade on February 7, defeating Cliffside Park. They lost the subsequent match to top seed Mount Olive, but a lot of positives to take away. There are a number of matches left in the season with matches vs. Glen Rock and PV the week of February 6 and districts loom in the future.
 - At the BCCA tournament, Ethan Mendel took 3rd place at 190 and Amanda Connors took 2nd at 119.
- **Boys Basketball** qualified for the Bergen County Jamboree and earned a home game win vs. Fort Lee. This was their Bergen County Jamboree win in almost 10 years. They went on to face Don Bosco at home in the 2nd round and went toe to toe with them for three quarters – but the team was unable to pull out a win in the end. The team is currently jockeying for position in States.
- **Girls Basketball** made it to the quarterfinals of the BCWCA tournament where they fell to Old Tappan. This ended a 14-game winning streak, in that time they went unbeaten in league play capturing the Big North Freedom Divisional title. The team is preparing for the State Tournament
 - During the season, Lauren Flatt was nominated for Northjersey.com Player of the Week and Emma Starr is on pace to score her 1,000-career point.
- **Boys fencing** experienced success at the Districts. The boys took 3rd place overall and our foil team took home the gold while the epee squad took bronze. The **girls fencing team** finished 5th overall.
- The **Cheer** squad took second place in a number of Big North meets they recently competed in. Although they did not finish in the top two in our division overall and didn't qualify for the Big North Conference playoffs, they showed tremendous growth throughout the season and laid a foundation for future success.
- **Winter Track** recently competed in the State Sectional meet at the Armory. The girls team finished in 2nd, while the boys took 4th. They are setting their sights on the Group meet soon to come. They've shown consistency all season long as they took 3rd for the girls and boys in the league meet earlier in the season.
 - Zach Madison set the school record for High Jump clearing 6'4"
- **Swimming** continued their winning ways, sharing the league title with Ridgewood for both the boys and girls. The girls relay also set the county record in the 200 & 400. The girls took 2nd in the county meet while the boys finished 4th. They are now gearing up for the State Tournament boys swim on Friday, February 10 vs. the winner of Wayne Hills/Randolph. The girls swim the week of February 13 and are awaiting to hear who their opponent will be.
- **Girls Bowling** finished the regular season undefeated at 14-0. Meghan Gido, Jaclyn Paglieri, Rachel Hanna, & Antonia Bellapianta combined to mow down the opposition all year long and took home the Big North Freedom Division crown. All three will play in the Individual County Tournament and state tournament play.
- Fall honors continue to shine upon Northern Highlands athletes:
 - **Girls' soccer** players Mia Langan, Brooke Philips, & Lyla Geller were named to the All-State team.
 - Coach Cord of Football was named the NJFCA Group 4 Coach of the Year.

- On Wednesday February 1, 2023, Northern Highlands athletes participated in the second National Letter of Intent Signing Day of the year. Five more student athletes committed to play sports at the collegiate level.
- On Friday February 3, Northern Highlands held their winter installment of the Positive Coaching Alliance workshop. Approximately 25 underclass students were nominated by coaches to attend and mentor leadership skills among them in hopes of them returning to the team and paying it forward. This session was geared toward making teammates better.
- PastaMania will be held on Thursday, February 9, 2023. PastaMania is a fundraiser run by the Northern Highlands Sports Association and all proceeds support all the Northern Highlands Sports Teams.

Music and Performing Arts Association (MPAA) – Grace Perruzzi

- The A Cappella season is in full swing. The next A Cappella competition is Saturday, February 25, 2023, The Voices, will compete at Bayonne High School.
- The spring musical, “Bright Star” will be held March 9-12, 2023 and tickets for the performances can be purchased [here](#).
- On Thursday, April 20, 2023, there will be an Arts Night.
- On May 5-6, there will be an A Cappella festival at Northern Highlands.
- The Spring band concert will be held Thursday, May 18, 2023, and the choral concerts will be held on Wednesday, May 10, 2023.
- On Friday, May 19, 2023, the freshman play will be held at Northern Highlands.
- This summer’s Marching Band Camp will be held the week of August 14, 2023.
- MPAA will be offering a scholarship for seniors. Details are forthcoming and applications and essays will be due around spring break.
- MPAA is in the process of ordering new drums for the marching band.
- MPAA will host a BINGO fundraiser on Thursday, March 2, 2023 at Trinity Church in Allendale. The event is sold out.
- The next MPAA meeting is Tuesday, March 7, 2023, at 7:00 pm in the Teacher’s Lounge at Northern Highlands.

HASA President, Katie Devitt, thanked everyone for attending. The next HASA meeting will be Wednesday, March 15, 2023 at 9:00 am via Zoom. She adjourned the meeting at 9:35 am.