

RIDGE H.S.A. INC.
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
January 12th, 2021 at 1:30 pm
ZOOM MEETING

BOARD MEMBERS: *Albano, Barnstable, Beiersdorf, Bender, Briganti, Bruce-Lockhart, Bruno, Constantinople, Crosly, Das, Daffron, DeVincenzo, Dilman, Di Maio, Flynn, Geller, Goldberg, Gross, Harris, Hoag, Holder, Katzman, Koehler, Kong, Kraljic, Kuiken, Kupiec, Lindenberg, Long, Losquadro, McGirr, Minetti, Monte, Muselli, Patrawala, Reilly, Rubine, Salmon-Herrmann, Sezgin, Singh, Strohmenger, Sullivan, Tobaccowala, Twilliger, Wall, Wesner, Whitehead, Williams, Wilson*

PRESENT: *Briganti, Goldberg, Kupiec, Minetti, Monte, Rubin, Strohmenger, Vaidya, Wesner, Whitehead*

ABSENT BUT VOTING: *Albano, Barnstable, Beiersdorf, Bender, Bruce-Lockhart, Bruno, Constantinople, Crosly, Das, Daffron, DeVincenzo, Dilman, Di Maio, Flynn, Geller, Gross, Harris, Hoag, Holder, Katzman, Koehler, Kong, Kraljic, Kuiken, Kupiec, Lindenberg, Long, Losquadro, McGirr, Monte, Muselli, Reilly, Rubine, Salmon-Herrmann, Sezgin, Singh, Sullivan, Tobaccowala, Twilliger, Wall, Williams, Wilson*

MOTIONS:

1. *A motion was made, seconded, and approved by those present to approve the Minutes from the November 17th, 2020 Ridge H.S.A. meeting.*
2. *A motion was made, seconded, and approved by those present to approve the Balance Sheet as of January 12th 2021 and the 2020/2021 Year-To-Date Profit & Loss Statement.*

Welcome & Call to Order

Ashley Minetti

Ashley Minetti, H.S.A. President, called the meeting to order at 1:30pm.

Principal's Report

Dr. Jean Schoenlank

Teaching Best Practices

- Dr. Schoenlank stated that we are living under very unusual circumstances. As a teacher it is very unusual. These last 10 months have been trying in every single way and the teachers have had to learn so much, so quickly. She is continually amazed at what the teachers have been doing. Dr. Schoenlank was able to pop into every remote class last week to visit and say hello. She was pleased to see that everyone was up running, smiling, and working hard.
- Importantly, Dr. Schoenlank would like to share that even though everything is changing and everyone is dealing with so much new, she has focused the last 2 faculty meetings on best practices for teaching and to try to remind ourselves what is working and what doesn't work.
- Dr. Schoenlank shared that at yesterday's faculty meeting, 3 teachers shared some tips regarding technology, and some content related. It is really helpful and refreshing to focus on what we all love, which is teaching, and not always be talking about Google meets.

- The teachers have really enjoyed talking about different ways on how to engage students, both in school and at home. This is an ongoing conversation that we have all the time so we can make sure kids are with us, and what to do if kids are on different paces. Dr. Schoenlank shared that she and the teachers had a long conversation about writing and writing assessments and what the direction moving forward is on that. She wants to make sure everyone knows that good teaching and focusing on learning is still the top of our list despite all the challenges.

Celebrating Diversity-

- One of our goals this year is to focus on an anti-racist, multicultural diverse view and figuring out different ways to focus on this throughout the year. Dr. Schoenlank has chosen the Books of the Month for the school and she has put together a committee that talks about how we can put a positive spin on cultural diversity as a way to be anti-racist. The committee does not always want to talk about Martin Luther King, protests and how people of color have had a difficult road in this country. They would like to also focus on the positive contributions that people of color have made in our history, that people are not always recognized.
- Dr. Schoenlank had made a slide show and each month she will introduce the students to 2 people who many of us might not have heard of, but have made significant contributions. There are 6 people she will introduce to the students throughout the next several months.
- In November, Dr. Schoenlank focused on Shirley Chisholm and Thurgood Marshall. Shirley is the 1st Black women elected to the US Congress.
- In December, Dr. Schoenlank focused on 2 Native Americans, Maria Tallchief and Jim Thorpe.
- In January, Dr. Schoenlank is focusing on Arturo Schomburg and Octavia E. Butler. Arturo was from Puerto Rico and did a lot to highlight books that were written by people of color. He created a large library. He then donated these books to the NY Public Library who recognized diverse authors. Octavia was a significant force as an author in creating a niche for science fiction for girls of color.

Book of the Month

- Dr. Schoenlank announced this month's book is "Martin's Big Words" which is appropriate for this month since we are celebrating Martin Luther King's birthday. This is a wonderful picture book about Martin Luther King and discusses some of his history. Dr. Schoenlank feels this is a perfect book for elementary aged kids.

Other Updates

- Dr. Schoenlank announced that the Library is open. Mrs. Eng has been speaking to all the grade levels about borrowing books. Each classroom has a wonderful collection of books as well, thanks to the HSA, but there are also 1000s of books sitting in the library ready to be used. The library will reopen on Tuesday, Jan 1.

- Tara Briganti is speaking on behalf of the Ridgewood Education Foundation and wants to introduce the organization and create an awareness of who they are. Ridgewood Education Foundation (REF) was founded in 1989 by a group of parents. REF is an independent group that is a 501 C3 organization that works in collaboration and partnership with the school district, administration, the principals, the educators, and the HSA's where appropriate. Tara stated that their mission is to raise private funds to be use to enhance education in our public schools. They raise funds so that they can take on larger district wide initiatives to get behind, to give financial backing, where the public-school system's might not have the funds to provide in the time or the level based on their budget capabilities.
- Tara mentioned that to date, REF has distributed more than 1.3 million dollars to the schools and that is through grants and sponsorships of community wide programs. REF has issued more than 300 grants and funding programs all over the schools, academic and art programs.
- Overall, what does REF do? We raise money and grant money.
- There are 3 different categories of grants
 - Classroom Grants- One of the grants REF gave was for GW and BF when they wanted a science program
 - Leadership and Sponsorship Grants- The biggest grant REF worked on for leadership is accelerating the districts chrome book program, which meant every student would get a Chrome Book in every school. They also modernized science classrooms at GW and BF. Most recently, REF completed a 4-year pledge that supports the districts STEAM initiative. Purchases have been made for laser cutters for all the science classrooms from 7th grade to the high school. They also created a Ridgewood High School makers space and completely updated the music studio. They are currently working with the district on a proposal discussed right before schools were shut down in March to figure out what our next big initiative will be for the district. We will keep everyone updated when we know more.
- Some of the events, REF sponsors are Super Science Saturday, the Wellness Series, and the Libraries Real Voices Film Festival.
- Tara noted that REF consists of an 18-member board of Trustees that have representatives from every school. She mentioned that the some of the board members do not have to have students currently in the school district. REF likes to hear from people across the community but they are now at a point that they are interested in looking for new members that are parents in the different schools. A lot of the board is aging out of the school system so they are interested in recruiting new members.
- Tara stated that they have fundraisers every year. One of their big fundraisers is Octoberfest which is held every other year. This has become a staple on the Village calendar, but unfortunately due to COVID it could not be held this year. In the years there is no Octoberfest, a Phone-athon is held. Since, there could not be an Octoberfest

in October, they are launching a Winterfest in February. This will be a series of zoom webinars. There will be children's author visits, beer tasting, cheese plate making, and other fun activities for the community. All that will be asked for is for a simple donation. There will be a link to join and a PayPal option.

- REF would like to get the word out and now when you see the communications, you will understand where the money is going and what it is for. Please contact Tara for more details on how to get involved.
- Alysson asked where would someone go to find out more information on this. Tara responded by giving the website which is www.ridgewoodedfoundation.org. REF can also be found on Instagram and Facebook.
- Lila mentioned that REF board members should reach out to the class parents to get the word out about REF since many people might not know about this organization.
- Tara would like to hit many different demographics via the zoom meetings.

Guest Speaker

Lindsey Rubin

- Lindsey thanked everyone for the GiftCard gift certificate's she received for the holidays.
- Lindsey shared with everyone the results of the feedback form that the school had sent out with both the hybrid and remote students from Ridge. This was a continuation of something that the district mental health team had started at the high school and middle school. Lindsey mentioned that we are really looking closely at all of our students' social and emotional well-being this year. We wanted to get a gage of overall, how is it going for them, what are their thoughts, and any feedback. Are there any big glaring areas that we are not noticing of issues present, and anything that we can address? There are a lot of things that are out of our control, but can we help if there are big issues.
- The teachers in November, asked a sampling of the students to give us some general feedback to see how this experience has been for them. Lindsey noted that this was done in several groups. Lindsey mentioned that even though we asked the students for an overall feeling of how this entire year has been going, we all know that from talking and working with little kids, that is a really hard thing to ask them to do. We know that we are most likely getting a snap shot of what they were feeling at that moment versus thinking back throughout the entire year. Overall though, it was nice to hear what they had to say.
- The first group we asked for feedback is hybrid students in Grade 1-2. We started asking them how they feel in their in-person day. We gave them 3 different emojis that had a positive, neutral, and a sad face so they could identify how they felt. Most said they felt positive or felt neutral. No one reported feeling negative about their in-person days. These kids mentioned that the favorite part of their day was seeing their friends. The other 3 options were split between seeing their teacher, learning, and getting to have snack. They were then asked questions about at home learning days. Some felt positive, a small percentage had a very negative response and half were neutral, where they did

not love it but were ok with it and tolerating it. The students were asked about their favorite part about at home learning and their responses were more free time, the teacher afternoon check in, and a small percentage enjoyed learning.

- The second group we asked for feedback was the hybrid students in Grade 3-5. Lindsey mentioned that we gave them more of an opened ended format to answer the questions. The first question was the same as the younger kids regarding how they felt on their in-person school day. 65% were positive, 33% was neutral, and a very few were negative. Lindsey noted that the great thing about this survey is that she can go back in the data by individual student and see who found the in-person day challenging, and possibly go check in with that person's teachers. The students mentioned that the most challenging aspects of being in school were wearing a mask, being 6 feet apart, and not having recess/lunch. The things the students liked most about being in person, was seeing their friends and teachers, easier to focus, science, talking with their friends and teachers, less stress and work, and going outside. Grades 3-5 home day mood mainly was neutral at 54%. It was 26% positive and 20% negative. The most challenging part about being at home for these students were, 26% reported nothing, 24% reported too many distractions, and 21% reported not seeing their friends. The last question that was asked was what do the students like about their at home school days. The answers were mainly, sleeping in, relaxing, being in PJ's, my pets and family, and the flexibility.
- The third group we asked for feedback from were the Remote students in Grade 1-2. The big difference here compared to the hybrid students was that the results are combined with all the other elementary schools across the district, not just Ridge. The results came back 58% were positive, 37% was neutral, and a small percentage was negative. The students did say they liked being home and seeing their teacher online.
- The last group we asked for feedback were from the Remote students in Grades 3-5 across the district. The group was pretty split about their feelings towards remote days. Some were positive and some were neutral. Most reported that they would much rather be at school. The students reported that what they found most challenging about remote learning was technology problems and distractions. The students liked Wednesday specials and being at home the most.
- Lauren asked if this survey would be shared at a higher level to the Board of Education and the superintendent. Dr.Schoenlank mentioned that she would share this data with the teachers and will share this with the Superintendent as well, and Board eventually. Lindsey would like to put the presentation together in a better way before sharing to a broader audience.
- Ashley is thrilled that Lindsey was able to figure out what child reported a sad face in an answer to a question so Lindsey will know who that child is to be able to help them.
- Dr. Schoenlank shared that she is worried about children socially, emotionally, and academically. She is happy to report that she did some data comparison of 1st grade reading levels last December versus 1st grade reading levels this December to see if there is a huge difference. 1st grade is such an important year for learning how to read. The great news is that really there is not a huge difference. There are fewer children below the benchmark now. The kids are moving along. Dr. Schoenlank is hoping for

more families to send their kids back to in person school as the vaccines become more available.

President's Report

Ashley Minetti

- Ashley cannot be prouder of the Wonka Bar Event and could not have imagined this to turn out as well as it did
- Mike Limbo who is the President of the Board of Education, now wants more information and pictures to be sent to him. He may feature our fundraiser in the next Board of Education meeting.
- The stocking stuffer sale was a success! Ashley noted that we made \$1000. We did not expect to earn this amount.
- Upcoming Events- Ashley is following up with the president of Orchard to see how their virtual Bingo Night went. The Executive board approved the event and we are looking to possibly do this at the end of February.
- Beautification Project Update- Meghan McGirr and Amy Hayes are in charge of the project. They have interviewed 4 different landscaping companies, and are now waiting for plans actually on paper to finalize what company they will choose and what plan they would like to move forward with. They will hopefully finalize this in February and start to sell the bricks and benches in early March. We hope to have a teaser on what this will look like in the February HSA meeting.

Important Dates

February

2/2 – Executive Board Meeting (1:30pm)

2/9 – HSA public meeting (1:30 pm)

2/11- Kindergarten Report Cards

2/12 – February Break – No School

2/15-16 – February Break – No School

2/26 -Virtual Bingo Night

March

3/2 – Executive Board Meeting (1:30pm)

3/5- Science Fair

3/9 – HSA public meeting (1:30 pm)

3/25- 2nd and 3rd grade concert

3/29 – 3/31 – April Break – No School

Vice President's Report

Jean Whitehead

- Dr. Schoenlank spoke with Ashley and the teachers about seeing which enrichment projects we can do in a virtual setting. The 3rd grade projects include the bee keeper and the space guy which we think we can still move forward with.

- Tara mentioned that we usually do a science or a music enrichment every other year and this would be a science year. Tara would like to work with the Science Fair committee and Peggy on scheduling, but would be nice to tie some kind of Science enrichment in March with the Super Science Saturday event which will happen virtually.
- Dr. Schoenlank mentioned that we would like to do a Science Fair. We would like to possibly fund this through Friends of Ridge. This is a work in progress and we will make decisions at a later date.
- Tara reached out to Mrs. Stewart, the art teacher, regarding if she would like to purchase any new products for the students. She mentioned that purchasing clay would be a great option for the students to be able to take home at some point.
- Jean Whitehead mentioned that there has only been one expense so far, the Roc books. At this point, not a whole lot to do besides reaching out to teachers to see what we can and cannot do.
- Ashley announced that she and Dr. Schoenlank spoke about potentially doing another One School, One Book, later this Spring. This would fall into the category of enrichment activities for the students. The good news is there is definitely budget to pay for this 2nd book out of Friends of Ridge from last year.
- Tara mentioned that Mrs. Tobin and she spoke regarding the circus and discussed whether it was feasible to do at the end of this school year. We run into the problem of our remote students, and this is a huge expense. The discussion was maybe it would be possible to turn this into a 5th grade activity moving forward and this year's 4th graders could have it the following year. Dr. Schoenlank will have to make this decision moving further, but she is not against this.

Treasurer's Report

Lana Monte

A motion was made, seconded, and approved by those present to approve the Balance Sheet as of January 12th, 2021 and the 2020/2021 Year-to-date Profit & Loss Statement.

- *Motion was made by Tara and seconded by Lauren.*

Statement of Financial Position

Lana reported that

- Bill Ward Fund \$19,310.75
- Savings \$35,419.90
- Operating Account \$45,591.83
- TD account for Legalized Games of Chance \$1
- Total Bank Accounts- \$100,323.48

Year-to-Date Actuals vs. Budget: Revenues

- Bill Ward Fund \$325 donated
- Membership/Directory \$300
- Retail Events- Holiday Stocking Stuffers \$1,032.42
- Wonka Bars (Additional Fundraisers)- \$2,767
- Friends of Ridge- \$4,072 since November

Year-to-Date Actuals vs. Budget: Expenses

- \$1,500 in expenses for Bill Ward Fund
- PayPal and Square Fees- \$155
- Administrative Fees- \$69
- Flowers and Holiday Gifts- \$1,250
- Landscape and Student Garden (item from last year that was just submitted recently)- \$44
- Miscellaneous- (Gift cards for pumpkin carving contest for Halloween) \$80

-Dr. Schoenlank asked Lana, “Based on the fact that we have fewer expenses and we are taking in less money, are we still at a good place”? Lana mentioned that we are about \$5,000 over. The additional fundraisers have brought in \$3,568 that we did not account for, but we have missed the family picnic, book fair, and bingo night. We still might do a virtual bingo night in late February. We are making up the difference in additional fundraisers that we are doing. Village Table brought in \$28 and the stocking stuffers brought in about \$1000, so every extra bit counts.

Planning & Development’s Report

Alysson Wesner

- Alysson reported Tiny Prints , which was launched in December brought in \$52 and Stop and Shop brought in \$205.55. We have 75 supporters at this time. Amazon Smile brought in \$902.55 since inception, and we have 98 supporters. From June-November, we have made \$136.10.

Volunteer Coordinator’s Report

Mark Bruno

- Mark was not present at the meeting but on his behalf, Ashley stated that he is working on a new calendar for Red Zone. He will start pushing hard on the class parents to try and get more volunteers for Red Zone each morning and afternoon for each Cohort. He also wants to brainstorm some signs that we can put up along Red Zone to remind people of the rules.

Secretary’s Report

Lila Goldberg

A motion was made, seconded, and approved by those present to approve the Minutes from the November 17th, 2020 Ridge H.S.A. meeting.

- *Motion was made by Lana and seconded by Lila.*

Update

No Updates

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at TK p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Lila Goldberg
Ridge H.S.A. Secretary

NEXT H.S.A. MEETING is Tuesday, February 9, 2021 at 1:30 pm via Zoom.