

Meeting Minutes - FINAL

REPAC Meeting: Thursday, December 8, 2022 6:00 PM

Riverside High School Media Center

In attendance: Linda Walters, Tim Velegol, Henry Sommerville, Tammy Patterson, Kathy Holt, Sabrina Lamar, Kim Bowers, Michelle Guilmette, Julie Dodge, Addi Hernandez, Raquel Silva, Diane Paces-Wiles, Micah Luftig, Stephanie Simon, Jenny Ostrovsky, Kristin Bradley-Bull, Robin Crawford, Bridget Bishop, Stephanie Brennan, David Schmid, Kelly Powrie, and Imre Gutay

Minutes prepared by Jill Foster

Meeting called to order at 6:26 p.m. after some social time with refreshments.

Michelle Guilmette motioned to approve previous meeting minutes, Henry Sommerville seconded. Approved with a change to a name's spelling.

Financial Report – Henry Sommerville

Not too much this month. Another donation came in, with matching funds from a business. We paid for refreshments at the Engineering Information Session night. Also paid insurance.

Tim – PLTW has another funding stream; when students qualify for credit through PLTW, RHS receives a financial “kickback” for credit hours purchased. Background - If students earned 85% or higher and achieved the requisite score on the final exam, they can pay \$225 for course credit, awarded by RIT. RIT, in turn, awards a mini grant of \$20 back to RHS. \$1520 came back this year. That money resides in the PLTW account in the school – Tim's discretionary fund - separate from REPAC funds. That pays for incentives and prizes for students. Also covers stoles (but not cords) for seniors for graduation.

Question – Is the RIT credit helpful? There's a lot of variation between schools with how that credit can be used.

Sometimes extra course credit can push students into an earlier registration time if they're designated with sophomore standing, etc. – can be helpful at some bigger schools. Can also give students access to courses they wouldn't otherwise be qualified to take as freshmen.

RIT only covers the PLTW engineering courses. Credit for the Computer Science courses is awarded through Milwaukee School of Engineering and Missouri S&T. Linda – with MSOE, they'll give you credit, but the transcript just shows that the student passed the class. NCSU only accepts transcripts with grades on them, so you need to check with each school to see what they will accept.

Introduction of Ms. Patterson, Assistant Principal

She supports PLTW and CTE. This is her 2nd year at RHS, and she's has spent a lot of time recently on the tech hall.

COMMITTEE UPDATES

Spirit Wear: Linda reporting for Teri Lowder

Having a small online spirit wear sale - just the in-stock items which are listed on the website. Purchased extra sweatshirts in the last order to have for sale. Items will be distributed before the break. If you want it to be a surprise, put a note to seller in the order so the item won't be given to their student. Another sale will be held early in spring to coincide with registration nights.

Community Service: Kathy Holt

Bit of calm as holidays/finals come up. Last outing was last Saturday with 10 kids at the diaper bank. Additional dates at the Diaper Bank are scheduled out for February, March, and April. Will set some up during break for Triangle Land Conservancy, and Chris is working with Kramden Institute for potential volunteer opportunities. Rose of Sharon looks much nicer after the day of service there – picked up 18 or 19 big bags of trash just from Guess Road to Hillandale, plus the school campus. Will probably do it again in the Spring. Worked with Keep Durham Beautiful on that and expect that this will become an annual or bi-annual event.

Programs and Grants: Kim Bowers

Still haven't been able to meet in person. Staff has been really busy, so hard to get time to meet. Have one student grant that was submitted – hoping it can be processed before winter break. Russell is following up with the folks regarding the greenhouse.

Speaker Day: Linda reporting for Karrie Comatas

Working on lining people up for spring Speaker Day, Feb 24th. We have someone willing to coordinate next year. Karrie will onboard the new person in the Spring.

Leadership Needs

Linda noted that Michelle is willing to help get us up and running with the Bulls in the spring but that we need someone to step up to be the volunteer coordinator for next season as Michelle's daughter is a senior. She was also a stand captain, but the two don't need to go hand in hand. The coordinator role can be good for someone who maybe can't work the games but is good at organizing and communication.

Tim got an email from the Science Olympiad contact, she's looking for specifics. We might need help with hospitality/concessions. Date is Feb 18th. We have a volunteer who has stepped up to co-chairing along with Alicia Pepper, who has chaired in the past. We will need parents to assist – that request will come in the form of a sign up genius in late January or early February. No RHS SO team this year, but the school is hosting.

Future of Smart Lunch Discussion

The discussion stemmed from one earlier in the week at the PTA meeting. The PTA is looking into holding a forum with central office personnel to discuss the issues how to try and keep Smart Lunch going, so be on the lookout for more info.

RHS admin is concerned about the growing intensity of the fighting in school and safety for students and faculty. They are putting too much time and energy into securing the school grounds and dealing with the follow-up issues when fights occur. While fights won't go away if Smart Lunch is removed, there will be less time and opportunity - the sprawling geography and hour-long time for Smart Lunch provides students with more opportunity for fights.

The morale issue from taking it away is a big deal. Impact could be huge. Can there be a way to still have clubs during the day? Tutoring? What about the students who are doing the right things?

If Smart Lunch is taken away, communications need to be upfront and very clear about why it's happening.

The security and well-being of the teachers and staff is paramount. There has been an increase in mental health issues for students, economic stress for families in Durham and at RHS. When the conversation comes to Dr. Mubenga, have to discuss what resources can be put into place to support families. No simple solutions, but Durham needs resources. Structural/systemic issues need to be front and center.

Needs to be more conversation so the community can understand what the issues are. Fighting isn't the issue, it's a symptom of the issue.

Is there more fighting at RHS than at other high schools? Maybe getting rid of smart lunch won't make a difference. Don't conflate the issues.

(Post-meeting update from PTA: Dr. Woods-Weeks is leaning toward having Smart Lunch stay in place, after speaking with many groups at RHS and hearing the overwhelming support for it. She is researching different approaches/options to ensure this can be successful.)

Updates

Still down 2 math teachers, an assistant principal, 1.5 science teachers, business teacher. Have 2 Spanish teachers. Can kids do an online class to replace it? Dr. Mubenga has made a priority to get a remote learning facility in each school, Room 245 is ours. Made progress in getting some hardware installed, not sure how much progress has been made in getting it ready. May not have the infrastructure for it.

Shared from PTA - Banyon Education Consultant is doing a zoom presentation about college process, next Wednesday, the 14th at 7pm.

Tim Town Hall

Had a tremendously successful info session. Bigger turn out than ever. Over 250 people. Over 80 families signed in. Parents did a great job with hospitality. The 10 student ambassadors really had a huge impact on the audience. Very candid and open. Went great.

There was an event at NCCU with 10 students representing RHS. Governor Cooper was in attendance. Our students were captivating – 4 sophomores, 4 juniors, 2 seniors brought their engineering projects to show off. People were wowed by what they saw.

Did Round 2 of ACT WorkKeys testing. Previous platinum record was shattered. Junior interviews are wrapping up. The other half will be in the Spring. Has been a great learning experience. Great families. Amazing faculty.

Ask everyone to keep in mind the 6 folks who serve as the PLTW teachers at holiday time. They meet every Tuesday during smart lunch – incredibly committed to what they're doing. All have the children's interests at heart. They're stressed about how short this quarter of the semester is – feel a lot of pressure to get through the material as they feel a lot of pride in how the students perform on the end of year exams. Keep them in your prayers and provide support. All gestures are appreciated and would go a long way to make them feel appreciated.

Tim won't be here – December 12th – Jan 7th. Intends to work from home until an email reminder comes thating he'll be out of the office.

Next REPAC meeting February 9th. Skipping January meeting as it would fall during finals week. There will be a Board Meeting that month.