

Meeting Minutes – FINAL APPROVED

REPAC Meeting: Thursday, March 16, 2023 6:00 PM

Riverside High School Media Center

In attendance: Kim Bowers, Jenny Ostrovsky, Sabrina Lamar, Monica Gainey, Teri Lowder, Stephanie Brennan, Henry Sommerville, Linda Walters, Michelle Guilmette, Tim Velegol, Karrie Comatas, Robin Crawford, Lara Ryan, Renee Moore, Addi Hernandez, Alex Spessot, Mary Taylor, Steve Bradley-Bull, Sarah Musser, and Charles Cloutier

Minutes prepared by Jill Foster

Meeting called to order 6:15pm

- 1) February meeting **minutes approval** – motion to approve from Alex Spessot, second by Renee Moore. Approved.
- 2) **Financial update** – Henry Sommerville.
 - Few generous donations came in. Thank you to the donors.
 - Amazon Smile is winding down. They will give us a few more dollars before the program ends.
 - Money is coming in from spirit wear.
 - Science Olympiad money was going in and out – had some leftovers from that which were put to other uses and designated accordingly on the financials. Made about \$200.
 - Speaker Day receipts were just turned in and money will go out for reimbursement on this.
 - Spring field trip balance is still low because the budget was cut off right before the field trip moneys started coming in.
 - TSA fund brought in \$1800 from the students. Hotel and such are paid for. DPS will be reimbursing Adam for his hotel, etc. How much do we support the TSA trip? It's all funded by the students, DPS is covering the advisor. REPAC only pays for the annual membership fees.
- 3) **Community Service** – Kathy Holt not present but sent update. There are 4 more service events: diaper bank on 3/25 and 4/22; tree planting on 4/1 and litter pickup on 4/15. The last two are in conjunction with Keep Durham Beautiful. Since May is a busy month, no community service will be scheduled, so those 4 events will wind down the year.
- 4) **Durham Bulls** – Michelle Guilmette. Checks are still pending, and our contact said we are very unlikely to get a beer stand this year and instead will get a food stand. We do have 5 stand captains, more are welcome to spread the workload. Three people will be attending a training on 3/22. Will start a sign-up genius soon as we are about a month out from the first date we requested. Get ready to volunteer! Please share experiences so we know for the future whether to continue with it or look for alternate fundraising opportunities. Tim appreciates the willingness to try.
- 5) **Program and Grants** - Kim Bowers.
 - Mr. Oakley is the new advisor for programs and grants with Mr. Strand leaving.
 - Received the final report from the student who completed the first Sage grant.
 - Greenhouse project has been rejuvenated for TSA to make the vertical hanging shelves.
 - Equipment needs – most have been met since CTE downtown came through with everything. Email came yesterday asking for list of things that can be purchased at Home Depot up to \$5K.
 - Looking for grants on the PLTW site to expand and offer the environmental sustainability class, but those listed were targeted to specific geographical areas that we are not in. Will continue

looking to see if some come up that would apply to us or for other STEM grants.

6) **Q&A** with Dr. Okun.

- Has a new VP been found? They interviewed someone today for the VP position that's open. Hopefully after spring break that will move forward. Want to bring in someone who's really good and dynamic.
- How is school safety/smart lunch going? Better. Identified the 50 students who were causing the bulk of the issues. Created a mandatory tutoring schedule – the counselors are meeting with them, escorting, talking about non-academic issues. There was an incident today. They still happen. But not every day.
- Scheduling? Most students have met with their counselors. Going through the last few make ups. Closer to summer they will create the matrix to match teachers to classes.
- Pirate Athletics Media is 100% student-run and they are posting on Instagram. Dr. Okun's posts are on Twitter.

7) **Science Olympiad** redux. Had great volunteers – students and parents. One thing that was different was the schedule...previously concessions were busy in the afternoon, but awards began at 1:30pm this year instead of 4pm as usual. We ended up with a lot of extras. Surplus went to Speaker Day (soda and chips), to Tim for various uses (candy and cookies), and future hospitality (plates, tablecloths), etc. Henry worked with the budget to charge those items accordingly, so we came out with a profit of ~\$200 for this event. Dawn took great notes and has suggestions to make next year better and we will plan according to what the schedule will be. Overall it was a good day.

8) **Spirit Wear**, Teri Lowder. Running a sale with online store. If you notice anything awry with online ordering, let them know. Sale runs through 3/26. Not sure how long it will take to get the items in but sounds like it will be quicker than in the recent past. Linda – so far 21 orders have come in, \$735.

9) **Field Trips** update from Tim. Expected a lot of interest in Busch Gardens, but it was fast. Sent the bus company the \$7800 to reserve the buses to show good faith and see if they can provide a 4th bus. The size of the fleets are diminished post-covid, and there is a driver shortage. Had to do the research much earlier and are lucky to have started as early as they did. 15 folks came through to chaperone. Adam and his wife will go as teacher chaperone. Sabrina – future field trip suggestion, seems like it would be fun for seniors to have a 1-day head start for registering. It's their last year. Tim - every year, the lowest number who go are seniors. They are usually over it by then. Mostly sophomores/juniors attend. Aerospace students are going to GE Aerospace for a field trip soon.

Next Meeting April 13th. May meeting had been scheduled for the 3rd Thursday instead of 2nd so it would not be the night before the field trip. **We now have to move it to Tuesday, May 16th,** as Tim has a conflict with the Durham Engineers Club meeting – we almost always have students who win their scholarships and they are being presented that night. At our May meeting we will hold elections and approve the summer budget.

Tim Town Hall:

- Ms. Haith, counselor for S-Z, came from Southern and is very experienced and outstanding. She's been put in charge of scheduling for rising 10/11/12 grades. Students were supposed to have signed up for course requests by 3/10. Trying to cut back on the chaos during drop/add with some changes so there will hopefully be less upheaval. The matrix will be created in May/early June and then the scheduler will run.

- Mr. Strand-Poole has departed. Were able to land a long-term substitute - Mike Dibble (Mr. Stallings' nephew), who majored in computer science. He's taken over 2 AP level CS classes and is doing very well so far. Has a great attitude. Remains to be seen whether he would want to do lateral entry and stay. Mr. V put out the word to hundreds of people about the job opening. Had several nibbles but at this stage not very hopeful to find an out and out replacement. Trying to emphasize that they are looking for someone for whom the money is not the main goal. Question - Would part time people help the situation? DPS not very open to part-time/adjuncts. When Russell came, it was to teach CSE as well as AP CSP. Had no expectation to grow the program, it just happened because of his enthusiasm and skill to deliver all 4 classes. As nice as it's been to offer the pathway, it's by no means a necessity. State of NC is really struggling with finding teachers period. CS is the hardest. There's no other school as far as he knows that teach all 4 classes. Question - Are there CS classes at Durham Tech that could serve as replacements? There are options on code.org, Khan Academy, etc. If we don't find someone that's really good at the job, we may have to go without. It could do more damage by having the classes taught by people who aren't right for the job.
- Mr. Stallings is RHS CTE teacher of the year for the 2nd year in a row. This was a teacher vote. Mr. Strand actually won but they had to revote because he's no longer eligible.
- Initiative has finally gotten off the ground to start a Society of Women in Engineering group. RHS program has a 65/35 gender split but there hasn't been a forum for underrepresented populations to talk about issues. Some girls have brought issues up about sexism. Mr. V put out a google form to gauge interest. Already have 20 that have responded. Meetings are planned for Mondays April 17 and May 14 during smart lunch and all the girls/female identifying students will be invited. The meetings will be led by Jennifer Buzun, retired engineer from stormwater division from City of Durham. She was a Speaker Day guest in February. If this pilot goes well, we may expand to other URMs.
- Lottery update – tomorrow is deadline for first draw. We let in 160. So far, 20 have declined outright. Expecting another 15 to not accept by tomorrow. That's 35 seats likely to open, and 33 on WL. Very optimistic that all who put Riverside first on lottery will get an offer of seat. Erica Bloodworth, a counselor at Brogden, has been a great advocate. She has followed up with a few students there who likely don't have support at home to get all the registration paperwork done.
- How are we looking staff-wise for 160 students? Okay. Have Mr. Oakley and Mr. Patridge. If we get a 6th teacher, that bodes well for availability of CS electives. Otherwise, there will be mostly engineering electives. Smaller 9th grade class this year, so that will open up offering extra sessions of other things.
- Amazing job with Speaker Day and science Olympiad. Joy to behold! High level of professionalism.