



Minutes of the General Meeting  
Wednesday, January 10, 2024

**In Attendance:**

Katie Devitt, Anne Kay, Patrice Duker, Margaret Murphy, Lisa Mundy, Maggie Liljegren, Christine Ferrarie, Renee Lardieri, Grace Perruzzi, Thao Groenewald, Lynelle Tedesco, Janeen Skripak, Christi Yu, Medy Murphy, Anita Altinbas, Julie De Jesus-Evans, Sonia Chadha Agarwal, Gidget Phillips, Maria-Elena DeGregorio, Jess Carlin, Liesa Anderson, Kathy Glynn, Anca Stanciu, Puig So, Luz Terranova

**School Administration in Attendance:**

Dr. Scot Beckerman, Mr. Joseph Occhino, Ms. Kimberly Hayes, Dr. Robin Knutelsky, Mr. Michael Koth, Mr. Jose Madhavasseril, Ms. Christine Wegert

HASA President, Katie Devitt, welcomed and thanked everyone for joining the call. She called the meeting to order at 10:40 am. Before opening the meeting to the administration for their updates Katie provided the following opening comments:

- HASA is excited to announce that the construction of the new stadium gate entrance to the football stadium is completed.
- HASA is pleased and proud to have been able to fund the project and play a part in building this for the school community. This entrance will welcome families, students and the community for graduations, competitions, and games to the Northern Highlands campus for years to come.
- She thanked the administration for providing the opportunity to HASA. She also thanked Kathy Travers and Thao Groenewald for spearheading the allocation process and the overall project for HASA. The project took a great amount of effort and work and like many construction projects, there were bumps along the way and Kathy Travers served as the point person with the construction company to ensure the final product was what HASA wanted and was delivered with the quality of work that HASA were looking for.
- This project could not have been done without the support of everyone involved with HASA - From the school administration, Board members, volunteers and all of the community members who participate and support HASA's efforts and fundraisers. It is because of everyone's support HASA was able to have the manpower and funding to support this project.

**Superintendent's Update – Dr. Scot Beckerman**

Dr. Beckerman provided the following updates:

On the referendum projects:

- The district went out to bid for the internal projects and the Board of Education provided approval at the January meeting.
  - The library and the old fitness center projects are expected to begin during the April break.
  - The art rooms and the PVP rooms will be completed right after the 2023-2024 school year ends.
  - The planetarium project is slightly delayed as the district is struggling with the installation of the new projector as many of the companies that have done this type of work in the past in New Jersey are no longer State certified to do work in New Jersey. The expected installation for the projector is mid-February.
- On the turf field, the district is ready to start putting the turf down, however recent weather issues have caused a slight delay in the installation. The projected completion date for the turf field is the end of February. The expectation is that the turf field will be ready for use before the 2024 spring season gets underway.
- The overall completion of the construction of the field house remains on schedule for the end of March 2024.
- For the February HASA meeting, Dr. Beckerman hopes to have information on the preliminary 2024-2025 school budget and the date for the public presentation, which usually occurs in April.

### **Principal's Update – Mr. Joseph Occhino**

Mr. Occhino provided the following update:

- The end of first semester is on January 19, 2024. Report cards will be available to view in Genesis after 3:00 pm on Friday, January 26, 2024. At this time, students and parents will be able to view first semesters grades.
- First semester cumulative assessments will take place from Tuesday, January 23, 2024 through Friday, January 26, 2024. Cumulative assessments are worth 5%.
- The Genesis parent portal will be closed from Monday, January 29, 2024 through Thursday, February 1, 2024. It will re-open on Friday, February 2, 2024. When Genesis re-opens on Friday, February 2, 2024, students and parents will be able to view cumulative assessment grades as well as first semester grades.
- Cumulative assessments are worth 5% but this calculation will not be factored into first semester grades. Semester two cumulative assessments are also worth 5%. The cumulative assessments for both semesters will be noted in a student's final grade in June.
- For more information on how the cumulative assessments will factor into a student's overall grade point average, [click here](#).

### **School Counseling Update – Ms. Christine Wegert, Director of School Counseling**

Ms. Wegert provided the following updates:

- In early January the School Counseling Department hosted an evening program for junior parents on post-secondary plans. To view the presentation, [click here](#).
- The School Counseling Department has sent invitations to junior parents to sign up for their child's junior conference. Appointments are available in January, February, March, and April. Appointments can be made through Genesis. [Click here](#) to view the parent communication regarding junior conferences.
- In February, school counselors will begin meeting with students regarding their schedules for the 2024-2025 school year. [Click here](#) to view all courses offered at Northern Highlands, course descriptions and requirements.
- As part of this year's Northern Highlands Summer Academy program, the program will once again offer the College Experience micro-course. This micro-course is a great chance for juniors to begin working on their college applications and college essay. For more information about the College Experience micro-course and other Northern Highlands Summer Academy offerings, [click here](#).
- On January 25, 2024, the School Counseling Department will host an evening program for eighth grade parents in Allendale and Ho-Ho-Kus to learn more about the course selection process and the transitioning to high school. A similar program will be held on January 30, 2024 for Upper Saddle River and Saddle River parents. Students are invited to attend as well.
- To view the January edition of the School Counseling Department's newsletter [click here](#).

### **Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment – Dr. Robin Knutelsky**

Dr. Knutelsky provided the following updates:

- She thanked HASA for providing partial funding for a classroom project that will provide additional monitors and desks. This project is almost completed.
- She provided a reminder that the school offers free tutoring in core academic areas. More information on this service can be found [here](#).
- Enrollment and applications for the 2024 Northern Highlands Summer Academy program are available. [Click here](#) for more information and to view this year course offerings.
- This year, Summer Academy will offer courses in financial management, Geometry, Biology, Chemistry, Algebra 2 and Trigonometry. In addition, there will be micro-courses in SAT Math, SAT Verbal, a math skills bootcamp and the College Experience.

### **Assistant Principal of Athletic – Mr. Michael Koth**

Mr. Koth provided the following winter sports update:

- The hockey season is currently ranked number nine in the state. They have won 10 out of their last 11 games. Junior Jake Baratta was recently nominated as one of the three stars of the week by NorthJersey.com.
- The Bowling team is off to a 3-3 start for both the boys and the girls. Both teams are looking forward to competing in county tournament play.
- Swimming is hovering around 500. They are also looking forward to county and state meets coming up.

- The basketball teams are off to a good start. The boys are ranked in the top 20 by NorthJersey.com. The boys are 6-3. The girls are ranked in the top 10 and are 8-2.
- Winter track has its first big meet of the year during the big North Conference League meet at Ocean Breeze in Staten Island.
- The boys and girls fencing team had a solid opening to the season after dropping their first match. The boys took second place in the Epee at Bergen County Coach Association County Tournament. The boys team also took fourth overall. The boys fencing team is 2-2 and the girls are 3-1.
- Wrestling is also off to a good start. They had a great showing at the Mahwah tournament to open their season with many wrestlers placing. Senior Ethan Mendel won the most outstanding wrestler of the tournament for the second year in a row.
- The winter cheer program hosted their first ever big North Conference Cheer Competition at Northern Highlands on January 8, 2024. The competition featured 10 schools and the girls had a sensational performance.
- The next session of the Positive Coaching Alliance will be held on January 11, 2024. This is a student mentoring program which identifies under classmen who are showing signs of leadership. The program hopes to mentor and grow student athlete's leadership skills. Each session features 20 to 25 student athletes and a different group of student athletes are chosen for each session.
- The Northern Highlands Sports Association will host its annual Pastamania event on Thursday, February 1, 2024. For more information and to purchase tickets, [click here](#).

### **Board of Education Update – Maggie Liljegren**

Maggie Liljegren provided the following update:

- The Board of Education re-elected Christine Ferrari as its President, and Andrew Prince as our Vice President during their January meeting. The Board also said farewell to Gail Trumbetti who has served on the Board of Education for over 17 years.

### **Special presentation: Career & Academic Pathways – Kimberly Hayes, Career & Academic Pathways Supervisor**

- Ms. Hayes provided an overview of the offerings available through Northern Highlands Career & Academic Pathway program.



Career Academic  
Presentation 1\_10\_24

- A copy of the presentation is offered here -
- For more information on the Career & Academic Pathways program, [click here](#).

### **HASA Update**

HASA President, Katie Devitt welcomed everyone again to the meeting and thanked everyone for joining the January HASA meeting.

- She thanked everyone who attended the Holiday Raffle on December 7, 2024 and who purchased raffle tickets. The Holiday Raffle is HASA's biggest fundraiser of the year and net proceeds were \$28,000.00.
- HASA sold \$19,230.00 in Grand Prize raffle tickets, \$5,755.00 in tricky tray raffle tickets, and \$5,300.00 in Junior parking tickets.
- She provided a special thank you to all of the Sponsors and prize donors for the Holiday Raffle.
- She also thanked the following individuals who assisted in making the Holiday Raffle so successful:
  - Anne Kay and Barbara Lobo for co-chairing the Holiday Raffle.
  - Caryn Beswick who organized the food.
  - Stacey Artale who headed up donations.
  - Debbie Morin, Jen Lavine and Lindsay Altieri who solicited donations,
  - Lauren Sacks who chaired the basket wrapping.
  - Christina Jasko who handled the Grand Prize Tickets.
  - Janeen Skripak who ran our social media and signage.
  - Judy Sica who managed the Parking Spot Raffle.
  - Anita Altinbas, Jackie Badiali, Patrice Duker, Lisa Ellison, Thao Groenewald, Maria Kempf, Theresa Lalime, Melissa Martella, Lynn McCarthy, Margaret Murphy, Vaishali Patel, Zuni Piran, Denise Rothe, Lisa Tallercio, Jennifer Zando who helped solicit donations, came out to help with the mailing, basket wrapping, set-up, clean-up and onsite support the day of the Holiday Raffle.
  - A special thank you was also provided to Amy Shulman of Reliant Ribbon for donating all the ribbon used to wrap the baskets and to Inserra Supermarkets/ShopRite of Ramsey for the large donation of food served at the raffle.
- To join HASA, visit HASA's [membership page](#) or scan the QR code below. You can join HASA at that time. Membership is \$40.00. Your dues will give you access to the school directory and the money goes to support all of HASA's initiatives.



- If you have any submissions for the HASA's monthly newsletter please refer to these [guidelines](#) prior to submitting your article(s).
- Please submit articles via a separate email and mention the month it is being submitting for when sending in the submissions. Articles should be sent in MS Word format only and include current links, forms, photographs (JPG or PNG files).
- For questions regarding the HASA Newsletter or for submission of articles, please email Shantal Kaikini at [shantalakaikini@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:shantalakaikini@yahoo.co.uk).
- Please follow HASA on [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#).

HASA Recording Secretary, Patrice Duker asked for primary and secondary motions to approve the November 8, 2023 meeting minutes. Katie Devitt motioned for approval and Medy Murphy seconded the motion.

HASA Treasurer, Margaret Murphy, reported that as of January 10, 2024, HASA's Operating Account balance is \$21,154.00 and the Money Market balance is \$59,031.00 for a total of \$80,185.00.

### **Music and Performing Arts Association (MPAA) Update**

Medy Murphy reported:

- The Northern Highlands Acapella group will host their first competition of 2024 January 27-28.
- The spring play, "Mamma Mia," will take place February 29, 2024 through March 3, 2024.
- On March 7, 2024, MPAA will host its annual BINGO Night, which is their largest fundraiser of the year. [Click here](#) for more information and tickets.
- MPAA is looking for additional board members for the 2023-2024 school year. Anyone interested in finding out more about these roles can contact Tiffany Hogue.
- MPAA membership for the 2023-2024 is open. [Visit here](#) for more information on MPAA.
- MPAA meetings are held on a monthly basis at 7:00 pm at Northern Highlands High School in the Teacher's cafeteria. The next MPAA meeting will be Tuesday, February 6, 2024.

HASA President, Katie Devitt, thanked everyone for attending and reiterated the board's appreciation for all the support through the year. HASA's next monthly Zoom meeting will be on Wednesday, February 7, 2024 at 9:00 am. Katie adjourned the meeting at 11:36 am.