

## RISING TIDE PARENT GROUP

September 13, 2023

### MEETING NOTES

Head of School Mr. O'Keefe opened the meeting at 6:30pm with Interim Principal/Asst Head of School Ms. Williams at Rising Tide with 20+ parents in person and on zoom. We went around the table and around the zoom, introducing ourselves, including the age of students at Rising Tide.

#### Old Business

Parent Wendy Marshall pointed out that Parent Group is not an independent entity or a fundraising group for Rising Tide. Parent Group gets donations as needed for activities to support students or the school. Having said that, parent Martha Dennison reported that the Group does have \$1102 on account from last year, where some solicitation requests raised more than was needed for the current activity. That money is earmarked to support those traditions this year.

#### New Business

##### Administration Update

Mr. O'Keefe provided an update on the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary events scheduled for late September.

- **9/28 – Gala.** Organized by the Board, parents are invited to purchase tickets to enjoy an adults-only celebration with cocktails, heavy appetizers, and games of chance. Ticket information in the Monday Memo. Parents are invited to donate gift cards for the prizes and/or donate cash in lieu of purchasing tix. Students are encouraged to provide artwork to decorate the Jones River Trading Post for the party. Questions can be posed directly to Communications Coordinator Martha Popoloski at [mpopoloski@risingtide.org](mailto:mpopoloski@risingtide.org).
- **9/30 – Family Event.** The School is organizing a free family 'backyard barbecue' with DJ and fun activities. Students will be involved in planning the event's activities. More info in the Monday Memo. Ideas and questions can all be posed to School Receptionist (and RT parent) Ashley Carlucci at [acarlucci@risingtide.org](mailto:acarlucci@risingtide.org).

Mr. O'Keefe was invited to provide an update on the 2023-24 school year. Highlights included:

- **Leadership team changes** have been made to reflect a whole school enrollment of ~625 students. The current team – one Head of School and one Interim Principal/Asst Head of School overseeing both schools and assisting with curriculum development with an Assistant Principal at each school – provides a cohesive and lean leadership structure.
- **Ms. Zahra Williams**, Interim Principal and Asst Head of School, introduced herself to the group, providing info on her background and extensive experience at RT. In addition to a strong curriculum foundation, her goals for the year are to ensure everyone feels safe and supported while we bring joy back to teaching and learning.
- A parent asked about the **Upper School schedule change** – Ms. Williams explained the new schedule is fixed (vs rotating, as prior years) with a rotating Academic Support block on

Mon, Tue & Thu that allows teachers to focus on building specific skills with their students to fill learning gaps and ensure long-term student success. On Fridays, students can choose which class to seek Academic Support; there is no Academic Support block on Wednesdays (due to ½ day.)

- A parent asked about COVID policies – Mr. O’Keefe said that state education officials have been prescriptive to encourage schools to focus on in-person school with home support for students who may test positive for COVID. There are no plans for expanding virtual school opportunities at this time.
- A parent asked about **Google classroom for tracking assignments** – Ms. Williams confirmed that all teachers are using Google classroom, although there is some variation in the ways that they may use it at this time.
- Ms. Williams announced that **‘Grade Push-out’** will be introduced the week of 9/25. On a bi-weekly basis, student grades will be published on the community portal for students and parents to get a ‘snapshot’ of current student performance. More info on grade pushout will be provided in the Monday Memo and at Parent Open House on Thursday, 9/21.

### Class Parent Ambassadors

Mr. O’Keefe introduced a ‘job description’ for a new parent role at Rising Tide, created to work with the Deans of Community to assist in communication and support for parents. Parent Ambassadors will be assigned for each grade (e.g., senior class, class of 2024) and will:

- Look for opportunities to bring people together within the grade level
- Communicate with administration on questions, ideas, and concerns from grade level families
- Reinforce information on events, initiatives, and processes
- Support RTCPS’ marketing by sharing grade-level stories that celebrate and honor the diversity and experiences of families in our community.
- Provide coordination assistance with grade-level enrichment opportunities

### First Semester Potential Volunteer Opportunities

- **25th Anniversary Family event, 9/30.** School will be looking for volunteers. Keep an eye out in the Monday Memo for details.
- **Boat Dance (US), 9/22.** Parent Group is soliciting donations of snacks and water and cash to provide snacks for the Upper School Boat Dance. [Click here for the Sign Up Genius.](#)
- **Landscaping, Fall.** Parent Group has offered to assist cleaning up the center medians in the school driveway. We’re looking for landscapers, tree experts and/or folks with experience removing small trees. Contact Wendy Marshall at [wemar17@yahoo.com](mailto:wemar17@yahoo.com) if you can help.
- **Picture Day, 10/2.** A few volunteers are needed during school hours to assist photographers by organizing the flow of students. Super fun volunteer gig and an opportunity to receive a discount on your photos! Look for a Sign Up Genius soon.

- **Spirit Week Atrium Decorations, 10/13.** Parents will decorate the Atrium on Friday, Oct 13 to surprise staff and students for Spirit Week. Details will be discussed at 10/4 Parent Group meeting.
- **Homecoming, 10/21.** Interim Athletic Director Thom Holdgate will provide info on what support is needed for Homecoming, which will be held at Sacred Heart School on Saturday, 10/21. Details will be discussed at 10/4 Parent Group meeting.
- **Muffins in the Morning (MS), date TBD (likely week of Nov 6).** Parent Group will seek donations and volunteers to support this fun morning event where each Middle School student is encouraged to invite a special adult to school to experience their school day.
- **Staff Appreciation / Stock the Staff Breakroom, 11/13.** Parent Group will solicit donations and volunteers to stock the staff breakroom for the week of Term1 conferences.

### Next Meeting – 10/4, 6:30pm

Mr. O’Keefe and Ms. Williams scheduled the next Parent Group meeting for Wednesday, 10/4 at 6:30pm. Parents can join the hybrid meeting in person in Room 190 or [on zoom](#).

Join Zoom Meeting  
Meeting ID: 864 1529 2203  
Passcode: 950255

The meeting ended at 8pm.

**Please mark your calendars to attend to learn more about school happenings and how families can stay involved. Hoping to see many faces again on 10/4!**