

Introductions Meet the new members to our special education team:



Dana Finsmith is thrilled to be joining the Hastings on Hudson school district this year as a Second Grade Special Education teacher! Dana received her BA in Childhood Education from SUNY Cortland where she graduated Magna Cum Laude. Additionally, she holds a Master's Degree in Special Education from The College of New Rochelle and was the sole recipient of the Education Division Award. Before joining the Hillside Elementary team, she worked for the past five years as a Second Grade Special Education teacher in the South Bronx. Also, she has spent the past summers in Israel teaching English. When Dana is not at Hillside, you can find her at the gym instructing spin classes, traveling, and spending time with her dog, Hope! Dana is very excited to be part of the amazing school culture that Hastings is known for!



Hello Hastings-on-Hudson Community! My name is Carmella Tedeschi and I will be teaching at Hillside Elementary School this year as a 3rd grade Special Education teacher. I graduated from Manhattanville College with a Master's Degree in Literacy, in addition to having a dual certification in Elementary Education and Special Education for grades 1 through 6. For the past 4 years, I have taught in the Bronx, NY as a Special Education teacher. When I am not teaching, I enjoy cooking, traveling, and spending time with family. I am excited to become a part of the Hastings-on-Hudson community! I am looking forward to getting to know each of my students as we journey through a fun and exciting year of learning!



My name is Gia Schneider and I am the new Speech-Language Pathologist at Farragut Middle School. I graduated with a Master's of Science in Communication Disorders from Mercy College in 2011. Prior to this I was a secondary special education teacher. I love being a part of a diverse school community and seeing my students reach their goals. When I'm not at work I am either crafting, taking pictures, or relaxing with my family and fur babies. I am looking forward to a great year at FMS!



Hello Hastings Community. My name is Britney Skultety and I received my Masters from Mercy College in Education. I am thrilled to be joining the Special Education team at Farragut Middle School this year. I am currently dual certified in general education and students with disabilities. Hastings holds a special place in my heart. Not only have I had the opportunity to work here the last five years, but I am also a Hastings graduate. Special Education has always been a part of my life and I am very passionate about giving all children an equal opportunity to be successful. I look forward to supporting and working with your children to ensure that they have the best year possible!



My name is Kristina Ippolito and I am incredibly thrilled to introduce myself as Hillside's 1-2 Learning Lab teacher for the 2018-2019 school year. I am very excited to join the Hillside community and the Board of Education. I am blessed to have had such a warm welcoming from parents, staff, and students. I worked for the New York City Department of Education for the past three years, in which I've taught special education in both self-contained and co-teaching classrooms. My experience ranges from kindergarten to third grade. Prior to New York City, I worked at Alpine Learning Group, a specialized school for autism in New Jersey. Here is where I taught 1:1 instruction as well as Applied Behavior Analysis therapy. I have experience teaching content, life skills, social skills, and strategies to support socio-emotional development. I have a degree in Psychology/General/Special Education as well as a Master's in Literacy. I enjoy teaching balanced literacy, targeted small group instruction, and social development! I am thrilled that Hillside respects and values teaching to the "whole child". I cannot wait to start my journey at Hastings!



My name is Erin Dolan and I am a lifetime resident of Yonkers. I pursued my Bachelor of Arts degree in History at Siena College in Loudonville, NY. While at Siena, I completed a New York State Teaching Certification Program in Social Studies for grades 7-12. History is my passion and I love teaching about the past as well as current events. My favorite part about teaching history is incorporating literacy into my instruction. I went on to pursue my graduate studies at Iona College in New Rochelle. I completed a Masters of Science in Adolescent Special Education and Literacy, becoming certified in Special Education in grades 7-12 and Literacy in grades 5-12. Although this is my first year at Hastings High School, this is my fifth year teaching. For the past four years, I was working at a middle school in the Bronx. I am so excited to be a part of the Hastings community and looking forward to a wonderful school year!



Hello! My name is Dr. Nicole Seicol and I am excited to be joining HUFSD as a District-wide School Psychologist! Previous to this year I spent four years as a School Psychologist in an elementary school in Hamden, Connecticut. I have also spent time working in the Pleasantville UFSD and at NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital in White Plains. I completed my graduate degree at Fordham University and my undergraduate degree at Binghamton University. In my free time I love to read, swim, knit, and bake. Most of all, I love to spend time with my husband and my three month old son, Dylan.



It is with both excitement and gratitude that I am joining the Hastings-on-Hudson UFSD as a district-wide psychologist. After completing my undergraduate degree at Wake Forest University in North Carolina and my M.Ed. and Ed.S. degrees at the College of William & Mary in Virginia, I began my career as a school psychologist in Atlanta, Georgia. I then worked for 3 years in Kansas City, Missouri before returning to my home state of New York to work at New Rochelle High School for the past 10 years. Although I am an avid runner and reader, I love spending time with my husband and my 5 year old son, Dylan, and 2 year old son, Kellen most. I am so happy to be joining this wonderful community and supporting Hastings families, students, and staff!

Contact Information

Beth Habermann

Classified students in grades 9th through 12th, students that are in out of district placements or parentally placed and special transportation needs.

habermanb@hohschools.org

Theresa Terry

Classified students in grades 5th through 8th and assistive technology needs.

terryt@hohschools.org

Alexine Hollocou

CPSE students and classified students in grades Kindergarten through 4th grade.

hollcoua@hohschools.org



Who Do I Contact?

Case Managers - Each child has been assigned a case manager. Please contact them with any questions/concerns regarding your child's day to day happenings including the areas of academics and/or behavior. If your child receives any related services (Speech and Language, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Counseling) please feel free to contact the provider directly if you have a question/concern related to this area. By now, you should have received the names and contact information for your child's case manager and service providers.

If you have a question that doesn't seem to fit into one of the categories above, please feel free to contact us through the following link. This link is also available on our website.

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1BKeS9kIkGu7HBvenuD2yUuzYle_dXDmaExJpreVD9U/edit?ts=59bc1c1a





Action Plan

On September 17, 2018 we presented at a Board of Education meeting to give the community an update on our progress. We are providing links to our Board of Education presentation, draft of the vision for special education, our continuum of services, and the completed sections of our SOPM manual.

LINKS

Link to presentation:

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1BqWtbYjEtewUN_QmsgH89Tp932vKKu2Pk1FQk1d2k1A/edit?usp=sharing

Link to draft of vision

https://docs.google.com/document/d/11UgmzWCFelkzhQ69da_ZS2ykKleojS6B3h0LRmj2pGU/edit?usp=sharing

Link to continuum

<https://www.hohschools.org/Page/1293>

Link to SOPM documents

<https://www.hohschools.org/domain/1040>



Professional Development

The district sent a team of 10 special education teachers representing all three schools to a two day training in Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI). The Fountas & Pinnell Leveled Literacy Intervention System (LLI) is an intensive, small-group, supplementary literacy intervention for students who find reading and writing difficult. The goal of LLI is to lift the literacy achievement of students who are not achieving grade-level expectations in reading. The LLI systems are designed to:

- Advance the literacy learning of students not meeting grade-level expectations in reading
- Deepen and expand comprehension with close reading
- Elevate the expertise of teachers
- Increase reading volume by engaging students in large amounts of successful daily reading
- Increase student engagement with books that build knowledge
- Intervene with small groups of struggling readers to maximize growth
- Meet the needs of struggling readers
- Monitor student progress.



Indicator 12

“The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA) requires each state to have in place a State Performance Plan (SPP) that evaluates its efforts to implement the requirements and purposes of Part B of IDEA and describes how the state will improve such implementation. The SPP, submitted every six years, includes measurable and rigorous targets for the 20 indicators established under three monitoring priority areas:

1. Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE);
2. Disproportionality;
3. General Supervision Part B, including Child Find, effective transition and effective general supervision.

The New York State Education Department elicited broad stakeholder involvement in the development of its SPP in order to set measurable and rigorous annual performance targets. The SPP provides the baseline data, measurable and rigorous targets, improvement activities, timelines and resources established by the State for each indicator.” Each year, a school district is assigned an indicator and asked to gather/submit required data to NYS. Last year (2017-2018) Hastings School District was assigned Indicator 11. This indicator looked at the percent of children who were evaluated within 60 days of receiving parental consent for initial evaluation or, if the State establishes a timeframe within which the evaluation must be conducted, within that timeline. (20 U.S.C. 1416(a)(3)(B)). This year, Hastings has been assigned Indicator 12 - Percent of Children Referred Prior to Age 3, who are Found Eligible, and who have an IEP Developed and Implemented by Their Third Birthday. The district will collect data related to this indicator and submit it to the state during the summer of 2019.

Important Dates

- Hillside Community Conversations- Wednesday October 17, 2018 7:30 AM-8:30 AM, Thursday March 21, 2019 6:30pm-7:30pm
- Farragut Middle School Community Conversations- Wednesday, November 14, 2018 6:30pm-7:30pm, Thursday March 7, 2019 6:30pm-7:30pm
- Hastings High School Community Conversations- Monday October 29, 2019 6:30PM-7:30PM, Monday February 25, 6:30-7:30 PM
- SEPTA Fundraiser Carnival- October 27th 12:00 PM-3:00



PM

Community Conversations:

We have worked with the community and schools to set up a few dates for community conversations. We encourage all interested community members to attend these discussions, and we hope you can join us.

We are looking forward to an exciting year in the special education department.

Regards,

Laura Sullivan and Tesfa Stewart

