



HASTINGS-ON-HUDSON UFSD

JUNE 2021 NEWSLETTER

OFFICE OF
CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION
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Dear Hastings Community,

This year, we all learned so much as we navigated the pandemic. We demonstrated resilience, creativity, perseverance, critical thinking, and collaboration as we worked together to ensure continuous instruction for students. Although we needed to navigate rapidly shifting mandates and tremendous constraints necessitated by the conditions of the pandemic, there were many bright spots from the school year that we can celebrate and replicate in the future. Our internal teacher teams worked together more closely than ever before. Communication between buildings was strengthened. Our outdoor spaces throughout our campuses were leveraged frequently for student learning and socialization. Technology was used to create blended learning environments, personalizing student learning experiences and supporting their engagement, while also creating efficient ways to accommodate parent schedules when hosting meetings. Innovation was elevated.

As I reflect upon all that we were able to accomplish in support of students this year, none of it could have been possible without a concerted effort from administrators, teachers, teaching assistants, aides, clerical staff, custodians, monitors, bus drivers, parents, our Board of Education, community partners, and, of course, our wonderful children. As we look to what lies ahead, we can remember and affirm that together we are better. Thank you.

Following is the yellow jacket "buzz" from the office of Curriculum and Instruction.

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Middle School Mathematics Resource

The team involved in the middle school mathematics resource selection process made their final determination about the resource that will be purchased. There was full consensus around implementing Big Ideas. Teachers and administrators liked this resource for many reasons, especially for its alignment to the vision indicators created by the K-12 Mathematics Committee. This resource has been developed from research based strategies and includes conceptual, procedural, and application elements in every lesson. It supports students with visualization and metacognition. There is an online component as well as print resources. The resource is available in 14 languages and incorporates a “read to” component in English and Spanish to support students with IEPs and English Language Learners. All students have access to a live tutor during the week, and there are data-rich reports for teachers to work with in customizing instruction for learners. The team loved that there is an authentic performance task associated with each unit of study, which supports real world relevance. This resource will be implemented in grades 6 through 8. In addition, one 5th grade teacher will be piloting it starting in the fall.

Chair Council

During our June Chair Council session, Dr. Detra Price-Dennis joined the group and supported the exploration and development of a tool to support inclusive curriculum and assessment. The group was asked to consider how they are currently making decisions regarding their curriculum and how the Culturally Responsive Curriculum Scorecard might support their work. Within small groups, participants engaged in discussion about the scorecard indicators and, in some cases, recommended changes to customize the resource for Hastings.

Diagnostic Screener

The diagnostic screener group met to debrief their experiences with piloting IXL with students as a screening resource. While the group agreed that this is a good intervention and extension resource, they were interested in exploring STAR, NWEA MAP, and FastBridge as potential alternatives. This will ensure that the most robust, supportive tool possible is selected. Melissa will be working together with diagnostic screener pilot participants over the summer to learn more about each of these resources. A decision will then be made by the group on a diagnostic screener that is appropriate K-8.

Science Alignment

Our work to align our science curriculum to the new New York State P-12 Science Learning Standards has been ongoing. During professional learning sessions with Dr. Helen Pashley, participants engaged in a lesson analysis, including examining motivation for the learning outcomes in the lesson, equitable student engagement with authentic phenomena, development of important ideas connected to the standards, and opportunities for students to share what they know. Teams explored a planning template for developing lessons aligned to the three-dimensional learning standards, which includes the dimensions of 1) practices, 2) disciplinary core ideas, and 3) cross-cutting concepts. Dr. Pashley also shared resources related to the Regents exam, unit planning resources, and three-dimensional assessment examples. Dr. Pashley has also been supporting us to unpack performance level descriptors that outline what students are expected to know and be able to do. Special thanks to Robin Farrell and Melissa Shandroff for their amazing efforts and leadership to support this important work. Thank you to the teachers in the department for their high level of commitment to the alignment process.



BEST WISHES FOR A WONDRFUL SUMMER!

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