HASTINGS-ON-HUDSON UFSD

DECEMBER 2020 NEWSLETTER

OFFICE OF
CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION
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Dear Hastings Community,

2020 is drawing to a close. We have learned many things over the course of this unprecedented year. We have strengthened our ability to be resilient, agile, and graceful in the face of adversity. We have strengthened our collaborations and helped each other to the greatest extent practicable. We have enhanced our communication practices to support shared decision-making and movement in the same direction. We have learned quickly from things that have not worked well and negotiated radical pivots. We have strengthened our use of technology, while keeping in mind the potential consequences of our increased reliance on it. We have engaged in critical and creative thinking to reimagine ways that learning can continue when students are in the building and out of the building simultaneously. We have recognized the critical nature of empathy, and the interplay of social-emotional well-being and learning. Regardless of our role, we have all grown in support of our students. Now it is time to rest for a bit.

As we enter into this winter break, I wish you and your families rest, joy, and a sense of ease. May the wish for good health in 2021 manifest as a resolution of the global pandemic.

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

Culturally Responsive and Sustaining Pedagogies

Our Chair Council, attended by administrators and teacher-leaders throughout the K-12 system, and our Diversity Committee have been unpacking the Culturally Responsive Sustaining Education Framework and determining how to incorporate the Framework into the work they do in their various roles. We have partnered with Dr. Detra Price-Dennis, who will be engaging the Chair Council in professional learning around defining culturally responsive practices, connecting the Culturally Responsive Sustaining Education Framework to anti-racist teaching and curriculum development, exploring instructional strategies that support culturally responsive practices, redesigning lessons and generating a list of resources to support content specific lessons about racism, equity, and social justice.

K-12 Mathematics Committee

The work of our K-12 Mathematics Committee continues to be ongoing. The focus of our December session was to engage in a collaborative inquiry, grounded in leadership, teaching, and learning artifacts, within small break-out groups. The session was designed to deepen understanding of the Standards for Mathematical Practice, examine how they are currently brought to life, and consider opportunities to enhance student learning through shifts in practice. Focus questions to guide annotation and discussion included the following:

Teachers: ***What teacher lessons and/or student work samples can we gather that illustrate teaching and learning of the various Standards for Mathematical practice? How and where are they brought to life?*** **(Lessons, activities, student work samples, conference notes)**

Administrators: ***What anecdotal experiences and observations can we gather that illustrate teaching and learning of the various Standards for Mathematical practice? How and where are they brought to life?*** **(Reflection paragraphs, fully redacted, non-identifiable observations)**

Both: ***What opportunities might there be to enhance student learning around the Standards for Mathematical Practice in the learning activity?***

Civics Unplugged

Thanks to a recommendation from Doug Sundheim, Board of Education Trustee, we have been working with Civics Unplugged around a potential fellowship opportunity for high school students. The mission of this organization is to "empower the leaders of Generation Z to build the future of American Democracy." Accepted fellows will participate in a five month civic leadership program that is focused on providing resources, training and a community. Fellowship applications will be accepted through December and can be accessed through the link above.

Curriculum Hour

We have been hosting monthly Curriculum Hours, a voluntary collegial professional learning forum for faculty members. Our most recent session centered around assessment, and was attended by administrators, teachers from across the three buildings, and a teaching assistant. Themes of the discussion included iterative grading, involving students in the design of assessments, reducing fear of failure, and the design of authentic, interesting tasks. Our future sessions over the course of the school year will focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Google Classroom Signature Practices

Our intention is to ensure that students and families are regularly aware of what is being taught. In service to this goal, and to support organization over the course of the week, teachers of students in grades K-8 have created weekly agendas listing assignments with embedded links. These agendas can be found within students' Google Classrooms under "Materials" in the "Classwork" section.

Use of Digital and Print Resources

While the pandemic has provided constraints related to curriculum, instruction, assessment, and the learning environment, we have maintained a strong focus on making developmentally appropriate choices and differentiating for the needs of our learners. Click here to read about how physical materials are being used.

WE CONTINUE TO REMAIN INTERESTED IN YOUR FEEDBACK IN SUPPORT OF OUR COMMITMENT TO CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT. PLEASE DO NOT HESITATE TO REACH OUT TO SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS AS WE NAVIGATE THE PANDEMIC TOGETHER.

BEST REGARDS,

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