



**Hastings-on-Hudson  
Regular Board of Education Meeting  
Wednesday, October 11, 2023**

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**Members present**

Silvia Robles  
Alexander Dal Piaz  
Damaris-Lois Lang (arrived at 6:10 p.m.)  
Doreen Bucher  
Maureen Lennon-Santana  
Jodie Meyer  
Theresa McCaffrey

**1. OPENING OF MEETING**

A. [Call to Order](#)

Meeting called to order at 6:03 PM by Alex Dal Piaz

B. [World Language International Trip Proposal](#)

1. Hastings High School - France Trip

- Stephanie Chalmers presented her proposal for a High School France trip, expressing her excitement about offering the opportunity to advanced French students for immersive language experiences. Safety concerns were raised regarding world events, but the policy is designed to handle such situations. The timing of the trip won't affect the juniors since it will take place after school ends, and fundraising options were mentioned. Board members expressed support and appreciation for the initiative.

**2. STUDENT REPORT**

A. [Student Report](#)

- Kai mentioned a Halloween Fun Run for the Elementary and Middle Schools, a SEPTA family carnival at Hillside on the 14th, a special guest assembly with Minnijean Brown-Tricky, and updates on the high school play "One Man Two Guvnors" and a recent pep rally. Homecoming game postponed to the 21st due to rain.
- Elianna shared an update on PL retreats, particularly the senior PLs' three-day trip to the Taconic Outdoor Education Center, and the successful PL retreat with freshmen. Upcoming sports games were also mentioned, including football, girls' varsity field hockey, and boys' varsity soccer.

[Click here to view the full Student Report](#)

**3. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

A. Motion to move into Executive Session to discuss personnel matters related to the employment history of a particular person.

Motion to move into Executive Session to discuss personnel matters related to the employment history of a particular person.

Motion by Silvia Robles, second by Jodie Meyer.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: Silvia Robles, Alexander Dal Piaz, Damaris-Lois Lang, Doreen Bucher, Maureen Lennon-Santana, Jodie Meyer, Theresa McCaffrey

## 4. REPORT FROM SUPERINTENDENT

### A. [Update & District Highlights](#)

- Dr. McKersie highlighted the impact of the Israeli-Hamas conflict on the local community and the need to address security concerns and social media threats. He also mentioned monitoring lunch and recess at the middle school and provided updates on the advisory pilot program. Finally, he mentioned the posting for the high school principal search.

[Click here to view Superintendent Report](#)

## 5. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

### A. [Report from Assistant Superintendent, Curriculum and Instruction](#)

- Melissa Szymanski addressed the community's questions regarding the link to the recent Brown versus the Board of Education Learning section. She pointed out that the link is included in her administrative report (below) and can also be found on the district website under the Announcements section.

#### **POHL: Restorative Practices**

Kamillah Dawkins, Jenice Mateo-Toledo and I have been working together around the progression of our POHL Restorative Practices professional learning. We set key learning objectives, planned for strategic implementation, and discussed resources that will be incorporated into the work. Faculty training will occur in all three buildings, starting with pioneer educators who will help to move restorative practices forward.

#### **Special Education Advisory Committee: Next Steps**

Laura Sullivan, Tesfa Stewart, and I met to review the implementation plans and timelines for all autumn goals established by the Special Education Advisory Committee last year. Professional learning designed to strengthen use of data to support students has been taking place with a strong cohort of teachers from across the three buildings. Anonymous feedback has been positive. Laura, Tesfa, and MariAngela Sanchez will be bringing the autumn goals back to the committee to design discrete next steps for each.

#### **Brown v. Board of Education Learning Session**

On September 26th, we were joined by Nick Murray, Division Manager of the Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Park, who facilitated a community learning session about the landmark case and the role Drs. Mamie and Kenneth Clark played. The recorded session is posted to our website under District Announcements, and may also be accessed [here](#).

#### **Curriculum Review Cycle: SS Inquiry**

Amy Cazes and I met to plan for the elementary component of the upcoming social studies inquiry. Our intention is to ensure a coherent inquiry process across the district while also differentiating for the needs of each of the three buildings.

#### **APPR**

As previously noted, the New York State Education Department is requiring districts to report principals' and teachers' evaluation scores this year. All teacher and principal scores have now been submitted to the State.

#### **Substantial Equivalency**

The New York State Education Department is requiring public school districts to ensure that schools operating within their geographic boundaries are offering a substantially equivalent program. Specifically, the regulation requires the following:

*The regulation requires that "by September 1, 2023 (each September 1 thereafter): LSA will report (1) all the nonpublic schools that serve compulsory age children (from age 6 to 16 in most jurisdictions, age 17 in others) within their geographical boundaries and (2) the date of the last substantial equivalency determination made for each nonpublic school to the Department via the NYSED Business Portal or another electronic portal as determined by the Department. Such report must include all nonpublic schools within the LSA geographic boundaries, even nonpublic schools without basic educational data system (BEDS) codes."*

I have been working with the Hudson Lab School to determine the State-approved pathway they plan to follow. At this time, they have chosen to seek accreditation through the New York State Association of Independent Schools (NYSAIS) and have assembled their application materials. We have reported their substantial equivalency pathway choice to the State, as required.

### B. [Report from Business Official](#)

#### State Aid

- Last week, I attended the fall State Aid workshop that is given each year to help Districts in the planning of their upcoming budget. Currently, the State has fulfilled its obligations to Districts phasing in the full Foundation Aid formula. Since the inception of the foundation aid formula, originally created in 2007 came about from a lawsuit filed by NYC schools in which the court ruling required the state to provide

every student with a “sound and basic education.” As a result, schools under the new foundation aid formula would receive billions in aid based on student and school district needs. Unfortunately not until 2021 did the funding under this formula start being honored. Hastings would have received about \$800k more each year since 2007, had the formula been fully funded. Currently, With the significant increase of federal aid the Stat received, they were able to fund Districts at the required amount. There were 433 Districts that have now had their full phase of Foundation Aid. The question on everyone’s mind is how will the State with the end of federal-based aid continue to pay Districts. At the workshop, the State Aid specialist believed that there would likely be no increase in aid but we should be held harmless and receive the same level of foundation aid as we did this year.

- Electric Buses were also a topic at the workshop. Beginning in the 24-25 school year, districts will be required to annually submit a progress report on the implementation of zero-emission school buses including, the number of zero-based buses currently contracted and the proposition of buses that are zero-based emission. Most of my colleagues believe the mandate to have full zero-based emission buses will be extended for both financial and practical reasons. It is highly unlikely that schools and bus contractors will have the infrastructure or the buses in place to make the mandated timeline.

## 6. PRESENTATIONS

### A. [Digital Learning & Technology Update](#)

- Melissa Szymanski, Ed.D., Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction presented an update on recent efforts related to technology integration and alignment with the state’s digital fluency standards. The presentation included discussions on AI usage, screen time considerations, and device use in the classroom.

[Click here to view the Digital Learning & Technology Update slide presentation](#)

[Click here to view the video presentation and discussion](#)

## 7. PUBLIC COMMENT

### A. Public Comment

- No public comment

## 8. BUSINESS

### A. [Business Items](#)

1. Lou Del Bianco, Live Show: Around the World on 12/22/2023, invoice.
2. Restorative Practices Professional Development, book proposal.
3. Panorama Education, roster integration with eSD, invoice.
4. Westchester Jewish Community Services - Center Lane, Professional Development at Hillside, quote.
5. EZ Designs, LLC - Eric Zoback, Labor to build ladders, invoice.
6. Warrants.
7. Gillian Husovsky, Consultant Proposal for Production Manager Theatre Program, Hastings High School and Farragut Middle School for the 2023-24 school year.
8. Budget Transfer.

RESOLVED, that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education approve the business items.

Motion by Damaris-Lois Lang, second by Theresa McCaffrey.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: Silvia Robles, Alexander Dal Piaz, Damaris-Lois Lang, Doreen Bucher, Jodie Meyer, Theresa McCaffrey

Not Present at Vote: Maureen Lennon-Santana

### B. [Placement and/or Services for CSE and CPSE](#)

RESOLVED, that upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools and the Committee on Special Education, the Board accepts the classifications and arrangements for the placement and/or services for the 2023-2024 school year:

CSE: 11196, 10539, 10968, 9022, 12046, 8054, 12587, 10572, 10369, 10534

RESOLVED, that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Committee on Special Education and the Committee on Preschool Special Education, the Board of Education accepts the classifications and arrangements for the placement and/or services.

Motion by Jodie Meyer, second by Damaris-Lois Lang.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: Silvia Robles, Alexander Dal Piaz, Damaris-Lois Lang, Doreen Bucher, Jodie Meyer, Theresa McCaffrey

Not Present at Vote: Maureen Lennon-Santana

## **9. PERSONNEL (CONSENT AGENDA)**

### A. [Approve Consent Agenda](#)

Resolution: RESOLVED, to approve agenda items 9B and 9C as contained on the Consent Agenda for this meeting.

RESOLVED, to approve agenda items 9B and 9C as contained on the Consent Agenda for this meeting.

Motion by Silvia Robles, second by Damaris-Lois Lang.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: Silvia Robles, Alexander Dal Piaz, Damaris-Lois Lang, Doreen Bucher, Jodie Meyer, Theresa McCaffrey

Not Present at Vote: Maureen Lennon-Santana

### B. Appointments

1. Erika Dionisio, appoint to Per Diem substitute teacher district-wide effective upon successful completion of NYSED fingerprint clearance.
2. Cayci Hill, appoint to Per Diem substitute teacher district-wide effective October 12, 2023 for the 2023-2024 school year.
3. Laura Kramer, appoint to Per Diem substitute teacher district-wide effective October 5, 2023 for the 2023-2024 school year.
4. Schedule B appointment requests as per attached spreadsheet. ([Enc](#))
5. Ramysh Bangali, appoint to position of Teacher Aide, Column IA, Step 6, 6 hours/day, effective October 10, 2023.
6. Taiyo Kitazato, appoint to position of part-time School Monitor, effective October 16, 2023.

Resolution: RESOLVED, that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education approve the appointments.

RESOLVED, to approve agenda items 9B and 9C as contained on the Consent Agenda for this meeting.

Motion by Silvia Robles, second by Damaris-Lois Lang.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: Silvia Robles, Alexander Dal Piaz, Damaris-Lois Lang, Doreen Bucher, Jodie Meyer, Theresa McCaffrey

Not Present at Vote: Maureen Lennon-Santana

### C. Amendments

1. Joseph Lopez, Teacher Aide, amend appointment to Jr. Network Specialist, \$47,000, effective October 12, 2023.
2. Amy Abrusci, School Monitor, amend appointment to Teacher Aide, 5 hours per day, Column IA, Step 2, effective September 7, 2023.
3. Lisa Duquette, Elementary K-6 teacher at Farragut Middle School has amended the dates of her leave of absence as follows: FMLA with pay September 11, 2023-October 27, 2023. She will return to work on October 30, 2023.

Resolution: RESOLVED, that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education approve the amendments.

RESOLVED, to approve agenda items 9B and 9C as contained on the Consent Agenda for this meeting.

Motion by Silvia Robles, second by Damaris-Lois Lang.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: Silvia Robles, Alexander Dal Piaz, Damaris-Lois Lang, Doreen Bucher, Jodie Meyer, Theresa McCaffrey

Not Present at Vote: Maureen Lennon-Santana

## **10. MINUTES**

### A. [Approval of Minutes](#)

1. Approval of Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of September 27, 2023.

RESOLVED that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education accepts the Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of September 27, 2023.

Motion by Jodie Meyer, second by Damaris-Lois Lang.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: Silvia Robles, Alexander Dal Piaz, Damaris-Lois Lang, Doreen Bucher, Jodie Meyer, Theresa McCaffrey

Not Present at Vote: Maureen Lennon-Santana

## **11. NEW BUSINESS**

### A. [Resolution to adopt the 2023-2024 District Code of Conduct](#)

1. Policy #5300 District Code of Conduct - revised.

- Dr. Lang had questions and concerns about the code of conduct, particularly regarding its review by the policy committee. Ultimately the Board decided to move forward with the code of conduct with the understanding that it would be reviewed at the next policy committee meeting to address any grammatical errors or other issues.

RESOLVED, that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board adopt the revised 2023-2024 District Code of Conduct.

Motion by Silvia Robles, second by Damaris-Lois Lang.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: Silvia Robles, Alexander Dal Piaz, Damaris-Lois Lang, Doreen Bucher, Maureen Lennon-Santana, Jodie Meyer, Theresa McCaffrey

## **12. SECOND PUBLIC COMMENT**

### A. Second Public Comment

- No public comment

## **13. AGENDA REVIEW**

### A. [Agenda Review](#)

Next Meeting 10/24:

- Senior Tax Exemption
- Audit Report

## **14. BOARD OF EDUCATION COMMENTS**

### A. [Comments](#)

- Theresa McCaffrey, Jodie Meyer, Doreen Bucher, Dr. Lang all made comments regarding the recent crisis in Israel and Palestine.
- Jodie Meyer also emphasized that the discussion about the bond and facilities in the last meeting was just the beginning of an exploration process. No decisions have been made yet, and there will be many steps to follow. She assured the community that their questions and concerns will be respected and addressed as they progress.

## **15. ADJOURNMENT**

### A. [Adjournment](#)

Motion to adjourn the meeting 10:06 p.m.

Motion by Silvia Robles, second by Maureen Lennon-Santana.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: Silvia Robles, Alexander Dal Piaz, Damaris-Lois Lang, Doreen Bucher, Maureen Lennon-Santana, Jodie Meyer, Theresa McCaffrey

*Melissa DeLaBarrera*

**Submitted by:  
Melissa DeLaBarrera  
District Clerk**