



Hastings-on-Hudson Public Schools

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Mid-Year Report on the State of the HOH Public Schools 2022-23 School Year

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INTRODUCTION

For the second year in a row, the Leadership Team is providing a mid-year and end-of-year report on our collective work to advance the intellectual and social-emotional growth of our students, grades K-12. This document is the mid-year report; the closing report for 2022-23 is scheduled for presentation at the July 11, 2023 BOE meeting.

As last year, the reports are qualitative, providing a listing of goals and reflections from the administrators in each school and major department. We recognize that there is a subjective quality to the reports. Nevertheless, we find good value for understanding and improving our work with students to periodically reflect on areas of accomplishment and growth. What is presented herein becomes the basis of discussion in Leadership Team meetings as we move through the remainder of the year—helping to promote coordination, cohesion and even systemic thinking and action.

Emerging Portrait of a Hastings Learner – A Strategic Framework for Action

By the close of the 2022-23 school year, we will have developed a widely endorsed *Portrait of a Hastings Learner*, which can be understood as follows:

Great learning organizations are forward leaning. They anticipate the actions needed to meet current and future demands and they are aspirational in their planning. The success of a great school district, consistently over decades, is based on the constant building of capacity; the accurate assessment of “where we’ve been, where we are, and where we are going;”

and the coherence with which goals are pursued and achieved.

Hastings-on-Hudson has a solid foundation on which to build. It is essential for the district to develop a well-coordinated framework for the next level of work.

The Portrait of a Hastings Learner will serve as the cornerstone for all aspects of the district's future K-12 work: curriculum & instruction, co-curricular; professional development; fiscal planning; classroom design; recruitment and hiring; and evaluation and tenure processes. (Judith Wilson, April 12, 2022)

We are fortunate to have [Judith Wilson](#), a highly regarded emeritus superintendent, including nine years leading the Princeton, NJ public schools, as our external partner for creating the *Portrait of a Hastings Learner*. Ms. Wilson is facilitating an efficient, inclusive process to develop the *Portrait*, drawing on the expertise of Hastings' teachers, staff, administrators, students, families, community members and BOE Trustees.

The *Portrait* is featured in the reflections from Dr. Melissa Szymanski, who is our lead facilitator for this pivotal process of developing strategic priorities and 18-month action plans. We expect that future mid-year and end-of-year reporting (and updates in between) will be fully guided by the *Portrait* priorities and action plans.

Mid-Year Report Structure

This report is organized from the school upwards, with individual sections for each school followed by sections from district-wide departments (SPED, PE & Athletics and Curriculum & Instruction). The Counseling Department has woven its reflections into those for the schools. Each section opens with a listing of goals the Leadership Team shared in a two-day opening retreat in August 2022. Administrators then provide reflections on areas of accomplishment and growth at this mid-point in the school year.

Business operations and facilities, while essential to effective schools and schooling (teaching and learning), are not a part of this mid-year report. During the upcoming Budget review process, which will be the focus of the BOE and administration the next two months, business operations and facilities will receive extensive attention.

MID-YEAR REFLECTIONS

Hillside Elementary School (HES) – Amy Cazes & Michael LaRocco

Goals shared in August 2022

1. By the end of the 2022-2023 school year, we will build the capacity of our ELA Committee through learning walks and lesson study so that they can lead these opportunities in the future.
2. By the end of the 2022-2023 school year, we will make a recommendation for Math instruction based on an inquiry with our Math Committee.
3. By the end of the 2022-2023 school year, we will continue our focused efforts in diversity, equity, and inclusion to enhance understanding of our students, staff, and community.
4. By the end of the 2022-2023 school year, we will create a Family Unity Night program to include 3 or more events for our Hillside community.
5. By the end of the 2022-2023 school year, we will empower Lunch/Recess monitors as PBIS Committee members by creating and implementing a Student Incentive Program.

Areas of Accomplishments

ELA Instruction- Word and Language Study and Writing

Our literacy work continues at Hillside. Most recently, teachers have been delving into word and language study to further enhance literacy instruction. Teachers are integrating language study into their curricular units through shared reading, shared writing, writer's workshop and small group work. In addition, they are using student assessment data to drive their word study instruction, differentiating based on students' stage of development. Teachers are also using writing progressions and language study maps to offer targeted feedback to students, meeting students where they are and providing them with the next step for learning in the writing process. With this differentiated approach to literacy, all students have the opportunity to learn, grow, and thrive.

Math Committee Preparation for Program Recommendation

Hillside's Math Committee has been meeting to continue our Phase I inquiry work. After in-depth exploration of best practices in mathematics instruction and standards review, our team has been exploring resources that could enhance our Hillside experience. Most recently, we visited two school districts to see two different programs in action and speak with the teachers and administrators for feedback. We are on track for making a recommendation this spring.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Efforts

Gender – Gender diversity has been a priority at Hillside for many years. In October, our Gender Team led a Professional Learning session for teachers and staff. Our team then presented *Dimensions of Gender* to the Hastings community through a webinar on 1/31, in collaboration with Center Lane. As a part of our community outreach, our Gender Team will be presenting at the PrideWorks Conference in March. In addition, our Gender Team is currently revising our curriculum to scaffold through the K-4 grades with the support of Center Lane. We will host an in-person Parent Gender Workshop on 3/30 where we can discuss the grade-level lessons and any questions that families have before the roll out in the spring.

Race – Hillside continues to be committed to ensuring an equitable experience for all students. Dr. Jenice Mateo-Toledo has been focused on leading CR-SE workshops with Grades 3 and 4, embedding diverse perspectives into our curriculum. In addition, she has led the 4th Grade Sparks Curriculum development and training, and the monthly lessons have been a success. In addition, Jada Dickens is leading our Mural creation project which will be completed this spring.

Learning Differences – We held our 7th Annual Intervention Cafe in December with follow up presentations about MTSS, CSE, 504, and OT interventions. In addition, we led staff through an important professional learning experience to better understand English Language Learners on 1/18/23.

Class Placement – We have renewed our contract with Class Creator to help us in ensuring that we create equitable classes for the 2023-2024 school year. This software supports student placement by eliminating bias and giving each child an equal opportunity.

Social-Emotional Learning

We have continued our school assemblies, providing our **Safety Patrol** members with leadership opportunities. Our February assembly was focused on Kindness and kicked off our Kindness Week at Hillside. Students participated in the Kindness Rings Challenge, where they were encouraged to look for and acknowledge kind acts around Hillside.

We contracted with a BCBA, Jasha Woodall, to support our students during lunch/recess time. Ms. Woodall attends lunch/recess daily to intervene as necessary and work with students to enhance their **social skills and successes**. In addition, Ms. Woodall models support for our monitors.

School Culture

National Blue Ribbon Award and Community Celebration – Our excitement around winning the National Blue Ribbon Award was infectious. Our National Blue Ribbon Committee planned an amazing week of celebration including a kick off event with surprises for our entire community, student events including a favorite- Walk the Blue Carpet- where 5th graders were invited to come back to Hillside to celebrate, teacher recognition, and even a visit from a Blue Man from Blue Man Group. Our Hillside community posed for a picture in the shape of a blue ribbon which will be displayed in our school for years to come reminding us of the excellence for which Hillside stands.

Veterans Day Celebration – We celebrated Veteran’s Day with our annual assembly where we honor our community veterans. This special event teaches our children about the sacrifices that veterans made for our country.

Kindergarten We Love To Read Parade - Hillside came together on Valentine’s Day to celebrate our youngest readers. Each kindergarten student, adorned with a “We Are Readers” crown, marched proudly through the halls of the school holding a book that they could now read. Students and teachers in all grade levels lined the hallways and cheered for our kindergarten readers. It was a very special moment of community celebration around the love of reading.

Areas of Growth

Building Capacity of ELA Committee

It was our goal to build the capacity of our ELA Committee through Learning Walks and lesson study. However, this year, other pressing literacy needs were recognized. Consequently, we put the ELA Committee work on hold. We are requesting more time next year to support lead literacy learners.

Family Unity Nights (FUN)

We created a First Grade FUN experience on February 1st with Telescope Night and our Family Dance Night is scheduled for 5/10. We look forward to a new Hillside Evening of the Arts on 6/6. We will continue to look for future opportunities to involve our families in their child’s educational experience.

PBIS Committee

Now that our Hillside food service has begun, this has become an area of focus to implement positive behavior systems in the Multi-Purpose Room during lunch periods. As a part of our PBIS Committee, our Lunch/Recess monitors worked collaboratively to implement new rules for the Multi-Purpose Room that ensure a comfortable dining experience for all.

Farragut Middle School (FMS) – Jennifer Spirelli & Kamillah Dawkins

Goals Shared in August 2022

1. Establish and implement an onboarding and year-long support plan for Kamillah Dawkins, the new Assistant Principal. This should be developed in coordination with the Assistant Superintendent and fellow principals to ensure consistency district-wide.
 - a. Weekly meetings to check in and support
 - b. In collaboration with Assistant Principal, create AP yearly goals.
2. Work to enhance capacity building and delegation. Ensure that faculty members understand what to do, how to do it, and why it is essential.
3. Ensure that student discipline is consistent and of high quality. Work to enhance Restorative Practices and training throughout the school.
4. Work to streamline and improve classroom MTSS progress monitoring and Tier I interventions.
 - a. Utilize protocols and STAR data for MTSS team meetings and building meetings.
 - b. Utilize protocols and STAR data for MTSS enrollment and unenrollment from Skills classes.
5. Enhance school culture and expand PBIS and incentives to grades 7/8.

Areas of Accomplishments

Professional Learning for all staff is relevant, long term and impactful to student learning.

Gender Diversity is an area that FMS staff have asked for learning in. Our first professional learning occurred this year from Gender Spectrum. FMS and HHS staff explored and learned about differences and misconceptions between gender, sex, assigned birth, sexual orientation, and gender identity. We will continue developing our understanding and collaborating with Gender Spectrum next year.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion continue to be a priority at FMS. Affinity Groups, Courageous Conversations, and Racial Equity Day are the foundations of our equity work with Dr. Mateo Toledo. Dr. Diane Goodman and Dr. Ann Marie Garran are visiting FMS on February 8 for work on racial identity and development and the impact on the student experience. We will review models related to identity development for BIPOC and white youth and explore how these theories can help teachers understand different students' perspectives, behavior, and experiences.

Restorative Practices continues as a priority with a third year of professional learning. We have an in-house training in February from facilitator Duke Fisher. Staff will learn about implementing restorative practices, improving the school climate, strengthening our students' social-emotional skills, and helping develop empathy and perspective. Instead of using punishments and rewards to influence how students behave, restorative approaches address the underlying reasons for hurtful behavior and nurture the desire to repair harm by treating others with care and respect.

Health and Safety

The **Above the Influence (ATI) program** is being implemented by our 8th grade peer leaders. The goal of *ATI* is to create a more positive school culture and help all students overcome negative influences, including pressures to vape. The program includes a research study conducted by the University of Rochester with funding from the National Institute of Drug Abuse. FMS students will receive ongoing mentoring by adult advisors as they create prevention messaging activities such as poster campaigns and classroom presentations.

FMS and HHS are currently working with the Hastings Way Coalition to bring back **Family University** as an in-person event on April 26, 2023. This program aims to educate students and families about mental health, social media, substance abuse, and many other important topics to our community and us.

FMS and HHS have evaluated our **safety drills** and partnered with Altaris Group to enhance our **building safety procedures**. Staff and students better understand the purpose of the exercises and how to respond best. Our building safety teams created eight zones in the FMS Complex and are working with the Hastings Police Department to conduct safety drills with these updates.

Social-Emotional Learning

To kick off the school year and **Hispanic/Latine Heritage Month**, Andres Forero, an award-winning drummer widely known for his work on the musical Hamilton, visited

Farragut Middle School to give an original performance in the auditorium. This one-hour show was streamed to HES and HHS and was an authentic way to learn more about Hispanic culture. Thank you, HEF, for your support.

Social-Emotional learning continues in our new **Grade 5 guidance classes**. Students participated in a survey to gauge students' understanding of drama and gossip. These survey results guided our school counselors to create lessons and discussions to better equity students with coping problem-solving strategies. Students made a mini play to demonstrate gossip and rumors, and within their skit, they had to create positive solutions and reflect on how a rumor can hurt others. The next topic for guidance classes is a deep dive into personal values and how they drive student life decisions and choices.

FMS had its second year of **school socials**. These opportunities for middle school students are memorable and valuable. They create a greater sense of community within the school and allow students to develop social skills. All our socials have had a "quiet space" with art and games, a dancing space, and a space for more active games like bean bag toss. Thank you to the PTSA and all the parents/staff that chaperoned; this joyful and beautiful event would not have been possible without you.

Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)

We are in our second year of using **STAR Renaissance** to help identify struggling students. Staff feels more comfortable utilizing the data to address the needs of all learners. Our MTSS team continues to look at the whole child and use STAR as one data point out of many that assist in supporting students to Tier 2 interventions.

Areas of Growth

We are collaborating with the Special Education department to bring professional learning to Farragut Middle School.

Continue to focus on MTSS protocols and procedures to identify struggling students using our STAR data and Tier 1 interventions.

We are working to improve our FMS Schedule to align with middle school best practices and ensure equity and responsiveness to all. We will work to find an equitable schedule that meets the needs of all students and can include an Advisory Program and align with HHS for shared staff.

Hastings High School (HHS) – Lou Adipietro & Melissa Hardesty

Goals shared in August 2022

1. To be a leader in the implementation of culturally responsive pedagogies with a specific focus on being a leader and supporter of our upcoming work with Facing History & Ourselves.
2. Given how incredibly difficult the past two years have been due, in part, to the pandemic and a turnover in faculty in specific departments, we will develop a plan to assist our new staff in assimilating as well as engage veteran staff in being good colleagues.
3. Focus on the social-emotional and mental health of high school students and staff by using the data from the three Panorama Survey administrations to develop an introductory advisory program. This goal also comes from HHS's continued work with Challenge Success.
4. Continue to work collaboratively with our Special Education administrators to further strengthen our high school program to ensure equal access to the high school curriculum. In addition, there will be a focus on the utilization of the new assistant director, MariAngela Sanchez, to maximize the benefit for students and staff.
5. Continue to support the entire Leadership Team with inherent knowledge of the district and the skills that have been developed over 30 plus years in the field.

Areas of Accomplishments

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Efforts

In conjunction with Dr. Szymanski and Dr. Mateo Toledo, Hastings High School English, Social Studies and Special Education teachers are currently engaged in professional learning through ***Facing History & Ourselves*** with a focus on Teaching for Equity and Justice. Faculty will have the equivalent of two full days of professional learning that will directly impact their lesson planning and inform their teaching to be in line with the culturally responsive framework.

With the assistance of Dr. Mateo-Toledo, the faculties of both FMS and HHS were participants in an introductory professional learning session on ***gender***. This presentation reviewed current language about identities within the LGBTQ+ community, some common misconceptions, noted people representing different parts of

the community, the differences between and among gender, sex assigned at birth, sexual orientation, and gender identity and the ways they are and are not related. We conclude with some tips on preferred language, including the importance of pronouns.

Health and Safety

HHS and FMS are currently in the process of planning the reintroduction of our **Family University program** in partnership with the Hastings Way Coalition. Because teenagers in Hastings and beyond have struggled with mental health and substance abuse, the Hastings School District has relaunched the Family University program. The program aims to educate parents and students about substance abuse and mental health, and, in the long-term, to ameliorate the rates of teenage substance abuse in Hastings. Family University is scheduled for the evening of April 26, 2023.

The district has worked collaboratively with the Altaris Group, to evaluate and offer support for required **safety drills**. In particular, we have spent a considerable amount of professional learning around lockdown procedures. The entire Farragut Complex has been grouped into 8 specific zones and building safety teams are working with both Altaris and the Hastings Police Department on these new procedures.

Social Emotional Learning

As we continue to emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic, the Counseling Department continues to **address individual student needs** on a variety of levels. We continue to support students with managing emotions, coping with feelings and setting goals academically and emotionally. Freshman transition support continues with monthly push-in programs through English and Social Studies classrooms.

Hillside and Hastings High School have teamed up via a grant from the Hastings Education Foundation to offer the **Sweethearts to Heroes Mentoring Program**, which will take place in March. The program centers around educating students on the impact of bullying, learning to build empathy in youth and promoting bystander empowerment through leadership roles.

Restorative Practices - Approximately 10 high school faculty members will participate in a full day professional learning session with Duke Fisher. Implementing restorative practices into our district schools aligns with the emerging *Portrait of a Hastings Learner* by improving the school climate, strengthening the social-emotional skills of our students, and helping to develop empathy and perspective-taking. Instead of using punishments and rewards to influence the way students behave, restorative approaches address the underlying reasons for hurtful behavior and nurture the desire to repair harm by treating others with care and respect.

Areas for Growth

Continue to work with our Special Education Team to identify and deliver programming to possibly allow students to return to Hastings from outside programs. This involves many factors that are at both the micro and macro levels.

Given the recent retirements and possibly others, the high school will need to lean on our veteran faculty in the hiring process with a goal to hire a more diverse staff and continue the academic rigor that our community deserves.

Continue our exploration of restorative practices, especially with our HASP program. In addition, find ways for our Peer Leaders to incorporate and participate in this work. The high school plans on submitting a Hastings Education Foundation grant to support this work.

Special Education – Laura Sullivan, Tesfa Stewart, & MariAngela Sanchez

Goals shared in August 2022

1. Design and share recommendations from the Special Education Advisory Committee to improve our special education program continually (supports, services, data collection, and instruction.)
2. Evolve the capacities of the Director of Special Education from chairing meetings to the adaptive work of special education leadership, including building the capacity of special education teachers, teaching assistants, and teacher aides and strengthening the continuum of services for students with IEPs.
3. Ensure the induction and retention of our new Assistant Director of Special Education, MariAngela Sanchez, by proactively outlining and providing necessary training, ensuring a clear understanding of responsibilities, expectations, and goals, and ensuring regular cycles of collaborative planning.
 - CPSE/CSE Chairperson Training
 - CPI Training
 - CPSE Chairperson County Meetings
 - PPS Directors Meetings
 - Tri-State Study Group
 - CPSE Site Visits

- Professional Learning Committee
- Lead Evaluator Training

Areas of Accomplishments

The Special Education Advisory Committee

The Special Education Advisory Committee, a group consisting of administrators, general education teachers, special education teachers, teacher aides, related service providers, and parents, began convening in July 2022. The group has been using an improvement science process to guide their work. In order to identify a problem of practice, members of the committee engaged in an analysis of qualitative and quantitative data. Data points included the following:

- Continuum of service information
- Disaggregated state test data
- Local assessment data
- Panorama survey data
- Prior outside reviews
- Interviews with colleagues
- Site visits

The committee identified an aim, to increase self-efficacy for students with disabilities, based on the data analysis process and themes in the peer-reviewed literature that emerged. The group also created a theory of action:

If we increase students' self-efficacy, then we will improve the academic performance of students with disabilities and students will feel supported, comfortable, and confident to pursue whatever path is best suited for their individual success.

Committee members investigated solutions-focused research on strategies for cultivating self-efficacy for students with IEPs, which led to the identification of areas to target district-wide. These areas are (1) data analysis practices, (2) mindset messaging, and (3) differentiated instruction. Participants have been working in groups to develop concrete action steps and timelines for implementation. Additional discussion themes over the course of the past several months have included ways to celebrate and acknowledge student achievement in both traditional and non-traditional ways for students with disabilities, and how to elevate student voice in the learning process. The Hastings continuum of services will continue to be explored.

Administration & Staff Capacity Building

- K-12 District-Wide Department Meetings
 - There have been two K-12 meetings to this date that have focused on the following:
 - Annual review preparation meeting
 - How to document and use testing accommodations appropriately

- CPI Certifications
 - Over 30 staff members this year alone have received initial refresher training in CPI (CPI training equips you with skills, confidence, and an effective framework to safely manage & prevent difficult behavior. From children to teens to adults, Nonviolent Crisis Intervention® training helps de-escalate tense situations with people of all ages.”)

- Professional Learning on Testing Accommodations
 - We have met with individual teams to review the need to have data in order to support testing accommodation recommendations. In addition we are preparing for the CBT NYS tests.

- Professional Learning with Aides and Assistants
 - We held a professional learning session in the fall to support our aides, and assistants in the following topics:
 - How to use data to support students in the classroom
 - CPI nonviolent de-escalation training

- Professional Learning with parents and families
 - How to prepare for the annual review meeting
 - Community conversations per each building to address any global concerns

Pet Therapy

Hudson Valley Paws for a Cause, a local non-profit organization, has recently teamed up with a class at FMS taught by Larry Cerretani. The Animal Assisted Activity Program features a three-year-old chocolate labrador/sharp-ei mix certified therapy dog, Harper (who is a lover of bacon and stuffed animals), and her handler, Jackie. According to the organization’s website, “clinical studies have proven that animals have the power to help people heal. Simply petting, touching, or talking to animals can improve physical health and emotional well-being.” The volunteers and their furry companions visit a variety of settings, including assisted living centers, nursing homes, hospitals, psychiatric centers,

hospice facilities, libraries, and schools. Dogs have been proven to help children learn empathy, kindness, communication skills, public speaking, and even reading fluency.

In Mr. Cerretani's first-period class, students had the chance to read a current events article to Harper, who is certified in the R.E.A.D. (Reading Education Assistance Dog) program. During the read-aloud, Harper listened attentively to a story about the ECHO robot in Antarctica that is helping scientists learn more about emperor penguins! Cerretani's class and the Harper-Jackie team also had the chance to walk around the school and get introduced to different staff members and students in the hallways. The team plans to meet the class every other week and are looking into opportunities to potentially expand the program, if possible.

Areas of Growth

Recommendations from the Special Education Advisory Committee

Although we are still in the process of reviewing all of our services, practices, and programs, we are already uncovering some possible areas of growth district-wide. Although the process has not yet been completed, initial conversations have centered around some, but are not limited to, of the following ideas and thoughts:

- Review of our data usage and how it impacts practices instructionally, as well as at a macro level
- The review of our continuum of services
- Ways to celebrate and acknowledge student achievement in both traditional and non-traditional ways for students with disabilities
- How to augment student voice in their learning

Our next steps will include:

Finalizing action steps related to enhancing data analysis practices and mindset messaging and developing implementation plans and timelines for these action steps.

Health, Physical Education & Athletics – Drew Wendol

Goals shared in August 2022

1. To continue to develop and foster a sense of community through athletics amongst the student-athletes, school district personnel, coaching staff, grounds crew, & community, one that everyone will be proud to be a part of.

2. To continue to work with the Physical Education teachers, Health Education teachers, and the Assistant Superintendent to complete the new Curriculum Review Cycle for Physical Education & Health Education.
3. To continue to develop ways to enhance the Athletic Department's overall rapport with all stakeholders to help enhance the overall program and increase our collective effectiveness as a subset of the Leadership Team.
4. To be an integral part of the ownership for developing a shared vision of learning through the "Portrait of a Hastings Learner" project.

Areas of Accomplishments

Hastings Athletics has been flourishing so far this year. We have been packing the stands and have incredible participation numbers.

Fall Athletic Season Highlights

The **Cross Country Team** medaled on both sides of their league championship - the boys came in 3rd & the girls came in 2nd. Hastings Star Cross Country Student-Athlete, Caitlin Thomas, had an incredible season earning a trip to the Federation Champion Meet, where she took more than a minute off her time from the Class C meet, running 19:31.8, earning her a 26th place finish out of a 277 runner field.

The **Field Hockey** team not only broke into the Lohud top 10 for all of Section 1 (this is out of 43 total teams in class A, B & C). First time in school history! They were the undefeated and 2022 League Champions. Coach Christina Gagliardi was honored as Section 1 Field Hockey Coach of the Year.

Senior **Football** Quarterback, Rob Kennedy, who has received multiple offers to play football at the next level, scored his *50th* career touchdown during a Sectional game. In just three years, Rob amassed over 4,500 passing yards and over 6,000 yards in total leading the team to three Sectional Tournament appearances.

Senior **Boys Soccer** player, Zeke Manly, finished the season ranked seventh on the list of scoring leaders (goals/assists) for all of Section 1 Boys Soccer (out of more than 70 teams in class AA, A, B and C), and was second overall goal scorer in our Class B.

Senior **Volleyballer**, Ellie Shin, served 25 total points in a row. In a game of 25 points, she served every single point required to win.

All of our Fall teams made it to the Sectional Tournament, with individual honors including 27 All-League Honorable mention Honors, 38 All League Honors, four All Section Honorable Mention Honors, four All Section Honors, and two Westchester County Honors.

(For full Fall Roundup see: [2022 Fall Interscholastic Athletics Sectional Schedule/Results & End of Season Wrap-Up](#). & the [2022 Hastings Athletics Varsity Fall Sports Banquet Slideshow](#))

Winter Athletic Season Highlights (as of 2/16/23)

The **Hastings Indoor Track & Field Select Qualifiers** will be the Section 1 State Qualifier Meet on 2/19/23 at the Armory at 9:00am. The Hastings Boys & Girls program did well at the Section 1 Class C Championships. Here are some of the tremendous results:

- Hastings Girls team placed 2nd, defending last year's silver medal.
- Individual Class C Champions, Caitlin Thomas in the 3000m
- Individual Class C Champions, Samantha Guilfoyle in the high jump.
- Oona Spaeth placed 2nd in the 1500m racewalk in 8:32.32, a time that qualifies her for the national championships!
- Emi Franco ran a huge PR in the 55m hurdles (10.39) to place 2nd.
- The 4x800 Girls team (Charlotte Durietz-Bourdain, Anna Thomas, Bliss Johnsen, Caitlin Thomas) placed 3rd.
- The 4x400 Girls team (Sammy Guilfoyle, Lola Norlander, Fiona Pugh, Bliss Johnsen) placed 3rd.
- Charlotte Durietz-Bourdain placed 5th in 600m
- Lola Norlander placed 4th in 55m HH
- Julia Mooney placed 5th in racewalk and 6th in shot put
- Lena Santoni placed 5th in weight throw.
- Owen Pietraszczek placed 6th in the 1600m
- The Boys 4x800 team of Paul Sliker, Gus Renzin, Daniel Caramanica and Owen Pietraszczek placed 4th.

Current new Hastings records:

- In the high jump, sophomore Sammy Guilfoyle tied Kelechi Iheagwara's mark of 4' 8" from 2002.
- The school record in the weight throw was broken not once, but twice this season. First by senior Sorin Kacmarczyk at 30'5", and then again by junior Patrick Lacy at 30'75".
- Caitlin Thomas broke a school record in the 1500m
- Caitlin Thomas earned a bronze medal in the 3000 at the Hall of Fame Invitational.

The AHEDI (Ardsley, Hastings, Edgemont, Dobbs Ferry, & Irvington) Boys Swim Team had a great regular season and a terrific sectional showing. Hastings ConEd Award Winner, Michael Scholz, has previously qualified for states in the 100

Freestyle, 200 Free Relay and 400 Free Relay during the regular season of competition. During the Sectional Championship Meets, Michael came in 4th in the 100 free and 3rd place in the 50 Free, qualifying him for states in a fourth event, and both of his relay teams (200 free and 400 free) came in 1st winning the gold. The AHEDI team set their own personal best in the 200 free and currently hold the 5th best time in all of NY State this season. Their 400 Free Relay time of 3.09.81 just happened to be the meet record for Section 1.

The Mount Pleasant Ice Cats Ice Hockey Team, composed of Hastings, Briarcliff, Valhalla, Pleasantville, & Westlake, had an amazing season so far with a record of 11-7-2 catalyzed by the strength of six Hastings skaters on both offense and defense. They won White Plains Guy Mathews HS Tournament with Hastings senior Joshua Chang scoring the winning goal and was named Player of the Game. They earned the #6 seed and will take on Cortlandt (#11 seed) in the 1st round of the 2022-2023 Section 1 Ice Hockey Division I Tournament on Friday, February 17, 2023 at 7:20pm at Westchester Skating Academy.

Boys Varsity Basketball finished the season last week with a perfect record in their league at 14-0. They are now League Champs. Hastings earned the #2 seed and will take on the winner of the Putnam Valley (#15 seed) vs. North Salem (#18 seed) 2/16 out bracket game in the 1st Round of the 2022-2023 Section 1 Boys Basketball Class B Tournament on Saturday, February 18, 2023 at 2:00pm in Hastings High School Cochran Gymnasium. Earlier in the season, they won the Briarcliff Tournament with a buzzer beater by senior Casey Maiorino. Keith Capuano, after two monster games, received MVP honors and Robert Kennedy was also named to the All-Tournament Team. Keith Capuno was named LoHud Player of the Week at the end of January.

Girls Varsity Basketball earned the #13 seed and will take on YMA (#4 seed) in the 1st round of the 2022-2023 Section 1 Girls Basketball Class B Tournament on February 18, 2023 at 11am at YMA. On Tuesday, Katie Drozd won Lohud Player of the Week honors for her dominant 63 points in two games the week before.

Wrestling constantly improved throughout the season and has one the largest rosters in our school's wrestling history with 20+ student-athletes. Hastings placed 12th in the Section 1 D II Wrestling Championships on Saturday, February 11, 2023. Michael Espinoza took 3rd place in the 215 weight class.

(For the most-up-to-date Winter Sectional Schedule and Updates see: [2022-2023 Winter Athletics: Section 1 Interscholastic Athletics Sectional Schedule & Results](#) and for the full Winter Roundup see: [2022-2023 Hastings Athletics Winter Season Highlights](#).)

Pushing School Spirit

The Athletic Department has been branding the indoor and outdoor spaces and will be unveiling our Ali Marpet Display and new trophy case down by Cochran Gym on Saturday, March 4th in the Cochran Gymnasium at 1:30pm. All are welcome to attend!

The Athletic Office works hand and hand with the **Hastings Booster Club**. They are constantly striving to enhance the school and community spirit. In the fall we did Hastings Under the Lights, Senior Stencils, and The Rock. We also sponsored a successful run during February of Friday Night Community Night Basketball Games, where we honored faculty/staff, alumni, former coaches and community agencies.

Areas of Growth

1. Constantly striving to provide more opportunities to enhance Hastings Community Pride.
2. Constantly striving to provide more opportunities to enhance the student participation & student recognition.
3. Continue to enhance the Hastings Athletics indoor & outdoor playing areas and hallway/Locker room areas (Branding & Quality).
4. Continue to hire and train well-qualified transformational coaches.

Curriculum & Instruction – Melissa Szymanski

Goals shared in August 2022

1. Lead the development of the *Portrait of a Hastings Learner*
2. Support continuous improvement through implementation of the Hastings Curriculum Review Cycle
3. Provide guidance and support for the Special Education Advisory Committee

Areas of Accomplishment

Academic Screener: STAR Renaissance

This year we continue to use STAR Renaissance as a diagnostic screener in grades K-8 to support our understanding of students' strengths and areas for growth in reading and mathematics. Please click [here](#) for a mid-year update on K-8 academic screening in the areas of reading and mathematics.

GOAL 1: Portrait of a Hastings Learner

Developing the [Portrait of a Hastings Learner](#) is our top priority, as it will become our districtwide strategic framework. Dr. Szymanski has been pleased to take the lead on this initiative, working in close coordination with Dr. McKersie. A [dedicated webpage](#) has been created, as a source for updates and background information.

This month a "Back to the Future" protocol was shared with members of the [Core Team](#). Core Team members were invited to provide input to inform action steps that will be created by a newly formed Action Step Planning Committee. Using this protocol, members of the Core Team were asked to dream about the three goals the group created, imagining what it would look like in 2027-2028 if Hastings has been wildly successful in its progress towards them. This protocol was also used with the Professional Learning Committee, Department Chairpersons, and Action Step Planning Committee.

The Action Step Planning Committee began convening with Judy Wilson on February 8 to design concrete, 18-month action steps associated with each of the three goals that have already been created through our Portrait process. The Committee will reconvene during March to continue work. The members of the POHL Action Step Planning Committee:

- Melissa Szymanski, Administration, Curriculum & Instruction (Core Team Member)
- Laura Sullivan: Administration, Special Education
- Jenice Mateo-Toledo: DEI/ENL, District (Core Team Member)
- Amy Cazes, Administration, HES
- Mike LaRocco: Administration, HES
- Jada Dickens: Math, HES (Core Team Member)
- Andrea Devarie: Special Education, HES
- MaryKate McCabe: Kindergarten, HES
- Caren Cort: Special Education, HES
- Jennifer Spirelli: Administration, FMS
- Ezra Elliot: Department Chairperson, Art, FMS (Core Team Member)
- Britney Stampfl: Special Education, Coordinator, FMS
- Ken Cotrone: ELA, FMS
- Gina Bellavia: Special Education, FMS (Core Team Member)
- Raquel Reid-McFarlane: TA, FMS (Core Team Member)
- Devita Cruz: SS, FMS
- Meredith Fichman: Science, FMS
- Joan Paradis: SS, Union, FMS (Core Team Member)
- Melissa Hardesty: Administration, HHS
- Melissa Shandroff: Department Chairperson, Science, HHS
- Julie Sullivan: ENL, HHS

We are designing a *Portrait* logo and Infographic. Ezra Elliott, Art Department Chairperson, has been coordinating the logo development with Jackie Saviano and Chris Yerkes, our communication associates through PNW BOCES. We look forward to unveiling the final version by April 2023.

GOAL 2: Curriculum Review Cycle

Computer Science and Digital Fluency

Work related to Computer Science and Digital Fluency has been directly related to Goal 1 of the [Hastings Instructional Technology Plan](#).

A team of technology lead learners met together over time to develop their understanding of the New York State Computer Science and Digital Fluency standards and plan next steps to involve the broader faculty. These sessions were facilitated by Leslie Accardo from the Lower Hudson Regional Information Center.

Early computer science and digital fluency work included a review of the State’s vision for the Computer Science and Digital Fluency Standards, a review of the 5 key concepts and all sub concepts included in the standards and a review of how the standards are organized. The group also unpacked the Digital Literacy standards and Impacts of Computing standards and began making connections to instruction.

Work with this team also included “unpacking” computational thinking K-12 with session learning activities including:

- coming up with an algorithm to solve a dilemma
- investigating subconcepts to the standard
- exploring related vocabulary, creating abstractions through storytelling
- debugging a program
- telling a data story using a simulated data set, and
- engaging in an inventor challenge

Other areas of focus in our computer science and digital fluency work included learning activities related to algorithms and programming, working to understand the developmental arc of the Cybersecurity and Network and Systems Design standards, considering their real world relevance and application, working with a cryptogram, taking a virtual cybersecurity field trip, and exploring technology-related job projections for 2030.

Health

Work around health occurred over the summer. Drew Wendol, Director of Physical Education, Athletics and Health, and Melissa Szymanski, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, met with members of the middle school and high school health and physical education team to begin the Phase I/II inquiry and design processes indicated in the Curriculum Review cycle document. The work occurred over a period of three days and included a review of data, curriculum and standards, research across districts, and identification of measures for success. The group created an articulated scope and sequence for middle and high school health, determined key topics for each grade level, and articulated student learning outcomes for each topic. In addition, a series of performance assessments were created. Collaborative design and peer feedback were integral to the process. An implementation of the changes was planned, with curriculum being implemented in the fall. The process was positive and successful, as evidenced by feedback from anonymous exit tickets and the products that were created.

Mathematics

The Hillside Mathematics Committee has been hard at work. This committee is made up of a team of teachers representative of each grade, special education, and mathematics intervention.

The first session was co-planned and co-facilitated with Cathy Williams, mathematics consultant from YouCubed (Stanford University). Pre-session work involved reading articles focused on mathematics, specifically about the importance of visual mathematics and the associated neurobiology for why it is important for students to learn conceptually. Initial session work included engaging with multiple mathematics learning activities, exploring the connections between conceptual understanding, computational/procedural skills and problem solving, discussing articles, and beginning to develop a shared vision grounded in research and the prior work of the K-12 mathematics committee.

As the work moved forward, this group participated in a video jigsaw, with videos focused on number talks with students in various grade levels. We explored the NY State Next Generation Standards for Mathematical Content (current grade taught, grade before, and grade after), analyzed and engaged with the Standards for Mathematical Practice. We conducted a crosswalk between the practice standards, Hastings mindset indicators and research-based beliefs and values generated from previous committee sessions and the Eureka teacher guidebook, did a data dive (student work samples, local assessment data, and State assessment data), and worked to calibrate their perceptions of instructional and learning practices. We also learned about other mathematics resources used regionally.

World Languages

Thank you to Katie Paz, World Languages Department Chairperson, for her strong instructional leadership in this area. The department's inquiry work began with looking at revisions to the New York State standards with a focus on interpersonal and presentational communication modes. Teachers shared activities and assessments across the checkpoints they teach, identifying what was already being done within these two modes. They watched webinars to deepen their understanding of each mode, explored student work, and engaged in a calibration exercise to align around proficiency expectations.

As the curriculum inquiry work continued, the interpersonal communication mode was introduced. Session activities included discussion around changes/revisions to the new standards, calibration exercises, and reflection. Calibration exercises were grounded in student work; performance assessments involving either speaking or writing. Members of the World Languages faculty took turns walking the group through the assessment, which was followed by conversation about how and why the work was either "Developing," "Meeting Expectations," or "Exceeding Expectations" based on the Quarter 1 Proficiency Target for that level. Common rubrics assisted in the collective assessment process.

The department also focused on the *Interpretive Communication* standard. Session objectives included (a) defining and differentiating skills and communicative modes, (b) identifying reasons for the standards' shift from language skills to communicative modes, (c) interpreting the wording of *interpretive*, (d) considering current implementation practices, and (e) considering potential opportunities for implementation.

Physical Education

The Physical Education Department began their curriculum work in the same way other teams and departments did, by agreeing upon what would work best structurally for engaging in the work. Teachers each shared the unit progressions and student learning outcomes for the classes they teach, which fueled next steps after colleagues had the opportunity to review them. Teachers reviewed the K-12 curriculum scope and sequence and New York State standards, outlined current units of study, and examined student assessments. Elementary, middle, and high school gap analyses were conducted and research on regional practices was explored. The team made recommendations for improvement and created five goals for their next session together: (1) create and populate an "arc" template to enhance programmatic coherence and skill development across the three buildings, (2) create lessons to augment standards alignment, (3) enhance consistency of unit planning, (4) create a visual assessment template, and (5) consider innovative practices.

Culturally Responsive Pedagogies

Our Diversity and Inclusion Coordinator, Dr. Jenice Mateo-Toledo, has been working on several initiatives. Recently, Center Lane hosted a workshop for educators at the HS and MS that focused on identity development and LGBTQ+ youth. We plan to continue working with this organization moving forward. Additionally, teachers in the English, English as a Second Language, History and Special Education department began professional learning with Facing History and Ourselves on 1/27. Facing History's Teaching for Equity and Justice (TEJ) series supports educators and school leaders as they enhance culturally relevant and equitable teaching practices and policies that cultivate student voice, critical consciousness, and civic participation. The TEJ educator journey focuses on the historical roots of educational inequity, and it explores the importance of critical consciousness, mitigating educator bias, and lessening single stories, while establishing a framework to co-construct equitable and just schools. After this experience, educators will be even better equipped to discuss the necessary shifts needed to teach for equity and justice in schools, so that all students can thrive.

Hastings High School hosted a Racial Equity Day in early February. Two representatives from the Innocence Project joined high school students to discuss the intersectionality of the criminal justice system and racial equity.

The 4th grade team at Hillside has launched the Sparks curriculum, teaching the first two lessons that focus on identity and race. Additionally, third grade teachers have been working together to update the social studies curriculum, specifically focusing on having students consider how their perspectives might be different if they lived in a different part of the world.

English Language Arts (ELA)

Please see the Hillside section for more detail about this goal.

GOAL 3: Special Education Advisory Committee

Please see the Special Education section for more detail about this goal.

Areas of Growth

GOAL 1: Portrait of a Hastings Learner

Our *Portrait of a Hastings Learner* Action Step Planning Committee work has begun. Continued efforts will be required to finalize concrete, 18-month action steps and

engage various stakeholders to review and react to what is created. By the close of the 2022-23 school year, we will have developed a widely endorsed *Portrait of a Hastings Learner*.

GOAL 2: Curriculum Review Cycle

Work in all content areas will continue over the course of the school year. Our continued, multi-year efforts to align our science curriculum to the new P-12 Science Learning Standards will begin in the spring with Liz Mirra, science consultant. We are in the process of determining whether middle school ELA Phase I inquiry will also begin in the spring or be postponed to the 2023-24 school year.

GOAL 3: Special Education Advisory Committee

Please see the Special Education section for more detail about areas of growth related to this goal.

CONCLUSION

A British Premier League commentator, in critiquing a match, once noted, “much industry, yet little product.” Turning this phrase on its head, I am pleased to conclude that this report documents “much product from extensive industry” in the Hastings schools since August 2022. Close readers of the report do not need me to repeat what is presented above. Instead, let me simply list the headlines for work well attended to the past several months by the Leadership Team:

- Strategic Prioritization & Planning – District, School & Departmental
- Academic Development – Curriculum, Programs and Courses
- Social-Emotional Well Being
- Health & Fitness
- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
- School Culture
- Safety & Security
- Professional Learning for Administrators, Faculty & Staff

Not noted here is a fundamental connecting all “the industry:” a deep commitment to continual improvement. I can assure the BOE, and most importantly Hastings students and families, that my colleagues consider how to do their work better, even when the accomplishments are clear. A dedication to growth for all students is our top, shared priority, which means we have to be looking for how we can improve and advance in our daily work.

To return to a pledge at the start of this report, I look forward to the emerging *Portrait of a Hastings Learner* serving as the framework for future analysis and reporting on the effectiveness of our work to ensure each and every student grows in all developmental facets—intellectual, social, emotional, artistic and physical.