



# Hastings-on-Hudson Public Schools

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## End-of-Year State of the Hastings School District

William S. McKersie, Ph.D., Superintendent  
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### **INTRODUCTION**

We are pleased to present the *End-of-Year State of the Hastings School District*. This report is modeled on the Mid-Year State of the HOH Public Schools (February 2, 2022), which was well-received in approach and format. We concentrate the year-end report on academic and social-emotional considerations. (We do not delve into Business Operations or other administrative functions.) This report extends into more quantitative and analytical information regarding academic and social-emotional areas. While I provide the introduction and conclusion, the meat of the document comes directly from the Assistant Superintendent, Principals, Assistant Principals, Directors and Assistant Directors.

### **LEADERSHIP TEAM GOALS 2021-22**

This report uses the *Leadership Team Goals 2021-22* as Hastings' approximate direction, mile markers and destination for this school year. The Leadership Team<sup>1</sup> developed a set of goals for the year at its August 2021 Retreat. The goals address academics, social-emotional learning and operations.

The Leadership Team Goals are organized into a single document:

**10.8.21 Leadership Team Goals: Academic, SEL, Operational 2021-2022** . A Venn diagram is used at the outset to depict the essential crossover (coherence) of goals across schools, departments and the district as a whole. Following the Venn diagram are action steps with short descriptions.

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<sup>1</sup> Leadership Team: Bill McKersie, Melissa Szymanski, Maureen Caraballo, Amy Cazes, Michael LaRocco, Jennifer Spirelli, Ken Cotrone, Lou Adipietro, Melissa Hardesty, Laura Sullivan, Tesfa Stewart, Jeanette Kocur, Drew Wendol and Joe Martorana.

The Leadership Team Goals were reviewed by the Board of Education at its BOE Goals Workshop (September 29, 2021). Going forward, the goals of the Leadership Team will be tied to a BOE-established strategic plan, “The Portrait of a Hastings Learner.”<sup>2</sup> Early in the new school year, we will launch an inclusive planning process to spell out the shared vision for what graduates of the Hastings Public Schools *should know and be able to do* upon completing their education in our district. (The RFP and proposed outline for the Portrait process is [here](#).)

## **END-OF-YEAR REFLECTIONS**

### **Hillside Elementary School – Amy Cazes & Michael LaRocco**

#### **Social Emotional Wellness–**

Our team has continued on their path of excellence, regardless of the challenges of the school year. Our newest challenge is the reorganization of the building, now that the Hillside addition is open. Our Space Committee composed of 11 volunteer teachers collaboratively reimagined the layout of Hillside. Through thoughtful planning, we were able to imagine our primary grades K-2 together on one side of the building and our intermediate grades 3-4 together on the other side. In addition, once our library moves to the Learning Commons, we envision a new space for our related services and MTSS team, as we know that proximity matters in collaboration. We are also working towards recreating a Teacher Resource Room, so that our team has a space to work with teacher tools at their fingertips, and Grade Level Closets so that materials can be safely stored when sections fluctuate.

We worked with our Buildings and Grounds team to facilitate classroom moves in an orderly manner. In June, teachers were provided with support to make the moves as seamless as possible for all. Though the process of moving can be anxiety provoking, the end result will be an improved experience for both students and staff.

Our students enjoyed being at school, interacting with their peers, and participating in the exciting array of opportunities that Hillside offers. From Safety Patrol, Student Council, and Newspaper, to Nature Walks, End of Year Picnics, and the 4th Grade Play, students thrived in our warm, supportive learning environment.

We welcomed our community back to Hillside with special events, including the Back to School Picnic, Family Dance Night, and our Ribbon Cutting Ceremony. Families had the opportunity to join us for nature walks, guest reading opportunities, and special

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<sup>2</sup> In the February Mid-Year Report, we described this strategic planning process as the “North Star–What Education Should Be in Hastings.” It subsequently evolved into the “Portrait of a Hastings Learner.”

classroom celebrations. In addition, we offered school tours the week of June 6th so that our families could finally see what Hillside looks like from the inside.

### **Safety-**

Safety continued to be our top priority at Hillside. We had monthly Building Emergency Response Team meetings as well as monthly drills. These included evacuation, lockdown, lockout, hold in place, and shelter in place. Our students and staff have practiced what to do in each of these situations and built muscle memory to help in response time. We continually updated and communicated our protocols. Most recently, we met with the entire faculty and staff to remind them of the importance of keeping all doors closed and locked at all times. We also worked on new protocols now that our new addition is open.

### **ELA- Word and Language Study –**

Our Word Study launch was a success. All teachers in Grades 3 and 4 created collaborative word study cycles, teaching tools, and routines that honor student voice and choice. Third and fourth grade students look at words, notice spelling patterns, consider word meanings, and notice multiple uses through differentiated word sorts. Each day, they worked in small groups, talking about words and making connections to word study concepts in their reading.

Grades K-4 also focused on language study, concentrating on vocabulary, grammar, and punctuation. Our teachers unpacked the language study maps on their grade levels and implemented language study through both shared reading and shared writing cycles.

### **Diversity –**

All grades met with Jenice Mateo-Toledo to revise curricular units of study so student experiences are more reflective of the New York State Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education Framework (CR-SE).

Our CARE committee continued to meet monthly, looking at each principle of the CR-SE, and identifying areas of strength and opportunities for growth at Hillside. One item that resonated under the Welcoming and Affirming Environment principle was representation on the walls of our school. Considering the spaces in which students experience and grow, grades started to submit posters that project a diverse group of individuals with messaging conveying the spirit that “All Are Welcome.” These posters will be consistent with a given grade, but vary across grade levels. We feel it is important to project this messaging as a daily reminder that Hillside is a place for all. Under the Fostering High Expectations and Rigorous Instruction principle, it was noted that

Hillside demonstrates strength in providing opportunities for enrichment, leadership, and enhanced learning to all students. These include Safety Patrol, School Newspaper, STEAM, Student Council and BLT.

All classrooms visited the Multicultural Book Fair to shop for books by diverse authors. Educators were generously gifted a coupon by the Race Matters Committee to further enhance classroom libraries, as well as personal and professional learning.

Racial Equity Day (February 3) was a great success. Safety Patrol helped students understand the value of an inclusive environment. City Love performed virtually for all classes. One goal was to bring this to the community. As a result, the artists returned to Hillside on June 8th to perform for the school and community at 5 pm.

We continued our work around gender inclusivity at Hillside. All grade levels had one counseling lesson this school year. We anticipate starting the next school year with a parent presentation and parent counseling lesson experience through our Family Unity Nights (FUN) at Hillside.

#### **MTSS –**

We are proud of our student growth in the areas of reading, math, and social-emotional learning. Our MTSS team worked diligently on using the data to drive instructional support. Below, please note our data that demonstrates student movement through our MTSS process.

#### **Winter 2021-2022**

| MTSS Program   | Total # of students in program | Tier 2 | Tier 3 | Percentage of HES Students |
|----------------|--------------------------------|--------|--------|----------------------------|
| <b>Reading</b> | 53                             | 31     | 22     | 9.46%                      |
| <b>Math</b>    | 32                             | 19     | 13     | 5.71%                      |
| <b>SEL</b>     | 102                            | 95     | 7      | 18.21%                     |

#### **Spring 2021-2022**

| MTSS Program   | Total # of students in program | Tier 2 | Tier 3 | Percentage of HES Students |
|----------------|--------------------------------|--------|--------|----------------------------|
| <b>Reading</b> | 43                             | 30     | 13     | 7.71%%                     |
| <b>Math</b>    | 26                             | 19     | 7      | 4.66%                      |
| <b>SEL</b>     | 116                            | 102    | 14     | 20.79%                     |

**2021-2022 Yearly  
Count**

| MTSS Program   | Total # of students T3-T2 | Total # of students Exited | Total # of students classified | Total # of student who received cycled through RTI this year | Percentage of RTI Kids exited this year |
|----------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| <b>Reading</b> | 17                        | 20                         | 8                              | 71                                                           | 28%                                     |
| <b>Math</b>    | 8                         | 13                         | 5                              | 47                                                           | 28%                                     |

\*Note: Percentages stand individually, as there may be a student(s) receiving Reading, Math, and SEL.

Our STAR Data in reading and math further demonstrate the success that our MTSS process is having:

**Star Reading  
Scores 2021-2022**

| Score Range:<br>Assessment Period | Urgent Intervention |           | Intervention |           |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|-----------|--------------|-----------|
|                                   | Fall                | Spring    | Fall         | Spring    |
| <b>4th Grade</b>                  | 4%                  | 1%        | 2%           | 0%        |
| <b>3rd Grade</b>                  | 2%                  | 3%        | 2%           | 0%        |
| <b>2nd Grade</b>                  | 7%                  | 5%        | 5%           | 3%        |
| <b>1st Grade</b>                  | 3%                  | 5%        | 1%           | 6%        |
| <b>Kindergarten</b>               | 3%                  | 2%        | 8%           | 4%        |
| <b># of students</b>              | <b>18</b>           | <b>17</b> | <b>19</b>    | <b>13</b> |

  

| Total Below 25th %ile<br>% of all Students | Fall                    | Spring                  |
|--------------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
|                                            | 37/494<br><b>7.49%*</b> | 30/546<br><b>5.49%*</b> |

\*In an RTI model, 5% of students will require intensive intervention and 15% will require additional intervention beyond the core curriculum. At Hillside, 7.49% of the school's population fell within the range of needing intervention in the fall. That number decreased to 5.49% in the spring.

\*In the Fall, all Grades 1-4 students did not take the STAR Reading, as they were unable to successfully participate. It is likely that our Fall data would actually show that approximately 93/546 students or 16.9% were below the 25%ile. By the Spring, all students in Grades 1-4 took the STAR Reading and the data reflects the success of our MTSS program.

Score Range:

Assessment Period

**4th Grade**

**3rd Grade**

**2nd Grade**

**1st Grade**

**Kindergarten**

# of students

| On Watch  |           | At/Above Grade Level |            |
|-----------|-----------|----------------------|------------|
| Fall      | Spring    | Fall                 | Spring     |
| 8%        | 6%        | 87%                  | 93%        |
| 10%       | 2%        | 85%                  | 95%        |
| 9%        | 5%        | 79%                  | 87%        |
| 7%        | 7%        | 89%                  | 83%        |
| 7%        | 9%        | 81%                  | 85%        |
| <b>42</b> | <b>31</b> | <b>415</b>           | <b>485</b> |

Total at/above 25th %ile  
% of all Students

| Fall                      | Spring                    |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| 457/494<br><b>92.51%*</b> | 516/546<br><b>94.50%*</b> |

At Hillside, 92.51% of the school's population fell at/above the benchmark. That number increased to 94.50% in the spring. In an RTI model, this number is expected to be 80%.

## Star Math Scores 2021-2022

Score Range:

Assessment Period

**4th Grade**

**3rd Grade**

**2nd Grade**

**1st Grade**

| Urgent Intervention |           | Intervention |           |
|---------------------|-----------|--------------|-----------|
| Fall                | Spring    | Fall         | Spring    |
| 0.1%                | 1%        | 8%           | 3%        |
| 4%                  | 3%        | 4%           | 3%        |
| 6%                  | 5%        | 10%          | 2%        |
| 1%                  | 3%        | 8%           | 2%        |
| <b>13</b>           | <b>12</b> | <b>31</b>    | <b>12</b> |

Total Below 25th %ile  
% of all Students

| Fall                  | Spring               |
|-----------------------|----------------------|
| 44/422<br><b>10%*</b> | 24/454<br><b>5%*</b> |

\*In an RTI model, 5% of students will require intensive intervention and 15% will require additional intervention beyond the core curriculum. At Hillside, 10% of the school's population fell within the range of needing intervention in the fall. That number decreased to 5% in the spring.

\*Kindergarten students do not take the STAR Math screener. It begins in

first grade. First grade students with reading difficulties did not take the STAR Math screener in the Fall. It is likely that our Fall data would actually show that approximately 77/455 students or 17% were below the 25%ile. All Grades 1-4 students completed the screener in the Spring.

| Score Range:      | On Watch |        | At/Above Grade Level |        |
|-------------------|----------|--------|----------------------|--------|
| Assessment Period | Fall     | Spring | Fall                 | Spring |
| 4th Grade         | 6%       | 3%     | 85%                  | 93%    |
| 3rd Grade         | 3%       | 2%     | 89%                  | 91%    |
| 2nd Grade         | 10%      | 12%    | 73%                  | 81%    |
| 1st Grade         | 5%       | 8%     | 85%                  | 87%    |
|                   | 26       | 27     | 352                  | 403    |

|                          | Fall    | Spring  |
|--------------------------|---------|---------|
| Total at/above 25th %ile | 378/422 | 430/454 |
| % of all Students        | 90%*    | 95%*    |

At Hillside, 90% of the school's population fell at/above the benchmark. That number increased to 95% in the spring. In an RTI model, this number is expected to be 80%.

We plan to offer our supplementary Hillside Summer Learning Program to further support our students in need of “urgent intervention.” This program is possible due to the Federal grant to support student learning.

### **Farragut Middle School (FMS) – Jennifer Spirelli & Ken Cotrone**

#### **Academics -**

Mathematics and the science curriculum were a focus all year. Professional Learning time was carved out for staff to work and grow together during the school day.

Students in grade 5 were immersed in a cultural experience with their Latin Fiesta. The celebration focused on the unit study of Ancient Latin American Civilizations.

Grade 6 students submitted research reports for the Invention Dimension (ID) project, which was a shared endeavor among the ELA, social studies and library classes. Students celebrated the accomplishments of their peers by viewing the reports on display in the library.

## **School Culture -**

School socials were a big success at FMS. There were lots of smiling middle schoolers and parents after the socials, which raised a positive tone in the school. May and June brought many school events and field trips to enhance the middle school experience. A tremendous amount of effort went into planning and organizing these experiences, which staff reported as worthwhile for the way they enriched our students' middle school experience. To name a few, African Dance Performance, Latin Fiesta, Botanical Gardens Trip, Chelsea Piers Trip, Boundless Adventure Trip, Metropolitan Museum of Art Trip, Museum of the City of New York Trip, Art Extravaganza, and Career Day.

The spike in COVID-19 cases at FMS caused concerns for many; however, staff followed our protocols, maintained seating assignment and charts, and continued to contact trace. Teachers adjusted to remote learning and tried their best to make the remote learning experience meaningful and enjoyable; definitely a challenging task. Our nursing staff did an amazing job all year of communicating with families and staff during after school hours. Their communication and leadership provided relief for many.

We found ways to spread joy for the staff through an Italian lunch, our staff appreciation lunch from the PTSA, sunshine raffles, and having a faculty meeting in our new Middle School Auditorium! Even though it isn't fully finished yet, we were able to sneak in for a preview.

## **Social Emotional –**

The middle school's first Family University event was met with overwhelming appreciation from about 90 parent and student participants who noted the engaging speakers and the valuable sharing of strategies and resources. Family University can be beneficial to our whole community and FMS looks forward to bringing it back next year; but hopefully in person.

Another event that focused on Social Emotional needs brought many emotions from students. The in-school presentation by Dr. Mykee Fowlin encouraged students to look beyond the obvious to see who people really are and why they behave the way they do. "Hurt people, hurt people," was among the many messages he conveyed to students. One student shared, "My feedback is that this presentation is very important and needed, because the topics he talked about are not talked about enough. It was nice that he added humor as well, to not make it seem so serious, but to still teach us these lessons."

## **PBIS –**

FMS celebrated a “reboot” of our PBIS initiative this year. Focusing primarily on the 5th and 6th grades, students were rewarded for positive behaviors by their teachers and school administrators. This incentive program for students to make choices based on kindness proved beneficial. Upon being rewarded with “bee stickers,” students used them to acquire PBIS merchandise and to sign up for special events with teachers, such as “Slime Making with Spirelli.”

## **Hastings High School – Lou Adipietro & Melissa Hardesty**

### **General Culture –**

The year ended on a high note as we were able to sustain in-person learning throughout the school year. The relief of the mask mandate allowed students choice. Even when state and national COVID cases were elevated, we remained stable.

Grades 9-11 brought the year to close by preparing for final exams and projects, as well as the much anticipated NYS Regents Exams. A surprise was NYSED’s last minute cancellation of the first administration of the United States History (Framework) Regents Exam.

Seniors enjoyed a successful “internship” period and end of year events. The annual Senior Prom was held locally at Harvest on Hudson on June 6th. The culminating event was on June 23rd, where the Hastings community celebrated our seniors at commencement exercises on the Burke Estate.

### **Academics –**

A priority was the ongoing work with the mathematics and science curriculum. The K-12 Mathematics committee participated in a series of lesson studies, while our science teachers engaged in multiple days of subject specific professional learning.

Advanced Placement (AP) testing was completed, with 95% of testing occurring off site at the Hastings Public Library. This year’s administration proved difficult due to many students needing make-up exams per COVID protocols. AP scores should be available by early July.

Student engagement continued to be at a high level as teachers finalized their content delivery in anticipation of the end of year. Teacher course placement recommendations were submitted through our school counseling office and the high school master schedule is entering the “tweaking” phase. Some students will be working with their

school counselor to alleviate scheduling conflicts. The final student schedules will be ready in mid-August.

### **Social Emotional Learning –**

A priority has been Challenge Success. The committee was revived and has been discussing the implementation of a HS Advisory Program in the future. The planning hit some speed bumps during the course of the year. The goal is to formalize a plan and roll-out the advisory program in some form by Spring 2023. While this is ambitious, it will ground and focus our work.

A similar priority has been “Freshman Seminar,” which the school counselors instituted to ease the grade 8-9 transition. For the next school year, all grade 9 students will be assigned to the “grade 9 transition counselor.” In the spring, they will transition to a permanent counselor for the remainder of high school.

The High School once again delivered a Family University program for students and parents on April 20th. The program provided essential guidance and support regarding mental health, drugs and alcohol.

High School counselors increased their attention to individual needs due to the impact of COVID-19 over the past 24 months. They continued to support students individually with managing emotions, coping with feelings, and setting goals academically and emotionally. In addition, the district’s administration of the Panorama SEL survey has guided our focus.

### **Administration & Leadership –**

The administration team worked well together and communicated effectively as a team. Communication with the community was a priority and went well. This was bolstered by streamlined and timely communications from the Central Office.

Decision making was collaborative within the high school, across the three schools, and with the Central Office. This collaboration proved key to the budget process. Discussions and decisions were always collaborative.

We must continue to acknowledge the Nurses and health office as the shining stars of our school district.

## **Special Education – Laura Sullivan & Tesfa Stewart**

### **Administration & Staff Coordination –**

Internal committees (K-12) continued their work since February 2022 in special education. Our third meeting was held on April 19, 2022, and focused on designing long-term and short-term goals for the 2022-23 school year. The committee's focus for short-term goals include reviewing the following areas: communication, ICT restructuring, philosophy, and vision. Long Term goals include: culture shift, behavior intervention, increased student independence, and Portrait of a Hastings Learner. Our June 6, 2022 meeting focused on planning and designing the Special Education Advisory Committee, which will work over the summer to review the strengths and needs of our district for the upcoming school year and beyond. Melissa Szymanski will join with Laura and Tesfa to ensure a comprehensive, district-wide inquiry and planning process.<sup>3</sup>

### **Staffing –**

We wish Ms. Susan McNaney all the best as she retires from Hastings. She has worked at Hillside Elementary School as a special education teacher for over 20 years. Everyone on our team will miss Sue, but we are confident she will succeed in any new journey. She has been a creative problem-solver and empathetic teacher; we wish her the best in her future endeavors.

Similarly, we wish Ms. Kristen Kumar success as she leaves Hastings after 16 years to become an Assistant Principal in Eastchester. Among many areas of impact, Kristen pioneered the Inclusion Coordinator position. We will miss her dedication to each student, fellow teachers and the district as a whole.

### **Administration & Staff Capacity Building –**

In December, we successfully trained 36 staff members to be certified in verbal, non-verbal, and physical de-escalation strategies. Moving forward, we will be working with each building to design crisis teams to help support students and staff who require these techniques and interventions. In the spring, we expanded our training into higher grades. We provided training to grade 7 in the month of May and will expand upon this in the upcoming school year.

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<sup>3</sup> The inquiry and planning process will incorporate elements of the *Curriculum Review Cycle*, which is described later in this report under “District-wide – Curriculum & Instruction”.

## **Communications & Outreach –**

This spring, we worked with Hillside Elementary school to plan a Neurodiversity Celebration. Kristen Kumar worked with Hillside staff to plan a celebration that looks to define neurodiversity and focus on empathy, strength, and individuality. The team worked on planning hands-on activities and learning experiences to teach and support all students in the 4th grade.

## **District-wide – Curriculum & Instruction – Melissa Szymanski**

### **Academic Screener: STAR Renaissance –**

This year we introduced a new resource, Renaissance Star, as a diagnostic screener in grades K-8 to support our understanding of students' strengths and areas for growth in reading and mathematics. Diagnostic screening occurred three times this year at the elementary school and middle school: once in the fall, once in the winter, and once in the spring. Academic screening data from the fall and spring were used to inform decisions for instruction and support. Early in the school year, professional learning was provided to administrators, MTSS team members, and teacher teams to support implementation and analysis. Mid-year, we were able to find a software solution in order to ensure that parent reports could be accessed through the eSchool data portal. This eliminated the need for a mass paper mailing and enhanced ease of parent access to reports over time. We have been extremely pleased with this diagnostic resource and plan to keep it in our assessment repertoire next year.

We implemented three Renaissance Star diagnostic assessments. First is the Early Literacy Screener, which was given to all kindergarten students. This resource also incorporates assessment in mathematical literacy, which is why you will not see performance results in mathematics for kindergarten. The Early Literacy Screener was also given to students who were not yet decoding text in grades 1-4. There were also a few kindergarteners who came into Hillside reading, and took the Renaissance Star reading screener instead. The second two academic diagnostic assessments, the Renaissance Star reading screener and the Renaissance Star mathematics screener, were administered in grades 1-8.

### ***Appropriate Use of STAR Renaissance Results***

Back on October 29, 2021, soon after we announced the implementation of STAR Renaissance, I wrote to the entire community with two messages about the appropriate use of assessment results. I repeat these guiding messages now, as we provide for the first time a review and analysis of a full year of STAR results.

### Message 1—No Single Measure Counts

*Fostering academic growth in each and every student is our priority, and we do so over the long haul while drawing on multiple measures, indicators, and sources of evidence and information to gauge progress. No single number, measure, test, screener, or report card tells the story, and no single point in time reveals the truth. As a parent, I can't point to a single moment that explains my four children (ages 7 to 25). Instead, it is a complex (and sometimes maddening) blend of many days, weeks, and years that reveal who they are, and even then it changes. As an educator, lucky to have been trained by leading researchers and statisticians, I also know this: we must gauge progress with learning in a way that is rigorous and relevant, guiding students to optimize their talents and gifts, with progress measured by multiple sources, over time, which are regularly checked for validity and reliability.*

### Message 2—A First Step, with Patience

*Over the next two weeks, Hastings will take a new step with the sharing of K-8 results on the STAR Renaissance “diagnostic screener.” This new addition to our portfolio for gauging student progress has been introduced in various announcements to families and preliminary training sessions for faculty. I was pleased to learn upon arriving in Hastings that a committee of faculty and administrators selected STAR Renaissance. I have experience with the tool as an educator and a parent. My biggest learning: be patient, families and faculty, be patient. STAR is most useful after we have several sets of results for a student when we can begin to see trends and patterns. A single set of results (such as the first round coming out soon) should be examined, but with a larger understanding that it is only a first step, a first look. Families should be patient with Hastings teachers and administrators as we learn to work with this excellent diagnostic; in turn, we will be patient with students as to what the diagnostic suggests for modifications in instruction.*

## **Beginning, Middle & End-of-Year Results**

Across both buildings, we were heartened to see growth over the course of the school year in a number of key ways. The data also illuminated areas for improvement, especially at the middle school, which will require attention during the coming school years. We now provide what we consider the key findings.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> The Hillside section earlier in this report included STAR results and analysis. In this section, we provide a district-wide view, with specific attention to both Hillside and the Middle School. While a bit repetitive relative to Hillside, it is valuable to have the full set of results and analysis in this dedicated, district-wide section.

## Reading

End-of-year screening results at Hillside illustrate strong overall proficiency in reading. When considering the kindergarten Renaissance Star Early Literacy Screener results alongside the Renaissance Star reading screener results in grades 1-4, the percentage of students performing at/above benchmark at the end of the year ranged from 83%-94% depending on the grade. We found an increase in the percentages of students performing at/above proficiency over time for all grades.

- K increased from 81% to 85%
- 1st moved from 89% to 83% (This masks an actual increase in proficiency.<sup>5</sup>)
- 2nd increased from 79% to 87%
- 3rd increased from 85% to 95%
- 4th increased from 87% to 93%

At the middle school level, the percentage of students performing at/above benchmark in reading at the end of the year ranged from 70% to 76%. We found slight declines for grades 6-8, with a marked decline in 5th grade.

- 5th dropped from 84% to 76%
- 6th dropped from 81% to 79%
- 7th dropped from 80% to 75%
- 8th dropped from 73% to 70%

These findings suggest the need to strengthen our middle school English Language Arts (ELA) program. Middle school ELA will be a Phase I inquiry area for the upcoming school year in the newly designed Curriculum Review Cycle.

## Mathematics

End-of-year screening results at Hillside illustrate strong overall performance in mathematics. Across grades 1-4, the percentage of students performing at/above benchmark at the end of the year ranged from 81%-93%. We found increases in the percentage of students performing at/above proficiency for all grade levels since the fall.

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<sup>5</sup> In first grade, we had a decrease from the beginning of the year to the middle of the year, and then a slight increase between the middle and end of the school year. This is because different students took different assessments, depending on their level of reading proficiency. Once the pool of students who took the Star assessment shifted, the data became more inclusive of students who were demonstrating weaker reading performance. In the fall, for example, 39 first graders did not take the Star reading. Instead, they took the Early Literacy Screener because they were not yet reading. By the winter, many of these students were added to the Star assessment pool. In the spring, almost all first graders took the assessment. While the data tables show a decrease between fall and spring for first graders, in actuality, given the pool of test takers increased by roughly 30 students with only a slight decrease in proficiency results (6 percentage points), it is a fair estimate that first grade performance increased from fall to spring.

- 1st increased from 85% to 87%
- 2nd increased from 73% to 81%
- 3rd increased from 89% to 92%
- 4th increased from 85% to 94%

At the middle school level, the percentage of students performing at/above benchmark in mathematics at the end of the year ranged from 70% to 82%. We see a steady decline across the year for 5th grade, but increases in the percentage of students performing at/above proficiency in grades 6-8.

- 5th dropped from 83% to 73%
- 6th increased from 73% to 82%
- 7th increased from 77% to 82%
- 8th increase from 61% to 70%

We believe a reason for the growth in Grade 6-8 mathematics performance data is that these grades benefited from the implementation of *Big Ideas* and related mathematics professional learning this year. Kudos to our teachers for their collaboration and successful implementation efforts.

### Data Sources

Please click [here](#) for summary tables showing the beginning, middle and end of the year screening results by grade level.

For a more detailed presentation of data, in this case solely for the end of year results, please click [here](#). This data set shows student results across four ranges of performance: At/Above Benchmark (green), On Watch (blue), Intervention (yellow), and Urgent Intervention (red).

### **SEL Screener: Panorama –**

We implemented the Panorama SEL screener this year to ensure the monitoring and support of the social and emotional well-being of students grades K-12. The screener was administered at three points over the course of the school year.

In grades K-2, the screener examined four indicators: *emotion regulation*, *social awareness*, *social perspective-taking*, and *self-efficacy*. Teachers administered the instrument in K-2 to ensure student differences in reading proficiency did not bias outcomes.

In grades 3-12, multiple measures related to two overarching indicators:

- *Student competency and wellbeing*, which includes self-management, positive feelings, self-efficacy, challenging feelings, emotion regulation, and supportive relationships.
- *Student supports and environment*, which includes teacher-student relationships, school climate, sense of belonging, and engagement.

### ***Fall, Winter & Spring Findings***

Findings for the first administration were shared at the December 6, 2021 Board of Education meeting, which included a [formal presentation](#) and a [detailed appendix](#) containing disaggregated data for demographic subgroups of students. In the fall, the screener was given on the same day and at the same time at FMS and HHS. This ensured that all students were screened.

Spring findings are based on a smaller sample of students at the middle and high school due to a change from the fall in the screening window. In the spring, a two-week window was provided with the intention of allowing teachers to identify a day that would be least disruptive to their instruction. This resulted in an unintended consequence, however, as not all students took the screener.

Looking across the three administrations, the dominant finding is stability, which is encouraging where the results are positive, but of concern where we would hope for stronger results. As noted below in the school-specific review of data, there are a number of areas where results declined slightly or remained consistent. Clearly, we need to continue to strengthen our social emotional program districtwide. We aim to enhance our percent favorable responses across all indicators. This will be a priority goal in 2022-23 for the Leadership Team.<sup>6</sup>

A significant benefit of the Panorama screener is that it immediately helped us identify vulnerable students in need of social emotional learning support through the MTSS process. This boosted our ability to meet the needs of individual students.

### **Hillside**

When comparing the fall and spring data in grades K-2, we see slight increases in the favorability ratings for *emotion regulation*, *self-efficacy*, and *social awareness*, with a decline in *Social Perspective Taking*.

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<sup>6</sup> We also will review the sensitivity of the screening instrument to ensure validity and reliability of findings. We will confer with regional colleagues for comparative insights on the extent of changes in findings over a particular school year. That is, how typical is the continuity in results we found when Panorama is administered several times in a single school year?

- Emotion Regulation rose from 79% to 82%
- Self-Efficacy rose from 62% to 66%
- Social Awareness rose from 73% to 76%
- Social Perspective-Taking fell from 63% to 57%

In third and fourth grade, we see slight declines (1% to 6%) from the fall to spring in the favorability ratings in all areas except *self-efficacy*, which increased by 4% increase. The biggest decline was in the area of *school climate* (6%).

- Engagement fell from 65% to 62%
- School Climate fell from 74% to 68%
- Sense of Belonging fell from 72% to 70%
- Teacher-Student Relationships rose from 75% to 78%
- Challenging Feelings fell from 67% to 64%
- Emotion Regulation fell from 58% to 55%
- Positive Feelings fell from 75% to 72%
- Self-Efficacy rose from 64% to 68%
- Self-Management fell from 83% to 82%
- Supportive relationships fell from 90% to 88%

### Middle School

Fall/spring comparisons for grade 5 show minor variations across indicators.

*Engagement, student-teacher relationships, emotion regulation, positive feelings, self-efficacy, and self-management* slightly increased (1% to 3%). No change is evident for *supportive relationships*. Slight declines (1% to 5%) are noted for *school climate, sense of belonging, challenging feelings, positive feelings, and self-management*.

- Engagement rose from 55% to 56%
- School Climate fell from 62% to 57%
- Sense of Belonging fell from 65% to 60%
- Teacher-Student Relationships rose from 68% to 71%
- Challenging Feelings fell from 60% to 57%
- Emotion Regulation rose from 53% to 55%
- Positive Feelings rose from 66% to 67%
- Self-Efficacy rose from 59% to 60%
- Self-Management rose from 78% to 81%
- Supportive relationships remained the same from fall to spring at 88%

Fall/spring comparisons for grades 6-8 show decreases (1%- 8%) across all areas except in *emotion regulation* and *supportive relationships*, which are the same for fall and spring.

- Engagement fell from 31% to 28%
- School Climate fell from 55% to 48%
- Sense of Belonging fell from 50% to 44%
- Teacher-Student Relationships fell from 60% to 52%
- Challenging Feelings fell from 57% to 50%
- Emotion Regulation remained the same from fall to spring at 48%
- Positive Feelings fell from 55% to 54%
- Self-Efficacy fell from 52% to 51%
- Self-Management fell from 81% to 78%
- Supportive relationships remained the same from fall to spring at 79%

### High School

At the high school level, we find slight increases (2%-5%) from fall to spring in favorability ratings for *emotion regulation*, *self-efficacy* and *supportive relationships*. We see slight decreases (2%-5%) over the course of the year in *engagement*, *school climate*, *sense of belonging*, *teacher-student relationships*, *challenging feelings*, and *self-management*. *Positive feelings* were the same at the beginning and end of the year. *Self-management* and *school climate* were the most notable areas of decline.

- Engagement fell from 28% to 25%
- School Climate fell from 55% to 50%
- Sense of Belonging fell from 42% to 39%
- Teacher-Student Relationships fell from 52% to 49%
- Challenging Feelings fell from 50% to 48%
- Emotion Regulation rose from 49% to 52%
- Positive Feelings remained the same from fall to spring at 56%
- Self-Efficacy rose from 44% to 49%
- Self-Management fell from 79% to 74%
- Supportive relationships rose from 82% to 84%

Tables presenting this data can be accessed [here](#).

### **Curriculum Review Cycle –**

The Professional Learning Committee, with input from administrators, department chairpersons and teachers, created a [Curriculum Review Cycle](#). This process is designed to support our ability to prioritize our curriculum efforts over multiple years, strengthen

our annual Professional Development Plan, and enhance opportunities for learning during Superintendent Conference Days. The Curriculum Review Cycle was presented to the Board of Education at the June 6, 2022 meeting. A link to this presentation can be found [here](#).

In the wake of the budget crunch and end-of-year rush, we must not overlook the significance of the Curriculum Review Cycle, which finally is designed, real and operational. Hastings requires this system, which will be tested during implementation. But, to take a page from [Michael Fullan](#), the Curriculum Review Cycle was built from the “middle out” (that is, where ownership could be found and expanded) and via a process where we knew the answers at the “end of the meeting, not the beginning” (that is, it was not built by mandate or pre-determination, but through collective thought and action). With those characteristics in the design process, we are optimistic that the Curriculum Review Cycle will bolster our aim in Hastings to have coherent autonomy among our professionals.

### **Culturally Responsive Pedagogies –**

In partnership with district and building leaders, Dr. Jenice Mateo-Toledo focused on the year one Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion [goals](#) that were presented to the Board of Education this fall. These goals take into account the NYS guidance and the voices of Hastings educators. Some examples include:

- Leading the Diversity Committee to create a digital toolkit with resources for stakeholders and develop familiarity with the New York State Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education Framework;
- Designing and providing district-wide professional learning workshops focused on culturally responsive-sustaining pedagogies;
- Reviewing current curriculum units with groups of educators to consider opportunities for including culturally responsive practices;
- Updating and designing Sparks and Courageous Conversations curriculum with teams of educators;
- Pushing into classrooms with educators to co-teach lessons;
- Working closely with administrators and educators to consider and prepare for our partnership with Facing History and Ourselves;
- Participating on various interview committees to support diversity recruitment efforts;
- Collaborating with the Inclusion Working Group (IWG) of the PTSA to finalize an incidents of bias protocol;
- Serving as a resource for students, educators, and administrators who requested support, such as when selecting diverse books and considering established protocols from diverse perspectives;

- Spearheading diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives, such as Racial Equity Days, beautification projects, and the Multicultural Book Fair;
- Supporting district initiatives, including Superintendent's Conference Days.

### **K-12 Mathematics Committee –**

The K-12 Mathematics Committee met monthly over the course of the 2021-22 school year. This year, the group finalized the development of the Hastings Mathematical Mindset rubric. Intended to foster a growth mindset among teachers and students, the rubric identifies the essential stages of teaching and learning practices in mathematics. This rubric is applicable across grades K-12 and can be accessed [here](#). As noted above in the high school overview, this group also designed and participated in a mini-series of lesson studies. This process enabled teachers and leaders to investigate practice through an inquiry lens and observe each other's teaching practices. Through these experiences, participants were able to analyze lesson planning, lesson delivery, and student performance, in relation to the mindset rubric.

### **Middle School Mathematics –**

Our middle school mathematics team implemented *Big Ideas*, a new curricular resource for Grades 6-8. Across the school year, Dr. Szymanski worked with the Math Department to outline their learning needs related to the new instructional resources. Professional learning took place on an ongoing basis and in partnership with a consultant from *Big Ideas*. Key areas of focus included development of shared implementation agreements, enhancing familiarity with teacher and student resources, working with the Dynamic Classroom digital platform, and developing an understanding of resources for student performance analysis. This summer, the team will meet to discuss the first year implementation process, explore the extent to which implementation efforts aligned with the implementation agreements that were determined last summer, discuss next steps for professional learning, and explore impact on student learning.

### **March Tri-State Visit –**

The [Tri-State Consortium](#) is an alliance of public schools working together as critical friends and partners. One of the benefits of being a member district is the opportunity to periodically enlist the fresh eyes and input of colleagues from throughout the region to support us in our continuous improvement efforts in service to students. Hastings was fortunate to have had a Tri-State Site Visit from March 9-11, 2022. As determined with our Chair Council, the inquiry focused on the effectiveness of collaboration in Hastings. Strong collaboration is critical to fostering a professional community that promotes each student's success and well-being.

The essential questions for the Visiting Team were as follows:

1. *To what extent, and in what areas, does the district have clear and well understood protocols for systemic communication in service to a [professional community for teachers and staff](#)?*
2. *To what extent are stakeholder roles and responsibilities understood and adhered to in service to a [professional community for teachers and staff](#), a shared vision and environment for change, and parent and community support?*
3. *How might we strengthen protocols, structures and norms to enhance intradistrict collaboration in service to a [professional community for teachers and staff](#)?*

Feedback from the Visiting Team was provided in [this report](#) (May 2022). The team recognized a number of successes, while also providing suggestions to push us forward in our efforts to strengthen collaboration. We will discuss the Tri-State report with the Board of Education either during the summer August retreat or in the fall at a work session.

### **Technology Plan Development –**

Melissa Szymanski, Maureen Caraballo, and the district Technology Committee, in partnership with colleagues from the Lower Hudson Regional Information Center (LHRIC), finalized the State-required 2022-2025 Instructional Technology Plan. The goals, action steps, and investment plan associated with this plan were presented at the February 28 Board of Education meeting. The presentation slides are included [here](#). A link to the full technology plan, which is required to be completed within a template generated by the New York State Education Department (NYSED), is [here](#).

### **Class of 2022 Future Steps –**

As we concluded the year, we were delighted to celebrate the [future steps](#) of our graduating seniors. This was put forth as a separate presentation to the Board of Education on June 22. Key takeaways are as follows:

- About 87% of our students will be attending 4-year schools. Approximately 2% will be attending a two-year school. All students who applied to a college or university will be attending.
- Over 85% of students who applied *Early Action* (EA) were accepted to at least 1 of their EA schools
- Approximately 75% of students who applied *Regular Decision* were accepted to at least one of their schools.
- Acceptance rates in the *Early Decision/Early Action* rounds stayed relatively the same for the past three years.
- Acceptance rates in the *Regular Decision* rounds declined.
- Waitlist acceptances increased slightly in 2022 compared to the past two years.

Special thanks to Jeanette Kocur and the school counseling team for compiling this information.

## CONCLUSION

For the sake of reporting clarity and comparisons, we conclude this year-end report with the same analytical themes that emerged from the mid-year report. We note where the work of the first half-year continued for the full year, and then highlight new developments and attributes since February 2022.

1. Intellectual and Academic Focus – Over the course of the year, the Professional Learning Committee, with input from administrators and faculty district-wide, established a Curriculum Review Cycle to ensure continuous improvement efforts. Ultimately adopted in the spring and presented to the BOE in June, the Curriculum Review Cycle takes an iterative approach, prioritizing different content areas for thorough examination and sustained focus across different points in time.
2. Social-Emotional Learning – We continued to attend to and address student wellness across the buildings. Data collected through the Panorama Survey illuminated patterns and trends, while also identifying students in need of special attention. We used the survey data as supplementary information to our direct, in-person work with students.
3. Culture – Building leaders attended to the climate of their schools and took varied approaches to keep things positive. As we moved late into the school year, and with COVID-19 (see below) in a manageable place, we shifted back to the typical end-of-year events and programs of pre-COVID years, giving students and staff an added boost.
4. Diversity – We remained true all school year to a shared standard: *To embrace the full diversity of who we are as an educational community, and to do so in a fashion that is thoughtful, inclusive and a path to dignity and respect.* This year the Board of Education adopted a new policy on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. Strong progress also occurred with district goals aligned to the New York State Culturally Responsive Roadmap and internal building and department targets.
5. Gauging Progress – The STAR Renaissance Diagnostic Screener became a significant indicator this year of academic performance, providing teachers with recommended areas of focus that could be used to provide small group and individualized instruction. Our multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) approach

at the elementary and middle school was strengthened as a result of access to data and benchmark information. Similarly, the Panorama Screener helped administrators, counselors, specialists and teachers attend to pressing needs regarding SEL and culture. The STAR and Panorama screeners were administered at three points over the course of the school year, allowing us to see trends for individual students and groups of students. We plan to keep these diagnostic resources in our assessment repertoire next year.

While valuing the insights STAR and Panorama provide, we must remember that mature educational communities wisely embrace multiple indicators of intellectual growth and social-emotional health. Matching a fundamental for me, Hastings does not fixate on single assessments or tests, or single moments in a student year, as the indicator of overall success. We must maintain this optimal standard and approach to educational measurement.

6. Professional Learning and Capacity Building – All year, members of the faculty across schools, departments and programs participated in professional learning offerings. Some opportunities were choice-based, while others were designed to enhance coherence within grades, departments, buildings, or the system as a whole. Looking forward, we will remain dedicated to continuous improvement and lifelong learning for Hastings teachers, staff and administrators.
7. Communications – A concerted effort was made all year to enhance internal and external communication. Internally, we provided timely, clear guidance and updates on situations, pending decisions and action steps. Consistent efforts were made to have administrators and staff hear first, so they could support students and families. Externally, our outreach efforts were designed to be consistent, clear, and timely. Drawing on surveys of staff and families in the fall, we worked across the year to improve the district’s website, streamline email and other electronic notices, and post “[\*Whom Do I Contact?\*](#)” The Superintendent’s Friday Letters, Assistant Superintendent’s monthly *Curriculum & Instruction Update* and the weekly *Hastings Happenings* were coordinated as to themes and features, with the goal to enhance coherence, transparency and understanding.
8. Collaboration – The March 2022 site visit by the team from the Tri-State Consortium underscored our commitment to collaboration and guiding theory of action:

*If we are able to ensure that communication is strong, that stakeholders understand and adhere to roles and responsibilities, and strong protocols, structures and norms exist for how we work together, then we*

*will be able to optimize conditions for a collaborative, professional community for teachers and staff—in service to students.*

Tri-State’s final report provided valuable feedback about our strengths and areas for growth, which will serve as guideposts for more effective collaboration in the 2022-23 school year.

9. Quality Educational Facilities and Settings – The recent bond was brought to life this year through a series of capital improvements. Despite supply chain issues, shifting costs, and the need for flexibility with timelines, our district had great success. The most striking accomplishment is the new Hillside Multi-Purpose Room and classrooms, which opened in early June and have been used to rave reviews as a concert and celebration space (including a lovely Moving Up Ceremony for the Fourth Grade). The new music rooms for the middle/high school and the renovated middle school auditorium also moved from vision to reality during the final months of the school year.
10. COVID-19 – While the pandemic persisted as a stressor over the school year, we remained “all in.” We worked consistently with the public health and medical frameworks of the state and county, consulted with area superintendents and our Medical Directors, revised procedures as necessary, updated manuals and regular notices, and kept reminding students, families and staff of the basic steps to keep **Us** healthy and in school. Daily COVID count updates kept the community informed of trends within buildings and across the district. All in all, we maintained quality in-person schooling for all students the entire school year.

### **Final Word: An Ending Leads to a Beginning –**

Student growth – intellectual, creative, social, emotional, and physical – was the connecting thread to this year’s priorities and work. From this ending, we shift to a new beginning. We embark on summer reflection and planning, so that we can roll into the new school year that much sharper with our goals, priorities and action steps, which will include ways to make mid-course adjustments as the year unfolds. Such is the cycle of robust and ever-improving schooling.