

Hastings-on-Hudson Regular Board of Education Meeting (Wednesday, March 10, 2021)

Generated by Melissa DeLaBarrera on Friday, March 12, 2021

Members present

Jodie Meyer, Doug Sundheim, Jeremy Galland, Lauren Berman, Silvia Robles, Alison Andrus

1. OPENING OF MEETING

A. 6:15 PM - Call to Order - Expected a motion to move into Executive Session for the purpose of contract negotiations.

Motion to move into Executive Session for the purpose of contract negotiations.

Motion by Silvia Robles, second by Doug Sundheim.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: Doug Sundheim, Lauren Berman, Silvia Robles, Alison Andrus

B. 7:15 PM - Public Hearing on District-wide Safety Plan

The public hearing on the District-wide safety plan was held before the Board of Education regular meeting. Maureen Caraballo gave a brief overview of the newly added section for protocols for Public Health Emergency, as required by the Governor. She also highlighted the updates to the District-wide safety plan, the updates included minor changes to the wording in two portions of the document.

C. 7:30 PM - Regular Board of Education Meeting - Public portion opens.

Lauren Berman:

- Welcomed all trustees, student trustees, administrators, teachers and public joining the meeting
- Addressed the recent increase in racially motivated hate crimes and violence against Asian Americans nationally, while we are unaware of any specific occurrences in Hastings it was noted that the district stands behind our policies of ensuring we do not tolerate acts of hatred against any individual or group on school grounds, all students and employees of the district have a right to feel safe and respected

D. Announcements

Valerie Henning-Piedmonte:

- Highlighted some of the student related interactions from the week:
 - Tuesday the Student & Board Liaison Group met they are preparing a survey to administer to the student body
 - Melissa Szymanski and Valerie met with the Students Advisory during lunch, students discussed their excitement and apprehension associated with returning all in on April 12 as a well as end of year activities
 - Time to Talk About Racism with Students, Valerie, Melissa Szymanski and Tesfa Stewart - discussed the violence against Asian Americans, integration of historical information and micro aggressions
- Re-Opening Committee - gathering feedback from parents, faculty and staff that participated and talking about recommendations and concerns
- The next meeting will a Board Work Session that will to hear recommendations, concerns and/or solutions, followed by a pre-recorded meeting by the three leadership teams on March 25th to review the proposed changes in order to reopen safely on April 12th for all students
- Congratulations to the Administrators and faculty staff of Hastings High School for being selected as number two among high schools in Westchester County
- Meeting next week to discuss a plan for surveillance testing of students with parental consent
- Still awaiting guidance from Department of Health regarding 6 feet of social distancing in the classrooms

E. Administrative Comments

Melissa Szymanski:

Science Research Student Publication

The following science research update from Melissa Shandroff is worthy of recognition and celebration: Two former science research students, David Dayan and Christian Healy of the Class of 2019, and their mentor, Craig O'Connell of the O'Seas Conservation Foundation, had their work published this month in the Marine Technology Society Journal. The title of their paper is "The Use of Baited Remote Underwater Video Systems (BRUVS) to Non-invasively Characterize a White Shark (*Charcharodon carcharias*) Nursery Area off Eastern Long Island, New York." David and Christian collected and analyzed hours of video footage to help them determine that the area off of Eastern Long Island does in fact meet the criteria of a nursery. Their findings can help lead to conservation efforts to protect the white shark population. David is currently studying Animal Science at Cornell University, and Christian is a dual major in Environmental Science and Film.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Diversity Committee

Our most recent Diversity Committee meeting took place on February 25, 2021. Our session focused on racial literacy work, grounded in the work of Dr. Yolanda Sealey Ruiz around archaeology of the self. As one aspect of our work together, we explored her pyramid of racial literacy development which, at its foundation, is grounded in critical love. She describes critical love as "a profound ethical commitment to caring for the communities we work in." Committee participants also self-selected discussion questions to unpack in breakout rooms.

Middle School Racial Equity Day

Our middle school Racial Equity Day took place on March 2nd. Thank you to the Hastings Education Foundation, the Race Matters Committee, and the Racial Equity Day Planning Committee. We were delighted to welcome three speakers:

Dr. Detra Price-Dennis helped us to explore what racial equity means and emphasized honoring everyone's humanity

Dr. Yolanda Sealey-Ruiz invited our community to think about how critical love is interconnected with the archaeology of the self

Mr. Richard Blanco read poems he wrote emphasizing that the idea of home is all-encompassing, including the dimensions of language, where you live, your culture, and your relationships with others

Mathematics Committee

The K-12 Mathematics Committee convened last week. The focus of the session was to engage in an inquiry within vertical, cross-building breakout groups that was anchored in student artifacts. This was a continuation of work that began during the previous session within building-based groups. Moving forward, we hope to bring Cathy Williams, Co-Founder and Executive Director of YouCubed from Stanford University, back into our sessions to push our thinking as an expert in the field.

Maureen Caraballo:

- Thanked the PTSA/SEPTA and The Education Foundation, they have approved additional funding for the school for out of their COVID grants, those funds will be used to provide additional outdoor seating, classroom and eating spaces and procuring additional air purifiers for each classroom.

F. Student Report

Sabine Hinkaty:

- RC swim has their first virtual meet on Tuesday, other sports within the fall 2 category have also begun their seasons
- Student Union is hosting a badminton tournament scheduled for late March
- Select members of the student union are also creating multiple surveys that are going to be sound out to the student body
- Many students are excited about returning to full in model next month

Sophia Maniero:

- Presented a research report she prepared analyzing the fractured relationship between the central administration and teachers
- She interviewed teachers, board members and the superintendent and highlighted the issues that are most concerning to the teachers and how they feel ignored and disenfranchised by the manner in which decisions are made as well as the lack of communication

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

A. Public Comment

Lisa Litvin:

- Commented on the meeting minutes. Incomplete as they did not contain the actual resignation letter from a teacher and instead contained a letter written by the Vice Principal
- Asked the Board to table their vote until the minutes reflect the names of who voted in favor of leaving the resignation letter off the agenda and who voted against it

3. PRESENTATIONS

Presentation: A. Budget Presentation

- Maureen and Dr. Henning-Piedmonte shared their budget presentation with the Board
- Administrators of each school presented budget proposals for their respective schools
- Important dates revolving around the budget vote were shared:
 - March 22nd - Budget review
 - April 7th - Budget review
 - April 20th - Budget adoption
 - May 4th - Budget hearing
 - May 18th - Budget vote

[Click here to view presentation](#)

4. BUSINESS

A. Business Items

1. Amended District-wide Safety Plan 2020-2021.

2. Approve the use of Reserve for Liability Claims, to increase budget in the amount of \$105,000 for a Special Education Settlement.
3. Approve invoice for services for One-Acts technical support from Yanniv Frank in the amount of \$440.00.
4. Approve settlement agreement.
5. Approve budget transfers.
6. Approve substitute cleaner/custodial rate of \$20 per/hr for Hastings CSEA custodial unit retirees.
7. Professional Learning Partnership, Cathy Williams, proposal.
8. State test translation, Star Interpreting & Translating, Inc., proposal.
9. Bloomz from LHRIC, proposal.
10. 2020-2021 APPR Plan Variance approval.
11. Side letter of agreement.

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

Motion by Doug Sundheim, second by Alison Andrus.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: Jodie Meyer, Doug Sundheim, Jeremy Galland, Lauren Berman, Silvia Robles, Alison Andrus

Not Present at Vote: Jeremy Arnon

B. Placement and/or Services for CSE and CPSE

CSE: 11789, 11101, 11378, 11665, 10863, 8035, 10590, 11474, 10699, 11511, 10175, 11647, 10600, 10182, 11697, 11061, 10636, 11207, 7619, 10786

CPSE: 12077

RESOLVED, that upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools and the Committee on Special Education and the Committee on Preschool Special Education, the Board accepts the classifications and arrangements for the placement and/or services for the 2020-2021 school year.

Motion by Silvia Robles, second by Jodie Meyer.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: Jodie Meyer, Doug Sundheim, Jeremy Galland, Lauren Berman, Silvia Robles, Alison Andrus

Not Present at Vote: Jeremy Arnon

5. PERSONNEL

A. Appointments

1. Maria Rafaela Pimentel Ramos, appoint to Substitute Cleaner district-wide effective March 11, 2021 for the 2020-2021 school year.
2. Juan Villamar, appoint to part-time Cleaner district-wide effective March 1, 2021 for the 2020-2021 school year.
3. Schedule B appointment requests as per attached [spreadsheet](#).
4. Juliana DeLaBarrera-Diaz, appoint to the position of School Monitor at Farragut Middle School, effective upon verification of fingerprint clearance.
5. Josh Guzman, appoint to the positions of School Monitor and Per Diem substitute teacher at Farragut Middle School, effective upon verification of fingerprint clearance.

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

Motion by Alison Andrus, second by Silvia Robles.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: Jodie Meyer, Doug Sundheim, Jeremy Galland, Lauren Berman, Silvia Robles, Alison Andrus

Not Present at Vote: Jeremy Arnon

B. Amendments

1. Victoria Kelter, .8 FTE Physical Education Regular Substitute/Leave Replacement at Farragut Middle School, amend her appointment to MA, Step 1, \$64,764 (pro-rated) effective February 23, 2021-June 25, 2021 and .2 FTE Permanent Building Substitute at Farragut Middle School, effective March 11, 2021-June 25, 2021.
2. Joseph Lopez, Per Diem Substitute teacher district-wide, amend his appointment to Permanent Building Substitute teacher at Hastings High School effective March 11, 2021-June 30, 2021.
3. Robyn Royal-Horn, .6 Special Education teacher at Hastings High School, amend her appointment as follows: .4 FTE Special Education, .2 FTE English effective February 1, 2021-June 30, 2021.
4. Nicole Valsalan, 1.0 FTE Permanent Building Substitute teacher at Farragut Middle School, amend her appointment to .6 FTE Permanent Building Substitute and .4 FTE Regular Substitute/Leave Replacement, MA, Step 1, \$64,764 (pro-rated), effective March 1, 2021-June 25, 2021. Certification held: Mathematics 7-12 - Initial.
5. Christopher Lembo, 1.0 FTE Special Education/Math teacher at Farragut Middle School, amend appointment of an additional .2 FTE assignment to cover an extended Math leave of absence, effective March 1, 2021-June 25, 2021.
6. Gina Raus, 1.0 FTE Math teacher at Farragut Middle School, amend appointment of an additional .2 FTE assignment to cover an extended Math leave of absence, effective March 1, 2021-June 25, 2021.
7. Steven Yurek, 1.0 FTE Math teacher at Farragut Middle School, amend appointment of an additional .2 FTE assignment to cover an extended Math leave of absence, effective March 1, 2021-June 25, 2021.
8. Mariya Pushkantser, .8 FTE English Language Arts Regular Substitute/Leave Replacement and .2 Permanent Building Substitute at Farragut Middle School, amend her appointment to 1.0 FTE English Language Arts Regular Substitute/Leave Replacement, MA, Step 4, \$74,112 (pro-rated) retroactive to February 24, 2021-June 25, 2021.

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

Motion by Alison Andrus, second by Silvia Robles.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: Jodie Meyer, Doug Sundheim, Jeremy Galland, Lauren Berman, Silvia Robles, Alison Andrus

Not Present at Vote: Jeremy Arnon

C. Leaves of Absence

1. Kristen Aimi, 1.0 FTE ENL teacher at Hillside Elementary School, requested a leave of absence as follows: FMLA with pay, January 19, 2021-February 12, 2021. She returned to work on February 22, 2021.
2. Francisco Clemente, Cleaner at Hillside Elementary School, requested a leave of absence as follows: New York State Covid Paid Sick Leave, February 9, 2021-February 19, 2021. He returned to work on February 22, 2021.
3. Anna Navarra, Teacher Aide at Farragut Middle School, requested a leave of absence as follows: New York State Covid Paid Sick Leave, February 12, 2021-February 19, 2021. She returned to work on February 22, 2021.
4. Alysha Polite-Horstman, 1.0 FTE Art teacher at Hastings High School, requested a leave of absence as follows: 3rd year unpaid Parental Leave, August 2021-June 2022. She will return to work for the 2022-2023 school year.
5. Kim Smith, 1.0 FTE Math teacher at Farragut Middle School, requested a leave of absence as follows: unpaid Parental Leave, March 1, 2021-June 26, 2021. She will return to work for the 2021-2022 school year.
6. Lisa Adipietro, Teacher Assistant at Farragut Middle School has requested a leave of absence as follows: New York State Covid Paid Sick Leave, February 22, 2021-March 2, 2021. She returned to work on March 3, 2021.
7. Matthew Adipietro, Physical Education teacher at Farragut Middle School has requested a leave of absence as follows: New York State Covid Paid Sick Leave, February 22, 2021-March 2, 2021. He returned to work on March 3, 2021.
8. Maria Gamerota, Teacher Aide at Hillside Elementary School has requested a leave of absence as follows: FMLA with pay, January 27, 2021-March 16, 2021. She will return to work on March 17, 2021.
9. Emily Kehoe, Physical Education/Health teacher at Hastings High School has requested a leave of absence as follows: New York State Covid Paid Sick Leave, February 22, 2021-March 3, 2021. She returned to work on March 4, 2021.
10. Emidio Righetti, Maintenance Mechanic district-wide, requested a leave of absence as follows: NYPSLA February 22, 2021-March 5, 2021. He returned to work on March 8, 2021.
11. Robert McCann, 1.0 FTE Physical Education teacher at Hastings High School has requested a leave of absence as follows: NYPSLA February 22, 2021-March 3, 2021. He returned to work on March 4, 2021.

RESOLVED, that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education approve the following leaves of absence.

Motion by Alison Andrus, second by Silvia Robles.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: Jodie Meyer, Doug Sundheim, Jeremy Galland, Lauren Berman, Silvia Robles, Alison Andrus

Not Present at Vote: Jeremy Arnon

D. Resignations

1. Erica Finegan, English Language Arts teacher at Farragut Middle School has provided notice of resignation effective July 1, 2021.

RESOLVED, that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education accept the resignations.

Motion by Doug Sundheim, second by Silvia Robles.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: Jodie Meyer, Doug Sundheim, Jeremy Galland, Lauren Berman, Silvia Robles, Alison Andrus

Not Present at Vote: Jeremy Arnon

6. MINUTES

A. Approval of Minutes

RESOLVED that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education accepts the Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of February 22, 2021.

Motion by Doug Sundheim, second by Silvia Robles.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: Doug Sundheim, Jeremy Galland, Lauren Berman, Silvia Robles, Alison Andrus

Abstain: Jodie Meyer

Not Present at Vote: Jeremy Arnon

7. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Policy

Valerie Henning-Piedmonte:

- Shared the New and Missing Policies from the Compliance Audit Policy Review to the Board
- Twenty policies were reviewed by the policy committee and added for Board review
- The list of new and missing policies can be found [here](#)

8. OLD BUSINESS

A. Construction Project Update

Maureen Caraballo:

- Presented an update on the construction at Hillside Elementary School
- Updates included excavation and digging and removing rock at the site
- Over the next 2 weeks, site work will progress towards the front of the new addition
- Construction will continue and an asbestos abatement in Room 155 and stairway will be performed the week of March 29th
- Maureen said she will give an update on budgets for work in the middle school auditorium and music rooms as well as the cornice update at the following Board meeting
[Click here to view presentation](#)

B. 2021-2022 School Calendar

- Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education adopted the 2021-2022 school calendar
[Click here to view the 2021-2022 school calendar](#)

RESOLVED, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education adopt the 2021-2022 school calendar.

Motion by Doug Sundheim, second by Silvia Robles.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: Jodie Meyer, Doug Sundheim, Lauren Berman, Silvia Robles, Alison Andrus

No: Jeremy Galland

9. NEW BUSINESS

A. Resolution for New York State Funding of Public Education

- Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education accepted the Resolution for New York State Funding of Public Education
- The resolution calls on State Legislators to ensure public schools receive short and long-term funding to deal with the extraordinary costs and student needs created by the COVID-19 pandemic

RESOLVED, that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education accept the Resolution for New York State Funding of Public Education.

Motion by Silvia Robles, second by Alison Andrus.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: Jodie Meyer, Doug Sundheim, Lauren Berman, Silvia Robles, Alison Andrus

No: Jeremy Galland

10. SECOND PUBLIC COMMENT

A. Second Public Comment

Ann Melvin:

- Congratulated Dr. Henning Piedmonte & Melissa Szymanski for bringing the High School to #2 ranking
- Regarding Sophia's project, she would be interested in knowing the feedback from the parents

11. BOARD OF EDUCATION COMMENTS

A. Comments

Jodi Meyer:

- Suggested that those on the board who work together should call everyone by their first name and not refer to each other by title

Jeremy Galland:

- Commented on Sophia's research paper and noted that the teacher didn't select the topic that was up to the student and Sophia revealed what is already known regarding the trust issues between the administration and teachers and he does not feel anything was left out in regards to the interviews of the parents if parental interviews provided nothing conclusive

Alison Andrus:

- Commented on Sophia's report noting she is curious about all the other groups that were interviewed in order to provide a fuller understanding of the situation

Doug Sundheim:

- Commented on Sophia's report noting that she brought up some great points, touched on a variety of issues facing the community and district from COVID, George Floyd incident, challenges around books, etc. and pointed out how everyone in the community is stressed and pointed out that all perspectives are valid
- He finds the most frustrating to be the tone in which different parties have addressed one another and people feeling disrespected, he feels it doesn't have anything to do with the actual parties but the crazy stressful time that we are all in right now

12. ADJOURNMENT

A. Adjournment

- Motion to adjourn the meeting.

Motion by Jodie Meyer, second by Silvia Robles.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: Jodie Meyer, Doug Sundheim, Jeremy Galland, Lauren Berman, Silvia Robles, Alison Andrus