



**Hastings-on-Hudson
Regular Board of Education Meeting
Monday, November 20, 2023**

Members present

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

1. OPENING OF MEETING

A. [Call to Order](#)

- Call to order at 6:04 pm
- Dr. Lang arrived at 6:12 pm

2. STUDENT REPORT

A. [Student Report](#)

- Seventh and eighth-grade musical "Godspell" was a success, with excellent performances in acting, dancing, and singing.
- Harvest Moon Ball featured performances from Hastings musicians, including high school and middle school jazz bands.
- Winter sports teams have finalized their rosters, and Boys Basketball has a scrimmage against Ardsley and Hendrick Hudson.
- High school One Acts held auditions bringing this popular middle school activity to the high school.
- Caitlin Thomas, an 11th grader, placed first at the New York Federation championships in the 5000 meters race.
- PL (Peer Leadership) parent fishbowl provided freshmen parents with insights into weekly lunch meetings.
- Spring musical interests meeting scheduled for November 28.
- HoH hikes organized for Thanksgiving break.
- Annual Project Share Thanksgiving dinner hosted by Hastings students, staff, parents, and residents in the Cochran gym on November 21.

3. PRESENTATION

A. School Based Mental Health Clinic

Mariangela Sanchez, Assistant Director of Special Education, shared exciting news about a meaningful partnership aimed at supporting Hastings students. As a certified school psychologist, she recognized concerning trends in students' social-emotional well-being due to the lingering impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Leveraging her network and expertise, she initiated a collaboration with Andrus, and they are in the final stages of state approval to have a licensed social worker supporting Hastings students by early 2024. The mental health clinic will be located at Hillside Elementary School two days per week and the Middle High School campus three days per week, offering outpatient services through referrals and utilizing medical insurance for billing. This initiative aims to address service delivery delays and enhance the support available to students. The goal is to foster positive social-emotional well-being and equip students with foundational skills to thrive. The

establishment of the mental health clinic is seen as an addition to existing services, not a replacement, and is expected to have a direct and positive impact on students' development. The effort has involved seven to eight months of collaboration and framing to ensure it complements the existing support structure.

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

B. [2024-25 Budget Prep Presentation](#)

Maureen Caraballo provided a high-level overview of the budget process. She discussed the internal and external budget calendars, emphasizing the legal timelines for budget presentations and approvals. She highlighted the importance of long-range planning, historical budget numbers, and early indications of trends. The presentation included a review of past budget growth, tax rate implications, and the impact of various factors on budget projections.

The focus was on the five-year projection chart, detailing the adopted budget, estimated expenses for the current fiscal year, and projections for the next five years. Three scenarios (low, medium, and high) were presented for salary and benefits growth, with a focus on the majority of budget variations being driven by student needs and individual circumstances. She emphasized the need for early projections while acknowledging the potential for changes as new information becomes available. The presentation also addressed factors like interfund transfers and anticipated savings.

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

4. REPORT FROM SUPERINTENDENT

A. [Update & District Highlights](#)

Dr. McKersie highlighted two significant items. First, he discussed the Blue Ribbon Commission's report on graduation measures in New York State, which has the potential to significantly change the framework for high school matriculation. The report, approximately 70 pages, emphasizes equity, multiple pathways for assessment, real-life credentials, and a culturally responsive curriculum. The concept of a statewide "portrait of a graduate" was introduced, outlining desired attributes for New York State graduates.

Secondly, Dr. McKersie updated the board on the search for a new high school principal. The application deadline is December 6, with around 60 applicants expected, and the goal is to identify 30 strong candidates. The review process will start in January, and an advisory committee will interview three or four candidates. Dr. McKersie plans to present a single candidate for board approval on February 6, with an executive session opportunity for the board ahead of the vote.

Dr. McKersie also addressed the interim middle school principal position, stating that the current focus is on the high school search. However, if a suitable candidate for the middle school emerges from the pool of high school principal applicants, there may be a smooth transition to the middle school search following the approval of the high school principal. The board was encouraged to keep the sequencing in mind, allowing time for careful consideration.

- [Click here to view Superintendent Report](#)

5. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

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

Presented by Melissa Szymanski, Ed.D., Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction

POHL: Restorative Practices

Professional learning sessions in the area of Restorative Practices that were originally scheduled for last week unfortunately had to be canceled due to the illness of the facilitator. This professional learning is in the process of being rescheduled.

FMS Action Plan

Scott Wynne and Melissa Szymanski have been meeting to finalize the action plan for FMS. This plan reflects areas of academic focus, social emotional focus, and structural focus as well as some additional content that does not sit within these three areas. Topics included in the action plan will fall under the Portrait of a Hastings Learner umbrella. The plan has been designed to highlight topics, descriptions, action steps, success metrics and a plan for evaluation.

Chair Council

The November Chair Council meeting was focused on finalizing a draft AI position statement. Time was also dedicated to discussing the authentic learning goal of the Portrait of a Hastings Learner. Subsequent exploration of content-area inquiry work related to this goal will follow.

AI

On Wednesday afternoon, our Model Schools partners, Leslie Accardo and Kelly Nocca, met with the FMS faculty during their faculty meeting to facilitate an introductory learning session around the use of AI. The three learning objectives were:

- (1) Clarify key vocabulary to develop an understanding of artificial intelligence
- (2) Provide some immediate and practical use cases for teachers to explore Chat GPT
- (3) Identify legitimate opportunities and concerns around AI and how to develop safe and effective habits.

The flow of the session mirrored what was done last month at the high school level, with content slightly modified based on teacher feedback from the initial session:

- * Intro: "hook" conversation / prompt to set the stage
- * Step 1: What is AI? (identify /clarify key terms)
- * Step 2: Why does it matter? Reflection on Hastings Portrait of a learner, current work on AI position statement but the Chair Council
- * Step 3: What are some immediate ways to start exploring AI tools like Chat GPT?
 - Modeled examples, including an AI example for teacher use and five effective strategies for using Chat GPT with students
- * Wrap Up: maximize opportunities and minimize concerns
- * Finale: toolkit for further learning and exploration (curated bibliography of resources)

Professional Learning Committee

During the November Professional Learning Committee meeting, members of the group began revising our State required Professional Development Plan. This plan is being crafted with consideration of the three goals indicated in the Portrait of a Hastings Learner and the content areas outlined in the Curriculum Review Cycle.

B. [Report from Business Official](#)

Maureen Caraballo provided a brief update on the recent Facilities Committee meeting. The committee discussed the progress of the ongoing capital project, with the architect providing an update to the committee members. One key point of discussion was exploring different options for the fields, including the possibility of splitting the proposed project to address maintenance items separately from potential field renovations or additions. She mentioned the recommendation to consider various drainage options as part of the field discussions. The committee is scheduled to have another meeting on the 27th to continue deliberations and gather more information. She also indicated that the Facilities Committee is actively meeting with architects to thoroughly understand and consider the elements of the capital project. The intention is to provide the board with a comprehensive update after one more facilities meeting, similar to the approach taken last summer, where architects presented a full overview of the project.

6. PUBLIC COMMENT

- A. Public Comment
- No public comment

7. BUSINESS

A. [Business Items](#)

1. Facing History and Ourselves, Professional Learning Workshop, proposal.
2. Stipulation of Settlement.

3. Salary Advancements for the 2023-2024 school year.
4. Special Education District Plan 2023-2026.
5. Tax Certiorari Settlement - Jigsaw, Inc. for the Assessment years 2018-2020.
6. Stephanie Minor, police officer provided security services for two soccer games and a football game, invoice.
7. Brandon King, police officer provided security services at the October 21, 2023 football game, invoice.
8. Alvin Ailey Dance Theatre Foundation, two performances on March 22, 2024, for Hastings High School and Farragut Middle School, contract.

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

Motion by Doreen Bucher, second by Theresa McCaffrey.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

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

Not Present at Vote: Jodie Meyer

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

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 2023-2024 school year:

CSE: 10322, 12561, 12294, 11442, 11378, 10480, 10968, 10464, 12292, 10898, 10462, 7703, 12743, 7662

CPSE: 12709, 12718

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

Motion by Damaris-Lois Lang, second by Maureen Lennon-Santana.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

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

Not Present at Vote: Jodie Meyer

8. PERSONNEL

A. [Approve Consent Agenda](#)

Resolution: RESOLVED, to approve agenda items 8B through 8D as contained on the Consent Agenda for this meeting.

RESOLVED, to approve agenda items 8B through 8D as contained on the Consent Agenda for this meeting.

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

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

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

Not Present at Vote: Jodie Meyer

B. Appointments

1. Kristen Calle, ENL teacher at Hillside Elementary School, appoint to an additional .1 FTE effective November 21, 2023 through a date to be determined.
2. Colleen Walker, ENL teacher at High High School, appoint to an additional .1 FTE effective November 13, 2023 through a date to be determined.
3. Amina Baker, appoint to Per Diem substitute teacher district wide effective upon verification of NYSED fingerprint clearance for the 2023-2024 school year.
4. Khizra Bhatti, appoint to Per Diem substitute teacher district wide effective November 20, 2023 for the 2023-2024 school year.
5. Svitlana Fay, appoint to Per Diem substitute teacher district wide effective November 21, 2023 for the 2023-2024 school year.
6. Schedule B appointment requests as per attached spreadsheet. ([Enc](#))

7. Bryan Stevens, appoint to the position of part-time School Monitor at Hillside Elementary effective November 13, 2023.
8. Patrick Doyle, appoint to 1.0 FTE Social Studies Regular Substitute/Leave Replacement at Farragut Middle School, BA Step 1, \$61,056 (to be pro-rated) effective approximately February 5, 2024-April 2, 2024. Certification held: Social Studies 7-12 - Initial.
9. Hana Rezmovits, appoint to volunteer translator at Hillside Elementary School effective date upon verification of NYSED fingerprint clearance for the 2023-2024 school year.

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

RESOLVED, to approve agenda items 8B through 8D as contained on the Consent Agenda for this meeting.

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

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

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

Not Present at Vote: Jodie Meyer

C. Amendment

1. Martha Polstein, Special Education teacher at Farragut Middle School, amend appointment date for additional .2 FTE Special Education Reading teacher at Farragut Middle School to effective date November 13, 2023 for the 2023-2024 school year.

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

RESOLVED, to approve agenda items 8B through 8D as contained on the Consent Agenda for this meeting.

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

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

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

Not Present at Vote: Jodie Meyer

D. Resignation

1. Nicolette Frattellone, recently appointed incoming per diem substitute teacher district wide has provided notice of resignation effective November 2, 2023.

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

RESOLVED, to approve agenda items 8B through 8D as contained on the Consent Agenda for this meeting.

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

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

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

Not Present at Vote: Jodie Meyer

9. MINUTES

A. [Approval of Minutes](#)

1. Approval of Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of November 7, 2023.

RESOLVED that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education accepts the Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of November 7, 2023.

Motion by Damaris-Lois Lang, second by Doreen Bucher.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

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

Not Present at Vote: Jodie Meyer

10. POLICIES

A. [Second Read](#)

Policies for Second Read:

- Policy 6710 - Purchasing Authority

RESOLVED, that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education adopt policy.

Motion by Maureen Lennon-Santana, second by Theresa McCaffrey.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

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

Not Present at Vote: Jodie Meyer

11. SECOND PUBLIC COMMENT

A. Second Public Comment

- No public comment

12. AGENDA REVIEW

A. [Agenda Review](#)

December 5th

- FMS Student Sharing
- Budget Work Session
- Executive Session (TBD)

December 19th

- Update on the school calendar

13. BOARD OF EDUCATION COMMENTS

A. [Comments](#)

- Dr. Lang addressed two concerns related to the board process. Firstly, she expressed unease about the appearance of censoring or altering board input, emphasizing that individual views must be presented in the collective board context without summarization or alteration. Secondly, Dr. Lang raised concerns about the normalization of sidebars, where discussions about board actions occur outside official meetings, influencing decision-making before the board convenes. She highlighted the lack of fact-checking, transparency, and the potential for power dynamics and biased baselines in sidebar conversations. Dr. Lang urged caution and emphasized the need to maintain a board process that adheres to established principles and fosters transparency and equity.
- Doreen Bucher expressed gratitude to Dr. Lang for her hard work and mentioned the surprising commonalities found in their discussions despite differences on paper. She commended Dr. Lang for being open to diverse opinions. Doreen then shared information about a school in Florida that implemented a bold move by banning phones, resulting in increased student engagement, reduced bullying, and improved focus on studies. She emphasized her ongoing advocacy for considering a similar policy in their district and reiterated the numerous positive impacts such a decision could have on students.

- Theresa McCaffrey raised a concern about students using Chromebooks during lunch, stating that her children have observed students gathering around those with Chromebooks to watch YouTube instead of engaging in dialogue. She expressed a desire for discussions on the possibility of discontinuing this practice.
- Dr. McKersie acknowledged concerns about Chromebook usage during lunch, mentioning that it has been a recurring issue raised by families. He highlighted that while there are instances of students using Chromebooks during lunch, it's not a universal problem. Dr. McKersie discussed the need to address the issue thoughtfully and systematically, emphasizing the importance of optimizing screen time for educational and recreational purposes. He also touched on the challenge of balancing the desire to limit screen time with the recognition that some technology access, such as YouTube for instructional purposes, is necessary. Dr. McKersie suggested approaching the matter strategically, considering potential actions and involving students in the decision-making process to avoid faculty resistance. He concluded by expressing the need for a thoughtful and systematic approach to address both Chromebook and cellphone usage.

14. ADJOURNMENT

A. [Adjournment](#)

Motion to adjourn the meeting.

Motion by Damaris-Lois Lang, second by Maureen Lennon-Santana.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

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

Not Present at Vote: Jodie Meyer

Melissa DeLaBarrera

Submitted by:

Melissa DeLaBarrera

District Clerk