



**Hastings-on-Hudson
Regular Board of Education Meeting
Tuesday, December 5, 2023**

Members present

Alexander Dal Piaz
Damaris-Lois Lang
Doreen Bucher
Jodie Meyer
Theresa McCaffrey

1. OPENING OF MEETING

A. [Call to Order](#)

- Meeting called to order 6:07 pm
- Jodie Meyer arrived at 6:18 pm

B. [Announcements](#)

- Alex Dal Piaz began the meeting by acknowledging the absence of board member Maureen Lennon, who is out of the country.
- The scheduled presentation by middle schoolers from FMS has been postponed to a later date.
- Student representatives are currently engaged in theater productions and will not be present for the meeting.
- Alex highlighted the busy season with holidays approaching, mentioning upcoming recitals and concerts.
- An announcement was made about a sixth-grade production of the play Matilda, which Alex recommended attending.

Upcoming Events & Dates of Interest:

- JR. College Night- Parents & Students (zoom)
Wednesday, December 6 · 6:30 – 7:30pm
- FMS Grade 6 Musical
Friday, December 8 · 7:00 – 8:00pm & Saturday, December 9 · 7:00 – 8:00pm
- Policy Committee Meeting
Tuesday, December 12 · 5:15 – 6:15pm
- HHS PTSA/SEPTA Meeting (Virtual)
Wednesday, December 13 · 8:30 – 9:30am
- HHS Winter Concert
Thursday, December 14 · 7:00 – 9:00pm

2. REPORT FROM SUPERINTENDENT

A. [Update & District Highlights](#)

- Dr. McKersie highlighted MariAngela Sanchez's presentation about the school-based mental health clinic at the previous meeting. Noting that on Friday, the governor announced a list of significant grants, with Hastings being included in the partnership with Andrus. This collaboration aims to provide on-site

licensed social workers as supplements to existing personnel for Farragut Middle School, High School, and Hillside, benefiting all students.

- Two principal searches are underway, with the high school principal search actively progressing. Dr. McKersie aims to present the recommended new high school principal for a vote on February 6. The search for the middle school principal will follow, leveraging the progress made in the high school search.
- Dr. McKersie mentioned ongoing work on the 2024-2025 calendar, with a survey planned for families and potentially students in January. The survey, modeled after Ardsley's last year, will provide guidance for the board's decision on the calendar, expected to be voted on in February. Preliminary region dates have been received, with considerations for additional mandates, such as including Lunar New Year in the school calendar.

[Click here to view Superintendent's report](#)

3. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

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

POHL: Behavioral Charter

As noted in the autumn presentation to the Board of Education, processes associated with this POHL action plan include forming a committee to lead the creation of the behavioral charter, revisiting the discipline codes and framework for restorative practices, creating differentiated behavioral charters for each building based on core principles, and enhancing professional learning opportunities focused on the use of restorative practices.

The work of the behavioral charter committee began last week, with members of the group aligning around what a behavioral charter is, why it is important, and the steps that will be taken to include the voice of students and faculty members in the creation process. Our charter work has been inspired by the efforts of Marc Brackett, Ph.D., from the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence as we collaborate to determine how we want to feel in our learning environment and the behaviors we will commit to in order to create those feelings at school.

POHL: Authentic Learning (Social Studies Inquiry)

Our social studies inquiry process at the middle and high school levels began, with teachers articulating areas of authentic learning within their current practice, inclusive of the use of technology, that are associated with the social studies practices outlined in the New York State Social Studies Framework. This inventory task served to identify current bright spots in the 5-12 social studies program. Because the social studies department has chosen AI as a lens for their inquiry, future sessions will be dedicated to learning more about AI and how AI can be leveraged to create the next level of authentic learning tasks for students. Continuous faculty input following each session will serve to guide future efforts.

APPR Recertification Training

This week, directors, assistant directors, principals, and assistant principals participated in annually required (APPR) recertification training with Melissa Szymanski and facilitator, Betty Ann Wyks. This training is necessary to be able to evaluate teachers. Prior to the training session, Melissa worked with Betty Ann to customize the session so it met the State requirements while also honoring the context-specific needs of the Hastings administrators.

B. [Report from Business Official](#)

Maureen Caraballo presented the following 2024-25 Budget Prep Presentation to the Board

[Click here to view the 2024-25 Budget Prep Session slide presentation](#)

[Click here to view view of 2024-25 Budget Prep Session presentation and discussion](#)

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

A. [Public Comment](#)

The following community members provided public comments addressing statements made by a board member in a previous meeting regarding Gender Diversity work with Center Lane at Hillside Elementary School. They also emphasized the importance of Gender work within the District.

- Cat McGrath - 130 Cochrane Avenue
- George Wichelns - 86 Hillside Avenue
- Laura Heisler Mitton - 45 Chestnut Drive
- Dorothy Neagle - 19 Terrace Drive
- Sarah Parker - 12 Riverpoint Road
- Andy Nichols - 35 Mt. Hope Boulevard
- Pato Paez - 42 Clunie Avenue
- Allyson McCabe - 171 Rosedale Avenue
- Amy Nichols - 35 Mt. Hope Boulevard
- Nancy Dodson - 69 Lincoln Avenue
- Lara Weitzman - 101 Lincoln Avenue
- Marie-Louise Miller - 357 Farragut Avenue

[Click here to view letter read by Cat McGrath and submitted to District Clerk to be entered into the record](#)
[Click here to view Public and Board Comments](#)

5. BUSINESS

A. [Business Items](#)

1. October 2023 Revenue and Expenditure reports.
2. Kelly's Sea Level, catering quote \$3000, for the Annual Senior Citizen Holiday Concert and Dinner.
3. Warrants.
4. 2023-2024 Salary Advancements Adjustment.

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

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

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

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

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

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

CSE: 10382, 7757, 10129, 10661, 10696, 12292, 12283, 11900

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 Doreen Bucher, second by Theresa McCaffrey.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

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

6. PERSONNEL

A. [Approve Consent Agenda](#)

Resolution: RESOLVED, to approve agenda items 6B through 6E as contained on the Consent Agenda for this meeting.

RESOLVED, to approve agenda items 6B through 6E as contained on the Consent Agenda for this meeting.

Motion by Jodie Meyer, second by Doreen Bucher.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

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

B. Appointments

1. Erin Dolan, Special Education teacher at Hastings High School, appoint to an additional .2 FTE to cover a leave of absence effective November 28, 2023-January 9, 2024.

2. Maryanne Heckhaus, Special Education teacher at Hastings High School, appoint to an additional .2 FTE to cover a leave of absence effective November 28, 2023-January 9, 2024.
3. Jan Melillo, Special Education teacher at Hastings High School, appoint to an additional .133 FTE to cover a leave of absence effective November 28, 2023-January 9, 2024.
4. Robyn Royal, Special Education teacher at Hastings High School, appoint to an additional .2 FTE to cover a leave of absence effective November 28, 2023-January 9, 2024.
5. Stephen Sullivan, Special Education teacher at Hastings High School, appoint to an additional .2 FTE to cover a leave of absence effective November 28, 2023-January 9, 2024.
6. Caryn Hecht, appoint to 1.0 FTE Special Education teacher at Farragut Middle School effective January 3, 2024-June 26, 2024. MA+60, Step 18, \$136,679 (to be pro-rated).
7. Felix Nieves, appoint to the position of part-time School Monitor at Hillside Elementary effective November 29, 2023.
8. Donna DeCicco, appoint to district-wide Per Diem substitute teacher effective December 6, 2023 for the 2023-2024 school year.
9. Elizabeth Zadrima, appoint to student teacher at Hillside Elementary School effective January 29, 2024-May 17, 2024.
10. Alicia King, appoint to the position of part-time School Monitor at Hillside Elementary effective December 7, 2023.
11. Larissa Judd-Pojanowski, appoint to the position of part-time School Monitor at Hillside Elementary effective upon verification of NYSED fingerprint clearance.
12. Amanda Rodriguez, appoint to .6 FTE ENL teacher at Hillside Elementary School and Hastings High School, MA+45, Step 9, \$103,297 to be prorated. Starting effective date to be determined for the 2023-2024 school year. Certifications held: English to Speakers of Other Languages - professional, Students with Disabilities (Birth-Grade 2) - professional, Students with Disabilities (Grades 1-6) - professional, Childhood Education (Grades 1-6) - professional, School Building Leader - professional, School District Leader - professional.

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

RESOLVED, to approve agenda items 6B through 6E as contained on the Consent Agenda for this meeting.

Motion by Jodie Meyer, second by Doreen Bucher.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

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

C. Amendment

1. Patrick Doyle, amend his appointment of Regular Substitute/Leave Replacement effective approximately February 5, 2024-April 2, 2024 to include appointment as a Per Diem Substitute teacher effective December 6, 2023 until approximately February 5, 2024 for his leave replacement assignment and after his leave replacement assignment until the end of the 2023-2024 school year.
2. James Adamo, amend appointment date for an additional .2 FTE Spanish position at Farragut Middle School to be effective August 29, 2023-June 26, 2024.
3. Francesca Hagadus, amend appointment date for an additional .4 FTE Spanish position at Farragut Middle School to be effective August 29, 2023-June 26, 2024.
4. Katie Paz, amend appointment date for an additional .2 FTE Spanish position at Hastings High School to be effective August 29, 2023-June 26, 2024.

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

RESOLVED, to approve agenda items 6B through 6E as contained on the Consent Agenda for this meeting.

Motion by Jodie Meyer, second by Doreen Bucher.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

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

D. Leave of Absence

1. Jacklyn Correa, Special Education teacher at Hastings High School has requested a leave of absence as follows: paid Medical Leave of Absence November 28, 2023-January 9, 2024. She will return to work on January 10, 2024.

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

RESOLVED, to approve agenda items 6B through 6E as contained on the Consent Agenda for this meeting.

Motion by Jodie Meyer, second by Doreen Bucher.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

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

E. Resignations

1. Merita Zherka, School Monitor at Hillside Elementary School has provided notice of resignation effective November 21, 2023.

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

RESOLVED, to approve agenda items 6B through 6E as contained on the Consent Agenda for this meeting.

Motion by Jodie Meyer, second by Doreen Bucher.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

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

7. MINUTES

A. [Approval of Minutes](#)

1. Approval of Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of November 20, 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 20, 2023.

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

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

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

8. SECOND PUBLIC COMMENT

A. [Second Public Comment](#)

- Pato Paez - 42 Clunie Avenue - made an additional comment regarding board member's response
- Laura Heisler Mitton - 45 Chestnut Drive - made a comment regarding 2021 Gender letter sent from Hillside

9. AGENDA REVIEW

A. [Agenda Review](#)

- Calendar discussion has been moved to January to align with neighboring districts. A survey will be conducted to inform the board.
- Gender Presentation is scheduled for March, following the February presentation at Hillside.

10. BOARD OF EDUCATION COMMENTS

A. [Comments](#)

- Jodie Meyer expressed her appreciation for the organized public comments and shared her reflections on the challenges faced in addressing issues of sex, gender, race, and equity within the district. She acknowledged both successes and failures, emphasizing the importance of continuous learning and improvement. Jodie highlighted the goal of ensuring every child feels a sense of belonging in Hastings. She shared a personal story from the farmers market, underscoring the community's positive reputation. Jodie expressed hope for a continued inclusive and supportive learning environment for all students, acknowledging the difficulties in navigating these complex issues and expressing empathy for teachers.

- Doreen Bucher clarified her earlier comment, responding to a parent who took offense to her suggestion that they could come to her individually. She explained the limitations of responding individually and the need for collective board agreement on official responses. Doreen expressed her past frustration with not knowing if her emails were received or had an impact, which influenced her decision to join the board to improve communication. She emphasized the board's openness to individual communication from parents who may have questions, comments, or differing views, aiming to ensure that diverse perspectives are represented.
- Dr. Lang expressed gratitude for the shared lived experiences and discussed the concept of a "construction site," emphasizing that issues become human protective rights due to a lack of equity. She highlighted the importance of expert input and lived experiences, mentioning the DEI position in the budget. Dr. Lang stressed the need for scholarly experts and discussed the creation of the Communications and Engagement Committee to address effective communication. She welcomed lived experience inputs and emphasized the goal of shaping an equitable environment while respecting diverse values.

11. ADJOURNMENT

A. [Motion to adjourn meeting](#)

Motion to adjourn meeting.

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

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

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

Melissa DeLaBarrera

**Submitted by:
Melissa DeLaBarrera
District Clerk**