



**Hastings-on-Hudson  
Regular Board of Education Meeting  
Tuesday, December 19, 2023**

---

**Members present**

Silvia Robles  
Alexander Dal Piaz  
Doreen Bucher  
Maureen Lennon-Santana  
Theresa McCaffrey

**1. OPENING OF MEETING**

A. Call to Order at 5:30 PM - it is expected that a motion will be made to move into Executive Session to discuss collective bargaining on an HTA matter.

- Meeting called to order at 5:38 PM

Motion to move into Executive Session to discuss collective bargaining regarding an HTA matter.

Motion by Silvia Robles, second by Maureen Lennon-Santana.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

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

**2. PUBLIC HEARING**

A. [Volunteer Firefighter and Ambulance Worker Tax Exemption](#)

- Jim Metzger residing at 427 Warburton Avenue, a civilian member and photographer for the HFD, sought Board of Education support for a tax break. He emphasized the rigorous training and volunteer commitment of HFD members, suggesting that a tax break would aid their efforts, attract new members, and help sustain the community's expected level of service. He urged the Board to vote in favor of the proposed tax break.

**3. OLD BUSINESS**

A. [Volunteer Firefighter and Ambulance Worker Tax Exemption](#)

WHEREAS, New York Real Property Tax Law Section 466-a was enacted to provide eligible volunteer firefighters and volunteer ambulance workers with a real property tax exemption from school taxes on real property owned by the eligible volunteer firefighter or volunteer ambulance worker so long as the school district in which the real property is located, after public hearing, adopts a resolution authorizing the exemption subject to the requirements of New York Real Property Tax Law Section 466-a; and

WHEREAS, New York Real Property Tax Law Section 466-a provides for the additional benefits conferred by the statute applicable to the exemption from school taxes so long as the School District which has authorized the exemption under Section 466-a adopts a resolution authorizing such additional benefits;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Hastings-on-Hudson Union Free School District Board of Education hereby authorizes the application of the Volunteer Firefighter and Ambulance Worker Real Property Tax Exemption as contained in New York Real Property Tax Law Section 466-a in the amount of ten percent (10%) of assessed value; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that, pursuant to New York Real Property Tax Law Section 466-a(2)(d), the Board of Education establishes a minimum service requirement for each applicant to be two (2) years; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that, pursuant to New York Real Property Tax Law Section 466-a(6), the Board of Education designates that application for exemption must be made to the local agency responsible for

assessment of real property in the School District.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Hastings-on-Hudson Union Free School District, does hereby grant an otherwise eligible volunteer firefighter or volunteer ambulance worker the exemption provided for in this resolution for the remainder of his or her life if the eligible volunteer firefighter or volunteer ambulance worker accrues more than twenty years of active service and is so certified by the authority having jurisdiction for the incorporated volunteer fire company, fire department or volunteer ambulance service;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Hastings-on-Hudson Union Free School District, does hereby grant an exemption claimed pursuant to New York Real Property Tax Law 466-a to a deceased enrolled member's un-remarried spouse if such member is killed in the line of duty, subject to the requirements set forth in New York Real Property Tax Law 466-a(4);

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Hastings-on-Hudson Union Free School District, does hereby grant an exemption claimed pursuant to New York Real Property Tax Law 466-a to a deceased enrolled member's un-remarried spouse, subject to the requirements set forth in New York Real Property Tax Law 466-a(5).

Motion by Theresa McCaffrey, second by Silvia Robles.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

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

## 5. STUDENT REPORT

### A. [Student Report](#)

- Elianna Carvalho reported on the success of Matilda Sixth Grade show, which sold out before the Friday night performance. She congratulated the cast and crew. The Hastings High School Winter Concert showcased impressive performances from various groups. Hastings Kids is currently collecting blankets, clothes, and supplies for a Midnight Run. Nine Hastings High School musicians were featured in four ensembles at the New York State School Music Association Allstate Music Festival. Jasper Zimmerman received two awards from the Young Arts National Competition, and Miles Levine won the Juilliard pre-college concerto competition. The Student Union's winter fundraiser for seniors, Winter Carol Gram, was successful. The Quiz Bowl Team achieved its first-ever large tournament win outside Westchester at Columbia on December 2. Elianna also mentioned that students are looking forward to the upcoming break.

## 6. REPORT FROM SUPERINTENDENT

### A. [Update & District Highlights](#)

- Dr. McKersie provided an update on the high school principal search, reporting progress with 70 initial applicants now narrowed down to 16. Efforts are being made to finalize a pool of five or six candidates for an advisory committee. The goal is to present a single recommended candidate by February for board approval. Dr. McKersie highlighted the informative roundtables conducted with students, staff, and parents, sharing insights that will shape the selection process. Additionally, he mentioned a recent difficult decision related to weather concerns, emphasizing the need to address changing climate conditions.

[Click here to read written Superintendent Report](#)

## 7. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

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

POHL: Behavioral Charter

The Behavioral Charter Committee met twice over the past couple of weeks. The work of the group focused on generating and discussing a priority list of emotions that students, staff, and administrators want to feel within the Hastings learning environment. This process entailed randomly selecting, and inviting, K-12 students, staff, and administrators to participate in the committee's initial prioritization process. Using an interactive process, the committee and randomly selected invitees generated and sorted emotions into groups. Robust discussion ensued as participants determined the best word choice for each group of emotions. To ensure the voices of all students, staff, and administrators throughout the district, the committee decided to create an input survey. The survey they designed together will be administered on February 6th.

POHL: Authentic Learning (Social Studies Inquiry)

The social studies department (Grades 5-12) continues to move forward with their curriculum review cycle inquiry. This week was dedicated to finalizing planning in partnership with Leslie Accardo, our Model Schools

thought partner. Next week, teachers will explore how AI can be leveraged to create the next level of authentic learning tasks for students.

B. [Report from Business Official](#)

- Maureen Caraballo provided a brief update on the budget progress, the next update is scheduled for early January. Internal meetings related to the budget were conducted throughout the past week.

## 8. PUBLIC COMMENT

A. [Public Comment](#)

- Megan Spano, residing at 332 Auburn Avenue and a parent of a seventh-grader, urged the consideration of upgrading the part-time Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) coordinator position to a full-time DEI administrator as the budget process begins. She emphasized the unique value a DEI administrator can bring in evaluating policies, procedures, and curriculum, ensuring diversity goals are met. Megan highlighted the need for DEI expertise in the DASA process, advocating for the automatic involvement of a DEI administrator to support families and maintain equity. She urged the board to take action, stressing the importance of prioritizing diversity, equity, and inclusion, especially in light of global incidents of hate. Megan called for serious consideration of this recommendation during budget discussions to better serve the students and protect vulnerable populations in Hastings on Hudson.
- Laura Heisler-Mitton, residing at 45 Chestnut Drive and representing Hastings Rainbow Families, addressed the board to clarify a perceived restriction on mentioning specific board members by name during public comments. She emphasized that district policy number 1230 does not explicitly prohibit naming board trustees in public comments, and she stressed the importance of transparency and accountability in a functioning democracy. Laura entered this clarification into the record, asserting the public's right to hold elected representatives accountable for their comments made during public Board of Ed discussions.

## 9. BUSINESS

A. [Business Items](#)

1. Emily Isidori, Special Education teacher at Hillside Elementary School, recommend approval of salary increase as per attached for completion of National Board Certification, effective January 1, 2024.
2. Joel Dean Foundation, Inc., contribution in the amount of \$6,000.
3. Hastings Ski Team Two (2) Year Pilot program, proposal.
4. Merger Letter of Intent, Girls Flag Football.
5. Holly Hochstein Weinrib, Speech and Language Therapy Services, agreement.
6. Dobbs Ferry School District, contract for Health Services.
7. Robert Simmonds, Police Officer, provided security services at the Thanksgiving dinner, November 21, 2023, invoice.
8. Stipulation of Settlement.
9. B & B Fitness and Flooring, Quote for treadmill repair.
10. HTA Side letter.
11. HTA Side letter.

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

Motion by Doreen Bucher, second by Maureen Lennon-Santana.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: Silvia Robles, Alexander Dal Piaz, Doreen Bucher, Maureen Lennon-Santana, 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 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: 12745, 10804, 12579, 11806, 12023, 12567, 11150, 12363, 12372, 11148, 11495, 12293, 12472, 12598, 10591

CPSE: 12586, 12726

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 Maureen Lennon-Santana, second by Doreen Bucher.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

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

## 10. PERSONNEL (CONSENT AGENDA)

### A. [Approve Consent Agenda](#)

Resolution: RESOLVED, to approve agenda items 10B through 10D as contained on the Consent Agenda for this meeting.

RESOLVED, to approve agenda items 10B through 10D as contained on the Consent Agenda for this meeting.

Motion by Maureen Lennon-Santana, second by Doreen Bucher.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

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

### B. Appointments

1. Patrick Agababian, appoint to Physical Education student teacher at Hillside Elementary School effective January 22, 2024-March 15, 2024.
2. Thomas Kress, appoint to Physical Education student teacher at Hastings High School effective January 22, 2024-March 15, 2024.
3. Michael Popov, appoint to Physical Education student teacher at Hastings High School effective March 18, 2024-May 8, 2024.
4. Schedule B appointment requests as per attached spreadsheet. ([Enc](#))
5. Luisa Scioscia, appoint to the position of part-time School Monitor at Hillside Elementary School effective December 13, 2023.
6. Lized Lopez Flores, appoint to the position of part-time School Monitor at Farragut Middle School effective December 19, 2023.
7. Emma Chibbaro, appoint to the position of part-time School Monitor at Hillside Elementary School effective December 18, 2023.

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

RESOLVED, to approve agenda items 10B through 10D as contained on the Consent Agenda for this meeting.

Motion by Maureen Lennon-Santana, second by Doreen Bucher.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

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

### C. Amendments

1. Amanda Rodriguez, amend .6 FTE (.5 Hillside Elementary School/.1 Hastings High School) ENL appointment start date to January 8, 2024 for the 2023-2024 school year.
2. Kristen Calle, amend date of additional .1 FTE ENL appointment at Hillside Elementary School to November 27, 2023-January 5, 2024.
3. Colleen Walker, amend date of additional .1 FTE ENL appointment at Hastings High School to November 13, 2023-January 5, 2024.
4. Jacklyn Correa, Special Education teacher at Hastings High School amend leave of absence as follows: paid Medical leave of absence November 28, 2023-December 15, 2023. She will return to work on December 18, 2023.
5. Erin Dolan, Special Education teacher at Hastings High School, amend appointment date of additional .2 FTE coverage to November 28, 2023-December 15, 2023.
6. Maryann Heckhaus, Special Education teacher at Hastings High School, amend appointment date of additional .2 FTE coverage to November 28, 2023-December 15, 2023.
7. Jan Melillo, Special Education teacher at Hastings High School, amend appointment date of additional .133 FTE coverage to November 28, 2023-December 15, 2023.
8. Robyn Royal, Special Education teacher at Hastings High School, amend appointment date of additional .2 FTE coverage to November 28, 2023-December 15, 2023.

9. Stephen Sullivan, Special Education teacher at Hastings High School, amend appointment date of additional .2 FTE coverage to November 28, 2023-December 15, 2023.
10. Nicholas Sestito, School Monitor at Hillside Elementary School, amend appointment to Teacher Aide at Hillside Elementary School, Column IA, Step 1, effective December 11, 2023.
11. Malik Smith, School Monitor at Farragut Elementary School, amend appointment to Teacher Aide, Column IA, Step 1, effective December 11, 2023.
12. Anne Marie Fardo, School Monitor at Hillside Elementary School, amend appointment to Teacher Aide, Column IA, Step 2, effective December 11, 2023.
13. Alexa Masucci, Elementary K-6 Regular Substitute/Leave Replacement at Farragut Middle School, amend appointment date to November 30, 2023-February 16, 2024.

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

RESOLVED, to approve agenda items 10B through 10D as contained on the Consent Agenda for this meeting.

Motion by Maureen Lennon-Santana, second by Doreen Bucher.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

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

#### D. Resignations

1. Alise Brkich, School Monitor at Hillside Elementary School, has resigned effective November 7, 2023.

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

RESOLVED, to approve agenda items 10B through 10D as contained on the Consent Agenda for this meeting.

Motion by Maureen Lennon-Santana, second by Doreen Bucher.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

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

## 11. MINUTES

### A. [Approval of Minutes](#)

1. Approval of Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of December 5, 2023.

RESOLVED that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education accepts the Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of December 5, 2023.

Motion by Theresa McCaffrey, second by Silvia Robles.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

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

## 12. COMMITTEE REPORTS

### A. [Policy](#)

- Maureen Lennon Santana provided an update on the policy committee meeting. Noting a tight timeline for implementation of the new Workplace Violence Prevention Policy. Two other policies were discussed and reviewed for updates, Purchasing and Investments, with added regulations. The Code of Conduct was discussed in the policy committee, voted on in October, and will undergo further review with proposed changes to be presented around April for alignment with the new calendar cycle.

## 13. POLICIES

### A. First Read

Policies for First Read:

8130.2 - Workplace Violence Prevention

#### 14. SECOND PUBLIC COMMENT

- A. Second Public Comment
- No public comment

#### 15. AGENDA REVIEW

A. [Agenda Review](#)

January 9th:

- State of the District Mid-Year Report (report may be delayed due to HS Principal search)
- Student Sharing with Hillside

#### 16. BOARD OF EDUCATION COMMENTS

A. [Comments](#)

- Doreen Bucher addressed comments made during the last Board of Education meeting, responding to claims made by members of Hastings Rainbow Families. She refuted accusations of misinformation, particularly regarding her statements on a letter sent to Hillside parents and her views on gender diversity education. Doreen clarified that her comments were based on her interpretation of a letter from Hillside and emphasized the importance of questioning the curriculum, citing concerns raised by other Hastings parents. She defended the right to question educational content and highlighted the need for a balanced approach, respecting diverse perspectives within the community. Doreen requested the removal of the letter from the record and asserted her commitment to inclusivity.
- Alex Dal Piaz emphasized the importance of Center Lane, highlighting that the Board supported it due to its unique nature as a local and community-grounded resource. He expressed that having a resource like Center Lane, rather than an anonymous outside provider, is valuable to many families in Westchester. Alex concluded by wishing everyone a good time off and happy holidays.

#### 17. ADJOURNMENT

A. [Adjournment](#)

- Motion to adjourn the meeting.

Motion by Doreen Bucher, second by Maureen Lennon-Santana.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

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

*Melissa DeLaBarrera*

**Submitted by:**  
**Melissa DeLaBarrera**  
**District Clerk**