

**Hastings-on-Hudson  
Regular Board of Education Meeting  
Wednesday, April 3, 2024**

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**Members present**

Silvia Robles  
Alexander Dal Piaz  
Damaris-Lois Lang  
Doreen Bucher  
Maureen Lennon-Santana (arrived at 6:28 pm)  
Jodie Meyer  
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 a confidential personnel matter.

- Meeting called to order at 5:36 pm by Alex Dal Piaz

Motion to move into Executive Session to discuss a confidential personnel matter.

Motion by Silvia Robles, second by Theresa McCaffrey.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: Silvia Robles, Alexander Dal Piaz, Doreen Bucher, Theresa McCaffrey

**2. PUBLIC COMMENT**

A. [Public Comment](#)

1. Ruth Kaplan, residing at 67 Tompkins - re: music program
2. Michael Gaillard, residing at 190 High Street - re: music program
3. Clint DeGannon, residing at 219 Birchwood, Nyack - Hastings Alumni - re: music program
4. Alex Solounias, residing at 14 Euclid Avenue - re: use of technology in schools
5. Andy Zimmerman, residing at 7 Ridge Street - re: music program
6. Risa Kaufman, residing at 121 Euclid Avenue - re: music program
7. Michelle Veyvoda, 70 Flower Avenue - re: music program

[Click here to view Public Comment](#)

**3. PRESENTATIONS**

A. [Budget Presentation](#)

Maureen Caraballo, Business Official presented the following budget presentation to the Board during their Budget Session:

[Click here to view Budget Slide Presentation](#)

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

**4. STUDENT REPORT**

A. [Student Report](#)

Presented by Kai Dirksen, Student Liaison

Kai expressed appreciation for the Hastings music program, highlighting personal growth and achievements attributed to it. Key updates included the Alvin Ailey Dance Company's visit, Spring Break anecdotes such as the Latin class trip to Italy, National Honor Society and Peer Leader applications, the commencement of senior internships, theater updates including recent and upcoming shows, preparations for Spirit Week and the spring

pep rally, safety measures for the solar eclipse, the upcoming ELA state test, the FMS science fair, and congratulations to students Justin Baldassarre and Miles Hamilton for their participation in the International Science and Engineering Fair.

## **5. REPORT FROM SUPERINTENDENT**

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

Presented by William McKersie, Ph.D., Superintendent of Schools

[Click here to view Superintendent Report for 4.3.2024](#)

## **6. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS**

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

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

#### **Music FTE Update**

Last Spring, we recognized the retirement of a member of the music faculty. That same member was promptly hired back as a .6, with the understanding that anticipated projections in enrollment & scheduling would not necessitate this staff for the 2024-25 School Year.

As we entered the budget planning process, we revisited the Music Department staffing needs with John Carini, the building principals, and Jeanette Kocur, Director of School Counseling, all of whom are key to the scheduling process. All have remained student-centered in the planning process, and all have remained passionate and committed to the excellence of our Music Program.

Following our recent Board of Education meeting, we looked closely into the concerns raised during the public comment period. We revisited both our music program offerings and student scheduling. Within the last couple of years, the middle school reallocated the 7th/8th grade general music position to provide chorus and instrumental music opportunities for all 5th graders. While we now have more robust opportunities for our 5th graders, the need remains to provide general music in either 7th or 8th grade for students who are not participating in chorus, band, or orchestra. Rather than reducing the full .6 music position, we will reduce the position by .4. This will result in a .2 position to ensure that we can both maintain the full fidelity of our current music offerings and lessons, and provide general music classes to middle school students who need the music requirement. By the end of the week, we will be posting a more comprehensive FAQ document outlining our current 23-24 and future 24-25 music offerings.

#### **ELA: Curriculum Review Cycle (Inquiry)**

Melissa Szymanski and Sarah Walters, English Department Chairperson, have been working closely together to advance the middle school ELA curriculum review process. The Hillside Literacy Committee will be presenting their literacy program to the middle school English department on April 15th. Following this presentation, representatives from the Hillside committee will return to the middle school for follow-up discussion about the work they have done over the years. The Hillside presentation and cross-building discussion will serve as springboards for the inquiry that will be completed this spring.

#### **PE/Health: Curriculum Review Cycle (Implementation)**

Melissa Szymanski and Drew Wendol met to plan for the next phase of work with the PE and Health teachers. They designed a reflection for each member of the department to complete regarding the impact of the curriculum review cycle work they did together and the extent to which their change efforts reached children through concrete shifts in the P.E./ Health program and instruction/ assessment practices. A date in May has been set for the department to debrief implementation efforts and plan for the next level of work.

#### **Latin Trip to Italy**

During the recent break, 15 Latin students (sophomores, juniors and seniors) traveled to Italy. The trip included stays in Sorrento, Naples, and Rome. The itinerary was robust and kept everyone moving. The Sorrento agenda included a hydrofoil to cross the Bay of Naples to Capri, a Tarantella dance lesson, a visit to a mozzarella farm, and an exploration of Pompeii. In Naples, students visited Herculaneum, hiked Mount Vesuvius, and took a

guided tour of Naples Underground to dive into many layers of history. The visit to Rome began with a tour of the Colosseum. Other highlights included a stop at the Capuchin Crypts, the Pantheon and the Piazza della Rotonda. Throughout the entire adventure, the accommodations and food were incredible. The guide was deeply knowledgeable, intuitive, and completely impressed by our students, who were exceptional. Special thanks to Magistra, Ellen Driscoll, whose preparation and trip facilitation were flawless, and Mme. Chalmers, whose calming influence and steady guidance were fully appreciated.

## **7. BUSINESS**

### **A. [Business Items](#)**

1. Warrants.
2. CBIZ Valuation Group 2023-2024 Proposal.

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

Motion by Jodie Meyer, second by Silvia Robles.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: Silvia Robles, Alexander Dal Piaz, Damaris-Lois Lang, Doreen Bucher, Maureen Lennon-Santana, 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 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: 12760, 7756, 10738, 12575, 11904, 12014, 12517, 10591

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 2024-2025 school year:

CSE: 10915

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 Silvia Robles.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

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

## **8. PERSONNEL (CONSENT AGENDA)**

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

Resolution: 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, Jodie Meyer, Theresa McCaffrey

### **B. Appointments**

1. Cayden McGuirk, appoint to the position of part-time School Monitor at Farragut Middle School effective April 1, 2024.
2. Janine Melillo, appoint to an additional .2 FTE Living Environment assignment at Hastings High School retroactive to April 1, 2024-May 31, 2024.

3. Sharon Quigley, appoint to an additional .2 FTE Counseling assignment at Hastings High School retroactive to approximately April 1, 2024-May 31, 2024.
4. Randie Shaw, appoint to an additional .2 FTE Counseling assignment at Hastings High School retroactive to approximately April 1, 2024-May 31, 2024.

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

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, Jodie Meyer, Theresa McCaffrey

#### C. Amendment

1. Christina Repp, Social Worker at Hastings High School, has amended the date of her resignation for the purpose of retirement to effective date June 30, 2024.

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

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, Jodie Meyer, Theresa McCaffrey

#### D. Retirements

1. Lisa Adipietro, Teacher Assistant at Farragut Middle School has provided notice of resignation for the purpose of retirement effective June 30, 2024.
2. Maria Cocucci, Office Assistant at Hastings High School has provided notice of resignation for the purpose of retirement effective December 31, 2024.
3. Nicholas Frascone, Laborer in the Hastings-on-Hudson UFSD has provided notice of resignation for the purpose of retirement effective June 30, 2024.
4. Melissa Hardesty, Assistant Principal at Hastings High School has provided notice of resignation for the purpose of retirement effective December 31, 2024.
5. Emidio Righetti, Maintenance Mechanic in the Hastings-on-Hudson UFSD has provided notice of resignation for the purpose of retirement effective July 1, 2024.
6. Jeanette Kocur, Director of School Counseling, has provided notice of resignation for the purpose of retirement effective December 31, 2024.
7. Joanne Cipollina, School Nurse, has provided notice of resignation for the purpose of retirement effective June 30, 2024.

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

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, Jodie Meyer, Theresa McCaffrey

## 9. MINUTES

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

1. Approval of Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of March 19, 2024.

RESOLVED that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education accepts the Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of March 19, 2024.

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

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

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

## 10. SECOND PUBLIC COMMENT

### A. [Second Public Comment](#)

1. Risa Kaufman, residing at 121 Euclid Avenue re: music program
2. Ruby Puccillo, Hastings Alumni re: music program
3. Andy Zimmerman, residing at 7 Ridge Street - re: music program

[Click here to view public comment](#)

## 11. AGENDA REVIEW

### A. [Agenda Review](#)

April 16th

- Board to vote to approve the budget

## 12. BOARD OF EDUCATION COMMENTS

### A. [Comments](#)

1. Jodie Meyer expressed appreciation for student and alum voices in the discussion. She reflected on the emotional impact of Mr. Rubino's retirement and highlighted the importance of acknowledging the emotional aspect of personnel changes. She also raised the idea of considering longer school breaks, inspired by her son's experience at an independent school with a two-week break, suggesting it as a possible future consideration for public schools.
2. Dr. Lang began by deferring prepared board comments to prioritize discussion on the music concern. She clarified remarks made in the previous meeting regarding the administration, emphasizing that her focus was on the effectiveness of the work rather than the authority of positions. She acknowledged community feedback and expressed a desire to revisit the topic after the budget discussions. Dr. Lang highlighted the community's support for the arts and diversity, emphasizing transparency and clarity as guiding principles for the district.
3. Theresa McCaffrey echoed Jodi's sentiments about the impact of Mr. Rubino's departure, noting that he had ignited a passion for playing the electric bass in her daughter. She expressed a sense of loss and gratitude for his influence on the students.
4. Doreen Bucher suggested expanding music education beyond performance-based programs to include music history, appreciation, and different styles of music as standalone classes. She emphasized the importance of providing opportunities for all students to engage with music, regardless of their musical talents, and suggested integrating music education with other academic subjects like social studies. She highlighted the potential benefits of such an approach in enriching students' educational experiences and breaking up their day.
5. Silvia Robles acknowledged the challenges of decision-making as a member of the board of education, emphasizing the need to consider the broader impact of decisions on the entire district. She highlighted the importance of providing a diverse range of programs while managing finite funds. Silvia expressed a commitment to making decisions in the best interest of the district and its students, despite potential disagreements among trustees. She reassured the community that the board is dedicated to serving them, even in the face of criticism, and thanked them for their understanding.
6. Alex Dal Piaz expressed gratitude towards administrators for providing comprehensive and transparent information, enabling the board to make informed decisions considering various factors such as future projections and local and state contexts. He appreciated their efforts in presenting multiple perspectives, making decision-making smoother and more effective.

[Click here to view Board Comments](#)

## 13. ADJOURNMENT

### A. [Adjournment](#)

- Motion to adjourn the 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, Jodie Meyer, Theresa McCaffrey

*Melissa DeLaBarrera*

**Submitted by:**

**Melissa DeLaBarrera**

**District Clerk**