

**Hastings-on-Hudson
Regular Board of Education Meeting
Tuesday, April 30, 2024**

Members present

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

1. OPENING OF MEETING

A. Call to Order at 5:00 PM - it is expected that a motion will be made to move into Executive Session for the purposes of discussing tenure recommendations.

- Meeting called to order at 5:15 pm

Motion to move into Executive Session for the purposes of discussing tenure recommendations.

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

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

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

Public meeting opened at 6:37 pm

2. PRESENTATIONS

A. [The WAY Coalition - Youth Needs Assessment Survey](#)

Linda Fosina, Coalition Coordinator presented the results of The WAY Coalition - Youth Needs Assessment survey to the Board:

[Click here to view the PowerPoint presentation](#)

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

3. STUDENT REPORT

A. [Student Report](#)

Student Liaisons, Elianna Carvalho and Kai Dirksen provided student updates to the Board, some highlights were:

- A spring concert featuring performances from various music groups
- Passover break that provided some relaxation time for students and families
- Upcoming AP exams from May 6 to May 17
- A successful FMS Science Fair with participation from middle schoolers and high school science research students
- A spirit week leading up to a spring pep rally, won by the sophomores who received an ice cream party
- A \$50,000 grant received by the Village of Hastings for youth-led environmental projects
- Sports updates, including nominations for low HUDs baseball player of the week and varsity baseball and softball games
- The Quiz Bowl team's win at the national Quiz Bowl small school competition

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

A. Public Comment

- No Public Comment

5. REPORT FROM SUPERINTENDENT

A. [Update & District Highlights](#)

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

[Click here to view Superintendent Report for 4.30.2024](#)

6. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

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

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

Curriculum Review Cycle: Social Studies

With leadership from Chairperson Greg Smith, the Social Studies Department has been exploring current lessons and opportunities for authentic instruction.

At the elementary level, faculty members worked together to determine a primary resource for coherence across all grade levels. They also identified one Social Studies inquiry unit to teach students, culminating in performance assessment work to advance authentic learning.

At the middle and high school level, the department recently conducted field research through a visit to the Katonah-Lewisboro school district to see AI integration in action. This learning opportunity will inform shifts to instructional practice. With the support of Leslie Accardo from Model Schools, we continue to learn about AI and how to leverage it to enhance engagement and authenticity.

Diversity Committee

Members of the Diversity Committee have been working to design instructional resources for educators pertaining to holidays and celebrations. Our recent Diversity Committee meeting was a work session, with members of the committee focused on creating information sheet documents that provide the names holidays, dates of celebration, general information, and resource links.

Cultural Competence: Exploring Equity

Drawing from the Learning for Justice Framework, Dr. Jenice Mateo-Toledo and a group of teachers conducted a review of the Courageous Conversations curriculum, providing recommendations for a shift from a Racial Literacy curriculum to a broader Cultural Competence curriculum. The Courageous Conversations course is being revised and renamed to Expanding Equity (EE). We have now been working together to articulate the K-12 developmental arc of outcomes aligned to the Social Justice Standards. Next steps, which will be done collaboratively with teachers, will include the development of a scope and sequence pacing calendar and lessons for each grade.

B. [Report from Business Official](#)

Presented by Maureen Caraballo, Business Official

State Aid

NYS budget was approved late last week, including the extension of the hold harmless provision, which in Governor Hochul's original proposal was being eliminated. The "hold harmless" provision in education funding refers to a policy that ensures that no school district receives less state funding than it did in a previous year, even if factors such as changes in enrollment or property values would otherwise result in a reduction of funding. In New York State, the hold harmless provision has been a significant aspect of education finance,

which the thinking was to provide stability and predictability in funding. This can be particularly important for districts that might otherwise face funding cuts due to declining enrollment or changes in local property values. Hastings would see a drop in foundation aid based on the increase in wealth factors.

By maintaining the hold harmless provision, the state aims to support educational continuity and stability for school districts, ensuring that they have the resources needed to provide quality education to students without facing sudden and unexpected financial challenges

Had she been successful, Hastings would have lost approximately \$200k in funding for the 2024-25 school year. We used an additional \$200k of appropriated fund balance to balance our budget, hoping that when the state budget was adopted, this money would be returned to reserves. As it was, we will reduce the amount of fund balance originally recommended to fund next year's budget.

7. BUSINESS

A. [Business Items](#)

1. Warrants.
2. MARCH Revenue & Expenditure.
3. Approve the use of Reserve for Unemployment Claims, to increase the budget in the amount of \$2,500.
4. Doug Friedman's Professional Learning - Michael Rubino, instructional music methods sessions, invoice.
5. 2024-2025 Interscholastic Athletics Merger paperwork (Ice Hockey, Girls Flag Football, Wrestling, Girls Swimming, Boys Swimming, Boys Volleyball).
6. Questar III, Special Education Aid Assistance Service, Cross Contract.
7. Budget Transfer.

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

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

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:

CPSE: 12756

CSE: 11806, 12742, 11049, 11647

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:

CPSE: 12749

CSE: 10673, 11914, 12356, 12363, 10505, 12430, 11374, 11561, 12261, 10696, 10697, 11490, 7703, 11516, 10369, 10534, 11906

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 Silvia Robles, 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

8. PERSONNEL (CONSENT AGENDA)

A. [Approve Consent Agenda](#)

RESOLVED, to approve agenda items 8B through 8C 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, Damaris-Lois Lang, Doreen Bucher, Maureen Lennon-Santana, Theresa McCaffrey

B. Appointments

1. Jeff Conwisar, retiring Social Studies teacher at Hastings High School, appoint to Social Studies teacher at Hastings High School for the 2024-2025 school year. MA Step 6, \$85,057. Certification held: Social Studies 7-12 - Permanent.
2. Eszter Fejer, Elementary K-6 teacher at Hillside Elementary School, appoint to Reading leave replacement at Hillside Elementary School for the 2024-2025 school year. MA+75, Step 18, \$141,695. Certifications held: Reading - Permanent, Special Education - Permanent, Pre-kindergarten, Kindergarten, Grades 1-6 - Permanent.
3. Maryanne Heckhaus, retiring Special Education teacher at Hastings High School, appoint to Special Education teacher at Hastings High School for the 2024-2025 school year. MA Step 6, \$85,057. Certification held: Special Education - Permanent.
4. Stephanie Righetti, appoint to district wide Per Diem substitute teacher effective June 3, 2024 for the remainder of the 2023-2024 school year.
5. Schedule B request as per attached spreadsheet.
6. Alexa Puoti, appoint to the position of part-time School Monitor at Hillside Elementary effective May 6, 2024, pending NYSED fingerprint clearance.

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

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

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

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

C. Leaves of Absence

1. Michele Depew, Teacher Aide at Hillside Elementary School has requested a leave of absence as follows: FMLA without pay April 18, 2024-May 29, 2024.
2. Tamara Cecere, Kindergarten teacher at Hillside Elementary School has requested a leave of absence as follows: FMLA with pay May 7, 2024-May 24, 2024.

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

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

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

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

9. MINUTES

A. [Approval of Minutes](#)

1. Approval of Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of April 16, 2024.

RESOLVED that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education accepts the Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of April 16, 2024.

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

10. POLICIES

A. [Second Read](#)

Policies for Second Read:

- Policy 1900 - Parent and Family Engagement
- Policy 5151
- Policy 5151-R

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

Motion by Theresa McCaffrey, 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

11. SECOND PUBLIC COMMENT

A. Second Public Comment

- No Public Comment

12. AGENDA REVIEW

A. [Agenda Review](#)

May 7th

- Budget Hearing
- Science Research Presentations

May 21st

- Budget Vote & Election
- Regular Meeting

June 11th

- Tenure & Retirement Recognition
- 5:00 PM Reception - Reception and Meeting will be held at Hillside

June 25th

- Last Day of School

July 9th

- State of the District Report

13. BOARD OF EDUCATION COMMENTS

A. [Comments](#)

- Doreen Bucher asked if there was an official notification sent out regarding the Give-Back days and the days off. She suggested including it in the weekly letter as a highlight. She acknowledged that she might be the only one who missed it and suggested reminding people if needed.
- Dr. Lang shared her concerns regarding the implementation of DEI policies in the school district. She said that diversity is not about a melting pot but comprises diverse perceptions, values, and identities, and each has its own significance. Equity is about creating space for all these diverse elements to thrive. She also emphasized the importance of inclusion, which is not obscure but a way to strengthen each diverse aspect of human existence. Dr. Lang shared her personal experience of discrimination and urged the district to take DEI seriously and not just treat it as paperwork. She said that the work of DEI cannot be forced on anyone but requires a

team of dedicated volunteers, including staff and faculty, with an expert navigator to navigate the process. She also thanked Dr. Szymanski for being an ally and for her data-driven approach.

[Click here to view Board Comments](#)

14. 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, Theresa McCaffrey

Melissa DeLaBarrera

Submitted by:

Melissa DeLaBarrera

District Clerk