

**Hastings-on-Hudson
Regular Board of Education Meeting
Tuesday, May 7, 2024**

Members present

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

1. PUBLIC HEARING

A. Public Hearing on the 2024-2025 School Budget

[Click here to view the Public Hearing portion of the meeting.](#)

2. OPENING OF MEETING

A. Call to Order

- Meeting called to order at 6:03 p.m.

3. PRESENTATIONS

A. [Science Research Presentations](#)

Melissa Shandroff, Science research teacher and department chairperson at Hastings High School, provided an overview of the science research program. Initiated in 2007, the program allows juniors and seniors to engage in authentic scientific research. Shandroff shared the program's growth from four students to the current cohort of 38 juniors and 31 sophomores who will be taking the course next year. She highlighted key components, including reading peer-reviewed articles, finding global mentors, and participating in various science fairs. Notable achievements include multiple students reaching high levels in prestigious competitions like the Regeneron Science Talent Search and the International Science and Engineering Fair. Shandroff emphasized the benefits of real-world research experience and communication skills gained by students. She proposed extending the program to three years to align with other Westchester schools and offer college credit through SUNY Albany.

[Click here to view slideshow presentation of science research program overview](#)

Brief presentations were made by the following students:

Shira Oppenheimer: Hudson River Water Quality: Correlation with Economics and Proximity to Wastewater Treatment Plants

Miles Hamilton: Reconstructing Late Pleistocene Changes in the Western Equatorial Pacific Thermocline and Analyzing the Viability of Coarse Fraction as a Temperature Proxy

Aynsley Zamore: The combined and isolated effects of nitrogen fertilization and warming on soil microbial activity

Justin Baldassarre: STING-Rich Ciliated Cells Protect the Fallopian Tube from Early Transformation in the Development of Ovarian Cancer

[Click here to view slideshow presentation of science research projects](#)

[Click here to view video of presentations](#)

4. REPORT FROM SUPERINTENDENT

A. [Update & District Highlights](#)

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

5. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

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

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

Curriculum Review Cycle: Social Studies

Last week, the middle and high school social studies departments came together to complete Phase I of their curriculum inquiry. During the session, a member of the 5th grade team shared resources from a recent AI conference she attended and members of the department debriefed their recent site visit to the Katonah-Lewisboro school district. Staff engaged in a work session, with Leslie Accardo and Kelly Nocca from Model Schools serving as thought partners, which culminated in recommendations to enhance authentic learning opportunities for students using AI within their current lessons. Curriculum work over the course of the school year associated with this phase of the cycle included reviewing current curriculum and standards, researching best practices in a variety of different ways, including off site field research, developing recommendations for improvement, and exploring available resources.

Cultural Competence: Exploring Equity

Work to revise the Courageous Conversations course continues to receive a strong focus. At a recent Board of Education meeting, there were questions about some of the topics shown in the wheel for the Exploring Equity course and the associated purpose for teaching each of these topics. Following is additional detail related to these topics to support understanding.

Topics	Goals	Links
Ability	Create affirming learning spaces that reject ableism.	https://www.learningforjustice.org/topics/ability
Activism	Help students understand the role of rights and resistance in shaping our history, and provide models of informed civic engagement.	https://www.learningforjustice.org/topics/rights-activism
Bias	Promote empathy and perspective-taking, and help students challenge prejudice, stereotyping and discrimination.	https://www.learningforjustice.org/topics/bullying-bias
Bullying	Assess power dynamics.	https://www.learningforjustice.org/topics/bullying-bias
Class	Build a deeper understanding of wealth, poverty and systems of economic class. Empower students to understand income and resource disparity.	https://www.learningforjustice.org/topics/class
Ethnicity	Cultivate positive identity formation, encourage young people to confront ethnic injustice, and prepare them to live and work together in a diverse world.	https://www.learningforjustice.org/topics/race-ethnicity
Gender	Teach facts about sex assigned at birth, gender identity and gender expression	https://www.learningforjustice.org/topics/gender-sexual-identity

Immigration	Tell complex stories about immigration in the United States and find strategies for serving immigrant students and families.	https://www.learningforjustice.org/topics/immigration
Race	Cultivate positive identity formation, encourage young people to confront racial injustice, and prepare them to live and work together in a diverse world	https://www.learningforjustice.org/topics/race-ethnicity
Religion	Explore the diversity of religious beliefs within the United States, questions of religious freedom, and tensions surrounding the separation of church and state	https://www.learningforjustice.org/topics/religion
Rights	Help students understand the role of rights and resistance in shaping our history, and provide models of informed civic engagement.	https://www.learningforjustice.org/topics/rights-activism
Sexuality	Teach facts about sexual orientation and strategies for affirming LGBTQ youth	https://www.learningforjustice.org/topics/gender-sexual-identity

POHL Behavioral Charter

The POHL Behavioral Charter Committee met last Tuesday afternoon to review K-12 student and faculty survey data to inform the creation of a draft of the district wide charter. Fruitful analysis of disaggregated data by building and by staff/student occurred over multiple sessions to determine patterns and themes of desirable emotions. Using a "chalk talk" protocol committee members worked to identify key actions to successfully elevate the key emotions that were identified. The format of the charter was inspired by the work of the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence.

B. [Report from Business Official](#)

Presented by Maureen Caraballo, Business Official

Maureen Caraballo, Business Official informed the board about an upcoming facilities meeting scheduled for tomorrow. This meeting will include community partners to provide diverse perspectives as the board begins the process of considering a bond. Additionally, architects will present at the meeting, with the full board scheduled to view this comprehensive presentation on May 29. The board will also review prior work related to the project, marking the formal beginning of planning for the next school year.

6. STUDENT REPORT

A. [Student Report](#)

Presented by Elianna Carvalho and Kai Dirksen, Student Liaisons

Kai provided a brief report highlighting the high school spring concert, which featured performances by the Jazz Band, Madrigals, Sinfonia, Chorus, and Orchestra. Notably, the chorus performed a piece composed by junior Jasper Zimmerman, and the concert ended with a collaborative performance of "Chicago" by Sufjan Stevens, followed by a senior ceremony. In sports news, junior Kieran McGrath was named the Low Hud Baseball Player of the Week.

Elianna started with reflections on the emotional high school concert, particularly for seniors who have participated in choir since third grade. She noted the significance of singing "Fix You" by Coldplay, bringing their choir journey full circle. In sports, the varsity softball team won their senior game against Irvington, and the varsity baseball team won three games against Irvington, Bronxville, and Albertus Magnus. Junior pitcher Jackson Acree and senior pitcher Billy Murnighan each recorded their 100th career strikeouts. AP exams began this week, resulting in fluctuating class attendance. She also mentioned that seniors would soon start their internships, including her work on a musical in Riverdale, "The Drowsy Chaperone."

7. PUBLIC COMMENT

- A. Public Comment
- No public Comment

8. BUSINESS

A. [Business Items](#)

1. PNWBOCES 2024-2025 Integrated Social Studies/ELA Curriculum K-8, renewal.
2. Resolution to set the per diem rates to be paid to substitutes for the 2024-2025 school year as follows:
 - A. Permanent Substitute Teacher:
 - \$150/day without benefits
 - \$150/day plus single health coverage for two (2) Permanent Certified District Wide Substitutes
 - B. Substitute Teacher:
 - \$140/day without benefits, except that, should a Substitute Teacher replace the same incumbent teacher for a period of twenty (20) consecutive school days or more, the prorated daily rate shall be based upon the Teacher's salary schedule (Step 1 of BA, MA, or DR line, whichever is appropriate).
 - \$180/day without benefits, should the Substitute Teacher be a retiree from the Hastings on Hudson UFSD.
 - C. Substitute School Nurse, RN: \$50.00/hour.
 - D. Substitute School Nurse, LPN: \$30.00/hour.
 - E. Substitute Office Clerical: \$23.00/hour without benefits.
 - F. Substitute Aide: \$20.00/hour without benefits.
 - G. Substitute/Summer Custodial Worker: \$20.00/hour.
 - Substitute/Summer Custodial Worker w/ more than 2 years of service: \$21.00/hour
 - Substitute/Summer Custodial Worker w/ more than 5 years of service: \$23.00/hour
 - Retired Custodial Worker: \$25/hour.
 - H. School Monitor: \$20.00/hour.
 - School Monitor with 3 or more years of service: \$21.00/hour
3. Additional Sub-Account for HHS Student Activities Account/Astronomy Club, proposal.
4. Barton & Loguidice - Proposal for Professional Engineering Services.
5. Pitney Bowes Inc., Lease Agreement Proposal.
6. CSEA Custodial Unit, Closure Day - Side Letter of Agreement.

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, Jodie Meyer, Theresa McCaffrey

9. PERSONNEL

A. [Appointments](#)

1. Patrick Agababian, appoint to District-Wide Per Diem substitute teacher effective May 8, 2024 for the 2023-2024 school year.
2. Nathan Bennett, appoint to World Language student observer at Hastings High School for the week of May 20, 2024.
3. Melissa Torres, appoint to student teacher at Hillside Elementary School September 4, 2024-October 25, 2024 and Farragut Middle School October 28, 2024-December 20, 2024.

4. Maria Canavan appoint to 1.0 FTE probationary World Language (Spanish) teacher at Hastings High School, MA Step 10, \$98,243 effective August 28, 2024. Probationary period August 28, 2024-August 27, 2028. Tenure eligibility date August 28, 2028. Certification held: Spanish 7-12 - Professional.

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

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, Jodie Meyer, Theresa McCaffrey

10. MINUTES

A. [Approval of Minutes](#)

1. Approval of Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of April 30, 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 30, 2024.

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

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

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

11. SECOND PUBLIC COMMENT

A. Second Public Comment

- No public comment

12. AGENDA REVIEW

A. [Agenda Review](#)

The board discussed the scheduled meeting on the 21st, which coincides with the budget vote. There was a consensus that holding the meeting is unnecessary, given meetings are already planned for today and the 29th.

May 29:

Executive Session on Security Plan

Public Hearing on Code of Conduct

Presentation on Master Plan from architects

June 11:

Tenure & Retirement

Public Hearing on Emergency Plans

SPED Advisory

June 25:

HEF Grant Awards

13. BOARD OF EDUCATION COMMENTS

A. [Comments](#)

- Silvia Robles reminded the board of the upcoming Speakeasy themed event hosted by HEF on Friday from 7-11 pm at Westchester Manor. The event aims to raise funds to support the school by offsetting expenses for various programs and resources, such as professional development and instruments.
- Dr. Lang emphasized the importance of the Hastings Education Foundation (HEF), noting that its sole purpose is to support the schools and echoed the sentiments about promoting HEF fundraisers to support the school's

needs.

- Theresa McCaffrey suggested revisiting the topic of literacy, specifically addressing concerns raised by a community member about professional development for balanced literacy versus the science of reading.
- Doreen Bucher suggested that the district's website should include information about their literacy programs. She recommended posting relevant presentations, such as those from past Board of Education meetings, under the "Academics" section for elementary instruction. This would make it easier for people to find information without having to search through past meeting records.
- Dr. Lang connected her board comment to the earlier discussion about literacy and the Science of Reading, sharing feedback from parents concerned about balanced literacy. She mentioned a group of parents who felt that the presented information did not reflect their children's experiences. She emphasized the need for continuous improvement and clear communication, quoting Dr. McKersie's idea that nothing is set in stone and stressing the importance of focusing on doing right rather than being right.
- Jodie Meyer reminded everyone about the Memorial Day parade and shared a photo of a previous Board members walking in it.
- Maureen Lennon-Santana commented regarding the IT Audit and wanted to double check that we have done all that needed to be done as requested in the audit.

14. ADJOURNMENT

A. [Adjournment](#)

- Motion to adjourn the meeting.

Motion by Damaris-Lois Lang, 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

Melissa DeLaBarrera

**Submitted by:
Melissa DeLaBarrera
District Clerk**