

Hastings-on-Hudson Public Schools



Office of the Superintendent
27 Farragut Avenue, Hastings-on-Hudson, New York 10706
tel: (914) 478-6205 fax: (914) 478-6209
www.hohschools.org



William S. McKersie, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools
mckersiew@hohschools.org

November 24, 2024

Dear Hastings Families and Staff:

Over the past two days, many families, students, staff and individuals (from both within and outside of Hastings) have expressed a wide range of views and emotions on the gender lessons taught at Hillside. As explained in [my letter late Friday](#), the gender lessons have been in place for several years and are rooted in Hillside's core values of respect, courage and curiosity for all students. One 30-minute gender lesson is taught in each class, one time per year. To repeat, these lessons do not address sex education or sexuality.

Two immediate updates are vital as we head towards Thanksgiving recess.

First, the entire Hastings School District—all three schools—will be safe and secure for every student and staff member. Given the emotions expressed in some of the social media posts and through the emails we have received, we are working closely with the Hastings Police Department, other regional law enforcement authorities, and Altaris security experts to ensure school safety. These measures are being implemented immediately and reach beyond our standard, strong safety protocols.

Second, many of the emails we received speak to the future of gender lessons at Hillside. The one-time lessons have been provided annually in the late winter and early spring. We will be reviewing future lesson plans over the next couple of months, with updates to the Board of Education, providing ample opportunity for Hastings community feedback before any lessons are taught in the classroom. In so doing, all of us will have to embody the standard of dignified, respectful and calm discourse.

We will be communicating with students, staff and families in multiple ways over this week and into the coming months. Most importantly, we want students to feel safe, secure and respected as they proceed through their Hastings education.

Thank you for your continued support and efforts to ensure calm, reasoned and student-centered discourse around this important topic.

Sincerely,

Bill

William S. McKersie, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools