



# HASTINGS- ON- HUDSON UFSD

OFFICE OF  
CURRICULUM &  
INSTRUCTION

**Dear Hastings Learning Community,**

**We have been thrilled to welcome our faculty, staff, and students back to a new school year! While the circumstances of this year's return to school are atypical given the pandemic, our Hastings team has been working extremely hard to design an engaging, joyful, and organized remote learning environment for students. From an informational technology perspective, we are happy to report that things went relatively smoothly overall the first week, particularly given anticipated concerns about regional bandwidth limitations and having had to navigate intermittent disruptions that occurred with Google Meet, Google Drive, Zoom, and Nearpod. None of these disruptions were within our control, and teachers were flexible, graceful, and creative when they occurred. We did have three incidents where non-Hastings students entered video conference sessions, which are currently under investigation. While this is taking place, we will be using Google Meet exclusively. Please be sure that your child uses their assigned Hastings account to join video conferences. We will only be letting credentialed students into video conference sessions.**

**Following is a bit of yellow jacket buzz from the office of Curriculum and Instruction offering highlights of our 2020-2021 opening.**

Faculty members participated in numerous training sessions during the recent Superintendent's Conference Days. District trainings included a focus on the following areas:

- **Signature Practices & Strategies for Success:** During this session, we explored a number of the signature practices that were developed by the educator focus group over the summer, including adding long term assignments as an event with a start and end date, adding video conferencing links to each classroom, posting assignments with dues dates so they push to students' calendars (grades K-12), and perspective taking around what the student stream looks like;
- **Communication Suite: Google Meet and Zoom:** Members of the faculty received an overview of each video conferencing tool, learned about the essential meeting controls and safety features associated with each, and learned about practices associated with breakout rooms;
- **Using Nearpod for Blended Instruction:** This session introduced Nearpod as a new instructional resource, explored opportunities to integrate this instructional resource to promote engagement, and provided "how-tos" around navigating and moderating the platform;
- **Social-Emotional Learning, Children's Institute, University of Rochester:** This workshop focused on the critical nature of social emotional wellness and offered practical strategies for cultivating belonging through a ritual of checking-in, designing engaging classroom practices, and providing optimistic lesson closures where students can reflect and make connections to their own lives;
- **Social-Emotional Learning Framework & Advisory, Jeanette Kocur, Hastings Director of School Counseling:** During this training session, the logistics and focus of advisory were outlined and sample experiences were shared.

Special thanks to Jenice Mateo-Toledo, Diversity Coordinator, and the English as a New Language (ENL) department, for creating and delivering building-based training around the learning needs of English Language Learners. In partnership with Laura Sullivan, Director of Special Education, and Tesfa Stewart, Assistant Director of Special Education, we have also designed additional training sessions for teaching assistants and teacher aides related to remote learning. These sessions will address planned adult learning outcomes, which include logistics and organization to support remote learning and explicit support with web based resources. Learning experiences will also be tailored to requested needs.

We have launched Nearpod as a new web-based instructional resource and will soon be launching Keyboarding Without Tears for Hillside Elementary School to support students to develop efficient typing skills. If there are families who would like to have expedited access to this learning resource, or middle school families that would like to have their student rostered with an account, please contact me directly at [szymanski@hohschools.org](mailto:szymanski@hohschools.org).

We look forward to our continued adventures in learning together and appreciate our partnership with all of you during this unprecedented time. Together we will make this a positive year ahead for our learners!

Best regards,

Melissa Szymanski  
Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction