



Hastings-on-Hudson Public Schools

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Dear Hastings Families and Staff,

Even though we are on a much deserved four-day Memorial Day weekend, some operational and technical updates cannot wait until we are back. While we have many accomplishments to communicate, I am sticking to the essentials in this week's letter—all the better for you to spend the time this weekend to relax.

BOE Adopts Revised Budget 7-0

Last evening, the BOE voted 7-0 to adopt the revised 2022-23 Budget and bring it to Village residents for a vote on June 21, 2022.

We will start a communications effort next week to succinctly and clearly present the revised budget. Look out for information via digital, print, in-person and virtual formats.

For now, you can find an overview of the revised budget on the "[Budget Info](#)" page on the HOH website. We heard from many Village residents and made some changes to the proposed budget. The revised proposition reflects an overall reduction in expenditure of \$528,163 (just under one percent).

Safety and Security

Hastings continues to carry Uvalde students, families, educators and community members in our hearts. Some of us may be deeply affected by the tragedy. If your child is experiencing any difficulties, please do not hesitate to reach out to your school's principal or counselors. In a small way to support staff and families, I was outside Hillside on Wednesday morning with a simple greeting and wave, and will continue to do so periodically the rest of the school year.

I want to assure families and staff that safety and security is fundamental to our daily work. We have detailed security procedures for each building and districtwide, which are contained in the [Districtwide Safety Plan](#). These plans are reviewed regularly by Altaris, our security consultant, and the Hastings-on-Hudson Police and Fire Departments. The posted plan is open for public review annually; a process which is underway now, culminating with a public comment at the June 22, 2022 BOE meeting. This year we supplemented the larger document with a summary piece, the [District Emergency Information Guide](#), which is posted on the district homepage.

Training for Hastings staff is essential to sound safety and security. Starting this week, we will be expanding our systems and skills to identify and assess potential threats to school safety and personal well-being. The plans for this training were set several months ago. A team of Hastings administrators and staff, joined by local emergency personnel, will be trained in the comprehensive [School Threat Assessment](#) system, developed by University of Virginia Professor Dewey Cornell. Used in a growing number of districts across the nation, the system provides the capacity and tools to identify and work with students and staff facing mental health and emotional issues, which could become a challenge to their personal and school safety.

Digital Communication – Errors and An Apology

On Wednesday and Thursday we had unfortunate problems with our Blackboard communications system. It sent out “emergency” notices, which should have been just “outreach” notices. The timing relative to raw emotions in the wake of the Uvalde tragedy was not good. We apologize for the errors and the understandable upset they created and will do everything possible to not let it happen again.

We have been working with the vendor to determine the cause and we believe the issues are resolved. We will continue to work with the vendor to head-off similar problems. When possible, we will wait to schedule communications until after school hours if they are not urgent.

COVID-19 Reporting – Long Weekend Procedure

The Health Offices wish everyone a relaxing and fun-filled extended Memorial Day weekend. In the event of any COVID-19 positive cases for students or staff members during this time, please report them with the [COVID-19 Reporting Form](#). We thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Be well.

Bill

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