



## **FMS PTSA Parent Meeting**

Monday, December 16, 2019

Lloyd Library

6:30pm

### **PTSA Announcements**

- The date of the **next FMS PTSA Parent Meeting** has been changed from Feb. 10 to **Feb. 25, 2020**. The reason is that FMS has an opportunity to bring in a teaching artist for an evening with parents and children on Feb. 10; the program is about racism and other forms of discrimination, and how we as a community can respond and advocate for one another. More information about this will be forthcoming.
- Planning for **FMS Winter Socials** is underway. This is a parent driven effort. There will be one party for Grades **5/6 January 24th** and one for **Grades 7/8 February 7th**. These will be parties in the cafeteria with a DJ and music. These evenings are envisioned as similar to Family Dance Night at Hillside, but children can be dropped off. There will be games and other activities in Bee Lounge for kids who may not want to dance. This event is parent-planned and supervised. Audrey deWys Richardson is leading the planning effort and additional chaperones, particularly for 7/8 grades are needed. If you are interesting in

helping out, please reach out to Audrey:  
[audreydewys@gmail.com](mailto:audreydewys@gmail.com).

- **The Used Book Fair at Hillside is coming up on on March 4-7.** We will be collecting books for whole month of February. Volunteers are needed for the **Big Sort Feb. 29 – you may volunteer for any amount of time, and kids are welcome.** In addition, we will need volunteers to sell books, to organize, and to staff the Logowear table. The Book fair then comes to HHS lobby 3/9-10, which will be a fundraiser for 8th grade graduation party.
- In front of middle school there are new signs encouraging parents to pull into what used to be parking spots, now “**safe drop off zones.**” Signage indicating this change is on the way. The safe drop-off zone should now allow parents to safely pull over, pick up a child curbside, and then continue out of the driveway. Please drive slowly in front of the school and observe this new drop-off/pick-up zone.
- **Volunteers are needed for Community-Building events.** These are events such as the yearly Staff Appreciation lunches. There are a couple of events at each school per year. This is a good opportunity to volunteer for someone who wants to help for a finite event but can’t commit all year round. We are also looking for a few parents in each grade to act as **Grade Level Parents**, since we don’t have Class Parents in Middle School, but a few grade-level parents can help communicate with parents for grade-level events where parent help is needed such as the Latin Festival in 5<sup>th</sup> grade or the Greek Festival in 6<sup>th</sup> Grade. If you are interested in helping out with these important Community Building events, please contact any of the FMS VPs (detail below).
- More information about the 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Party will sent out beginning in January 2020.

- Chris Herron is a speaker who is coming to present to our high school students on January 7<sup>th</sup>. He is a former NBA player, and is in recovery from substance use disorder. He talks about his experiences with addiction and has earned national recognition for his engaging, impactful program for students. **A documentary film, “The First Day,” made by Hastings’ own Jon Hock, will be shown to the entire parent community on January 9<sup>th</sup> at 7pm in the Hastings High School Auditorium.** Please make every effort to attend this important community event.

### **SEPTA Announcements**

- January 28 is the **annual review preparation review meeting**. If your child has an IEP, this is a great opportunity to get tips and questions answered by a panel of experts.
- Feb 8 is **SEPTA trivia night** at the Southside club. This is SEPTA’s largest fundraiser of the year. Please look out for information on how to buy tickets.
- Any questions please contact [Hastings.SEPTA@gmail.com](mailto:Hastings.SEPTA@gmail.com).

### **Administrative Announcements**

- The **Academic Coaching** period is from 2:45-3:15. During this time students can go to teachers for support or help with HW. If a student doesn’t need the help, the student may leave. There are times when teachers are not present in their classrooms during Academic Coaching, and this is usually when a teacher has a meeting or gets called for coverage duty in another area. When teachers are not present, they will leave a sign on their classroom doors. A parent asked if teachers can communicate with their students about when they will and will not be available for academic coaching. Ms. Kipper noted that this can and should be done and will be discussed with the teachers.

- Ms. Kipper and Mr. Keogh presented an update on school **Social Emotional Learning (SEL)** initiatives.
- 
- **DASA (Dignity for All Students Act)** was passed in 2012 and amended in 2013 to include cyberbullying. DASA protects and prohibits bullying, harassment, cyberbullying etc. on all issues - race, class, sex, gender/gender identity, etc.
- Melissa Szymanski, the District Assistant Superintendent Curriculum & Instruction is the district coordinator. Mr. Keogh is the FMS coordinator. Bullying behavior is defined as that which is targeted, repetitive, and involves an imbalance of power. The school has leverage in how to apply that definition. The law requires that FMS post a reporting form that students or adults can use - <https://www.hohschools.org/domain/228>. The law protects students. It considers student to student and adult to student incidents. The DASA form is not required to report an incident, however. The link to the form is above, and printed copies are also available in the FMS office.
- 
- - **PBIS (Positive Behavior in School)** is the initiative that rewards positive behavior in school through the use of bee stickers, access to the bee lounge, and other efforts. It is aligned with other school efforts at supporting kids both emotionally and academically.
  - FMS utilizes the **RULER (Recognize Understand, Label, Express, Regulate). framework**, based on work by Yale's Center for Emotional Intelligence, to communicate with students about their emotions.

- FMS brings **Guest Speakers** to speak to students. Last year, Judith Altman, a Holocaust survivor, spoke with students. This year, John Halligan will present to 7th and 8th grades on depression and cyberbullying in January, and the teaching artist discussed above will be coming in February.
- FMS utilizes its **Health Ed** curriculum and the **Second Step** program to promote prosocial behaviors and support student decision making.
- Through collaboration with the Holocaust Human Rights and Education Center, eight student leaders in the seventh grade have attended workshops and are participating in a pilot of the community circles framework. These eight students are responsible for the teaching artist visiting in February.
- A parent asked how is RULER used in classes. Ms. Kipper reported that the teachers have been trained to use the RULER language in class, however, this tool is primarily used by support staff. Another parent reported that the founder of RULER may be launching a program for parents? Ms. Kipper agreed to look into it.
- A parent asked about bullying and whether students are reluctant to report incidences of bullying, based on the code of conduct and the consequences outlined in it. Ms. Kipper reported that she did not think students were reluctant and that the school does not tolerate retaliation for coming forward to report something of concern.

- At the Board meeting on 12/16, Ms. Kipper and Mr. Keogh presented the **FMS Action Plan** which discusses plans for the years ahead and focuses on data literacy, next generation standards, and other issues. The plan will be presented at the next PTSA meeting in February. The presentation can be viewed here: <https://go.boarddocs.com/ny/hhufsd/Board.nsf/Public>.
- 
- Ms. Kipper and Mr. Keogh reported on **Parent-School communications**. Ms. Kipper noted that the FMS Newsletter was not being sent out via email as she thought it was. This problem has been corrected and the monthly FMS Newsletter will now be sent to all parents via email. Hastings Happenings and the PTSA Parent Meeting minutes - <https://www.hohschools.org/Domain/828> - are also good ways to know what's going on.
- Ms. Kipper invited parents to share any additional questions or concerns about **communication**.
  - One parent commented that the monthly newsletter at Hillside comprehensively discusses in each subject and focuses on curriculum in each grade. Many parents supported the idea of something like this for FMS. Ms. Kipper reported that the FMS is working on developing class syllabi for each subject/grade which will be shared at the beginning of the school year. There was parent support for this plan.
  - Ms. Kipper and Mr. Keogh emphasized that every teacher should be using Google Classroom. A parent noted that a daily or weekly parent summary can be sent from Google Classroom, which

helps parents know what their kids are doing in each class. Some teachers are using this, some are not. Ms. Kipper and Mr. Keogh agreed to look into this.

- A parent requested more frequent information about curriculum so that parents can better support their children's learning. For example, if parents know more about what students are studying in a given class, perhaps they can support the child with books, enrichment, trips, etc. outside of school that relate to the topic being studied. Several parents supported this idea and emphasized that it can be an email, a letter, or any form of communication, but it just needs to be more frequent and comprehensive.
- A few parents suggested revisions to Back to School night, noting that it's too fast and hurried for most parents to get a real overview of curriculum. Some parents noted that some teachers do provide this and are good at doing so, and others struggle. A parent suggested splitting BTS night into two events – one for 5/6 and one for 7/8. Ms. Kipper agreed to look at what's possible here to enhance BTS.

### **General Q&A**

- A parent asked about late start days and whether students have time to eat. Mr. Keogh noted that the lunch period is shortened on these days but that students can and should stay in the cafeteria and finish their food if they need to do so.

### **Next meeting:**

February 25, 2020

6:30pm

Lloyd Library

## **Questions?**

Feel free to contact any of the FMS VPs with questions or comments.

### FMS VP'S

Tammy Black – [fmsvp3@ptsahastings.org](mailto:fmsvp3@ptsahastings.org)

Robin Muskin – [rmuskin@ptsahastings.org](mailto:rmuskin@ptsahastings.org)

Emma Sollars – [esollars@ptsahastings.org](mailto:esollars@ptsahastings.org)

Kefira Wilderman – [fmsvp2@ptsahastings.org](mailto:fmsvp2@ptsahastings.org)