



## Minutes, October 12, 2021

### HHS New Teaching Staff Introductions

- Alisa Kolenovic – English as a New Language (ENL)
- Claire Lytton – English
- Benjamin Glassman – English (Ms. Rudolph's leave replacement)

### Students Self Advocate

Principal Adipietro stated that while students and teachers are adjusting to being in school again there are feelings of being overwhelmed. He said our students need to take action when they are overwhelmed - be it asking for help, or requesting an extension, etc. He reported that many of the students seem to have lost these self-advocacy skills. Mr. Adipietro and Ms. Hardesty spoke to the faculty about this and told them all to remind their students to advocate for themselves.

**Congratulations to Melissa Szymanski** - for receiving her EdD

### COVID Update

The first case of COVID at HHS was reported 10/12/21, which resulted in one student in quarantine. About a dozen people were exposed, but because they were vaccinated, they do not have to be quarantined. Getting vaccinated decreases the need for quarantine in the event of an exposure.

HHS is requiring vaccination or a negative test for students to attend Junior Formal (Nov 10<sup>th</sup>). Currently, 90% of 11th grade students are vaccinated. For students who need to be tested, rapid COVID tests will be conducted in the morning at school.

### Communication

The Superintendent and Building Leaders are currently working on a document regarding communication protocols from the school to the community, and from the community to the school. Parents are reminded that when an issue arises with the school, the first step is to go directly to the individuals involved. In other words, if there is an issue with a teacher, please speak with the teacher first, and then if the issue is not resolved please come speak with the school administration. There is a concern that sometimes people take up issues directly with the Superintendent without first working with the relevant individuals at the school.

### Transitions to High School

Jeanette Kocur (Head of Guidance K-12) has started a new program at HHS for 9<sup>th</sup> graders. She meets with small groups of students to help with the transition from middle to high school. She will continue with these small group meetings until November, when students will be connected with their individual counselors. Guidance is considering a new model in which one

counselor would be dedicated to 9<sup>th</sup> grade. Mr. Adipietro mentioned that the new guidance meetings with 9th graders are helpful as Peer Leadership doesn't begin until October.

Mr. Adipietro reiterated that students start High School with a “clean slate” and disciplinary records (either formal or informal) are not carried forward from Middle School to High School.

### **Scheduling**

Class scheduling in our small school has several challenges, some related to limited staffing. For some electives there can only be 1 section, and priority is given to seniors and juniors. Freshmen are the lowest priority for these electives. If a student does not get into the class, the schedule can be filled with a different class or a study hall. Creating more electives (and decreasing electives) requires more staffing and is a budgetary issue. There are several staff who are shared between FMS and HHS, which places further constraints on scheduling. The building administrators are working together to find solutions.

Guidance Counselors are available a week before school starts to work on schedule changes. When students indicate their class preferences, in late April/early May, the administration uses this information to determine how many class sections will be needed. They also analyze what courses students have requested to attempt to minimize scheduling conflicts (e.g., two courses be scheduled at the same time). They can't avoid every single conflict, but they do their best - and the information they have in the Spring can help them to do this job.

### **Independent Study**

A question was asked about independent study (in lieu of study hall). Students cannot do an independent study of anything that is offered as a course at HHS. Independent study is “student driven” where a student has an idea (e.g., wanting to take the AP French exam, which is not a course offered at HHS) and asks a teacher to be their mentor. A school counselor can discuss and advise with respect to independent study as an option, but they cannot initiate the discussion with a teacher to mentor them, the student must do that on their own. There is no particular time set in the schedule when a student selects to incorporate independent study to their course work. It can be during study hall, after school or at lunch, but there must be some form of oversight by the teacher/mentor. Please note that this is also a contractual issue, as providing mentorship for independent study is not in the teachers' contract. Per their contract, teachers cannot be asked by administration to perform extra, out of contract work. Therefore, teachers can decline to serve as a mentor for a student's independent study. This year, there are 8 students doing an independent study, in addition to many who do orchestra/band/chorus as an independent study before school. This is for students who can't fit it into their schedule but still want to participate.

### **BOCES**

BOCES has a wealth of programs open to all who are interested including college-bound kids. Students can learn a trade such as plumbing. The BOCES Culinary program is spectacular. BOCES used to do presentations at HHS (pre-COVID). Students should talk to their guidance counselor if interested.

### Social Options for Students

Mr. Adipietro reported that there has been an increase in problems at PADJ (a place in the Hillside Woods where kids gather to socialize on weekend nights, and where underage drinking is common). The police department came to HHS to speak with leaders of the student union and administration about their concerns and closing PADJ during Homecoming. Homecoming weekend is traditionally when 9<sup>th</sup> graders are invited by upper class students to come to PADJ. The police department is making the students aware of their intent to patrol the woods. The school and the police department would like to identify student-driven alternative social activities. These may occur at school, or through the Youth Council. Mr. Adipietro reminded us that they used to offer YAP, which was a program that opened the school gyms on Friday and Saturday nights. It was shut down because students recurrently came intoxicated. Mr. Adipietro is willing to reconsider YAP. They've also sponsored a Badminton tournament - which he stated was very well attended (close to 200 students). Mr. Adipietro stressed that the alternatives to PADJ really need to come from the students to be successful. Chief Dosin also wants to help find something else for the students to do, including helping to sponsor a dance. The parks and recreation department is also interested in supporting social activities.

A parent asked if there was going to be a “make up” Junior Formal for this year’s senior class. Mr. Adipietro and Ms. Hardesty had not heard this request directly from the seniors this year and indicated he would need to hear it from the students.

### Vaping and Drug Use

Staff are continuing to monitor the bathrooms. When a student is caught vaping at school, they will be suspended. In addition, there is an effort to work with the social worker, Chris Rapp, to help families to get any help or treatment that may be needed for the student.

Mr. Adipietro introduced Linda Fosina, the director of Hastings WAY, which is a local organization that provides information and services regarding youth and drug use. They recently participated in a meeting with the town administration to discuss whether Hastings will choose to opt-out of providing marijuana dispensaries. There will be a Town Hall, and a decision will be made by December 31st.

### SEPTA Announcement

Homecoming and Farmers Market this weekend  
FMS Community Conversation is tomorrow at 5:30

### PTSA Announcements

1. **Membership** - Please join the PTSA!
2. New (again) this year – we do have **PTSA liaisons** for every class. **HHS liaisons** are:

9	Amanda Lang	<a href="mailto:amanda.r.lang@gmail.com">amanda.r.lang@gmail.com</a>
9	Tal Erez	<a href="mailto:talerez18@gmail.com">talerez18@gmail.com</a>
9	Susan Tenthoff	<a href="mailto:sbtenthoff@gmail.com">sbtenthoff@gmail.com</a>

10	Marit Haahr	<a href="mailto:mhaahr@yahoo.com">mhaahr@yahoo.com</a>
10	Eric Zamore	<a href="mailto:ernestegg@gmail.com">ernestegg@gmail.com</a>
10	Audrey Dewys	<a href="mailto:AudreydeWys@gmail.com">AudreydeWys@gmail.com</a>
11	Anne Brit Ekert Rothstein	<a href="mailto:aekert_nyc@fastmail.fm">aekert_nyc@fastmail.fm</a>
11	Susie Carmanica	<a href="mailto:susiecara@gmail.com">susiecara@gmail.com</a>
11	Alicia Sweitzer	<a href="mailto:sweitzer.alicia@gmail.com">sweitzer.alicia@gmail.com</a>
12	Babara Cifelli	<a href="mailto:barbara.cifelli@gmail.com">barbara.cifelli@gmail.com</a>
12	Maureen Lennon	<a href="mailto:maureen.lennonsantana@gmail.com">maureen.lennonsantana@gmail.com</a>

3. **Fundraising:** our coffers are low due to COVID and the impact on fundraisers. You can help by participating in an upcoming **Pizza Fundraiser** with vendors in town or you can make a **straight donation** to the HOH PTSA. To participate and/or donate - go to: <https://my.cheddarup.com/c/ptsa-is-for-pizza-fall2021>.

If you shop at DeCiccoss, please re-register your card for the new year! We receive a % [https://www.decicco and sons.com/customer-card-pta-sign up/](https://www.deciccoandsons.com/customer-card-pta-sign-up/)

Also, name us on your **Amazon Smile** link by going to:

<https://www.amazon.com/gp/clpf?ref =nav ListFlyout smi se ya III II> and selecting *PTA New York Congress 18-205 Hastings-On-Hudson PTSA* , and always use your Smile log in if you order from amazon.

**The Used Book Fair** will take place for one day November 13th at Hillside! To donate books register here:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/hastings-ptsa-used-book-fair-fall-2021-tickets-185034201277>

and to volunteer to work at the UBF - sign up here:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1pJW-nW-KjOWAgBAjZ7HPswKwiYTepBXOgu7cqYI7aq/edit#gid=0>

It's a fun community event and a great way to support the PTSA!

4. **Homecoming:** we will have a table where you can buy **logowear** or become a member. Come by and say hi!
5. **Traffic Safety Committee:** Please encourage your kids to walk to school. There are new signs on Hillside Ave to remind everyone that it is not an appropriate or safe place to stop for drop off. If you must drive, find a location further away from the school.

### Next Meeting

Our next meeting is **Monday November 22nd, at 6:30 P.M.** Please email us if you have any topics you'd like included on the agenda.

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