



**HHS PTSA / SEPTA PARENT MEETING MINUTES
11/22/2021 6:30PM VIA ZOOM**

HHS English Personnel Changes:

Effective 11/19/21, English teacher Claire Lytton resigned due to personal reasons. Ben Glassman, who has been substituting for Maria Rudolph, and has been well received by students, has been hired to replace Claire Lytton. Maria Rudolph is expected to return on 12/1/21.

AP Classes/Testing Expectations:

The School offers numerous AP (Advanced Placement) courses. These are primarily for juniors and seniors. The exams are a required component of the course. It is the school policy that families pay for the costs of the AP exams. The fees are estimated at \$90 per exam. When Mr. A. says "AP" he means anything at college level - APs, Oneonta (Geology), Albany (French and Spanish) and SUPA. The AP fees cover the exam. The fees for SUPA, etc. are not for an exam but for the college credits.

The District has discretionary funds available for families with financial hardship that need assistance covering these costs. There is a process - that is private - in which a parent or student can ask their guidance counselor for financial assistance to cover the cost of the exams. The funds are made available by 1) the PTSA, or 2) the collection of an extra \$1 per exam to hold in an account for these purposes.

Per requests from the community and the PTSA, in the future years the information regarding financial assistance will be included in the information sent to parents, and will be provided in English and Spanish.

Midterms:

There are ongoing conversations regarding managing stress levels of students and faculty, and finding balance with meeting the rigor and standards of test requirements. The district can not cancel the days scheduled for midterm exams. They are mandatory school days the district must meet for state education requirements. The school is working to find a balance where they can alleviate the stress, however, in some classes, there have to be traditional midterms. This is true in classes where Regents exams are required, particularly when these students have not yet taken a Regents exam, such as Algebra and Living Environment, or in classes with longer

exams at the end of the year, such as AP classes. On the 1st day of midterms the ELA Regents is required for the 11th graders.

Drugs and Alcohol:

Per Mr. Adipietro drug and alcohol use does occur in Hastings, as it does in other school districts. The Hastings Way Coalition performed a 2019 Youth Survey which was presented to the Hastings Board of Trustees on 9/17/2019 which can be found [here](#).

Discussion centered around the need for alternative recreational activities for students on Friday and Saturday nights, as well as the need for reflection about community values around drug and alcohol use. In recent community discussions around opting in or out of having a marijuana dispensary in Hastings, there were some portrayals of excessive drug use in the High School. Per Mr. Adipietro, these are inaccurate portrayals and are disrespectful to the school community.

Vaping in the Bathrooms:

Vaping occurs in the HHS bathrooms, and other locations around the school. Mr. Adipietro, Ms. Hardesty, and one security guard, check all the bathrooms. This surveillance is necessary to ensure the school maintains a safe learning environment. On occasion, the police have monitored the bathroom, which has resulted in a student being caught vaping. Mr Adipietro stated that the school has a zero-tolerance policy.

Additional resources would likely be helpful in reducing vaping in the bathrooms. Specifically, an additional person dedicated to monitoring the bathrooms.

What happens if a student is caught vaping, drunk or high on school property?

Mr. Adipietro stated that the punishment for a first offense is an in-school suspension. This means the student spends a full day in the High School Office, where they must complete a 6 hour on-line course on vaping. They are also provided with three sessions with the school social worker Christina Repp (reppc@hohschools.org), who evaluates whether there are any ongoing needs for services.

The punishment for a 2nd offense is an out-of-school suspension, and does include parent conferences and additional sessions with Christina Repp.

The school prefers to provide substance use services, rather than punitive action, and will attempt to engage students in seeking help when they are aware of a problem. For all rules and regulations, The Student Handbook can be found [here](#).

Positive Action:

Mr. Adipietro, Joanne Reed from the Youth Advocates Office, Police Chief Dosin met with the HHS student government (including Coach Rob McCann) to ask the students: ***What can the school do to provide alternative social activities and/or events? Administration is interested in pursuing options that students propose (see below).***

- **Dances**

Mr. Adipietro is open to discussion of dances, if there is reasonable agreement regarding rules that would help facilitate safer events with appropriate student behavior. Based on past experiences, the concerns surround social pressure for sexual activity, and alcohol consumption prior to the event with inappropriate and aggressive behavior at the event

- Potential safeguards proposed included:
 - Parental chaperones
 - Pre entry breathalyzer
 - Parental drop-off/pick-up

- **The Students proposed the following social events:**

- A Talent Show - which is being scheduled for December
- Movie nights
- Reviving the One Act Plays - completely student driven
- Reinstating Youth Advocate Program - YAP. Opening a separate gym for both FMS and HHS, on Friday and Saturday nights.

Question from the floor:

A parent asked about ways to increase education about the effects of substance use on teenagers, and about what is currently taught in school. Mr. Adipietro reported there is a section in Health class on substance use. There is also an awareness week - which is done in partnership with SADD (Students Against Destructive Decisions).

Announcements:

PTSA -

[The PTSA Superintendent Forum](#) is set for next Tuesday Nov 30th at 6:30pm. Here is the link to the [google meet](#) which is also available in the Hastings Daily. Please [submit questions](#) early so that Dr. McKersie and the building leaders can review and have answers.

HHS School Clubs -

The PTSA HHS VPs worked with Peter Scotch and Robb McCann to organize the [clubs listing](#) on the website. This document will continue to be updated, and students can join clubs any time during the year.

SEPTA -

[Agency 101 - Transitioning planning](#) - A free virtual workshop about transition planning post high school on Tuesday, December 21st at 9 AM. The deadline to sign up is December 19th. The flyer is located [here](#).

Community Conversations - will be hosted by SEPTA on 01/26/22. Topics will include a transition coordinator, math, daily assessments and academic coaching. If anyone has other items to add to the agenda, please contact rhiannon.platt@gmail.com.

There will be an Inclusion Coordinator Night with Kristen Kumar in January - exact date TBD.

Traffic and Safety Committee -

Gratitude for members of the Traffic and Safety Committee for their hard work. There are three new traffic safety persons at the crosswalks, as well as new signage on Hillside Avenue. There is a new upcoming public service video on traffic safety - sure to make you smile (as well as provide an important message).

Family University -

This event is partnered with the district, The Way Coalition and the PTSA, which invites parents and students to learn together, and will occur in March. Keynote speakers are being considered in the theme of drug and alcohol use. Please email either Mr. Adipietro adipietro@hohschools.org or Linda Fosina lfosina@hastingsgov.org with suggestions for speakers or workshops.

The Way Coalition -

The Way Coalition hosts monthly meetings and has added an evening meeting. All are invited to attend their virtual speaker event on Wednesday, December 8th at 7PM with Dr. Jason Kilmer on the topic of Research on Marijuana and Lessons Learned after Legalization: Implications for Youth and the Powerful Role of Parents & Caregivers, Register at: Know2Prevent.org.

Happy Thanksgiving Everyone!