



**HASTINGS HIGH SCHOOL
PTSA/SEPTA Parent Meeting
Wednesday, December 13, 2023
8:30 a.m. – Virtual via Zoom**

MINUTES

Regents Exams

Mr. Adipietro explained that NYS State put together a [Blue Ribbon Commission](#) to look at graduation measures and pathways to graduation from high school. There currently is a one size fits all model tied to Regents testing (5 required) and credits (22 needed to graduate divided between subjects). The panel released a wishlist for the future that takes more of a holistic look at students and allows districts to certify that students have learned, attended, and are ready to graduate instead of Regents. There may be restructuring that includes different safety nets. Mr. Adipietro believes it's unlikely that Regents will disappear but alternative pathways are likely. He added that most Hastings graduates don't have a problem with the Regents exams and that Regents provide an accountability measure for obtaining federal funds. Also, the state has invested in reworking the curriculum to match the Next Generation standards. Last year there was a new U.S. History exam. This year there is a new algebra exam. Next year there will be a new biology (now Living Environment) exam and earth science will follow (will be called Earth and Space Science).

Mid-Year Testing

- **REMINDER** (January 23-26, 2024) - students only need to attend school on days when they have tests.
- **The testing schedule** will be released at least two weeks before exams. If a student has two local exams on the same day, they should see Ms. Hardesty to reschedule. Regent exams cannot be rescheduled.
- **English Regents** - Hastings 11th graders will take the English Regents in January and students who are new to the district or who have to make-up or retake exams all will take January Regents.

- **The Algebra exam** is June 4 and will be scored manually and then the tests will be scanned to the state. The district will get scores the last week of school. Because it's a new test, the state has to develop a scoring rubric. Beginning in January, Mr. Adipietro will ask algebra teachers to identify students who need and would benefit from an algebra lab, which will provide additional assistance and test preparation.
- **Academic Coaching** - Mr. Adipietro suggested that students take advantage of academic coaching and reminded parents that if a student isn't going and a parent believes he or she should, contact the student's teacher or Mr. Adipietro or Ms. Hardesty and they'll encourage the student to attend. Also the [National Honor Society provides peer tutoring](#). And, please speak to the teacher directly about concerns.
- **Calendar Holidays** - Mr. Adipietro stated that the state is contemplating adding holidays to the calendar. Lunar New Year was added this year but it lands on a weekend. The district will be distributing a survey to assess the community's view of holidays.

Vaping Protocols

- Mr. Adipietro reported that many chronic vapers have graduated. HHS administrators and staff are patrolling bathrooms and other areas during lunch and have asked teachers to track the whereabouts of students. Mr. Adipietro says the school is across this, and believes that it is less prevalent than in previous years.

Academic Integrity

- **Old Fashioned Cheating** - Mr. Adipietro explained that the rules are simple: Teachers can do what they think is appropriate if they catch a student cheating. The first incident often doesn't rise to the administrative level. If a student is caught cheating multiple times, Mr. Adipietro and Ms. Hardesty get involved.
- There is a new type of cheating via **Artificial Intelligence** ([Chat GPT](#), etc) that the school is attempting to address. Also, the district will utilize software to determine when students are using AI to cheat.
- Mr. Adipietro explained that AI also can assist students who are struggling writers to start the process. The district has hosted a workshop for teachers to learn about AI and how it can be integrated into lessons. Teachers will stress to students that AI can be used as a resource that they should make their own. Students do not have open access to Chat GPT at school.

- Inquiry work is happening in social studies now 6-12 to address discrepancies between classes in teaching writing skills.
- Parents stressed the importance of learning the fundamentals of writing without AI assistance so that they struggle and learn to think for themselves.
- Mr. Adipietro responded that students will still be taught how to write and learn the writing process but using opportunities to use Chat GPT in a constructive way, similar to how calculators are used in math.
 - A parent said that she doesn't believe Chat GPT functions in the same way as a calculator. With a calculator you need to do the thinking and know how to solve the problem, then the calculator helps you solve it, which is more analogous to a grammar program. She said that she works in a heavy writing job where they are piloting a version of Chat GPT and what it does is it helps process and analyze information, which is fine for people who learned those skills in high school. But she believes the reason she can do it now is because she had to do those things independently in high school, even when it was difficult. Taking information, processing it and writing in an effective way, is a thinking skill that should still be taught in high school.
 - Mr. Adipietro explained that the school will still teach research skills and writing techniques, but will also teach students how to use Chat GPT constructively.

Course Selection Process for 2024-25

- **The course selection process** will start in the new year. Students will meet with counselors during their PE classes. Please speak to your student's teachers to determine whether to take honors courses.
- **New Course Proposals and Changes** - Mr. Adipietro proposed adding a full time science teacher because he and the science department chair, Melissa Shandroff, want to move the science research program to a 3 year program (except for the current 10th grade which will still be offered a 2 year program). Ms. Barenfeld would move partially to the science research program to work with Ms. Shandroff. Mr. Adipietro emphasized that there is no other program at HHS like science research that matches all of the components identified in the Portrait of a Hastings Learner. There is support for this change from the central office.

- **Other new proposed courses:**

- **Physics** - Mr. Hill proposed a restructuring of the physics program, which would involve reintroducing AP Physics 1 (algebra based AP Physics) for students in 11th grade. For seniors, HHS will combine AP Physics C and E&M and make each a half year course. This is how the courses are taught in most schools because there is not enough content for each to be a full year course.
- **Chemistry** - HHS is developing a chemistry course that will cover all of the fundamentals of chemistry but eliminates other material. It will be a lab course and will be project based and more practical. The course must be approved through the NCAA Clearinghouse so it counts for students who want to play sports in college.
- **Math** - Ms. Mockler introduced financial algebra, which is personal finance, as a half year elective. Dr. Stephens has been on leave but is planning to return mid-January. They are considering offering AP Pre Calc instead of Pre Calc Honors and are considering bringing back BC Calc.

Student Support Team (SST) Structure

The SST Team meets every Monday. It is made up of administrators, school counselors, nurses, the school social worker, and representatives from special education. The team presents kids that need to be put on peoples' radars and create action plans for every student. Staff also refer students to SST. They brainstorm and problem solve and work to get students on track. If you feel that your child needs something, reach out to an administrator or counselor. The SST team invites teachers to attend if they need insight on a particular kid.

PADJ -

Mr. Adipietro said that he is addressing this topic because people have asked but emphasized that it is outside of his jurisdiction.

- For many weeks PADJ was locked down by the police department because it became an unsafe place because of (1) underage drinking; (2) litter and glass in the woods; (3) attendance by students from outside of Hastings. Ms. Hardesty said they let students know when they hear from the police department.
- The location of the first cannabis dispensary is likely the old Hastings Velo storefront. A second proposed location is across from Antoinette's on Warburton.
- The district administered [The Way survey](#) last week and will have results soon.

PTSA Announcements

- Used Book Fair. Donate 1/19-1/20. Shop 1/26-27.
- First Monday Muffin Madness. Sign-up [HERE](#).

SEPTA Announcements

- On February 5, 2024, SEPTA will host an IEP Night, at 7pm (location TBS). A panel of specialists will discuss how parents can better prepare and plan during IEP Season for their annual meeting. All are welcome - even if you do not have a child with an IEP, the panelists have a wealth of knowledge around Alternative Learning.

**We hope you have a safe and happy Holiday!
See you next year!**