



HASTINGS HIGH SCHOOL PTSA/SEPTA Parent Meeting

**Wednesday, April 2, 2025
8:30 a.m (Via Zoom)**

Minutes

- **Finals/Regents Schedule**

- Mr. Clayman explained that the final schedule is in the works. He received feedback following midterms that it caused some students stress that certain tests were not given during midterms week. The thinking behind the early exams was spreading out tests to relieve stress. For finals, any exam that is happening will take place during Regents and Finals week. The Biology Regents exam will be administered early (June 10) because it is a new Regents exam and the state needs time to curve it appropriately.
- The last day of classes is Monday, June 16 and finals/Regents begin on June 17.

- **Update on Capital Bond By President of the Hastings BOE Alex Dal Piaz**

- Alex shared a presentation on the bond that he gave at the March 25, 2025 BOE meeting. The presentation is [HERE](#). He also reviewed the highlights.
 - NY State will reimburse Hastings 47% of the cost of the bond. The reimbursement rate is likely to decrease going forward but it will be locked in now if the bond is passed because a bond is a legal contract between the district and the state.
 - FMS is drastically undersized and has 40% less space than HHS.
 - Going back 30 years, we are a very “lightly bonded” district. We’ve put \$36 million into capital projects and surrounding districts have

bonded at least \$30 million more. In Hastings, projects that should be bonded have been put into budgets.

- There will be a split bond proposal: Proposal A is for buildings (\$31 million) and Proposal B is for fields (\$7) with passage of B conditional on passage of A because fields are not reimbursable by the state without buildings work. If the field bond does not pass, we'd likely attach the field work to future building renovations that are on the district's schedule of work that needs to be done.
- The construction will take approximately 18-24 months to complete and will be paid back over the next 20 years.
- The scope and verbiage will be decided at the BOE meeting on April 8 and the BOE will vote on April 22.
- A parent asked about the inclusion of turf given the contentious bond in 2014. Alex explained that he had thought there would be options other than turf but that the state only reimburses for projects that are biddable and many new products cannot be competitively bid.
- The community vote will likely be in June with the date TBD.
- 2025-26 Staffing and Budget
 - Mr. Clayman explained that he's deeply appreciative of the support from families, PTSA, the Board, and staff. Tight financial constraints force hard conversations. He stated that the feedback on the initial proposed budget was that people were concerned that the high school wouldn't continue to function at the high level with the proposed staffing cuts. Mr. Clayman obtained permission from Dr. McKersie to fine tune the proposed high school budget with department chairs to create a budget that would allow course offerings to remain untouched. Mr. Clayman brought the revised proposal to the board last week and the BOE and families raised concerns that if we hired "for decimals" (like a .9 social studies position), we wouldn't get the best candidates. The proposed budget was revised again to increase the social studies position from .9 to 1.0 FTE. Within math and special education HHS was looking for .4 and .5 FTE, respectively, so HHS is posting for a 1.0 dually certified math/special education teacher. Mr. Clayman is cautiously optimistic that this will allow us to hire the best possible candidates.

- Update on Cell Phone/Device Ban

- Cell phone and device ban a function of the book “An Anxious Generation” and other conversations around what cell phone dependency means for childrens’ brains. The proposed ban is a bell-to-bell ban for students, meaning no phones between classes, during lunch etc.
- Mr. Clayman reported that there is no consensus among Westchester principals on how to approach the ban. Hastings currently is on the more restrictive end of the spectrum but our policy is not sufficiently strict to conform to the law.
- Next step is deciding on one of the following options (1) Yondr pouches; (2) DIY pouches (like the pouches used in classrooms except they would be in the office and for the entire day); or (3) an honor system where students store devices in lockers or backpacks and there will be disciplinary consequences for violating the policy.
- Mr. Clayman is meeting with each grade and students will have the opportunity to give feedback. It will be clear that it’s not a vote but he wants feedback to inform decisions. There also will be an optional meeting with families and a google form to provide feedback.
- A parent asked if we’ll wait to see if the state rolls back the ban. Mr. Clayman explained that the teachers union is in support of the ban but the administrators’ union is not. He said that our work is to determine the best way to implement the bell-to-bell ban, but if it’s walked back we should determine whether the bell-to-bell ban is what we need.
- A parent asked how the ban impacts the bring your own device rule. Mr. Clayman explained that it’s difficult to enforce a ban on bringing your own device to school because students use them for high level electives.
- A parent added that students are using their phones as hotspot devices and Yondr pouches will eliminate that.
- A parent asked about emergencies and Mr. Clayman explained that our security professionals have come back with firm evidence that in emergency situations, phones are not helpful.
- A parent also asked Mr. Clayman to look at the restrictions on Chromebooks to see if they can be made more useful for high school students. Mr. Clayman explained that many of the restrictions are imposed outside of the district and relate to data privacy.

- **Upcoming Events**

- HHS Musical - Mamma Mia, April 3-5
- Spring Recess, April 14-18

- **PTSA Announcements**

- [Let's Talk Cultural Competence](#) - April 3, 5:45 PM @ FMS Auditorium - forum about the FMS Exploring Equity curriculum (formerly called Courageous Conversations); families with students of all ages are invited to join.
- The next (and last!) high school PTSA parent meeting of the 2024-25 school year is May 7 in person. We welcome current 8th grade families to attend.
- Volunteers Needed! If you are interested in serving on the PTSA's Executive Committee, please reach out to Kefira (kwilderman@ptsahastings.org) or Tammy (tblack@ptsahastings.org) for more information.

- **SEPTA Announcements**

- It's Annual Review season! If you have any questions or are interested in a sounding board with a parent whose child has a profile similar to yours, please reach out to hastings.septa@gmail.com.
- Please consider volunteering to serve on our board so SEPTA can continue to be a voice for those who learn differently and their family. Reach out to the HHS VP Jennifer Destin (jennifer.h.destin@gmail.com) or hastings.septa@gmail.com for more information, including open positions.