



2026 - 2027
HASTINGS HIGH SCHOOL

**Hastings High School
PTSA Meeting Minutes**

Held Wednesday, October 14, 2026 8:30am
Location: High School Auditorium, (In Person)

Administration Presentation: Years 1 and 2 Update

Principal Andy Clayman and Assistant Principal Tara Ware gave an overview of accomplishments of Years 1 and 2 of their administration and an explanation of HHS priorities for Year 3, followed by discussion. The presentation will be posted on the website.

- **Focus on Students**

- Getting to know all students, lots of listening
- Helping to alleviate anxiety, particularly around tests
- Calendar work to keep review weeks clear
- Class notes posted on Google Classroom and increased use of AP Classroom for student support and ease of studying
- Helping teachers have classroom time to finish material in time for review
- Full-time testing center with full-time coordinator now open and available to all students

- **Course placement and pathways**

- Administration provided context on how course placement is decided and communicated.
 - Background: policy developed in response to teacher-identified need to ensure students have completed necessary prerequisites for course placements. The standardized policy is intended to reduce impact to students from dropping courses / falling behind in September.
 - Students who wish to challenge themselves beyond their initial recommendation will be presented with benchmarks and pathways to do so.
 - Clear communication with students about placement criteria is essential. Further clarity on the criteria teachers use, especially in Humanities courses, was identified as a need.
- Data was presented showing direct impact of the policy. Approximately 34% decrease in students dropping classes in September 2026 vs September 2025, leading to less disruption for students and teachers. Students are reporting that their overall start to school experience is more supportive.
- With students placed appropriately, teachers haven't felt the need to screen their classes early with especially challenging material before the drop date.

- **Special education: adding consultant taught classes and a full time testing center**

- Addition of consultant teachers in geometry and chemistry so more students can access these classes. Administration explained that consultant teaching is a new part of the continuum of special education services and is similar to a co-taught classroom.



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- At HHS, Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) classes previously existed only for courses that culminate in a Regents exam. Consultant teaching fills the gap for other courses.
- A special education teacher pushes into classes to ensure that students with IEPs receive the supports they need.
- Discussion touched on whether budget constraints are a root cause of the gap in ICT coverage.
- Full time testing center and a full time test coordinator are now in place. Students who missed exams and/or have testing accommodations were previously taking tests in all sorts of conditions. Testing center is open to all students.
- **Student absences and attendance**
 - Administration addressed protocols around student attendance, supports for students who are often absent and how administration works one-on-one with those students and their families to improve their attendance.
 - Discussion touched on how students are supported when they return to school and need to catch up. At HHS, students are expected to reach out to their teachers when they miss class. Teachers are required to provide make-up work for excused absences.
 - It was noted that some classroom learning, like class discussions or group work, can't be replaced by make-up work.
 - Data was presented demonstrating year on year improvements in attendance, which is correlated with better academic outcomes.
 - Students who regularly attend learn more and keep up with the material....consistent attendance is strongly linked to high academic achievement.
 - All students receive tests and work back quicker with improved attendance because teachers aren't waiting as long for all kids to take the tests.
 - Discussion also called for more clarity about the root causes of attendance issues and suggestions were made that administration break down attendance data between excused and unexcused absences.
- **Improvements in Safety and Behavior Oversight**
 - Tightened procedures related to safety, security, emergency management
 - Tightened procedures around behavioral violations
- **New Programs and Recognition**
 - Excitement around the new course "Eastern Perspectives on Global Events," with credit to Affinity Club, Jenice Mateo-Toledo, Sarah Walters, and Cid Greenberg
 - The Shifting Perspectives program was commended, with credit to Norah Destin, Tesfa Stewart, Erin Dolan, and others that worked on it.



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- Robotics Team, Dungeons and Dragons Club, Economics Team/DECA providing options for students to connect and explore common interests, with credit to Austin Hills, Christina Gagliardi, Emily Kehoe, and Kevin Ruffler
- HHS administration launched a new Instagram account to connect in an additional way with parents and students.

- **Looking ahead for work this year:**
 - Tightening and refining earlier work
 - Administration previewed upcoming work on MTSS (Multi-Tiered Systems of Support) and NY Inspires, including what NY Inspires will mean for Regents and graduation requirements.

- **Parent Concerns:**
 - Though moving field trips and class trips away from spring testing seasons was applauded, a request to remember that sports teams may be in playoffs past the posted game schedules when scheduling things in the future was made.
 - Discussion of how math placement decisions made in middle school shape later courses of study, including at the university level, it was noted that these conversations should extend into the middle school. Administration confirmed that these conversations are already ongoing, including discussions around “on-and off-ramps” between honors and regular courses, depending on a student’s needs and stage of development. It was noted that summer school courses are no longer available as a way to make a jump. Administration noted that a flowchart exists showing the consequences of course selection in math (and in other subjects). This information needs to come from the administration and building level, at the appropriate time, and be available when needed.