

Hastings-on-Hudson Public Schools

Board of Education

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A National Blue Ribbon District of Excellence

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Board of Education Statement – November 23, 2021

It is with great pleasure that we notify the community that Dr. William “Bill” McKersie was appointed as our new Superintendent of Schools at last night’s Board of Education meeting, effective January 1, 2022. Since assuming the helm of the Hastings-on-Hudson Union Free School District in August 2021 as Interim Superintendent, Dr. McKersie has dedicated significant time to listening to, and learning from, educators, administrators, students, and community members to gain a fuller understanding of our schools and Hastings.

The Board appreciates that Dr. McKersie set the tone for the year by emphasizing relationships as the theme for this year. He prioritizes hearing different perspectives and makes decisions affecting our students and staff in thoughtful ways. This is mirrored in his attention to the principles he champions in our schools: Us, Curiosity before Judging, Caring, Trust, Social/Emotional/Psychological Health, Intellectual Growth, and Joy. He became well-informed about our district while promoting intellectual rigor, compassion, connections, and joy. Specifically, he prioritized the importance of clear updates, leading to revisions in our district communications plan, a precise COVID-19 management document, and a commitment to working together to build a nurturing, dynamic learning environment that is healthy and safe for our staff and students.

Bill collaborates with his team of colleagues and staff to oversee continuing work in curriculum, instruction and assessment, instructional and information technology, special education, culturally responsive pedagogies, and facilities renovation. Through his campus and school walkabouts, guest reading and interacting at events like plays and Homecoming, he has boosted spirit and morale while focusing on both social emotional health and intellectual growth. Bill has supported the use of appropriate screeners so our school community can maintain progress in an evolving COVID-19 environment.

On other fronts, Bill is helping his team continue the work on our capital projects at the Hillside addition and FMS music suite and auditorium while also ensuring that our schools recover in a timely manner from storm damage. As someone who is always looking for ways to improve, he has homed in on areas like communications, scheduling, transportation, registration, and appropriate staffing. Under his guidance, the district continues to prepare for a Tri-State Consortium site visit that examines ways to foster effective collaboration and communication among and between administrators and faculty. With regular meetings that reinforce relationships with the Quad Village school districts, Village government, and local safety

agencies, Bill has also made safety and security a key component of the district's emergency preparation.

Bill brings an emphasis to the district on viewing ourselves as partners. He highlights our district's long-standing excellence in easily understandable terms. He has also reminded the community that, while it is important to monitor student progress, we should not focus on single metrics to capture student potential. A key component to his professional style is his ability to take in new information and apply it in the best interest of the various people who make up the school system. Finally, Bill has made an effort to highlight kindness to one another and acknowledge the importance of contributions of different cultures in the educational context. For all the reasons already mentioned in this note, in addition to his warm personality, we feel confident that Dr. McKersie possesses the qualities, work ethic, and skillset to successfully lead our district in the years to come.

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