

**HASTINGS-ON-HUDSON BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**ONE TOPIC WORK SESSION**  
**Monday, November 10, 2008**

Minutes of the One Topic Work Session of the Board of Education of the Hastings-on-Hudson Union Free School District, Town of Greenburgh, County of Westchester was held in the John J. Russell Lecture Room at the Farragut Complex on Monday, November 10, 2008. Present were Trustees Eric Sweeting, Gabrielle Lesser, Eileen Baecher, Caryn Campbell, Lindsey Hicks, Donna Laing, and Jodie Meyer. Also present were Superintendent of Schools Robert I. Shaps, Public Information Officer David Hayes and District Clerk Franziska H. Goodman.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Board of Education President Eric Sweeting called the work session to order at 7:00 p.m. Mr. Sweeting indicated that this meeting was a one-topic work session regarding district communications.

**ONE TOPIC WORK SESSION: DISTRICT COMMUNICATIONS**

- Handouts provided included: (1) list of guiding questions for discussion purposes; (2) draft communication goals; (3) 2008-2009 district budget *Your Schools* newsletter dated May 2008; (4) November 2008 edition of *Your Schools* recently mailed to residents; (5) sample budget edition newsletters – one from the Ossining School District and one from Scarsdale School District; (6) Calendar of Communication, by month; and (7) 2008 canvass of district public information programs (sampling).
- Discussions initially focused on the current state of communications in the district; specifically what is communicated, how, and when. Examples of current topics the school district communicates include specific required program announcements (i.e., reduced/free lunch program, annual fire inspection results, transportation to non-public schools, etc.), budget information (calendar, notice, and vote information), and general information through the *Your Schools* newsletter. The *Your Schools* newsletter was discussed at length, particularly its purpose, format, size contact information, and frequency of distribution. A suggestion was offered to conduct a survey, collecting data on the use and effectiveness of the *Your Schools* publication. The Calendar of Communication handout indicated when topics were scheduled (by month) for distribution. This review pointed towards a noticeable communication gap between the months of November and March.
- Discussions continued on what additional information and methods of communications can be employed. Examples of desired messages to share with residents include curriculum updates, academic and program successes within the district, easy to read and understand policy guide, teacher appointments, the tenure process, and staff updates. Ideas and ways in which the district can increase its communication with residents focused on the likelihood of

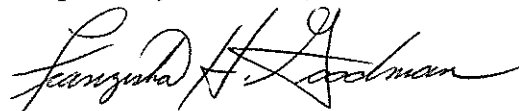
using Channel 77 more to publicize (weekly, daily) school-related happenings/events, improving the ConnectEd format, providing more physical personal presence by Board members in the community (i.e., Community Center functions, Farmer's Market, Village events, etc.), positing additional information/highlights on the district's website and establishing links between the district and Village's websites.

- Discussions concluded with what can be initiated, or next steps, to improving district communications. Suggestions and ideas include increasing the frequency of the *Your Schools* newsletter by maybe adding a December issue focusing on the school budget and questions concerning state aid, etc.; re-designing the budget edition of *Your Schools* by reviewing templates and budget publications from area school districts; posting the district's upcoming week's schedule of events on Channel 77; establishing, scheduling and publicizing programming on Channel 77; ongoing taping of school-related programs for Channel 77 viewing; e.g., highlighting the Hillside Elementary School library and the changes the new librarian, Ms. Dee Ratterree has made; notifying various Village groups about Board member availability at various Village-related events; and recruiting the district's Technology Committee to investigate the format, use, and posting content to the district's website.

**ADJOURNMENT**

At 8:35 p.m., Board President Eric Sweeting declared the work session concluded.

Respectfully submitted,



Franziska H. Goodman  
District Clerk