

Dr. Juliette Pennyman, Superintendent of Schools

## **The JHS Shared an Update on Positive Growth at a Recent Board Meeting; Capital Project and Budget Updates**

The Hudson School District Board of Education convened on Tuesday, March 25, 2025.

Dr. Kortright-Torres and Mr. Behr, Interim Principal of Junior High School, presented an overview of JHS student data, emphasizing improvements in proficiency scores at a Hudson City School District Board of Education meeting on Tuesday, March 25, 2025. After explaining why the JHS was designated as a targeted support and improvement school (TSI), the focus shifted to the positive growth in student performance. Mr. Behr highlighted that even modest gains, with more students scoring at a proficient level (a rating of four or above), signal progress compared to the previous year.

Mr. Behr also addressed the challenge of testing participation, noting that state assessments, which grade the school overall, require robust participation from all students. To boost the current participation rate, he is proactively reaching out to parents and extending the testing window to two weeks. Additionally, improvements in attendance—up by 10% from last year—demonstrate the effective efforts of the attendance team, further supporting the school's ongoing commitment to student success.

## **Capital Project: Infrastructure Upgrades Across All Schools**

The Facilities Committee provided an update on the district's 2025 Capital Project, which aims to modernize infrastructure across all three school buildings. This project is designed to **address critical facility needs and enhance learning environments**.

The Board of Education determined that these upgrades are in the best interests of the District in order to meet the educational needs of the students and remedy infrastructure deficiencies identified in the District's five-year condition survey. The district will hold public forums between now and May, where community members can see detailed project visuals and cost breakdowns. These forums will give residents the opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback before the capital project vote in May.

## **Energy Performance Contract: Long-Term Cost Savings & Efficiency**



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In addition to the capital project, the district is also working with Johnson Controls on an Energy Performance Contract (EPC). This initiative focuses on energy-efficient upgrades that will reduce costs while improving sustainability.

Planned energy conservation measures/improvements include:

- LED Lighting Upgrades
- Renewable Energy – Solar PV
- Building Management System Upgrades
- HVAC System Upgrades
- Building Envelope – Weatherization
- Mechanical Insulation

The goal of the EPC is to generate long-term savings by reducing the district's overall energy consumption, freeing up funds that can be reinvested in classroom resources and student programs.

Community members are encouraged to attend upcoming public meetings to learn more and share their input.

### **Policy Committee Update**

The Policy Committee reported progress on several key district policies:

- The Promotion and Retention Policy draft will be introduced as new business at the next board meeting, allowing for board discussion and review.
- Staff feedback on the Code of Conduct has been collected, and the committee will work to finalize a revised draft.

### **Budget Workshop & Financial Discussion**

Superintendent Dr. Pennyman presented an update to the draft 2025-2026 budget, outlining potential tax levy increases and their impact on district finances.

Key budget considerations included:

- A 2% tax levy increase (raising \$509,161) vs. a 3.55% increase (raising \$904,027).



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- A budget gap of \$1.5 to \$1.9 million, depending on the tax levy chosen.
- Options to repurpose staff positions, reduce positions through retirements, and utilize reserve funds to balance the budget.

The district is committed to transparency throughout the budgeting process and will provide further updates as discussions continue.

### **Superintendent's Report**

During Dr. Pennyman's Superintendent Report, she:

- Recognized those who earned the Superintendent's Spotlight of Excellence Award. Congratulations to Tim Call, Ms. Joan Hunt, Gail Wheeler, and Omer Mufti!
- Showed slides of the work-based learning program in the high school kitchen. One of Mrs. Schmitt's Life Skills students is completing an internship in the kitchen.
- Praised the JHS/SHS performance of "Annie" and reminded everyone to see the MCSES's "Seussical Kids".
- Highlighted the visit from Verizon Innovative Learning.

### **Presentations**

Several presentations were given to the Board of Education, highlighting current programs, grant usage, and funding impacts across the district.

- Sage Carter and Greg Mosely presented on Hudson Hall's Workforce Development Program, which focuses on live arts and media. Students are paid and learn job-readiness skills like teamwork, timeliness, and task completion. The most recent cohort included 15 students. Projects included a podcast and variety show, with students managing all production. The program uses industry-level equipment and is supported by the Berkshire Taconic Foundation. Hudson Hall hopes to expand this opportunity directly into district schools.
- Dr. Kortright-Torres provided an update on ESSA (Titles I-V) funding, which is allocated based on enrollment, poverty levels, and accountability. She explained how these grants support district programs and services and noted that she oversees their use.
- Dr. Pressey reviewed additional federal grants, including the 21st Century Afterschool Program, MBK Fellows, Stronger Connections, IDEA 611 & 619, and Universal PRK/UPK. These grants support after-school, early childhood, and special education programs.



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- Cheryl Rabinowitz presented on the LGRMIF grant, which supports the management of the district's paper records, and she gave an update on the Verizon Innovative Learning program.

### **Other Actions**

The Board approved 24-25 officers, updated building and administrator coverage, and other consensus agenda items. Follow-up sessions are scheduled for March 25 and April 8, 2025, to further address budget finalization, facility projects, and policy updates.

The next Board of Education meeting is slated for April 8, 2025. You can learn more by visiting <https://go.boarddocs.com/ny/hudsoncsd/Board.nsf/Public>.

**There is also a Policy Committee Meeting on Tuesday, April 8, at 5 PM in the HS Library and a Facilities Committee Meeting, Tuesday, April 8 at 4 PM in the District Office Conference Room.**

Click on the March 25 Meeting Agenda, and each item can be expanded for further details. Watch live and recorded meetings on the District's YouTube page (<https://www.youtube.com/@hudsoncityschooldistrict182>).