

February 23, 2021

Dear HPS Families,

Thank you to those of you who were able to attend last night’s School Committee meeting. Below are a few of the highlights from the meeting as well as details for an important joint meeting tonight with the Board of Selectmen, Advisory Committee and the School Committee that will include a hearing of the proposed FY’22 education budget. Tonight’s meeting is an important opportunity to learn more about the proposed education budget and how it fits into the total town budget and we encourage you to attend.

As we shared last night, the School Committee unanimously endorses the FY’22 budget that was [proposed](https://hinghamschools.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Item-6.2-Budget-Presentation_FY-2022_Final.pdf) by Dr. Austin. As a result of COVID-19, this has been an unprecedented school year and the impact on the social/emotional and academic needs of our students has been very challenging. The proposed budget was carefully developed to include funding for the essential services required to meet the academic and social/emotional needs of our students as a result of the pandemic. It also includes funding for a strategic plan which will enable us to develop a vision of how Hingham will meet the needs of our students in the future and some concrete steps that will get us there. We strongly encourage parents and members of the community to continue to engage in the discussion about how we fund our schools.

**Upcoming Meeting Details:**

**Joint Session with Board of Selectmen and School Committee**

Tonight (2/23) @7 p.m.

Remote meeting via Zoom: Dial-in number: 929-205-6099

Meeting ID: 451-213-735

Passcode: 111222

Website: https://zoom.us/join

**Office Hours with the School Committee**

Tuesday, March 2 @7 p.m.

Meeting ID: 815 0036 8478

Passcode: HPS

Website: https://zoom.us/join

**2/22 School Committee Meeting Highlights:**

Below are a few of the highlights from last night’s meeting. A full recording of the meeting will be available on the [Harbor Media School Committee playlist](https://www.youtube.com/c/HarborMedia/playlists).

Last night, the School Committee voted to approve the proposed [phase 3 reopening plan](https://hinghamschools.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Item-6.2-Budget-Presentation_FY-2022_Final.pdf) that was presented by Dr. Austin on Monday, February 8. Plan highlights include:

* + - * By or before Monday, March 15, students in grades one through five who opt for in-person learning will return to school full time. (Kindergartners will remain in their current schedule.)
      * Students who opt for full remote learning will be given details of the remote learning plan once the district knows how many students in each grade will be full remote.
      * Mitigation strategies will remain in place, including masks, cleaning protocols and maintaining three to six feet distancing. To view Dr. Austin’s presentation on the new CDC school reopening guidance and how it relates to HPS, click [here.](https://hinghamschools.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Item-4-Health-Metrics-and-CDC-Guidelines.pdf)
      * A Learning Transition survey was emailed to all HPS [Elementary](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdDqUC-UC2VkFsqfH8Qnr6q7tQTiVjRuOTQDcfCI822-X9HHw/viewform) and [Secondary](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdDqUC-UC2VkFsqfH8Qnr6q7tQTiVjRuOTQDcfCI822-X9HHw/viewform) families on 2/22.
        + In the survey, families with students in grades one through five are asked **to commit** to either full in-person or full remote learning for the remainder of the school year for each student.
        + Families with students in grades six through twelve are asked to indicate whether they are leaning towards full in-person or full remote at this time. Parents should note that in order to accommodate an increase in the number of students in-person at a given time, social distance spacing may be reduced to three feet in some classrooms.
      * Beginning Wednesday, March 17, students in grades six through eight will attend school in-person on alternating Wednesdays with their cohort.
      * Discussions and planning will continue at least weekly to determine how to increase in-person learning time for students in grades six through twelve. We recognize that a plan for secondary students can not come soon enough and we will continue to express a sense of urgency on this topic.
      * Middle and High School principals have established a council that includes medical professionals in our community to help guide decisions on safely increasing in-person learning for students.
      * Approximately 950 students have enrolled in the pool testing program to date. To learn more and to enroll your student(s), click [here](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSe7M_mr0oZO4nYbht6b21RQeb8ibPm213QdNrvHC0jHqPTu-w/viewform).

Assistant Superintendent Dr. Jamie LaBillois presented a detailed [quantitative analysis](https://hinghamschools.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Item-4-HPS-COVID-Impact-2.21.21.pdf) quantitative analysis of the current achievement gap for students in grades K-12 as a result of the pandemic. To conduct the analysis, Dr. LaBillois relied on available year over year data to compare this year’s students in a particular grade with last year’s students in that same grade. The findings quantified the regression that many teachers, parents and caregivers have witnessed over the last several months. Dr. LaBillois also showed how the essential services required to close the achievement gaps are included in the proposed FY’22 budget.

Thank you for your continued support and engagement.

If you have questions or concerns, please email your [School Committee members](https://hinghamschools.org/about/school-committee/).