



# Hastings Public Schools

INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT 200  
1000 11<sup>TH</sup> STREET WEST  
HASTINGS, MN 55033-2597  
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## **Community Collaboration Committee Purpose Statement:**

The Community Collaboration Committee is a link between the Hastings School District and the ISD200 community. The committee focuses on identifying avenues to continuously improve the district's communication process for increased transparency and to better articulate the district's goals with its stakeholders. The committee seeks opportunities for shared learning, knowledge, awareness, experience, and growth to create a stronger, more united community.

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**Date & Time:** Wednesday, April 1 2026 at 5:00–6:00 P.M.

**Location:** Hastings High School

In Attendance: Elaine Mikel-Mulder, Matt Bruns, Dr. Kristine Wehrkamp Herman, and Mark Zuzek, community members

## **Event Overview**

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The April 1 Community Collaboration Night brought together Hastings community members, parents, staff, and stakeholders to engage in open dialogue about the relationship between Hastings Public Schools, the School Board, and the broader community. Using the Homerun Leadership® Innovation App, participants responded to a series of structured questions designed to surface strengths, areas of concern, and ideas for improvement.

## **Community Findings: What Is Working Well**

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Participants identified numerous strengths in the current relationship between the district, the board, and the community:

### **1. Improved Communication**

Community members noted meaningful progress in communication between the district and families, citing multiple channels for receiving updates and providing feedback.

### **2. Regular & Consistent Meetings**

The frequency and consistency of community collaboration meetings were highlighted as a positive, with participants valuing the opportunity for ongoing engagement and input.

### **3. Increased Transparency**

Many respondents recognized the school board's enhanced efforts to keep the community informed, including posting meetings online, publishing survey results, and sharing regular updates.

### **4. Public Comment Reinstated**

The return of public comment during board meetings was widely celebrated as an important step toward restoring community voice and direct input.

### **5. Community & Parent Engagement**



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There was appreciation for increased opportunities for parents and community members to participate in school affairs and decision-making processes.

### **6. Student Representation**

The inclusion of student representatives in meetings and governance conversations was viewed as a meaningful and beneficial practice.

### **7. Visible Leadership**

Participants noted the superintendent's visible presence in the community and at events such as concerts and the Native American graduation ceremony as a positive reflection of leadership engagement.

### **8. Feedback Mechanisms**

The use of regular surveys and other tools to gather community and staff input was recognized as a constructive step toward accountability and responsiveness.

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## **Community Findings: Areas of Concern**

Participants also surfaced significant concerns and areas where relationships could be strengthened:

### **1. Trust & Respect Between Board and Staff**

The most frequently raised concern was a perceived lack of trust and respect between certain school board members and district teachers and staff. Many respondents called for the board to value the professional expertise, experience, and dedication of educators.

### **2. Communication Gaps**

While overall communication has improved, participants noted that the flow of information between the board, administration, and teaching staff remains inconsistent and sometimes unclear.

### **3. Limited Follow-Through on Survey Results**

Several community members expressed frustration that concerns raised in prior perception surveys had not been adequately addressed with visible, actionable change.

### **4. Lack of Meaningful Community Input in Decisions**

Some respondents felt that significant decisions were being made without adequate community awareness or opportunity for input in advance.

### **5. Board-Staff Relationship Breakdown**

Participants described a fractured relationship between portions of the school board and district staff, pointing to public accusations, lack of acknowledgment of staff expertise, and insufficient support for teachers.

### **6. Political Influence Concerns**



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Concerns were raised about personal and political agendas influencing board decisions in ways that detract from educational priorities and community needs.

### 7. Student & Classroom Needs

Participants called for greater attention to student needs, specifically around reading proficiency, class sizes, mental health support, and inclusive programming.

### Community Ideas for Improvement

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Respondents offered a rich array of suggestions for strengthening relationships and moving forward together:

- Establish a more consistent and direct communication channel between the school board and teachers
- Increase school board member presence in schools — observing classes, attending events, doing lunchroom duty, and engaging directly with students and staff
- Create regular focus groups and small-group sessions where teachers and board members can dialogue directly
- Publicly recognize and honor teachers for their expertise and contributions
- Expand student voice and representation in board discussions and decision-making
- Develop proactive communication strategies to get information out before rumors spread
- Ensure board actions align with the district's stated strategic plan and values
- Expand and diversify community engagement events and formats
- Provide professional development for board members on educational policy, roles, and best practices
- Celebrate and embrace the growing diversity of ISD 200
- Record work sessions and provide accessible recaps through the superintendent's weekly email
- Continue and expand community collaboration events as a foundation for ongoing relationship-building

### Next Community Collaboration Committee Meeting

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**April 22, 2026 | 4:30-5:45-P.M.**

The April 22 meeting will focus on the following agenda items:

- Discuss planning for the next Community Collaboration Night event
- Develop a timeline and structure for proposed upcoming events
- Identify and discuss topics for future community engagement sessions