

Executive Director's End-of-Year Recap

Dear Hoboken Charter School Community,

I hope you are enjoying some summer fun and relaxation. The summer is quieter at HCS and the admin team takes time to reflect on the conclusion of the completed school year and plan for another exciting year of learning and growing. 2023-2024 was another mission-aligned year of success for our students. For example, The NJ Department of Education listed HCS as being in the top 15% of NJ public schools in NJ in student growth!

On our [website](#) you can find a non-exhaustive list of highlights, all of which demonstrate the four pillars of our message in action!



Social Justice Education



Service-Learning



Learner-Centered Education



Intergate Experiences

For example, you'll learn how:

- All our K-12 HCS students engaged in:
 - Multiple experiences centered around social justice
 - Service experiences
 - At least three intergate learning projects that were service and/or academic-oriented.
 - Collaborative, personalized, project-based and experiential learning
- Field trips to over twenty-five (25) locations extended learning beyond the four walls of our classrooms.
- Upper school students participated in our dual enrollment programs through which twenty-one of our students earned college credits
- Our graduating seniors faired with the college applications
- Our talented students were honored with multiple awards this year and presented their learning to those outside our community.
- Our community partnerships with outside service providers enhanced our programming.

Plus, because we can only accomplish what we do with the hard work and creativity of our brilliant staff, you can also read about their accomplishments.

I want to wish everyone a continued restful summer with refreshed enthusiasm for the new school year.

Best,
Deirdra

2023-2024 School Year Recap



Social Justice Education

- All K-12 HCS students engaged in multiple experiences centered around social justice thus enhancing students' academic skills while they developed a greater sense of identity; an appreciation for diversity; and a lens for justice and equity all while experiencing a call to action and service.
 - Our lower school students explored the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) with each grade focusing on a specific area of focus (i.e., right to food security, education, housing and health care). Meaningful local and global nonprofit partnerships were forged, and students engaged in acts of service to further support access to these rights.
 - Middle and upper school students explored all their coursework with critical lenses around race, ethnicity, socioeconomic privilege and gender and found social justice connections across all disciplines whether they were [scaling Barbies to life size to investigate both ratios and unrealistic body images in Math](#) to examining in English Language Arts and Social Studies how outdated language in texts can perpetuate harm toward groups of people to analyzing in Science environmental impacts of policies on various global communities. Many of these academic projects inspired students to initiate social action and service work.



Service-Learning

- All K-12 students engaged in service experiences that enhanced their academic learning by engaging in hands-on work with real-world application while developing a sense of social responsibility, empowerment and the critical skills to enact positive change in the world. Students dedicated countless hours of service and raised thousands of dollars in monetary donations to these organizations.
 - Partnerships included [Heifer International](#), [The Hoboken Shelter](#), [Riverview Park Community Garden](#), NJ Humane Society, [Saint Matthew Trinity Lunchtime Ministry](#) and the [Leukemia & Lymphoma Society \(LLS\)](#).



Learner-Centered Education

- Learning at HCS is collaborative, personalized, project-based and experiential (what we call learner-centered) preparing students for a changing world. Our students experienced this in their differentiated coursework across all disciplines and in frequent opportunities for students to bring who they are to their coursework.
 - Some of this was evidenced in lower school published writing pieces such as the [Wax Museum presentations](#) where 3rd grade students researched a changemaker of interest and came to life for museum goers or in their Writing for Change essays advocating for change to administrators or governmental figures.
 - 5-12 students chose from a variety of mixed grade Electives and Labs such as STEM Showcase, Murals and Public Art, Craftivism, Forensics, Audio Production, Podcasting Activism and Immigration Law. Find a list of course offerings this year below.
- Social-emotional learning is essential to our work to teach the whole child. All students engaged in work around having a growth mindset, mindfulness, gratitude, self-regulation and conflict resolution. Our 5-12 students engaged in middle and upper school four-year advisory programs focused on the students' social, emotional and academic well-being.
- Learning was extended beyond the four walls of our classrooms with coursework reinforcing field trips to over twenty-five (25) locations including [Hudson River Estuary](#), NJ State House, Carnegie Hall, [Waterloo Village](#), [Reeves Reed Arboretum](#), [Ellis Island](#), [Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture](#) and the Metropolitan Museum of Art. See below for a more comprehensive list.
- Upper school students participated in our dual enrollment programs through which twenty-one (21) of our students earned college credits for completing schoolwork offered via Fairleigh Dickinson University and Hudson County Community College at HCS during the school day. Courses ranged from College Composition, African American Literature, Intro to Probability and Statistics, Computer Science, Psychology and Intro to Business and Art.



Interage Experiences

- All K-12 students engaged in at least three interage learning projects that were service and/or academic-oriented. These experiences are valuable for building community and providing leadership opportunities as well as the meaningful experience of mentorship. Experiences included transcribing and reviewing Library of Congress documents for ADA accessibility, [making lunch kits with friendly notes and delivering them to the Hoboken Shelter](#) and [making and sending cards for seniors in the local Senior Center](#) and [deployed US troops](#). Additionally, regularly [classroom connections were made across divisions to enhance learning](#). A more comprehensive list can be found below.

ACCOLADES

We also have lots to celebrate!

- [The NJ Department of Education listed HCS as being in the top 15% of NJ public schools in NJ in exceeding student growth in ELA and Math.](#)
- [Our nineteen \(19\) seniors graduated and were accepted into over 50 colleges across the nation and awarded over \\$3.6 million in merit scholarships.](#) HCS brought students on numerous [college tours](#) and fairs and welcomed presenters to speak about their experiences at Princeton University, University of Oxford and Rutgers University and to share tips on the application process and the transition to college.
- Our talented students were honored with multiple awards this year and had new experiences to present their learning to those outside our community. Some of these recognitions were from the [Stock Market Game, Elementary Division](#), International WPI Robotics Invitational, First Tech Challenge and [First Lego League](#). A more comprehensive list can be found below.
- We can only accomplish what we do with the hard work and creativity of our exemplary staff. Some of them received accolades from outside HCS this year.
 - [Mr. Kunkel was honored as STEM Educator of the Year by NJ STEM Month.](#)
 - [Ms. Powers](#) was selected as quarterfinalist for the 2024 Music Educator of the Year by the Recording Academy and GRAMMY Museum.
 - Thanks also to [Mr. Persico](#) for seeking out, applying for and receiving a grant from “We Need Diverse Books” to further diversity our classroom libraries.
 - We owe our gratitude also to Ms. Palma for securing the High Impact Tutoring grant bringing \$18,000 of math tutoring support services to HCS serving nineteen (19) of our lower school students.
- I’d be remiss to not also thank our community partnerships with outside service providers enhancing our programming. These include [Shehnaaz Dance Academy](#), Tambor y Cana, [Bricks for Kidz](#), Surati Performing Arts, PlayDay, [Tenafly Nature Center](#), [Hoboken Public Library](#), Mad Science, [Liberty Science Center](#), Speranza Theater Company, Urban Arts, [Buzy Bugs](#), [Sokolow Theater/Dance Ensemble](#), Amazon Future Engineers, Girls Who Code and Waterfront Project.

Thank you for a wonderful 2024!

Best,

Deirdra

DETAILS

Middle and Upper School Mixed Grade Electives and Mission Lab Courses

- Artists on a Mission
- The Great Displacement
- Decoding Disney
- Technology Applications
- Theater Design
- Art Journaling

- Ukulele and Guitar
- Muralists
- Swiftly Speaking
- Don't Be Clueless
- STEM Showcase
- Lego Land
- Animal Activists
- Magazine Making
- Project Runway
- Modern Band
- Hamilton
- Environmental Justice
- Podcasting Activism
- Current Events and Social Issues
- Children's Books as Activism
- Advocacy Journalism
- Murals and Public Art
- [Radical textiles](#)
- Craftivism
- Forensics
- Audio Production
- Careers in Sports
- SAT prep
- Writing and Reflection through Journaling
- Immigration Law
- Theater as Activism
- ACLU: Know Your Rights
- Activist Poetry

Interage Experiences

- Transcribing and reviewing Library of Congress documents for ADA accessibility
- [Full School Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration](#)
- Making lunch kits with friendly notes and delivering them to the Hoboken Shelter
- [Fundraising to cover multiple nights of meals at the Hoboken Shelter](#)
- Making and sending cards for seniors in the local Senior Center
- Making and sending cards for deployed US troops
- Reading Buddies
- [100 Days of School Event](#)
- Local park clean-up
- [Toilet paper drive for the Hoboken Shelter](#)
- [Deodorant and soap drive for the Hoboken Community Center](#)
- Probability Carnival
- Coding, Robotics and [French lessons](#) for younger grades
- [Gently used book collection, bookmark creation and distribution to Little Free Libraries in town](#)
- [No One Eats Alone Day](#)
- [Cross Divisional Cheer Squad](#)

Field Trips

- United Justice Coalition Annual Summit
- Sokolow Theater/Dance Ensemble

- [Pocono Valley Resort](#)
- [9/11 Memorial Museum](#)
- Girls in Technology STEM Symposium
- [Liberty Hall](#)
- NJ State House
- Hudson River Estuary
- Waterloo Village
- Reeves Reed Arboretum
- Ellis Island
- Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture
- [Metropolitan Museum of Art](#)
- Citi Field: Mets Stadium (anti-bullying event)
- [New York Public Library](#)
- Six Flags (Amusement Park Physics)
- [Meadowlands Environment Center](#)
- NJPAC
- Carnegie Hall
- Central Park
- [Manhattan School of Music](#)
- [Liberty Science Center](#)
- TurtleBack Zoo
- Museum of Illusions
- [Hoboken Historical Museum](#)
- Ort Farms

Student Honors and Recognitions

- International WPI Robotics Invitational
- [High Notes Music Festival \(both grades 5 and 6 and 7 and 8 bands earned "Excellent" ratings\)](#)
- American Invitational Robotics Competition
- The Stock Market Game, NJ Elementary Division (Three teams of our 4th graders scored 1st, 2nd and 3rd in the State!)
- [Your Voice, Your Song Shout Down Drugs competition \(3rd Place\)](#)
- [Technology Student Association](#) Conference (8 teams scored in top 12)
- [Hudson County Unsung Hero award](#)
- First Tech Challenge (winner of the Inspire award- the highest award given out)
- [National Girls and Women in Sports Day at Jersey City Mike's Arena at Rutgers](#)
- First Lego League North NJ Championship (Core Values award)