

# **Regional School District #17**

## **Board of Education**



## **School Board Member**

## **Handbook**

January 6, 2015

This handbook summarizes various policies, protocols, and practices of the Board of Education to aid its members and the general public in understanding the operating principles of the Board.

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# Regional School District 17

Providing Excellence in Education for the Towns of Haddam and Killingworth

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## **Introduction**

This handbook is intended to serve as a guide for citizens, Board members, and prospective Board candidates in the operations of the Board of Education. It is intended only to summarize, and bring together in a single location, certain information, policies, and practices helpful in understanding the organizing principles of the Board of Education.

This Handbook will be posted on the Board's website and will be available at the Central Office of Regional School District 17.

## **Mission Statement**

The mission of Regional School District 17 Board of Education is to engage students in an educational community that challenges them with high standards and builds their capacity for success and their aspiration to improve themselves and their society.

## **Statement of Philosophy**

We believe that it is imperative to develop a community of learners by offering comprehensive, vigorous and contemporary instructional programs and services imparted by highly trained, dedicated and caring professionals with the support of parents and citizens. Recognizing that individuals represent the most valuable resource of our school district, we stand committed to creating and maintaining a culture and climate that supports learning for all.

We are dedicated to effectively prioritizing and being held accountable for the allocation of human, financial and physical resources of the school district to ensure the effective and efficient delivery of all programs and services.

Adopted by Regional School District 17 Board of Education:  
August 3, 2011

The members of the Board of Education are local residents charged by Connecticut law to oversee school district educational programs. They are elected by district citizens to represent them in setting policies and staff members to carry out district policies and objectives. School board members are volunteers who serve without pay for a four-year term. The Board conducts monthly business and committee meetings as listed in the calendar. Regional School District 17 community members are invited to attend Board of Education meetings.

## **Core Values**

### **Children**

Guarantee a quality education based on the belief that all children have the natural disposition to learn.

### **Curriculum**

Provide a curriculum that engages and challenges all students.

### **Responsibility**

Foster a community that recognizes that education is a responsibility shared among students, families, and the schools.

### **Ethics**

Require all members of the school community to exhibit integrity, model responsible behavior, and show respect to others.

### **Safety**

Maintain a safe environment for all members of the school district.

### **Stewardship**

Ensure responsible stewardship to the communities for the resources and facilities they provide.

### **Communication**

Build collaborative relationships with the entire community through ongoing and transparent communication.

### **Diversity**

Provide an environment that respects diversity.

## **Board Goals**

### 1. Student Achievement

All students in Regional School District 17 schools will achieve established, rigorous performance standards in all areas of student learning by becoming independent strategic readers, problem solvers, and critical thinkers.

### 2. Communication

The RSD 17 Board of Education will establish reciprocal communication that is accessible and understandable, and that unites all citizens around the belief that high-quality public education is a community's most valuable asset.

### 3. Facilities and Educational Adequacy

The RSD 17 Board of Education will ensure all students have the opportunity to learn and achieve in safe and educationally adequate facilities by meeting the needs of the district with respect to adequate space and the quality of learning environments.

### 4. Board Governance

The RSD 17 Board of Education will focus on continuous improvement leading to student achievement and student success through its development of policy, ongoing evaluation, and commitment to individual and Board professional growth.

### 5. Fiscal Responsibility

The RSD 17 Board of Education realizes that its main responsibility is to the students of the district. However, the Board is fully cognizant of the financial education budget burden for taxpayers. Every effort is made by the Board to maintain high quality in education and facilities in fiscally responsible practices.

## **What Does a School Board Do?**

Boards of Education have several functions:

- Develop, implement, and monitor the district's policies including short and long term goals. These policies serve as the road map for the school district. They give direction to the administration and staff and become the foundation of accountability.

- Select, retain, and evaluate the Superintendent of schools, who serves as the district's chief executive officer and implements board policy. Perhaps no single decision a board makes has more impact than the selection of the Superintendent.

- Establish good working relationships with the Superintendent. The Board and its individual members are expected to refrain from becoming involved in the day-to-day operation of the schools and remember that board members have no individual authority other than their vote at a formal board meeting. Outside of an official meeting, or unless otherwise designated by the board, an individual board member is an ordinary citizen, with no more authority than any citizen.

- Work with the Superintendent to develop an annual operating and capital school budget that is then presented to the district residents for their approval.

- Develop, approve, and monitor implementation of the budget. The budget provides resources for the educational priorities of the school district.

- Attend the business school Board meeting and the education Board meeting each month.

- Help with the effectiveness of the school Board by serving on Board subcommittees and Board liaison organizations.

- Serve as the impartial hearing panel on such issues as termination, expulsion and grievance.

- Respect the confidentiality necessary for executive sessions of the Board, for special hearings of the Board, and for the negotiations process, and for RSD 17 website Board email communication.

- Build public support and understanding of public education. This means communicating and interpreting the school district's mission to the public, listening to the community, and when appropriate, incorporating citizens' views into the discussions of the Board.

## **Board Authority and Responsibility**

The Board of Education is ultimately responsible for ensuring that Regional School District 17 residents have access to a free, quality education through high school. Connecticut law imbues the Board with specific and often broad authority over the administration of district schools. For example, the Board of Education exercises control over school buildings and property, employs and supervises the superintendent of schools, adopts a budget, and approves textbooks. A lengthier and more specific listing of the Board's authority can be found in Chapter 10 of the Connecticut State Statutes.

While the Board has broad authority over the RSD 17 schools, much of its authority is delegated to the Superintendent of schools and other district employees. The Board of Education functions, not as management responsible for the administration of the school district, but as a board of directors responsible for establishing a vision for RSD 17's schools, and monitoring its progress in reaching that vision.

Reference: *BOE Policy 9010*

Individual Board members have no authority except when they are meeting as a Board of Education. The Board of Education is a collective body and, by statute, can only act when a quorum is assembled in a legally constituted meeting. The statements or actions of individual Board Members do not bind the Board of Education, except when that statement or action has been authorized by an official act of the Board. Board Members should be careful not to act or speak in a manner that suggests they are speaking or acting on behalf of the Board of Education or the school district when they have not been so authorized by the Board.

Reference: *BOE Policies 9010, 9011 and 9012 (a, b)*

## **Board Meetings**

### Meeting Schedule

The Board of Education approves its annual meeting schedules (Business Meeting and Education Meeting) in the fall. The Board

meets on the first and third Tuesday of each month. Regular and special meetings of the full Board are televised.

As a public agency, the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requires that all meetings of the Board be posted at least twenty-four hours in advance and that members of the public are allowed to be present. Additionally, the FOIA requires that all Board documents be made available to the public promptly upon request, with limited provisions for the redaction of confidential information.

Reference: *BOE Policy 9321*

### Regular Meetings

Regular meetings of the Board of Education are those meetings listed on its annual schedule of meetings voted by the board in the fall. At regular meetings, the Board can add items to the agenda. Business board meetings start at 7:30 p.m. (the first Tuesday of the month) and are held in the Central Office board room. Education board meetings start at 7:30 p.m. (the third Tuesday of the month) and are held in the Media Center at the Haddam-Killingworth Middle School.

### Special Meetings

Meetings of the entire Board that are not on the annual schedule of meetings are special meetings. At a special meeting, the Board cannot add items to the meeting agenda for discussion or action.

### Meeting Agendas

The Superintendent of schools, in conjunction with the Board Chair, develops an agenda for each Board meeting. Meeting agendas, along with necessary documents and material, are distributed to Board members prior to the meeting. Board agendas and the related documents are designed to facilitate discussion and voting. Further explanation and discussion matters can be addressed at the non-board level.

### Robert's Rules of Order

The Board conducts its meetings guided by *Robert's Rules of Order* except when these rules are in conflict with Board policy,

Board meetings, or Connecticut state law, or workshop style meetings.

Reference: *BOE Policy 9325.3*

### Board Quorum

Six members of the Board shall constitute a quorum. Unless otherwise specified by Board policy, a majority of Board Members voting on a particular item is sufficient for approval.

Reference: *BOE Policy 9325a*

### Consent Agenda

Consent agenda items may include donations to schools, classrooms, or programs. The consent agenda is an item on the meeting agenda in which all voting items that do not require Board discussion or debate are listed. A vote to approve the consent agenda by the Board shall approve all items listed on the consent agenda. If a Board member wishes to discuss an item, he/she shall request that the item be set aside/taken off the consent agenda, and it will be discussed and voted on separately following a vote on the consent agenda.

Reference: *BOE Policy 9325.21*

### Board Votes

The Board of Education is a collective body and, as such, can only act via a vote by its members. Board votes must be in public at a properly noticed meeting of the Board and recorded in writing. Pursuant to Robert's Rules, all motions must be made by one board member and seconded by another. Members may vote in favor or against the motion, or abstain from voting.

### Executive Session

Although, as a public agency, the Board must meet and conduct its business in public, under certain narrowly defined exceptions, the Board may exclude the public from a portion of its meeting by calling an executive session. The Freedom of Information Act provides that a board of education may hold an executive session by a two-thirds vote of those members in attendance and voting.

Although the law allows for discussion in executive session, any action by the Board must be taken in open session.

The permissible reasons for holding an executive session are limited and, when in doubt, the Board should consult with its counsel. Some reasons are to discuss documents with respect to contract negotiations, personnel matters, pending claims and litigation, confidential documents and student matters.

Reference: *BOE Policy 9322a*

### Board Member Attendance

Board members are expected to attend all regular and special meetings of the Regional School District 17 Board, including meetings of their assigned subcommittees. While it is almost inevitable that, on occasion, an individual member will have a personal or professional conflict that prevents him/her from attending a meeting, ideally this is a rare and unavoidable circumstance. Service on the Board of Education is a public trust on behalf of the communities and children of Regional School District 17. It is expected that Board members will make this service a priority. The Board of Education functions best when all eleven members devote the time, energy, preparation, and seriousness of purpose necessary to accomplish exceptional work that is called for by public service. All Board members need to keep in mind that they were elected by their towns to serve in this position.

### Meeting Minutes

Pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), minutes must be taken at all meetings of the Board of Education. These minutes must be available within seven days of the meeting, but all votes of the Board must be reduced to writing and available within forty-eight hours. The FOIA requires that minutes must contain the recording of votes and the names of those members in attendance. These requirements apply to meetings of Board subcommittees as well.

In order to appropriately apprise the public of the Board's work, Board minutes should contain the date, the time, and the location of the meeting. Also included should be the members in attendance, a brief description of any business transacted by the

Board, along with any Board action, the recording of Board member votes, and a description of any executive session held, and the names of all individuals present for each executive session.

Reference: *BOE Policies 9326a minutes and 9130 of subcommittees*

### Meeting Norms

It is the expectation that the Board of Education is a professional organization whose meetings model appropriate behavior for the school district. Members need to be prepared for meetings and arrive on time. Board meetings will be conducted via understood and established procedures as set forth in Board policy and bylaws.

If a Board member is unable to make any Board meeting, he/she needs to contact the Board Chair in advance. If a Board member can't make a subcommittee meeting, the chair of that subcommittee needs to be notified in advance.

In order to ensure that meetings of the Board are as effective and useful as possible, members will avoid surprises by articulating specific concerns in advance. The Board believes that informed, respectful discussion and debate is the best means of arriving at good decisions for the school district. Accordingly, during discussion Board members will listen attentively, consider all points of view, support their positions with facts when possible, be prepared to answer questions from other Board members, focus on the issue at hand, avoid negative and personal comments, and be prepared to compromise, understanding that the goal of debate among Board members is not to prevail but to arrive at the best possible decision for the school district.

At the beginning of Board meetings, residents have the opportunity to address Board members. This is not to be a debate or discussion period with the public. It is a listening period for Board members. Any response will come from the Board Chair or the Superintendent. More complete and detailed responses are typically furnished after the Superintendent and the Chair have had the opportunity to consider and/or research the remarks.

Information and discussion in Board executive sessions are confidential and cannot be shared with the public. Information, discussion, and actions taken by Board members at disciplinary, expulsion, termination hearings are highly confidential. The Personnel and Evaluation subcommittee must remember that much of its work is confidential as well.

### **Board Committees, Subcommittees, and Liaisons**

The Board understands that not all of its work can be accomplished at regularly scheduled meetings of the entire Board, and that in order to dedicate the necessary time, expertise and focus on individual issues, it is necessary to utilize committees of the Board. The Board's committee structure was developed so that it is aligned with the Board's goals to better focus Board activity and action on its priorities.

The Chair of the Board of Education selects from among Board of Education volunteers to serve on the various BOE Subcommittees. The Chair also selects the chair of each subcommittee. This is one of the important responsibilities of the Board Chair. The chair of each subcommittee is responsible for the meeting schedule, the agenda, and the minutes. The meeting schedule can be set for the entire calendar year or set up as Special Meetings held when needed. The agenda needs to be sent to the board clerk at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting. If it is a Special Meeting, the notice of the meeting should be sent to the board clerk at least one week in advance and that agenda cannot be altered. The completed minutes are to be returned to the board clerk within 24 hours. These requirements must be met due to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

The chairs of subcommittees and the Board liaisons are expected to report pertinent information to the full Board each month.

The Board of Education has six standing committees. These committees are: Communications, Curriculum, Facilities, Finance, Personnel and Evaluation, and Policy. The Board will also rely on ad hoc committees, appointed by the Board Chair, for those tasks that require a committee of the Board and do not fall within the parameters of the standing committees.

Reference: *BOE Policy 9130*

### Communications Subcommittee

This subcommittee deals with getting Board of Education information out to district residents. A Board of Education Update dispersed throughout the communities can share district and Board events and accomplishments. Using the District 17 Website, Facebook page, Haddam and Killingworth news websites are also important sources for Board communication. The establishment and the maintenance/updating of this Board of Education Handbook is the responsibility of this subcommittee. This handbook is intended to serve as a guide for board members and prospective Board members.

### Curriculum Subcommittee

This subcommittee is responsible for reviewing the district curricula and supervising any changes suggested by the Superintendent, administrators, and teachers. This subcommittee will be represented at the monthly district Curriculum Council meetings. Subcommittee members may also want to be included in other district or community activities involving Regional School District 17 curriculum such as activities or programs to enhance the curriculum.

### Facilities Subcommittee

This subcommittee works closely with the district Facilities Director. Maintenance projects and the purchase of items for district buildings and property are supervised by this subcommittee.

### Finance Subcommittee

This subcommittee oversees and approves the monthly district finance records of the district Director of Fiscal Operations.

### Personnel and Evaluation Subcommittee

This subcommittee is responsible for the evaluation of the Superintendent, as well as for contract negotiations involving the Superintendent, the Administrators, the Teachers, the Support Staff, the Nurses, and the Custodians. This subcommittee interviews final candidates for administrator positions in the district and sends its recommendation on to the full Board.

### Policy Subcommittee

This subcommittee oversees the policies of the school system. The policies encompass numerous areas: Missions and Goals, Community Relations, Administration, Business & Non-Instructional Operations, Personnel-Certified & Non-Certified, Students, Instruction, New Construction, and Bylaws of the Board.

## **Board Responsibilities**

Every Board of Education Board member participates in the following important activities:

### Education Meetings

The Board meets on the third Tuesday of each month. At this meeting education issues pertaining to the district are presented and discussed.

### Budget Meetings

The superintendent presents his recommended budget to the Board at the first Board meeting in March. The Board reviews that budget and will have further recommendations. There will be additional meetings: a joint meeting with town Selectmen and town Boards of Finance, town input sessions, and Board workshops. The Board of Education presents its recommended budget to the public in April. In early May the final budget will be presented to the district towns. The Board is very involved with this process throughout the two-month period. The final decision on the budget goes to a district referendum the first Tuesday in May.

*Reference: BOE Policies 9012a and 9040*

## **Board Liaisons**

### Healthy Communities-Healthy Kids

This is a coalition subcommittee under Haddam-Killingworth Youth & Family Services. This group meets once a month for an 8:00 am breakfast usually at the HKHS Lower Media Center. This is a group of diverse individuals from the community. The mission of the HC-HK Coalition is to engage every sector of the community in an effort to change policy, education, and implement strategies to prevent and reduce substance abuse, other risky behavior, and to promote the wellness of the community.

### LEARN

This Board member becomes a member of the Board of Directors of LEARN, our regional education service center (RESC). It meets on the second Thursday of each month at the LEARN center in Lyme.

### Curriculum Council

The Regional School District 17 Curriculum Council meets each month at the Central Office. The council is made up of administrators, teachers, community members, and any Board members who wish to attend. At each meeting areas of the district curriculum are presented and discussed. A report from each of the five schools and the Pupil Services department is given. Comments from the Superintendent and/or the Assistant Superintendent are included as well.

### Parks & Recreation

The liaison attends the monthly meeting of the Parks and Recreation Authority. He or she brings questions and concerns back to the Superintendent and the full Board. This Board member facilitates the relationship between the district and P & R Authority as the representative of the Board.

### Haddam Board of Selectmen

A Haddam resident member of the BOE serves as the liaison. This person attends one Board of Selectmen meeting each month to engage in a sharing of information. A report is given to the full Board of Education at its first meeting of the month--the business meeting.

### Killingworth Board of Selectmen

A Killingworth resident member of the BOE serves as the liaison. This person attends one Board of Selectmen meeting each month to engage in a sharing of information. A report is given to the full Board of Education at its first meeting of the month--the business meeting.

## **Board Hearings**

One of the responsibilities of the Board of Education is to conduct hearings. For many of these hearings, such as student expulsion hearings, school accommodation hearings, and teacher termination hearings, the Board serves as an impartial hearing board. In these instances, Board members who serve on the panel must make their decision based only on the evidence and information presented at the hearing. Regardless of whether the Board is serving as an impartial panel, or in grievance hearing, Board members have an obligation to treat those before them respectfully and fairly, adhering to the highest standards of professional conduct.

## **Election of Board of Education Members**

The Regional School District 17 Board of Education is an eleven member, non-partisan Board. There are six members from Haddam and five members from Killingworth. Candidates are selected by a town's registered political party and placed on the November ballot in that town. The term of office is four years. Election of Board members is set up so that half are elected or re-elected every two years.

This ensures that there are always experienced members on the Board.

Reference: *Town Charters of Haddam and Killingworth, CGS 10-46*

## **Board Member Qualifications**

Individuals must be registered voters in the Regional School District 17 towns in order to serve on the Board of Education. Employees of the Board of Education may not serve on the Board.

Beyond the minimum statutory requirements for Board service, it is expected that Board of Education members will share a commitment to providing an exceptional educational experience for each student, a willingness to work and study to become well-versed in public education and Regional School District 17 schools, and a sincere desire to be part of a high-functioning governing body that takes the responsibilities of public service seriously.

Elected Board members must be sworn in by their Town Clerk (Haddam or Killingworth) before they can officially become Board members. If elected in November, they need to be sworn in before the December Board meeting. If a vacancy is being filled, the new Board member should be sworn in by the Town Clerk as soon as possible.

## **Resignation of Board Members**

Board members who wish to resign from the Board of Education must submit a letter of resignation to the Town Clerk, with a copy to the Board Chair. A member's resignation is not effective until it is filed with the Town Clerk. The Board of Education does not

have the authority to either accept or reject a member's resignation.

Reference: *BOE Policies 9221 and 9222*

### **Filling a Vacancy on the Board**

When a vacancy occurs on the Board, the filling of the vacancy in Haddam and Killingworth follows the same procedure. A special town meeting is held within 30 days of the official resignation to elect a new Board of Education member. The new Board member will fill the term of the resigning Board member until the next November municipal election.

Reference: Connecticut General Statutes, Sec. 10-46(a and c)  
*Town Charters of Haddam and Killingworth*

### **Discipline of Board Members**

Although the Board of Education cannot remove individuals from service as Board members, it does have the authority and ability to discipline individual members. Since service as a Board officer is a privilege and not a right, Board officers can be removed from their position as an officer by a majority vote of the membership of the Board. Board members who violate the rules, regulations or policies of the Board, interfere with the orderly and efficient operation of the Board, or act in ways that are contrary to the best interests of the school district can be subject to a vote of censure by the Board. A censure vote is an expression of disapproval concerning an individual member by the Board and, hopefully, will be used rarely, if at all.

Reference: *BOE Policy 9222*

### **Board Member Orientation**

As part of its commitment to having highly trained individuals as part of a professional governing board, the Board and the Superintendent will provide orientation opportunities for new members and candidates. Once the list of candidates is finalized, the Superintendent of Schools will offer candidates (upon their request) an opportunity to learn about service on the Board of Education. A package of materials including the Board member

handbook and other appropriate materials will be made available to candidates upon request.

Upon their election to the Board, newly elected Board members will be provided additional orientation, including the opportunity to attend professional development workshops and conferences such as the CABE/CAPSS Convention.

### **Board Member Professional Development**

The Board is committed, both individually and as an organization, to the principles of continuous improvement and ongoing education, and understands that in order to perform as a high-functioning professional organization its members must be well educated about the Regional School District 17 schools, board governance and educational best practices. The Board will look to identify and provide professional development opportunities for Board Members, and Board Members will be encouraged to participate in these learning opportunities. The Board will reimburse members for reasonable, pre-approved expenses for professional development.

### **Board Officers**

The Board of Education has four officers: Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer.

The term of office is for two years. The office of Chair will alternate every two years between the towns of Haddam and Killingworth. Election of officers will occur at the business meeting in December when their terms are up. Officers are elected by a majority vote of those members present and voting.

The Board Chair presides at all meetings and serves as the spokesperson. He/she is responsible for appointing Board members to subcommittees, and signs documents, contracts and checks on behalf of the Board. The Board Chair works closely with the Superintendent of Schools to plan meeting agendas and can call special meetings of the Board when necessary.

*Reference: Board Policy 9121*

The Vice-Chair serves as Chair in the absence of the Chair. The Vice-Chair works closely with the Chair and assists that office when called upon to do so.

*Reference: Board Policy 9122*

The Secretary is responsible for all minutes of the Board. The Board Clerk takes the minutes of the Board Business meeting, the Board Education meeting, and other full Board meetings. The Secretary must check the accuracy of these minutes and get back to the clerk promptly. The minutes need to be posted within 48 hours if votes are taken at any meetings. The Secretary must sign the Board-approved minutes at the next Business meeting held the first Tuesday of each month. Other official correspondence of the Board may be required of this office.

*Reference: Board Policy 9123*

The Treasurer will sign any notes or obligations of the district in accordance with of Section 10-46 of the Connecticut General Statutes. The Treasurer will have oversight over the Superintendent or Director of Finance. This officer usually serves as Chair of the Finance Subcommittee and presents the budget at the public annual meeting.

*Reference: Board Policy 9126*

### **Superintendent's Responsibilities**

The Superintendent of Schools, pursuant to state law, is the CEO of Regional School District 17. He/she is responsible for leading and managing the school district, hiring and supervising personnel, developing and administering the budget, and advising the Board on educational developments, board policies, and applicable laws. The Superintendent of Schools shall regularly communicate to the Board the status of student learning and the district's progress in meeting its stated goals.

The Superintendent of Schools will attend all meetings of the Board and works closely with the Board in developing goals and initiatives, and is responsible for the implementation of these initiatives. Although the Superintendent of Schools is directly employed and supervised by the Board, his/her working relationship with the Board is such that he/she is generally considered the Board's "twelfth member."

## **Search, Selection and Appointment of Superintendent**

The Board of Education is responsible for the appointment of the Superintendent of Schools. When conducting a search for a Superintendent, the Board may vote itself as the personnel search committee. If so, it may meet as the Personnel Search Committee without public notice of its meetings or a requirement to allow the public to attend.

The search for, and selection of, a Superintendent of Schools is one of the most important decisions that a board of education can make. Accordingly, this process should be thoughtful and informed, made with a clear understanding of the needs of the school district and the corresponding characteristics of an ideal Superintendent, as well as an awareness of the availability of potential candidates. Although each search process is unique, generally the Board would be well advised to consult with the public and other informed individuals, both in and outside the district, when conducting a Superintendent search.

## **Superintendent Evaluation**

As the Superintendent of Schools is the only district employee directly supervised by the Board of Education, the Board is responsible for evaluating the Superintendent's performance, as well as making decisions concerning his/her contract of employment, such as compensation and extending the term of the contract. Following the conclusion of the school year, the Board shall conduct an evaluation of the Superintendent's performance, utilizing a process and standards of performance that has been agreed upon in advance with the Superintendent of Schools.

## **Board Role in Hiring Process**

Generally speaking, the Board does not have the primary role in the hiring process except for the Superintendent of Schools. It is Board policy to authorize the Superintendent of Schools to hire teachers and other personnel without direct involvement on the part of the Board Members.

When hiring school administrators, Board Member(s) selected by the Board Chair can participate in the interview process. The Personnel and Evaluation Subcommittee interviews potential candidates. Then the full Board interviews the recommended finalist for the administrative position and votes to approve or not approve the recommendation.

## **Board Policies**

One of the primary responsibilities of the Board is to develop policies to govern the school district and the Board, which will serve as guideposts and guidelines for the effective and efficient operation of a school district committed to providing an exceptional educational experience for each student. Board policies are developed according to requirements set forth in Connecticut Statutes, State Department of Education recommendations, and the Board's own bylaws, policies and mission statement. In order to ensure that Board policies are current and in compliance with statutory requirements, the Board may utilize CABE (Connecticut Association of Boards of Education) services, attorneys or other outside consultants. While the Board may be advised concerning its policies by the Superintendent of Schools, its attorney or other consultants, the adoption of new policies, or the revision or repeal of existing policies is the sole responsibility of the Board.

The adoption of Board policies is governed by Board Bylaws under Section 9000 of the RSD 17 Policies, Regulations, and Bylaws. Board policies require an initial public reading at a Board meeting, followed by a subsequent second reading and vote before they can be adopted by the Board.

Board policies and bylaws may be suspended for a specific purpose and limited time by a majority vote of the Board members in attendance when there is a prior written notice; absent such written notice, suspension of Board policies requires a majority vote of the entire Board. The suspension of Board bylaws requires a two-thirds vote of the entire Board absent prior written notice.

*Reference: BOE Policies 9311(a, b), 9311.1, 9312, 9313, and 9314*

## **Budget Process**

The Superintendent presents his recommended budget to the Board in early March.

The Board reviews it and can recommend changes to this initial budget during their budget workshops. Then this proposed budget goes to a joint meeting with town Selectmen and Boards of Finance. There are community input meetings. The Board then reviews the budget considering recommendations from town officials and residents. The Board then presents its recommended budget to the public in April. A final budget is presented to the public at the Annual Budget Meeting held the first Monday in May. A district referendum vote is held the following day. If the budget is voted down, the Board meets and makes revisions. Another district vote will be held. This process continues until the budget is passed.

## **Indemnification of Board Members**

Connecticut law provides that the school district must indemnify and hold school employees, volunteers and board members harmless from any claim, demand or judgment from negligence in the performance of their duties and responsibilities. This protection includes legal fees, expenses and other costs.

Reference: CGS 10-235

## **Board of Education Email Address Site Communication**

The Board members need to keep in mind that the Board of Education email address site is under the Freedom of Information Act. All emails can be made public under this act. However, some emails received by Board members at their BOE address may be of a confidential nature. Neither the emails themselves nor their content should be shared unless there is an official FOI request verified by our Superintendent of Schools.

## **Regional School District Website**

The district website can be accessed at [www.rsd17.org](http://www.rsd17.org). Drop down menus at the top will take users to information about the

current board, agendas, minutes, the district calendar, the five district schools, curriculum, emergency information, and more topics. In addition there are important links for school board members and community residents.

### **Regional School District 17 Facebook Page**

The Regional School District 17 Facebook page can be accessed through the Facebook site or through the district website location. Photographs and articles on the site are subject to approval by the Superintendent or his designee.

## **Glossary of Terms**

**Connecticut Glossary of School Board Terms**, CABE reprinted  
January 2013

The following are terms commonly used when discussing various aspects of the RSD 17 school district and may provide a reference for Board members and others.

### Adjusted Equalized Net Grand List Per Capita (AENGLC)

The Adjusted Equalized Net Grand List (AENGL) of each town is divided by the population of that town to obtain a measure of property/income wealth per person. This is the definition currently used to compare town's ability to finance educational costs.

### Average Daily Membership (ADM)

Average Daily Membership is the average number of students in a school district. In October, a count is made of the number of students in a school district. From this measure, students are counted in their town of residence-the town that pays for their education.

### Common Core State Standards (CCSS)

Building on the best of existing state standards, the Common Core State Standards provide clear and consistent learning goals to help prepare students for college, career, and life. The standards clearly demonstrate what students are expected to learn at each grade level, so that every parent and teacher can understand and support their learning.  
[www.sde.ct.gov](http://www.sde.ct.gov)

### District Reference Groups (DRGs)

A district reference group (DRG) is a classification of each school system in a state into a group of 'like' school systems. Seven data indicators are used to classify similar districts into a DRG: three indicators of socioeconomic status, three indicators of need, and enrollment. There are nine classification groups starting with the most affluent to the most in need. Regional School District 17 is in Group C.

### Education Cost Sharing (ECS)

Education Cost Sharing is the grant program of state aid that was created as a result of a Public Act of 1988. The new grant program (ECS) replaced both the Guaranteed Tax Base (GTB) and the Education Enhancement Aid (EEA) grant programs (which provided a formula for distribution of funds for minimum salary aid, salary aid and teacher pupil ratio aid). The new legislation also revised the Minimum Expenditure Requirement (MER) program by setting a new definition of eligible expenditures, regular program expenditures, and by eliminating alternate MERs.

Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)

This federal law passed in 1993 allows employees who meet the eligibility requirements to access unpaid leave for specified purposes. The leave can extend up to twelve weeks in a twelve month period and the employer is obligated to maintain health insurance benefits during the leave period.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

A federal statute that requires districts to keep student educational records confidential and not reveal such information without the prior written consent of the parent or student aged 18 or older.

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)

State law that requires districts to make copies of public records for the benefit of the public and to have records available for public inspection, subject to certain exceptions listed in the law.

Individualized Education Program (IEP)

An IEP is a written statement for a child with disabilities that is developed and implemented in accordance with P.L. 94-142 regulations. The program is developed by a placement team consisting of a certified employee who is qualified to supervise special education, the child's teacher (regular and special education), one or both parents, the child, if appropriate, and other individuals at the discretion of the parent or the school. A program is developed taking into account the child's current level of educational performance, and including short term and annual goals.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

A federal law addressing the needs of children with disabilities and protecting their right to a free and appropriate public education.

Municipal Employees' Relation Act (MERA)

The Connecticut collective bargaining statute that governs negotiations between a board of education and its non-certified staff.

Minimum Budget Requirement (MBR)

The statutory requirement replacing MER (Minimum Expenditure Requirement repealed in 2007). MBR insures that a portion of a municipality's education grant increase is directed to education. In the absence of special exceptions the amount of a town's budget for public education cannot be decreased from the previous year.

Planning Placement Team (PPT)

The body that develops an IEP (individualized Educational Program) for a disabled student. The body consists of the parents, a certified district employee qualified to supervise special education, the child's teachers (regular and special education), and other individuals at the discretion of the parent or school.

Regional Educational Service Centers (RESCs)

A regional educational service center is a public educational authority formed within a regional state planning area by four or more boards of education for the purpose of cooperative action to furnish programs and services to the member boards of education.

Reduction-in Force (RIF)

The process whereby employment is terminated because of a need to reduce the staff rather than because of any performance inadequacies of the employee.

Robert's Rules of Order

A book embodying parliamentary rules, first published in 1876 by Major Henry Robert and revised since then. These rules are not law, and thus are not binding upon meetings of a board of education. If the book is used for guidance, care should be taken because most of the book deals with meetings of assemblies or conventions and only a portion of the book deals with board meetings.

Scientific Research Based Interventions (SRBI)

SRBI are proven teaching and assessment methods that may be integrated in a systemic way so that students who are not successful when presented with one set of instructional methods can be given the chance to succeed with the use of other practices.

Section 504

A federal statute providing that no otherwise qualified disabled individual in the United States shall, solely by reason of his/her disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.

Smarter Balanced Assessment

The Smarter Balanced Assessment is the name of the collective assessments aligned to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in English language arts/literacy (ELA/literacy) and mathematics for grades 3-8 and 11. The system will use computer adaptive testing technologies that teachers and other educators can use to help students succeed.

Talented and Gifted Children (TAG)

A program designed for students who demonstrate high performance ability or capability and who would benefit from differentiated or accelerated education. TAG programs are those special instructional programs, supportive services, unique educational materials, learning settings, and other services that differentiate, supplement, and support the regular educational program in meeting the needs of gifted students.

Teacher Tenure Act (TNA)

The Connecticut General Statute governing the employment of teachers. A certified teacher who has taught successfully 40 or more consecutive months in one school district. This is equivalent to four years before being able to receive tenure.

Title IX

Federal statute designed to eliminate discrimination on the basis of sex in any educational program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.

**Acronyms**

ADM	Average Daily Membership
AENGLC	Adjusted Equalized Net Grand List Per Capita
CABE	Connecticut Boards of Education
CAPSS	Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents
CAPT	Connecticut Academic Performance Test
CAS	Connecticut Association of Schools
CEA	Connecticut Education Association
CHRO	Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities
CIAC	Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference
CMT	Connecticut Mastery Test
CIP	Continuous Improvement Plan
CSCC	Connecticut State Common Core
DRG	District Reference Group
DSAP	Durational Shortage Area Permit
ECS	Education Cost Sharing
ELL	English Language Learners
ENGL	Equalized Net Grand List
FERPA	Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act
FMLA	Family and Medical Leave Act
FOIA	Freedom of Information Act
FOIC	Freedom of Information Commission
HC-HK	Healthy Communities-Healthy Kids (under HKYFS)
GED	General Educational Diploma
HKEA	Haddam-Killingworth Education Association
HKYFS	Haddam-Killingworth Youth and Family Services
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Act
IEP	Individualized Education Program
MBR	Minimum Budget requirement
MER	Minimum Expenditure Requirement
MERA	Municipal Employee Relations Act
NCEP	Net Current Expenditures per Pupil

NEASC	New England Association of Schools and Colleges
NSBA	National School Board Association
OCR	Office of Civil Rights
PPT	Planning and Placement Team
RESC	Regional Educational Service Center
RSD	Regional School District
RTI	Response to Intervention
SDE	State Department of Education
SRBI	Scientific Research Based Intervention
TAG	Talented and Gifted program for students
TEAM	Teacher Education and Mentoring Program
TNA	Teacher Negotiations Act
TRB	Teacher Retirement Board

### **Helpful Reference Sites and Information Sources**

<a href="http://www.rsd17.org">www.rsd17.org</a>	Regional School District 17 Website
<a href="https://www.facebook.com/HKSchools">www.facebook.com/HKSchools</a> page	Haddam-Killingworth Facebook
<a href="http://www.cabe.org">www.cabe.org</a> Education	CT Association of Boards of
<a href="http://www.nsba.org">www.nsba.org</a>	National School Boards Association
<a href="http://www.sde.ct.gov">www.sde.ct.gov</a>	State Department of Education
<a href="http://www.cga.ct.gov/">www.cga.ct.gov/</a>	Connecticut General Assembly
<a href="http://www.learn.k12.ct.us">www.learn.k12.ct.us</a>	LEARN
<a href="http://www.killingworthtoday.com">www.killingworthtoday.com</a>	Killingworth Today (news Website)
<a href="http://www.haddamnow.com">www.haddamnow.com</a>	Haddam Now (news website)

## **Acknowledgements**

### Regional School District 17 Communications Subcommittee

Susan Dean, Chair

Sue Twachtman

Kathy Brown

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### Berlin Board of Education

Berlin Board of Education Member Handbook, adopted October 2011

### Fairfield Board of Education

Fairfield Board of Education Handbook, approved June 26, 2012

### Becoming a Better Board Member

National Association of School Boards, Third Edition, 2006

### CABE's Board Meeting Guide

(The Freedom of Information Act and Parliamentary Procedures)

Patrice McCarthy and Kelly B. Moyher

CABE, December 2013

### The Collective Bargaining Handbook

Kelly Moyher

CABE, August 2012

### Connecticut Glossary of School Board Terms

CABE, reprinted January 2013

### Media Tips

CABE, laminated pocket guide

### Parliamentary Motions

CABE, laminated pocket guide, 1991

### A Practical Guide to Connecticut School Law

Thomas B. Mooney, Shipman & Goodwin, 6<sup>th</sup> Edition, 2008

Robert's Rules of Order  
12<sup>th</sup> Printing, 1984

Roles and Responsibilities of Board of Education Membership  
CABE, revised July 2012

