

# REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 17

## BOARD OF EDUCATION

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### **February 2015**

The Board of Education is pleased to provide you with the following District and Board News.

#### **District News:**

- Congratulations to Olivia Parmelee and Zach Westerbeke who were recently named Connecticut Association of Schools Scholar Athletes. Selected for their academic and athletic accomplishments, along with their leadership and community service contributions, Olivia and Zach will be honored at the Aquaturf in Southington in May.
- The HKHS Robotics team recently competed in the Danbury HS VEX qualifying tournament. VEX is a competitive robotics organization for Middle School, High School and University level robotics. HKHS had two teams competing at the event, both of which are new to the VEX competition this year. The HK Girls +1 team placed 7<sup>th</sup> out of 46 teams, and both teams displayed excellent problem solving skills, sportsmanship and overall improvements to their robots after their first competition at Manchester HS last month.
- Killingworth Elementary School is proud to announce the two recipients of the CAS Elementary Celebration of the Arts awards. The objective of this program is to recognize students with outstanding citizenship, cooperative skills, and artistic ability in performing or visual arts at the elementary level. Sasha Berardino has been selected for the Art Award and Juliana Gagliardi has been selected for the Music Award. The Celebration will be held at the Aqua Turf Club in Southington in late February. Congratulations to both of you!
- HKMS recently held its Geography Bee testing the student knowledge of World Geography as part of National Geographic's World Geography Bee. Congratulation to the two finalists from the 5<sup>th</sup> grade; the winner Kevin Cavrell and second place winner Colin Loria.
- Congratulations to the 8 Haddam-Killingworth High School visual arts students for being recognized in the Scholastic Art Award Show for their outstanding work.

#### **Board News:**

- **Legislative Breakfast**  
On Friday, January 16, Holly Hageman, Assistant Superintendent, Sue Twachtman, Board of Education Chair, and Susan Dean, Board of Education Vice-Chair represented Region 17 at the CABE (Connecticut Association of Boards of Education) Legislative Breakfast. Local legislators, Superintendents, Board of Education members, and additional staff members attended. Some of the issues discussed included the following: the hiring of the new State Department of

Education Commissioner, town compliance with the state's school security and related staff training plans. Additional discussion centered on the Minimum Budget Requirement (MBR) and the reluctance of the state to issue waivers. Falling student enrollment in a town could be a reason to lower the MBR. Further topics concerned the payment of tuition for students attending magnet schools, testing concerns at the high school level in regards to relevance for college, ECS (Education Cost Sharing) funding, special education mandates, and unfunded mandates coming down from the state level.

- **Exciting new courses coming to HKHS!!**

Board of Education members approved 2 new courses for HKHS for the 2015/16 school year. We are pleased to announce a new Biological Engineering course (BioE). BioE is a rigorous project and problem-based course whereby students investigate and design solutions to solve various global challenges such as clean drinking water, renewable energy and world food security. This course will help to prepare students for emerging careers through topics such as genetic engineering, biofuels, and bio-manufacturing. Also, there will be a new Computer Science and Software Engineering course at HKHS. This course will develop students' computational thinking as they create apps for mobile devices, automate tasks in a variety of languages, find patterns in data and interpret simulations. The course will introduce students to a variety of computationally intensive career paths. Both of these Project Lead the Way courses offer college credits to Region 17 students before graduation. Thank you to HKHS staff members for presenting these new and very exciting courses!

- **Board of Education Subcommittees**

Information on the various Board of Education subcommittees can be found on the Regional School District 17 website [www.rsd17.org](http://www.rsd17.org). Go to the "District" drop down menu and select Board of Education. One will find meeting schedules and minutes from previous meetings.

In addition to the two full Board meetings every month, each subcommittee meets once a month on an average. The various Board liaison groups meet once a month as well. During contract negotiations, hiring of administrators, and the annual budget season, meetings can be as frequent as once a week. The Board members on each subcommittee and liaison group can be found on the district website under "BOARD" information as well. The Curriculum Subcommittee has recently reviewed some new courses and textbooks for the High School. The Facilities Subcommittee has presented plans to remove the temporary classroom modulars at the Haddam and Killingworth Elementary Schools. The Finance Subcommittee reviews check amounts of \$5,000 or more. They are also working on a RFP (Request for Proposals) for a bus contract and the bidding process. The Policy Subcommittee is working on the lengthy 6000 Series which concerns Instruction. The Communications Subcommittee composes the monthly Board of Education Update (District and Board News) which can be found on the district website under the "BOARD" drop down heading, on the [www.HaddamNow.com](http://www.HaddamNow.com) and also, on [www.KillingworthToday.com](http://www.KillingworthToday.com). This group has completed the first Board Handbook. (See Board Handbook section below.) The Personnel and Evaluation Subcommittee has negotiated five contracts in the last year in addition to the annual evaluation of the Superintendent.

- **Budget Time Line**

*The Budget Time Line can be found on the district website.* The annual budget season commenced October 1, 2014 involving the administrators from each school, Pupil Services, Buildings & Grounds (Facilities), Food Service, and Technology. There will be several March meetings: a Special Meeting on March 3 when the Superintendent will present his recommended budget for 2015/2016, a joint meeting on March 12 (Selectmen, Boards of Finance and the Board of Education), a Community Input session March 17, and three Board Budget Workshops. The Annual Hearing for the Board of Education's budget will be held on April 7. After review of any input from the hearing and possible modifications, the Board will adopt its 2015/2016 budget to present at the Annual Meeting on Monday, May 4. The Referendum will be held the following day, Tuesday, May 5 in each of the respective towns.

- **Board of Education Handbook**

The first Board of Education Handbook was officially approved at the January 6, 2015 Board meeting. The Handbook will be available sometime in April. It should be of particular interest to anyone considering running for the Board of Education next November. Copies will be on the RSD17 website and at the Central Office. Copies will also be available at each Town Hall.