

REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 17
BOARD OF EDUCATION -
MEETING MINUTES
June 6, 2023

A meeting of the Regional School District No. 17 Board of Education was held on June 6, 2023, in the Haddam-Killingworth High School Auditorium.

Board Member Attendance:

Board Member	Present	Absent	Board Member	Present	Absent
Prem Aithal	X		Dr. Nelson Rivera	X	
Lisa Connelly	X		Corey Roberts (remote)	X	
Dr. Joel D'Angelo		X	Peter Sonski	X	
Jennifer Favalora	X		Dr. Kathleen Zandi (remote)	X	
Shawna Goldfarb	X		Suzanne Sack	X	
Hamish MacPhail		X			

Also Present: Superintendent of Schools Jeffrey Wihbey, Assistant Superintendent Jennifer Miller, Director of Fiscal Operations David Solin, Board Administrator Sarah Kaiser, Director of Operations John Mercier, KES Principal Dennis Reed, and KES Music Teacher Irina Rubalsky

Visitors: Approximately 30

The Board meetings are videotaped and posted on the RSD17 Website under the Board of Education, BOE Meeting Schedules & Minutes for public viewing.

[2023 RSD#17 BOE Meeting 6/6/23 I](#) and [2023 RSD#17 BOE Meeting 6/6/23 II](#)

1. Call to Order/Opening of Meeting

Board of Education Chair Suzanne Sack called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

2. Superintendent's Report

a. Cougar Pride

Principal Reed introduced a selection of 3rd-grade students led by Music Teacher Irina Rubalsky in a recorder performance.

Ms. Rubalsky, parents, and students left the meeting at 6:12 PM.

b. Monthly Summary and Updates

Superintendent Wihbey provided the Board with an update on the Special Education Audit process. He noted that the RFP for Special Education is currently open to the public. The goal of the work is to improve student outcomes and improve the work life of the staff in a cost-effective manner. The Superintendent discussed some of the major processes to be reviewed.

Superintendent Wihbey also discussed the completed work of the HK Middle School Study conducted by Dr. Wasta. In his summary, Dr. Wasta identified issues as well as recommendations for the Board review. One recommendation was the creation of a broad-based task force to create, in a collaborative fashion, a vision and structure for HKMS to become one of the highest-performing middle schools in the state. Assistant Superintendent Miller will head the task force along with Principal Ventura.

3. Public Comment

Jamie Ritone, a resident of Higganum, spoke to the Board on the topics of class size and teacher retention.

4. Committee Reports

A. Finance/Facilities Subcommittee

Committee Chair Sonski reported that the committee met last month. The committee discussed the Master Plan and reviewed the analysis of the public presentation and discussed feedback. Planning is underway for the upcoming virtual presentation at the end of June. Director Solin reported to the Board on the Fiscal year-end status and updates. Director Solin will have the updated finance report for Board review at the June 13th subcommittee meeting. Committee Chair Sonski noted that the next Community conversation on the Masterplan is scheduled for June 28th.

B. Communications/Strategic Planning Subcommittee

Committee Co-Chair Goldfarb reported that the committee met on May 31st with Teacher Sean Gallagher of HKHS and his student Maddie Gordon who presented the committee with options for a new RDS 17 logo that his students

created. The committee provided feedback to Mr. Gallagher and his graphics students' revised the logos and provided the final four updated options for the Board's review. Committee Co-Chair Goldfarb also reported that they discussed the Communications and Community Engagement plan for the referendum, analysis of the communication process for this year's budget, and finalized the subcommittee goals for next year.

Committee Co-Chair Aithal reported that the committee discussed committee goals for the upcoming year. One goal will be to release a dashboard that will track critical measures of success versus the strategic plan to ensure progress. Committee Co-Chair Aithal noted a plan for a summer planning session and that the committee is looking to create a process of reporting the progress of the strategic plan.

C. Personnel & Evaluation

Committee Co-Chair Sack reported that the committee discussed with Superintendent Wihbey and Assistant Superintendent Miller human resources items that included job descriptions, the process for hiring, unaffiliated employment letters, and the creation of consistent benefits and offerings. The committee also discussed the Superintendent's year-end evaluation and requested input from the Board members on the Superintendent's goals.

D. Policy/Curriculum Subcommittee

Committee Co-Chair Rivera updated the Board on the progress of the Legal Services RFP. He noted that he is hopeful that the committee will bring a recommendation to the Board in July.

Committee Co-Chair Zandi reported on three Curriculum topics discussed at the last subcommittee meeting. The first was that they discussed goals for the upcoming year. The second topic discussed was the curriculum council and professional development. The third item discussed was regarding the High School scheduling process and that they move the process back by two weeks to align with the budget process.

5. Discussion Items

A. Strategic Plan

Superintendent Wihbey presented to the Board Thirteen District Performance Measures and Leading Indicators for the dashboard. The Superintendent gave information for the Board to review regarding key actions and internal performance target metrics examples. The Superintendent also noted that he provided the Board with Strategic Operating Plan subcommittee input to review.

6. Action Items

A. Consent Agenda

- a. Enrollment Report
- b. Personnel Report
- c. Approval of Minutes from the May 1, 2023, Board of Education Meeting
- d. Approval of Minutes from the May 1, 2023, Board of Education Annual Meeting
- e. 5131.92 Use of Private Technological Devices by Students
- f. 5131.914 Policy Regarding Student Use of the District's Computer Systems and Internet Safety
- g. 6116 Parent-Teacher Communication
- h. 4118.223 Attendance Policy

Prem Aithal **MOVED** and Shawna Goldfarbi **SECONDED** a motion for approval of the consent agenda as presented.

Motion unanimously passed by a show of hands 9-0-0.

Dr. Zandi wanted to mention the Personnel Report and that Director Mercier was leaving the District. Board Chair Sack spoke to Director Mercier and commended the work that he has done during his tenure in the District.

B. ECHMC Board Selection

The appointment will be further discussed and approved by the Board.

Board Chair Sack asked the Board to suspend the remainder of the agenda and revisit them at a future Board meeting. The members verbally affirmed.

Board Chair Sack adjourned the meeting at 7:03 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Kaiser

Administrative Assistant to the Board of Education

Approval: _____ Date: _____

Joel D'Angelo, Secretary