

REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 17
BOARD OF EDUCATION - MINUTES
September 13, 2022

A meeting of the Regional School District No. 17 Board of Education was held on September 13, 2022, in the BoardRoom of the Central Office. Board of Education Chair, Suzanne Sack, called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Board Member Attendance:

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

Also Present: Superintendent of Schools, Jeffrey Wihbey, and Assistant Superintendent, Jennifer Miller, and Director of Fiscal Operations, David Solin, and Board Administrator, Sarah Kaiser, and Principal , Donna Hayward

Visitors: 7

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

<http://reflect-hktv.cablecast.tv/CablecastPublicSite/show/1264?channel=1>

1. Call to Order/Opening of Meeting: Board of Education Chair, Suzanne Sack, called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

2. Superintendent's Report

A. Cougar Pride

a. HKHS Art Display

Jason Cannan introduced his student Alex Lara who submitted and won with his artwork to the Congressional District Art Competition. The message of the piece was based around the rise and fall of civilizations over time. The drawing “Parabola” in each segment represents New York City through time from the colonial period until today and into the future. The piece is currently hanging in the US Capitol Building in Washington DC until June 2023.

b. HKHS Athletic Achievements

Lynne Flint presented the athletic highlights from last year and current fall sports.

16 all state athletes	1 all New England athlete
23 Shoreline Scholar Athletes	The Shoreline Cross Country Coach of the year
The Shoreline Girls Cross Country overall winner	The Shoreline Boys Lacrosse Coach of the year
7 Shoreline Championships	The State Wrestling Coaches of the year
3 State Championships	HK is tied for 3rd with the most State Championships in the state CT
There are currently 245 student athletes in fall sports	The sports teams are fully staffed including a full time athletic trainer
The Football team is wearing Guardian Caps which reduces the severity of subconcussive impacts and minimizes impact to the students.	

B. Strategic Operating Plan Update

Superintendent Wihbey provided the status update on the strategies and metrics connected to the goals and objectives that the Board developed. The team is in the process of analyzing and consolidating the goals and strategies throughout September. The next step will involve faculty meetings for final feedback prior to the final draft for the Board to review at the October meeting.

C. School Opening Report

Superintendent Wihbey reported the schools experienced a normal school opening for the first time since 2019. All schools and staff were visited. The message for the opening of the year is a return to normalcy in all aspects of the school most notably in the classrooms.

Operations: Superintendent Wihbey reported the Operations team did a great job with preparing the schools internally and externally for the year opening. The Wifi Access points and some computers arrived later in the summer but the team got everything up and working before the first day of school.

Transportation: Transportation was reported as having a smooth start with buses arriving primarily on schedule. Director Mercier worked with the schools and STA during the summer months to resolve any issues before the start of school.

Student Services: Student Services had a great summer with extended school year services through August 4th.

Food Services: Food Services is facing a shortage in staffing. The efforts of Director Shettleworth were noted and appreciated to ensure department operation. Talent management is looking at options to fill the vacant positions.

Curriculum: The Curriculum program was busy over the summer with feedback from students and families on the summer programs such as Jumpstart, Readiness program, and IReady. There were 28 Curriculum projects completed over the summer.

Fiscal Department: David Solin and his team completed and submitted the annual state financial reports including the EKMS Grant and the EFS Grant. Finance is continuing to support the work of the Annual Financial Audit. Noted that all bank reconciliations are complete to date after system interface issues.

Schools

HKHS: The High school reported that they are fully staffed for the first day of school, athletics are in full swing, and the Seniors parents night will be on September 19th.

HKIS: At the Intermediate school, the incoming fourth graders took part in the stepping up camp.

HKMS: The Middle school is focusing on developing positive relationships and implementing Restorative practices as a school-wide goal to improve the culture of the school.

BES: At Burr Elementary, they were thrilled to bring back the Welcome Back picnic on August 30th which allowed students to see their classrooms and the Kindergartens went for their first bus ride.

KES: Killingworth Elementary opened their classes for a meet and greet the day before school began which was reported to have made a big difference in the students confidence of knowing where to go.

HK In the News: Superintendent Wihbey noted that there was a First day of school article written in the Middletown Press. Also he noted the social media accounts on Facebook and Twitter for the District.

D. Bank Reconciliation Update

Director Solin presented additional information to Superintendent Wihbey's Fiscal Department report. Director Solin noted the hard work of Aileen Kosecki who spearheaded the project.

E. Legislative Updates

Superintendent Wihbey provided the Board the new legislative update from the state and noted an executive summary of some highlighted new Legislative Updates. He noted that the 2022 legislative session can be described as a saturation of mandates on Local Boards and Districts.

F. Personnel Update

Assistant Superintendent Miller reported that it was a very busy summer with 17 new hires in August. The District held a New Teacher Academy which had community building activities. The feedback was positive and they also provided ideas for next year. Issued first edition of the Central Office Newsletter.

Superintendent Wihbey also provided status on the Haddam Neck start. It was noted the project will not start earlier than March 2023 as a target date. He noted that families can sign up through the DOT website to receive updates as well.

3. Public Comment: None

4. New Business

A. Class Rank Presentation-Donna Hayward

Dr. Rivera offered an introduction of the topic before Principal Hayward started her presentation offering a brief history of the actions to date. There is no current Board policy in place but Principal Hayward is presenting to obtain

feedback and Board support on the presented model. Principal Hayward presented information regarding a proposal on the Class Rank Model. Vice Principal Apicella and Guidance Counselor Baerlein were also present to provide information on additional questions. Principal Hayward presented how the proposed practice will align with the Board's Vision of a Graduate in areas such as maintaining a growth mindset and reflecting upon feedback or mistakes as opportunities to adapt and improve upon learning. The proposed practice will also align with Strategic Plan objectives in areas such as maximizing the academic growth of each student and ensuring all students master essential content and skills. Principal Hayward provided information on the HKHS history and emphasis of class rank noting the human impact of class rank on the students over the past 8 years. The research and decision making towards this model began in 2016 with conversations from College representatives that come to HKHS each year asking them thoughts on class rank and what they see statewide and throughout the country. It was noted that many schools are moving away from the class rank model and the colleges not needing the ranking. Presentation of several districts within CT that have moved away from the class rank practice. The model proposed is a GPA distribution model. Other models were considered such as abandoning the ranking completely and only reporting GPA and the decile ranking system. Powerschool will continue to rank the students and provide the required reporting and make their students ranking readily upon request to parents. The positions of Valedictorian and Salutatorian will remain in place. The new model would look to be implemented with this year's incoming Freshmen (Class of 2026). The current Sophomores-Seniors will continue with the current class ranking system. The practice will become part of the handbook and Opportunities book as part of the communication distribution. The student views were positive when discussed for feedback. Discussion was held and the Board was in support of the new model.

B. High School Air Conditioning Project

Peter Sonski presented the topic of the air handling devices on the roof of the High School. The original devices are original to the building and have begun to fail. There is a unique issue with this problem as they are difficult to fix and find parts for. Currently there are 5 units that are not working. The proposed direction for the High School is to find a more modern method to cool the building. Board member Sonski advised that any proposed situation will not be feasible within this academic year due to sourcing delays. A request to perform an analysis for an engineering concept on how to address remedies in a short term and long term situation. The current proposal is to obtain an analysis, create a proposal that would go out to RFP. Superintendent Wihbey noted items such as looking at 8 units, requests for other alternative options to be given, and that the work would not look to begin until the summer of 2023. Discussion will continue once there is a proposal to consider.

C. KES/BES Lighting Project

Peter Sonski reported that they received a proposal from Secure Energy Solutions to upgrade the lighting at Burr and Killingworth Elementary Schools to LED after an analysis was conducted. Board Member Sonski provided the cost details, incentives available, energy savings and financing options. The cost would be at a 0% interest rate over 48 months. The project would be completed by the same company that completed the Middle School/ Intermediate School project and they would install it during the second shift and would take approximately 4-6 weeks to source the product. The project would need to be completed by the end of this year to receive the incentives. There will be a cost in the current year but will create a future savings. Discussion was held on whether to utilize the funds for the lighting project at this time versus utilizing it for other projects.

Peter Sonski **MOVED** and Lisa Connelly **SECONDED** a motion to upgrade the two Elementary School legacy lighting systems through the Eversource Incentive Program with a four year financing program that will cost approximately \$30,000 per year each of the four years.

Motion passed 9-2-0 from the following voice votes

Member	Vote	Member	Vote
Brenda Buzzi	X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A	Dr.Nelson Rivera	X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A
Lisa Connelly	X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A	Corey Roberts	<input type="checkbox"/> YES X NO <input type="checkbox"/> A
Dr. Joel D'Angelo	X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A	Peter Sonski	X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A
Jennifer Favalora	<input type="checkbox"/> YES X NO <input type="checkbox"/> A	Dr. Kathleen Zandi	X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A
Shawna Goldfarb	X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A	Suzanne Sack	X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A
Hamish MacPhail	X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A		

5. Board Committee Reports and Future Meetings

A. Facilities Subcommittee

No additional information to present

B. Communications Subcommittee

Shawna Goldfarb reported that they met last week to discuss the next steps and accomplishments. There will be a Board Newsletter that will be distributed and there are quoted costs to follow once quotes and printing options have been provided and the final decision is made. The first newsletter will be out during mid Oct, followed in mid January and then mid April. A template of topics was created for each edition that can be sustained and used yearly. Board Member Goldfarb reported that they are ready to proceed with the Strategic Planning

video once they receive confirmation from the Strategic Planning Team. Report on Stakeholder engagement. Convocation was a great event and was given great feedback to include the recognition of year anniversaries and other staff member inclusion. The website is being updated and will continue to be revised to include more information on the Board including profiles and photos. Superintendent Wihbey will provide a calendar of engagement that the Board can attend. There will be an upcoming event to go to the Haddam Community Center for Christmas caroling.

C. Policy Subcommittee

Committee did not meet since previous BOE meeting

D. Personnel and Evaluation Subcommittee

The Committee met on 9/13 and discussed two topics. First the Superintendent's 2022-2023 Goals which will be reviewed when addressed in the below agenda point. The second topic was the Mandatory 3 Year Training Plan which ensures that we are getting all the training necessary per state requirements. The system utilized is Vector Solutions.

E. Strategic Planning Subcommittee

Jennifer Favalora reported that the Committee did not meet since the previous BOE meeting but they will have recommendations with Superintendent Wihbey's Strategic Plan on Goal 2.1 when presented.

6. Board Liaison Reports

A. Healthy Communities-Healthy Kids

Shawna Goldfarb reported that there is a new Executive Director and Prevention Coordinator onboard. There are also a lot of fundraisers coming up such as Pumpkin Run on October 30th. They are also working on their Strategic Plan with the assistance of Prem Aithal.

B. LEARN

Jennifer Favalora reported that they had the first meeting of the school year and discussed the new education laws, for instance the Trauma Coordinator position and grants for charging stations for the electric buses.

C. Haddam Killingworth Recreation Department

No meeting was held

D. Haddam Board of Selectmen

Jennifer Favalora reported that they had some feedback about traffic for buses at BES during events but also during day hours at school and bus stops.

E. Killingworth Board of Selectmen

Dr. Kathleen Zandi reported there is an appreciation of the summary that they get and will ask clarifying questions. They are looking for Killingworth photos and were looking to see if there were any student projects that would be Killingworth

based images that can be displayed in Town Hall. Follow up will be made with Superintendent Wihbey.

7. Consent Agenda

- A. Approval of Minutes from the August 16, 2022 Board of Education Meeting
- B. Personnel Report
- C. Enrollment Report

Dr. Joel D'Angelo **MOVED** and Brend Buzzi **SECONDED** a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

Motion unanimously passed 11-0-0 from the following voice votes

Member	Vote	Member	Vote
Brenda Buzzi	X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A	Dr. Nelson Rivera	X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A
Lisa Connelly	X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A	Corey Roberts	X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A
Dr. Joel D'Angelo	X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A	Peter Sonski	X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A
Jennifer Favalora	X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A	Dr. Kathleen Zandi	X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A
Shawna Goldfarb	X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A	Suzanne Sack	X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A
Hamish MacPhail	X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A		

8. Old Business

- A. Custodial Contract-board Approval*
This will be addressed at the October meeting
- B. Superintendent 2022-2023 Goals-Approval*
Addressed the seven goals that have been discussed with the P&E Committee and Superintendent Wihbey. Board Chair Sack advised that the document is ready and the Board is ready to move forward.

9. Board Discussion/News/Suggestions

Dr. Zandi wanted to recognize the School Administration and Central Office in regard to new hires.

Brenda Buzzi advised that she will be moving and will be withdrawing from the Board. She will notify the Board of her effective resignation date.

10. Adjournment

Board Chair, Suzanne Sack, called for the meeting to adjourn at 9:28 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Kaiser
Administrative Assistant to the Board of Education

Approval: _____ Date: _____
Joel D'Angelo, Secretary