

**REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 17**  
**BOARD OF EDUCATION - MINUTES**  
**October 11, 2022**

A meeting of the Regional School District No. 17 Board of Education was held on October 11, 2022, in the Auditorium of HK High School. Board of Education Chair, Suzanne Sack, called the meeting to order at 7:07 PM.

**Board Member Attendance:**

Board Member	Present	Absent	Board Member	Present	Absent
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		Brenda Buzzi		X
Dr. Nelson Rivera		X			

**Also Present:** Superintendent of Schools, Jeffrey Wihbey, and Director of Fiscal Operations, David Solin, and Board Administrator, Sarah Kaiser, and Principals Donna Hayward, Eric Larson, and Dolores Bates, and Teachers Andrea Darmanin, Ruth Masci, and Dana Kalksma, and Elementary Coordinator Becky Templeton, and Jim Kane, and Denis Recchia, and Student Representatives Callen Powers and Madison Moriarty, and Director of Unified Sports, Bob Hale.

**Visitors:** Approximately 25 students and parents

**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/1298?channel=1>

**1. Call to Order/Opening of Meeting**

Board of Education Chair, Suzanne Sack, called the meeting to order at 7:07 PM. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

## **2. Cougar Pride**

### **A. HKIS Student Council Introduction-Principal Eric Larson**

Principal Larson introduced the 2022-2023 elected Student Council members (9 in-attendance). Council members provided the Board with examples of initiatives that they would like to accomplish such as raising money for children's hospitals, creating a recess shed for materials to be readily available outside, and fundraisers for animal shelters. There are three student council advisors that will assist with prioritizing the ideas and gaining a plan with approval to move forward.

### **B. HKMS Unified Sports Presentation-Principal Dolores Bates**

HKMS received recognition as a Special Olympics Unified Champion School for their efforts to provide inclusive sports and activities for students with and without disabilities. HKMS is receiving this honor as a result of meeting national standards of excellence in the areas of inclusion, advocacy, and respect. Principal Bates introduced three students who spoke to the Board on the Unified Sports program.

Director of Unified Sport, Bob Hale recognized HKMS as 1 of 4 new schools to be recognized this year as a National Unified Champion School for 2021-2025. Mr. Hale presented a banner to be displayed at the school.

Parents and students left the meeting at 7:25pm.

## **3. Report from Student Representatives**

New student representatives Senior Callen Powers and Junior Madison Moriarty introduced themselves to the Board.

Callen and Madison reported to the Board on the 8th grade preview night and on October 12th 9th-11th graders will be taking the PSATs with Seniors doing post secondary planning then all grades will be working on graduation portfolios. There is a Fall play called "This Is A Test" taking place the first week in November. Madison reported that Fall sports have had a strong start to the season and advised on fundraising efforts. On November 16th there will be the Names Can Really Hurt Us assembly which will create an awareness of diversity and equity in the school and also allow us to connect on topics of identity.

Student Representatives left the meeting at 7:28pm.

## **4. Superintendent's Report**

Superintendent Wihbey spoke that the teachers, staff and student are back into their

academic routines for learning. He mentioned how it was to see students working in small groups with teachers and staff working closely together on best practices for creating learning structures.

Superintendent Wihbey reported the current October 1st enrollment count was at 1819. This figure is reported to the State Department of Education and a percentage of our state benchmarking and funding is based on this annual reporting. This increased from last year from 1793.

### **Operations/Transportation**

Superintendent Wihbey updated on the free HVAC cleanair audit to be completed at the High School in preparation for the submission of the HVAC grant.

Superintendent Wihbey also reported that Director Mercier configured RevTrak, which is an online payment system, to include a web store that includes payment centers for areas such as HK Cubs tuition, Integrated Preschool tuition, and Chromebook protection plans and repairs.

### **Student Services**

Student Services worked to provide CT-SEDS training for individuals and small groups of staff members. This is the new mandated software that all school districts across CT are to roll out. Also student service is working on troubleshooting for Vector Solutions, the new online professional development platform.

### **Food Services**

Food Services has reported two new hires with a third new hire pending. This will bring department to full staffing giving credit to the social media campaign. There is also an internship started with a High School senior who is interested in a career in food service.

### **Human Resources**

Frontline Central Preparations are underway with a system to become paperless for employee information and human resource platform. Superintendent Wihbey reported that all paraprofessionals will receive 18 hours of professional development. This includes mandatory training as well as choice training choices.

PDEC had its first meeting in September with norms defined and the state guidance of teacher evaluation was discussed. Team agreed on a teacher evaluation model for the school year. The group is anticipated to meet at least 4 more times throughout the year.

### **Teaching and Learning**

Both Curriculum coordinators met with all departments at the High School for in-depth training on features and reports available in SAID, the internal data warehouse.

### **Fiscal**

A new Accounts Payable Specialist was hired and started on October 3rd leaving the department with one more position to fill. The team is transitioning to a new time and

attendance system to Frontline with an expected roll-out on October 20th. The Fiscal team has started the transition as well to a paperless accounts payable system last month.

#### **HKHS**

Superintendent Wihbey reported that the High School received notice that there were 4 students that received the National Rural and Small Town Award (NRSTA) for their academic and outstanding performance on the PSAT. Additionally, Alexander Engler, Abigail Jones and Andrew Melnick were named Commended Students in the 2023 National Merit Scholarship Program for scoring in the top 50,000 students who took the test across the nation.

#### **BES**

Burr Elementary welcomed in 82 new students with their Ringing in ceremony on September 29th. The students were able to ring a bell as the start of their academic journey.

#### **KES**

KES hosted a back to normal curriculum night for the parents. The parents had the opportunity to walk and see the whole building.

### **5. Public Comment**

Jessica Abramski from Haddam addressed the Board. She spoke on the subject of the Middle School, assigning the book “Out of the Dust” as part of the curriculum for 6th graders.

### **6. New Business**

#### **A. High School Graduation Presentation-Principal Hayward**

Principal Hayward presented the information of the most recent Graduates and where they have gone to and how they fared in terms of their higher education after leaving HK. Principal Hayward provided the data in areas such as an increase of students choosing higher education after HK, a small decrease in the applications sent to the most competitive schools, and that the student body was a bit smaller contributing to the overall percentage results versus the previous year. Principal Hayward noted that there were a high number of students that look to pursue majors in Health and Science. Board member MacPhail requested information on the FAFSA completion percentage. Principal Hayward will get that data and provide the information with Superintendent Wihbey’s next report.

Principal Hayward left the meeting at 7:59 pm.

#### **B. Fiscal Department Quarterly Report**

The Quarterly report will be issued to the Board as part of the November agenda.

**C. Board Strategic Plan 2.1 Presentation**

Vice-Chair Favalora presented a draft for Objective 2.1-Ensure Effective Governance through a high functioning Board of Education. She advised on the work of the Subcommittee to produce the document on how the Board furthers the Strategic Plan, how the Board represents through the feedback given to address the requests for governance over management, and how the Board responds to systems and processes that need to be enhanced. There are five recommendations items for reconsideration: Driving the strategic plan, Policies, Community engagement, Efficient & high functioning Board, and Long term budget planning.

Vice-chair offers the draft to the board for a first read and welcomes feedback. The Committee will bring this back to the Board in November for approval.

**7. Board Committee Reports and Future Meetings**

**A. Facilities Subcommittee**

Peter Sonski reported that the Facilities Subcommittee met on October 4th. There was a tour of the High School to view some of the issues areas and view some of the recent improvements. Specific note was made toward the Air conditioning issues and the efforts to get a solution as soon as possible that can address the situation on a short term and longer term basis. Mention was made on a state grant in reference to a HVAC grant available that would need to be applied for by December 1st. Director Mercier also worked with Secure Energy on potential Eversource incentives on the HVAC project as well. Mr. Sonski suggested to Director Mercier to tour or have Board members tour other district's schools that are in need of improvement and others that have been renovated. Mr. Sonki advised the Board on preparation for the upcoming Tecton meeting by reviewing all documents and use the Strategic Planning as a guide on how the Board would like to see the school system developed in the next 10-20 years. The Tecton report is the assessment of the buildings as they are today.

**B. Personnel and Evaluation Subcommittee**

The Board has come to completion of the Custodial contract and will look to take action in the later agenda item. Also with the consent of the Board the Personnel and Evaluation Committee has commenced negotiation with the HKAA Administrators Association. The Committee will bring the Board updates as they are available.

**8. Board Liaison Reports**

- A. Healthy Communities-Healthy Kids Council  
Jennifer Favalora reported that the new Director has been meeting with as many community individuals as HKYFS is in the midst of their Strategic Plan as well. The Director has requested feedback and also sent to the community a survey for completion. There has been a lot of conversation and feedback on mental health in the community and prevention for our youth.
- B. Haddam Killingworth Recreation Department  
Nothing to report.
- C. Haddam Board of Selectmen  
Nothing to report. Meeting is also scheduled for October 11th.
- D. Killingworth Board of Selectmen  
Nothing to report.

## 9. Consent Agenda

- A. Approval of Minutes from the September 13, 2022 Board of Education Meeting
- B. Approval of Amended Minutes from the May 2, 2022 Board of Education Meeting.  
Current Motion: “a motion to approve the Healthy Food Certification Options for the 2022-2023 school year as presented by Sharon Shettleworth, Director of Food Services” amended to read *“a motion to approve participation in the Healthy Food Certification Program for the 2022-2023 school year. Pursuant to C.G.S. Section 10-215f, the board of education or governing authority certifies that all food items offered for sale to students in the schools under its jurisdiction, and not exempted from the Connecticut Nutrition Standards published by the Connecticut State Department of Education, will comply with the Connecticut Nutrition Standards during the period of July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2023. This certification shall include all food offered for sale to students separately from reimbursable meals at all times and from all sources, including but not limited to school stores, vending machines, school cafeterias, culinary programs, and any fundraising activities on school premises sponsored by the school or non-school organizations and groups.”*
- C. Approval of a donation in the amount of \$1,000.00 from the HKMS PTO to be deposited into the Student Activity Fund to be used to offset the cost of the Grade 6 Field Trips and student events. Submitted by Dolores Bates, Principal HKMS.
- D. Approval of a donation in the amount of \$1,000.00 from the HKMS PTO to be deposited into the Student Activity Fund to be used to offset the cost of the Grade 7 Field Trips and student events. Submitted by Dolores Bates, Principal HKMS.
- E. Approval of a donation in the amount of \$1,000.00 from the HKMS PTO to be deposited into the Student Activity Fund to be used to offset the cost of the

Grade 8 Field Trips and student events. Submitted by Dolores Bates, Principal HKMS.

- F. Approval of a donation from the HKIMS PTO, valued at approximately \$550.00, of a standalone cabinet with various board games. Submitted by Dolores Bates, Principal of HKMS.
- G. Approval of a donation in the amount of \$1,000.00 from the HKIS PTO to be deposited into the Student Activity Fund to be used to offset the cost of Field Trips and student events. Submitted by Eric Larson, Principal of HKIS.
- H. Approval of a donation in the amount of \$1,000.00 from the HKIS PTO to be deposited into the Student Activity Fund to be used to offset the cost of Grade 4 student field trips and student events. Submitted by Eric Larson, Principal HKIS
- I. Personnel Report
- J. Enrollment Report
- K. 2023 BOE Meeting Schedule (1st Read)

Jennifer Favalora **MOVED** and Dr. Joel D'Angelo **SECONDED** a motion to accept the Consent Agenda as presented with gratitude.

**Motion unanimously passed 6-0-0 from the following voice votes**

Member	Vote	Member	Vote
Lisa Connelly	X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A	Corey Roberts	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO X 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	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO X A
Shawna Goldfarb	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO X 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	Brenda Buzzi	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO X A
Dr. Nelson Rivera	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO X A		

**10. Old Business**

- A. KES/BES Lighting Update  
Superintendent Wihbey reported that Secure Energy has ordered the fixture for the approved Eversource list and the projected completion date is 1/31/23 with an extension that could be submitted for if necessary.
- B. Custodial Contract-board Approval\*

Hamish MacPhail **MOVED** and Lisa Connelly **SECONDED** a motion for the Board to go into Executive Session for the purposes of discussing a strategy matter in bargaining and negotiating.

Motion passed unanimously by Way of Show of Hands

The Board entered into Executive Session at 8:15 pm.

The Board came out of Executive Session at 8:35 pm.

Hamish MacPhail **MOVED** and Dr. Joel D'Angelo **SECONDED** a motion to approve the Custodial Contract Settlement contingent on the Custodial bargaining unit ratifying the contract and providing a signed contract for the Board to sign.

Board Chair Sack noted that she would like to thank the Custodial Bargaining Unit for negotiating in good faith with the Board and for all the good work they do in the schools.

**Motion unanimously passed 6-0-0 from the following voice votes**

Member	Vote	Member	Vote
Lisa Connelly	X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A	Corey Roberts	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO X 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	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO X A
Shawna Goldfarb	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO X 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	Brenda Buzzi	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO X A
Dr. Nelson Rivera	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO X A		

C. District Strategic Operating Plan-Superintendent Wihbey

Superintendent Wihbey reported the highlights of the Strategic Operating Plan and to receive feedback from the Board on the process starting from 2021 through Fall 2022. Discussion was made on the four determined Priorities: Student Learning and Well-Being, Educator & Leadership Development and Capacity, Operational Efficiency, and Enhanced District Infrastructure. The path of the Strategic Plan goes from the Vision of the Graduate to the District Strategic Plan to the School Continuous Improvement Plan to Evaluations. There will be approximately 10 metrics that will be made available on the website. These metrics are in the process of being finalized for a final listing. Superintendent Wihbey also noted that there is a RSD 17 data warehouse that has been



established with data being inputted and the staff will be trained on how to access the data easily.

#### **11. Board Discussion/News/Suggestions**

Board Chair Sack acknowledged the resignation of Brenda Buzzi and presented a certificate for her on her service.

Peter Sonski reported that the Town of Haddam's next meeting will be held on November 9th and the item to elect a replacement Board member will be added to the agenda.

#### **12. Adjournment**

**Board Chair Sack called for the meeting to adjourn at 9:08 pm.**

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Kaiser  
Administrative Assistant to the Board of Education

Approval: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Joel D'Angelo, Secretary