

REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 17
BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
February 1, 2022

REVISED

A meeting of the Regional School District No. 17 Board of Education was held on February 1, 2022 in the Haddam-Killingworth Intermediate/Middle School Cafeteria and Live Streamed through the District's Website. Board of Education Chair, Suzanne Sack, called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Members Present: *Hamish MacPhail, Brenda Buzzi, Lisa Connelly, Corey Roberts, Jennifer Favalora, Kathleen Zandi, Joel D'Angelo, Nelson Rivera, Shawna Goldfarb (Via Remote) Peter Sonski and Suzanne Sack*

Members Absent: *None.*

Also Present: *Superintendent of Schools, Jeffrey Wihbey, Director of Operations, John Mercier, Director of Finance, Ann Adriani (Via Remote), Haddam-Killingworth High School Principal, Donna Hayward, Principal of Burr District Elementary School, Brienne Whidden, Student Representatives, Yumi Iami and Ben Williams, Tecton Representative, Justin Hopkins, Tecton Project Manager, Allison Fredericks, CES, Brian Hammel, and Board Clerk, Jamie Sciascia (Via Remote)*

In-Person Visitors: *Approximately 100*

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

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1WmZSZJA7mRtfgDiCwcCWuB_C5FfwsBzq/view?usp=sharing

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.*

*Brenda Buzzi **MOVED** and Kathleen Zandi **SECONDED** a motion to move up on the Agenda Items 8A, Class of 2021 Grad Report, Item 8B, World History Textbook and Item 8C Facilities Report to before Item 6, Board Committee Reports and Future Meetings.*

Motion unanimously passed by Way of Show of Hands from All Board Members.

Superintendent's Report:

A. Cougar Pride - BES 3rd Graders

Principal Brienne Whidden updated the Board. She spoke about how the Burr Elementary School Students just finished up with the Fairytale Unit Writing Pieces. Some of the students were in attendance to read their stories to the Board and Community:

*Everleigh Pruser read – Cindy and Belly
Cece Pulaski and Sophie Caccomo read - Rancherella
Aurora Mylen read - Goatie Pig and the Three Wolves
Derek Chlodnicki read - The Three Little Mice
Norah Lucas read - The Three Prisoners*

Brynn Chometa read - Goldie Pig and the Three Wolves

Landon Haeckel and Caleb Anderson read - Scorbunny Raboot and Cinderace vs. Mewtwo

Principal Whidden and the 3rd Grade Burr Students left the meeting at approximately 7:30 p.m.

Report from the Student Representatives:

Yumi Iami and Ben Williams updated the Board. They spoke about holding a Question and Answer Night for parents of incoming Freshman; HKHS Counselors went to the Middle School to review with the 8th Grade Class the new course selections for next year; The Drama Club is putting on One Act Plays and they will be live streamed through the District's Website; The Music Festival is taking place on Friday and Saturday of this week at the Maloney High School in Meriden; Mid-Terms were held last week, and Sports are in full swing, prepping for Post-Season.

Yumi Iami and Ben Williams left the meeting at approximately 7:42 p.m.

Board Chair and Superintendent Statement for Public Comment:

Superintendent Wihbey spoke about his affinity and appreciation for the Community and suggestions moving forward to successfully create partnerships between the School District and Community members. He spoke about support for kids, parents as partners, areas to address, perils of social media for student and personnel issues, board meeting decorum, chain of command, and a reminder that children are watching.

Board Chair, Suzanne Sack, spoke about the Public Comment Agenda item of the Board meetings and how the public can best engage with the Board of Education.

Public Comment:

Julia Thelen of Haddam addressed the Board. She spoke about how she feels it is important to educate the students at the Middle School with the LGBTQIA for Sexuality and Gender Identity and also briefly spoke on her own personnel experience struggling with her sexuality and now identifies as a Lesbian.

Saige Merwin from Haddam updated the Board. He spoke about how he feels it is important that the Schools within the District hold different types of clubs for the Students. He is in support of the Glass Club at the Middle School.

Brandan Iovene from Haddam addressed the Board. He spoke about how offering competitive and various programs within the District is essential to students' education. He briefly went over his own personal experience while attending school in the District and stated how he was bullied for identifying as gay. He wished he had the Curriculum that the District offers now which includes LGBTQIA material.

Mark Degnan from Haddam addressed the Board. He read a letter from his son, who is Transgender, and spoke about his own personal experience. He spoke about the importance of the Glass Club and Health Curriculum at the Middle School and also spoke on the hatred within our Community.

Erin Ortega from Haddam addressed the Board. She spoke about LGBTQIA and how studies suggest that students need access to Identity affirming spaces and spoke about the negative effect that it has on students, if not supported.

Joe Rizzo from Haddam addressed the Board. He expressed his support for all Students and Staff of the Glass Club at the Middle School. He spoke about the Petition circulating and how he obtained over 30 Community Members letters condemning the behavior in Public Comment in the last Board meeting.

Christine Palm, State Representative of Chester, Deep River, Essex and Haddam, addressed the Board. She spoke about the Health Curriculum provided in the 8th Grade Middle School. She feels that this should be mandatory and urged the Board to reconsider the Opt-Out option for parents.

Jen Voegtli from Killingworth addressed the Board. She spoke about her support of the Glass Club at the Middle School and feels that the Opt-Out option for parents should not be given.

Jennifer Banaletti from Haddam addressed the Board. She spoke about how she feels we need to end the Mask Mandate in the schools and feels that it should be a parent decision. She asked the Board to add this topic to the next Board Meeting.

Board Secretary, Joel D'Angelo, spoke on the Public Comment Emails that were sent in since the last Board Meeting. Due to the fact that the Public Comment time for each topic was exceeded, the emails couldn't be read at the Board meeting. Board Secretary, D'Angelo, briefly stated what topics the emails were about for the record:

32 Community Members were in support of the LGBTQIA Health Curriculum within the Middle School.
1 Community Member expressed concern with the LGBTQIA Health Curriculum.

2 Community Members wrote in on the topic of Mask Wearing and one of them was Read during Public Comment.

The Board took a brief pause so the Community Members could exit after Public Comment.

New Business:

A. Class of 2021 Grad Report

Principal Donna Hayward addressed the Board. She presented to the Board and Community the Class of 2021 Graduate Report.

B. World History Textbook

Principal Donna Hayward updated the Board. She spoke about how the Social Studies Course is being completely refreshed to align with State Standards and expand on Modern World History. The textbooks are 12 years old, with outdated material. She also briefly touched on associated costs for purchasing same.

Joel D'Angelo **MOVED** and Brenda Buzzi **SECONDED** a motion to approve the World History Textbook as presented.

Motion passed unanimously 11-0-0 by Way of Voice Votes.

Kathleen Zandi	YES <u>√</u>	NO <u> </u>	A <u> </u>
Peter Sonski	YES <u>√</u>	NO <u> </u>	A <u> </u>
Lisa Connelly	YES <u>√</u>	NO <u> </u>	A <u> </u>
Joel D'Angelo	YES <u>√</u>	NO <u> </u>	A <u> </u>
Brenda Buzzi	YES <u>√</u>	NO <u> </u>	A <u> </u>

Shawna Goldfarb	YES <u>√</u>	NO <u> </u>	A <u> </u>
Jennifer Favalora	YES <u>√</u>	NO <u> </u>	A <u> </u>
Nelson Rivera	YES <u>√</u>	NO <u> </u>	A <u> </u>
Hamish MacPhail	YES <u>√</u>	NO <u> </u>	A <u> </u>
Corey Roberts	YES <u>√</u>	NO <u> </u>	A <u> </u>
Suzanne Sack	YES <u>√</u>	NO <u> </u>	A <u> </u>

C. Facilities Report

Peter Sonski updated the Board. He spoke about the Tecton Facilities Report which included a complete analysis of Building and Grounds, providing strengths and weaknesses of each building, time urgency on building projects, and anticipated costs for the Capital Improvement Planning.

Justin Hopkins updated the Board. He went over the Tecton Architect Report including: Introduction Scope of Work, Existing Conditions, Order of Magnitude of Budget and Next Steps.

Peter Sonski advised the Board to send any further questions to the Facilities Subcommittee. He briefly spoke about upcoming projects on the Capital Plan list and Summer Projects.

Justin Hopkins, Allison Fredericks and Paul Hamel left the meeting at approximately 9:36 p.m.

Board Committee Reports and Future Meetings:

A. Facilities Subcommittee

Peter Sonski updated the Board. He spoke about the Committee's review of the Tecton proposal and discussed upcoming lighting projects.

B. Finance Subcommittee

Peter Sonski updated the Board. He spoke about the Committee meeting and having a brief orientation for the new members, reviewed Capital Projects and Expense Projections for the fiscal year of 20-22, Covid Expenditures and Emergency Repair Projects.

C. Policy Subcommittee

Nelson Rivera updated the Board. The Committee met and is continuing work on the 3000 Series. They plan to bring this to the Board for a full review on the 15th as a "First Read".

D. Personnel and Evaluation Subcommittee

Board Chair, Sack, updated the Board. The Committee met and discussed Central Office Staffing.

E. Strategic Planning Subcommittee

Vice-Chair, Favalora, updated the Board. She spoke about the upcoming Strategic Planning Workshop is scheduled for Saturday, February 26th from 8:00 – 3:00 p.m.

Board Liaison Reports:

A. Healthy Communities – Healthy Kids Council

No Report.

B. LEARN

Vice-Chair, Favalora, updated the Board. She spoke about exploring costs related to the LEARN Consortium Health Plan.

C. Haddam Board of Selectmen

No Report. Board Member, Brenda Buzzi, volunteered to attend the Haddam Board of Selectmen meetings.

D. Killingworth Board of Selectmen

No Report.

Old Business:

A. District Central Office Staffing Needs*

*This item was **TABLED** until the February 15, 2022 Board of Education – Education Session Meeting.*

10. Consent Agenda

A. Acceptance of a donation in the amount of \$174.10 from Tox Box for Education to be deposited into the Student Activity Fund. Submitted by Brienne Whidden, Principal of Burr District Elementary School.

B. Approval of Minutes from January 4, 2022 – Board of Education Meeting

C. Approval of Minutes from January 18, 2022 – Board of Education Meeting

D. Approval of Minutes from January 25, 2022 - Board of Education Special Meeting

E. Personnel Report

F. Enrollment Report

G. Budget Transfers

*Brenda Buzzi **MOVED** and Hamish MacPhail **SECONDED** a motion to accept the Consent Agenda as presented with gratitude.*

Motion unanimously passed by Way of Voice Votes.

Kathleen Zandi	YES	<u>√</u>	NO	___	A	___
Peter Sonski	YES	<u>√</u>	NO	___	A	___
Lisa Connelly	YES	<u>√</u>	NO	___	A	___
Joel D'Angelo	YES	<u>√</u>	NO	___	A	___
Brenda Buzzi	YES	<u>√</u>	NO	___	A	___

Shawna Goldfarb	YES	<u>√</u>	NO	___	A	___
Jennifer Favalora	YES	<u>√</u>	NO	___	A	___
Nelson Rivera	YES	<u>√</u>	NO	___	A	___
Hamish MacPhail	YES	<u>√</u>	NO	___	A	___
Corey Roberts	YES	<u>√</u>	NO	___	A	___
Suzanne Sack	YES	<u>√</u>	NO	___	A	___

Board Discussion/News/Suggestions: *None.*

Adjournment:

Board Chair, Sack, called for the meeting to adjourn at 9:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jamie Sciascia

Board Clerk

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