REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 17
BOARD OF EDUCATION -
MEETING MINUTES
July 11, 2023

A meeting of the Regional School District No. 17 Board of Education was held on July 11, 2023, in the Central Office Board Room.

Board Member Attendance:

Board Member	Present	Absent	Board Member	Present	Absent
Prem Aithal		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- remote	X				

Also Present: Superintendent of Schools Jeffrey Wihbey, Assistant Superintendent Jennifer Miller, Board Administrator Sarah Kaiser, Director of Childcare Kelly Camporeale

Visitors: Approximately 0

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http://reflect-hktv.cablecast.tv/CablecastPublicSite/show/1623?channel=1

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

   Board of Education Chair Suzanne Sack called the meeting to order at 6:32 PM.

   The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Board Chair Sack advised that the meeting was a regular Board of Education meeting, not a special meeting. She then proceeded to request a motion to move agenda item 5.B.b Expenditure and Revenue Report to 4.A.b

Corey Roberts **MOVED** and Dr. Kathy Zandi **SECONDED** a motion to remove agenda item 5.B.b Expenditure and Revenue Report from the Consent Agenda and add it to 4.A.b.

Corey Roberts **MOVED** and Dr. Kathy Zandi **SECONDED** to **AMEND** the motion to include a move of item 5.B.h Budget Fund Transfer under Finance committee 4.A.c, remove item 5.F until next month, and move item 7.B Legal Services RFP and move it under Action Items 5.B.

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

2. Superintendent's Report

a. Monthly Summary and Updates

BES

Superintendent Wihbey provided the Board with an update that the capital projects are underway. The KES roof project has been completed. He also mentioned that the repair of the septic pipe at KES is in the process of being repaired. The elevator repair work at the High School will begin in about four weeks but is anticipated to be completed before the opening of school. Superintendent Wihbey reported to the Board that the Boys' baseball team won the Class S State Championship for the first time. He noted that many end-of-year items in the schools had taken place.

Assistant Superintendent Miller provided details to the Board on the status of hiring for open certified positions for the upcoming school year.

Board Chair Sack wanted to join the Superintendent and on behalf of the Board of Education congratulate Coach Brookes and the Boys baseball team on winning the Class S State Championship.

3. Public Comment

None

4. Committee Reports

A. Finance/Facilities Subcommittee

a. Master Plan Update

Committee Chair Sonski reported that the Master Plan is continuing to move forward. There was a virtual community session held on June 28th. Tecton offered several different options for the community to consider in terms of campus configuration and how many physical school buildings there will be. He noted that there was concern from the public on items such as cost, when will projects begin, when will the projects be

completed, and if significant changes are to be made how it will affect the students positively or negatively in terms of bus time and in grade assignments. There are proposals that Tecton is evaluating that range from two campuses to retaining the locations as is and enhance or improve the schools making them more contemporary for the delivery of education. The next in-person community session is scheduled for September 13th. There are school tours that have been scheduled for Town members to see the facilities.

b. Expenditure and Revenue Report

Committee Chair Sonski provided a report to the Board of the year-end fiscal expenditure and revenue reports. He discussed that the Superintendent and the Director of Fiscal Operations worked to mitigate and resolve many of the end-of-year concerns to the bottom line. In total, there was a total of $472K to be transferred to the capital fund. Mr. Sonski explained items that showed significant variances from the budgeted amounts. Many capital projects were allocated from the total budgeted capital such as the KES furnaces. There was discussion on the overage in the substitute line and the drivers for example staff absences and the change in substitute rates.

c. Budget Fund Transfer

Board Chair Sack provided a summary to the Board that fund transfers of over $5K from one line to another will come before the Board for approval throughout the year. Mr. Sonski provided a report of the reported items and the Board discussed the reasoning factors and how the requests will be presented moving forward.

Peter Sonski **MOVED** and Dr. Joel D'Angelo **SECONDED** a motion to approve the budget transfer requests as presented.

Motion unanimously passed from the following voice votes 9-0-0.

Member	Vote	Member	Vote
Prem Aithal	☐ YES ☐ NO X A	Dr. Nelson Rivera	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A
Lisa Connelly	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A	Corey Roberts	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A
Dr. Joel D'Angelo	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A	Peter Sonski	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A
Jennifer Favalora	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A	Dr. Kathleen Zandi	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A

Shawna Goldfarb	☐ YES ☐ NO X A	Suzanne Sack	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A
Hamish MacPhail	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A		

B. Communications/Strategic Planning Subcommittee

Jennifer Favalora reported that Communications did not meet this month but Strategic Planning had a workshop on the 8th where they discussed the measures, the District dashboard, the measures for next year, and a data review of the previous year for priorities for next year.

C. Personnel & Evaluation

Corey Roberts reported that P&E met and received an HR update from Assistant Superintendent Miller. She presented on the status of the staffing plan, banding, and the status of the Middle School task force. The committee also started the discussion on the Superintendent's year-end goals and evaluation.

D. Policy/Curriculum Subcommittee

Committee Co-Chair Rivera updated the Board on four policies coming before the Board for a second read and approval. Three of the policies were updated for legal and language updates and one new policy is being presented on attendance.

Dr. Joel D'Angelo **MOVED** and Lisa Connelly **SECONDED** a motion to approve the policies as presented.

Jennifer Favalora asked about the handbook amendments for these presented policy changes. Superintendent Wihbey confirmed that they will be completed in time before the school year starts.

Motion unanimously passed from the following voice votes 9-0-0.

Member	Vote	Member	Vote
Prem Aithal	☐ YES ☐ NO X A	Dr. Nelson Rivera	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A
Lisa Connelly	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A	Corey Roberts	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A
Dr. Joel D'Angelo	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A	Peter Sonski	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A
Jennifer Favalora	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A	Dr. Kathleen Zandi	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A
Shawna Goldfarb	☐ YES ☐ NO X A	Suzanne Sack	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A

Hamish MacPhail	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A		

Committee Co-Chair Zandi reported that the Curriculum coordinators presented at the committee meeting on Middle School Math and the efforts to improve with more time in the schedule and a recommendation to change the pathway. She noted that currently at the end of 5th grade, the teachers provided a recommendation and informed the students and parents on whether students are to be placed on an advanced math track or a regular math track. Now the recommendation based on research is to start the pathway at the beginning of the 6th grade with a discussion on the criteria with the students and parents. The differentiation will then be made in the 7th grade. Jennifer Beermuender updated the committee on ELA updates. Dr. Zandi also discussed the ARPA Right to Read Grant. Lastly, she reported on the staff's summer curriculum projects.

5. Action Items

A. HK Cubs Rate Change Proposal

Superintendent Wihbey discussed that the HK Cubs is proposing to increase the daycare rates to better adequately staff the program with quality candidates and replace toys due to wear and tear. Superintendent Wihbey noted that the rates have not been increased since 2017, inflation impacts on compensation rates, District expense increases, and the minimum wage increases as of June 1st. The proposed increase will be $5 per day. This will allow for wage increases and the purchase of new toys and equipment for the children. Director Camporeale has a communication plan that she will meet with families and there will be an email distributed. Superintendent Wihbey confirmed that the proposal did not require Board approval but he felt it was important that it was discussed with the Board. The Board had no objections to the proposal.

B. Legal Services RFP Selection

Dr. Rivera advised the Board on the Legal RFP process. He discussed that the committee reviewed all submissions from the RFP that were received and interviewed all potential candidates. Dr. Rivera advised that one firm was the consensus of the committee. The committee recommended moving to Shipman and Goodwin for our General Counsel for the Board and District and Special Education services.

Dr. Nelson Rivera **MOVED** and Dr. Kathy Zandi **SECONDED** a motion for Regional School District No. 17 Board of Education to award the legal services contract to Shipman & Goodwin LLP effective July 15, 2023, as General Counsel to the Board of Education, Legal Counsel to the District, and Special Education Counsel to the District. This will not preclude the Superintendent or the Board of Education from reaching out to additional counsel in certain circumstances.

Board Chair Sack wanted to say a special thank you to our current counsel Floyd Dugas for serving us very faithfully all these years and working hard on our behalf.

Motion unanimously passed from the following voice votes 9-0-0.

Member	Vote	Member	Vote
Prem Aithal	☐ YES ☐ NO X A	Dr. Nelson Rivera	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A
Lisa Connelly	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A	Corey Roberts	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A
Dr. Joel D'Angelo	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A	Peter Sonski	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A
Jennifer Favalora	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A	Dr. Kathleen Zandi	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A
Shawna Goldfarb	☐ YES ☐ NO X A	Suzanne Sack	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A
Hamish MacPhail	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A		

C. Consent Agenda

a. Enrollment Report
b. Personnel Report
c. Expenditure and Revenue report
d. Approval of Minutes from the June 2, 2023, Board of Education Special Meeting
e. Approval of Minutes from the June 6, 2023, Board of Education Meeting
f. Approval of Minutes from the June 6, 2023, Board of Education Special Meeting (Awards)
g. Approval of the Disposal of HKMS Science 6 textbooks, Inside the Cell. Submitted by Heather Rigatti, K-12 Curriculum Coordinator-Math, Science, and Technology
h. FY 22-23 Budget Fund Transfers

Consent Agenda item 5.B.c was moved to 4.A.b and agenda item 5.B.h was moved to agenda item 4.A.c in a previous motion.

Jennifer Favalora **MOVED** and Dr. Nelson Rivera **SECONDED** a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

Motion unanimously passed from the following voice votes 9-0-0.

Member	Vote	Member	Vote
Prem Aithal	☐ YES ☐ NO X A	Dr. Nelson Rivera	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A
Lisa Connelly	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A	Corey Roberts	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A
Dr. Joel D'Angelo	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A	Peter Sonski	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A
Jennifer Favalora	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A	Dr. Kathleen Zandi	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A
Shawna Goldfarb	☐ YES ☐ NO X A	Suzanne Sack	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A
Hamish MacPhail	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A		

D. Second read and Board action on the following Policies:
   a. 5131.92 Use of Private Technological Devices by Students-2nd Read
   b. 5131.914 Policy Regarding Student Use of the District's Computer Systems and Internet Safety-2nd Read
   c. 6116 Parent-Teacher Communication-2nd Read
   d. 4118.223 Attendance Policy-2nd Read

The motion was approved earlier in the meeting.

E. ECHMC Board Selection

Board Chair Sack provided a summary history that gave background that the Board approved the move from the State Plan to the ECHMC Cooperative for health insurance. As part of becoming a member of the ECHMC Cooperative, the Board will appoint two individuals to sit on the Board of Directors as representatives for RSD 17. Board Chair Sack made the recommendation that Superintendent Wihbey and Board Member Prem Aithal be selected.

Corey Roberts **MOVED** and Lisa Connelly **SECONDED** a motion to have the Board of Education hereby approve and authorize Superintendent Jeffrey Wihbey and Board Member Prem Aithal to be the appointed representatives for Regional School District 17 to reside on the Eastern Connecticut Health and Medical Cooperative Board of Directors.

Motion unanimously passed from the following voice votes 9-0-0.

Member	Vote	Member	Vote
Prem Aithal	☐ YES ☐ NO X A	Dr. Nelson Rivera	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A
Lisa Connelly	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A	Corey Roberts	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A

Dr. Joel D'Angelo	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A	Peter Sonski	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A
Jennifer Favalora	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A	Dr. Kathleen Zandi	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A
Shawna Goldfarb	☐ YES ☐ NO X A	Suzanne Sack	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A
Hamish MacPhail	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A		

F. Financial Management RFP

Board Chair Sack provided a brief overview of the historical status of the Fiscal Office and the Board discussed some of the challenges faced. Superintendent Wihbey provided a recommendation to outsource the services for a short term to improve the financial operations of the District. He provided the Board with the rationale that led to the decision and provided examples of the rationale in making this decision such as staffing issues and the ability to effectively move into the software system and use it to the fullest extent in all finance areas. Superintendent Wihbey discussed the RFP process that was completed and was overseen by Director Solin and Assistant Superintendent Miller. The Superintendent made a recommendation that the Board appoint LEARN as the District's finance office vendor for the coming year.

Peter Sonski **MOVED** and Jennifer Favalora **SECONDED** a motion to move our fiscal operations office to LEARN on an outsourcing basis for the coming year for Regional School District 17.

The Board discussed briefly the topic of outsourcing financial services for the coming year.

Motion unanimously passed from the following voice votes 9-0-0.

Member	Vote	Member	Vote
Prem Aithal	☐ YES ☐ NO X A	Dr. Nelson Rivera	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A
Lisa Connelly	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A	Corey Roberts	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A
Dr. Joel D'Angelo	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A	Peter Sonski	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A
Jennifer Favalora	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A	Dr. Kathleen Zandi	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A
Shawna Goldfarb	☐ YES ☐ NO X A	Suzanne Sack	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A
Hamish MacPhail	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A		

G. Approval of Superintendent's Goals

This item was tabled to next month.

6. Board Member Reports, Announcements & Comments

   Nothing to report

7. Executive Session

Lisa Connelly **MOVED** and Corey Roberts **SECONDED** a motion to go into Executive Session.

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

The Board went into Executive Session at 7:43 pm for a personnel matter - Superintendent Contract and Year-End Review.

The Board came out of Executive Session at 8:14 pm.

Dr. Kathy Zandi **MOVED** and Dr. Joel D'Angelo **SECONDED** that the Superintendent's contract be extended by one year to include 2025-2026. Let the record show that the Board expresses its appreciation to our Superintendent for his hard work and dedication and our full and unwavering support for him to implement our strategic plan.

The Board Secretary called the vote - The motion passed unanimously.

Board Chair Sack adjourned the meeting at 8:17 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Kaiser
Administrative Assistant to the Board of Education

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