

**REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 17
BOARD OF EDUCATION -
MEETING MINUTES
November 14, 2023**

The Regional School District No. 17 Board of Education meeting was held on November 14, 2023, in the HK High School Community 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	X				

Also Present: Superintendent of Schools Jeffrey Wihbey, Assistant Superintendent Jennifer Miller, Board Administrator Sarah Kaiser, HKHS Principal Donna Hayward, HKMS Principal Dorothy Ventura (remote), Assistant Principal Heather Persson, HKIS Principal Eric Larson, KES Principal Dennis Reed, BES Principal Brienne Whidden, Curriculum Coordinators Jennifer Beermuender and Heather Rigatti, and Student Representative Madison Moriarty.

Visitors: 16

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

1. Call to Order/Opening of Meeting

Board of Education Chair Suzanne Sack called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

2. Board Recognition and Transition

Board Chair Sack recognized Board Members Joel D'Angelo and Peter Sonski for their time, dedication, and hard work while serving on the Board of Education. She presented each with a Certificate and gift.

Board Chair Sack discussed the transition and that the Board needed to appoint an interim Treasurer and signatory to the Board until the December Board elections. She reviewed the process of outgoing members and when the elections will be held, per the By-Laws, in the first meeting following the first of the month when the incoming members take office.

Jennifer Favalora **MOVED**, and Hamish MacPhail **SECONDED** a motion on an interim basis to appoint Prem Aithal as our Treasurer.

Motion unanimously passed from the following voice votes 10-0-0.

Member	Vote	Member	Vote
Prem Aithal	X YES ☐ NO ☐ 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	ABSENT
Shawna Goldfarb	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A	Suzanne Sack	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A
Hamish MacPhail	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A		

3. Superintendent's Report

A. Cougar Pride

Superintendent Wihbey introduced Choral Director Katherine Jones and students Eliza Sturges, Emma Castiglioni, and Eleanor Barry. They spoke to the Board about the Middle School Honor Choir of the American Choral Directors Association Eastern Division Conference they were selected to participate in. Board Chair Sack presented each student with a recognition certificate.

Ms. Jones, students, and family left the meeting at 6:50 pm.

B. Report from the Student Representatives

Madison Moriarty reported to the Board on the following topics:

- The boys soccer and volleyball teams had semi-final state games taking place on 11/14
- On November 20th, the Cougar Bowl will be held at 6:30 pm
- On November 22nd, there will be a school-wide assembly on leadership and character building sponsored by HKYFS
- On November 21st, the football team will be traveling for the annual Principal's Cup Game

Madison Moriarty left the meeting at 6:52 pm.

C. Monthly Summary and Updates

a. Superintendent Report

Superintendent Wihbey reported to the Board on the following items:

- Burr Elementary was named a School of Distinction for the second consecutive year by the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE). Killingworth Elementary achieved a School Performance Index (SPI) of 100 again this year. HKIS made significant growth improvement over the last year as well.
- HSHS SAT English Language Arts achievement was ranked as Connecticut's 10th-highest high school.
- RSD17 was awarded the High-Intensity Tutoring Grant from CSDE.
- Update on the E.H. Swing Bridge Rehab project. This should be the last closure for 2023.
- The Facilities team will present the Facilities Subcommittee a Capital request list on November 28th.
- Food Services received a Supply Chain Assistance Grant of \$44,289.28.
- The Fiscal department reported that the annual audit is targeted for a December 31st completion.
- Teacher feedback is being collected through the District Wide Data Team to monitor the impact of Professional Learning on teachers' practice.
- Jenn Beermuender, Superintendent Wihbey, and Judy Nacca defended our reading waiver to the State Department of Education on 10/26 and will hear a response by December 1st.
- The Curriculum coordinators filed the Title I, II, and IV grants with the CSDE.
- Superintendent Wihbey recognized Liza Murphy was identified by the College Board as a commended student on the 2022 PSAT.
- The Middle School task Force has concluded on five priorities.

Superintendent Wihbey followed up with the Board on the High School internship program, a status update that he will meet with Attorney Santiago and Principal Hayward regarding the RSD17 drug policy, and further explanation on the solar shade project at BES.

b. SPED Program Review

The Superintendent provided an update on the review process.

3. Public Comment

Robin Duffield from Killingworth addressed the Board. She discussed the 2024-2025 school calendar and the Board's FMLA policy revisions.

4. Discussion Items

A. Continuous Improvement Plan 2023-2024

Principal Donna Hayward presented the CIP presentation for Haddam Killingworth High School. Principal Dorothy Ventura and Heather Persson presented the CIP Presentation for Haddam Killingworth Middle School. Principal Eric Larson presented the CIP Presentation for Haddam Killingworth Intermediate School. Principals Dennis Reed and Brienne Whidden presented the CIP Presentation for Killingworth Elementary School and Burr Elementary School.

Principals Reed, Whidden, Larson, and the Curriculum Coordinators left the meeting at 8:42 pm.

B. LEARN Quarterly Updates Report

Superintendent Wihbey reported to the Board on the work and policy/process improvements from LEARN in the Fiscal Department. Superintendent Wihbey will provide quarterly updates on the LEARN progress and discuss further assessments with the subcommittee in the spring for recommendations to the Board.

5. Action Items

A. HKMS Trip Request-Nature's Classroom Field Trip

Principal Ventura spoke to the Board about the Middle School's interest in a 6th-grade field trip. The first step taken was the administration surveyed the feasibility and interest. Based on the feedback, Principal Ventura would like to work with the team and the subcommittee on the best approach to offering the trip in the future as a modified trip.

B. HKMS Philadelphia Field Trip

Principal Ventura updated the Board. She spoke about the upcoming 8th-grade Philadelphia Trip. They will travel to many historic sites over three days and two nights.

Prem Aithal **MOVED**, and Peter Sonski **SECONDED** a motion to approve the HKMS-Philadelphia Trip from June 4, 2024, to June 6, 2024, as presented.

Motion unanimously passed from the following voice votes 10-0-0.

Member	Vote	Member	Vote
Prem Aithal	X YES ☐ NO ☐ 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	ABSENT
Shawna Goldfarb	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A	Suzanne Sack	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A
Hamish MacPhail	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A		

Board Member Hamish MacPhail, Principal Ventura and Assistant Principal Persson left the meeting at 8:58 pm.

C. HKHS Trip Request-France April 2025

Principal Hayward and Teacher Christine Kehrley presented to the Board their proposal for approval for a trip to France in 2025 for the 10th-12th grade French students. Principal Hayward discussed travel safety and her recommendation for the students to obtain travel insurance. Ms. Kehrley discussed the itinerary that would be taken. Superintendent Wihbey also told the Board that they will be revisiting the trip six months before for a second approval.

Peter Sonski **MOVED**, and Lisa Connelly **SECONDED** a motion to approve the HKHS field trip to France scheduled for April 2025 on the conditions that a) all participants are recommended to carry full travel insurance and b) the State Department and RSD17 District Administration deem it safe to travel at that time.

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

Member	Vote	Member	Vote
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Prem Aithal	X YES ☐ NO ☐ 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	ABSENT
Shawna Goldfarb	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A	Suzanne Sack	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A
Hamish MacPhail	ABSENT		

Principal Hayward and Christine Kehrley left the meeting at 9:10 pm.

D. HKYFS - Youth Voices Count Survey

Jennifer Favalora provided the Board with a request to approve a survey to be conducted at HK High School. The Board discussed the changes from the previous survey conducted at the Middle School.

Nelson Rivera **MOVED**, and Prem Aithal **SECONDED** a motion to authorize the Youth Voices Count Survey to be administered at HKHS.

Motion unanimously passed from the following voice votes 8-0-1.

Member	Vote	Member	Vote
Prem Aithal	X YES ☐ NO ☐ 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	☐ YES ☐ NO X A	Dr. Kathleen Zandi	ABSENT
Shawna Goldfarb	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A	Suzanne Sack	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A
Hamish MacPhail	ABSENT		

E. 2024 Subcommittee Goals

Board Chair Sack made a recommendation to table this agenda item in December.

Prem Aithal **MOVED**, and Shawna Goldfarb **SECONDED** a motion to table this item until December.

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

F. Consent Agenda

- a. Enrollment Report
- b. Personnel Report
- c. Approval of Revised Minutes from the October 10, 2023, Board of Education Meeting
- d. Approval of Minutes from the October 24, 2023, Board of Education Special Meeting Workshop
- e. Approval of Minutes from the November 2, 2023, Board of Education Special Joint Meeting
- f. Acceptance of a donation in the amount of \$237.50 received from parents through field trip collections. This donation will be deposited directly into the Student Activity Fund to be used as scholarship funds for HKIS students. Submitted by Eric Larson, Principal of Haddam-Killingworth Intermediate School.
- g. Acceptance of a donation in the amount of \$210.00 received from parents through field trip collections. This donation will be deposited directly into the Student Activity Fund to be used as scholarship funds for HKMS students. Submitted by Dorothy Ventura, Principal of Haddam-Killingworth Middle School.
- i. 4152.6 & 4252.6 Family and Medical Leave Policy First Read
- j. Acceptance of a donation of 21 vape detectors valued at \$14,850 received from HKYFS. These units will be installed at HK High School and HK Middle School.
- k. 2024 Board of Education Meeting Calendar First Read
- l. 2024 Board of Education Handbook First Read

Shawna Goldfarb requested to remove 6.F.h. 2024-2025 School Calendar First Read

Prem Aithal **MOVED**, and Lisa Connelly **SECONDED** a motion passing the Consent Agenda less item h.

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

The Board further discussed the 2024-2025 School Calendar. Provided Superintendent Wihbey with feedback to review before the December meeting.

Shawna Goldfarb **MOVED**, and Lisa Connelly **SECONDED** a motion to approve the 2024-2025 School Calendar First Read.

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

6. Committee Reports

A. Finance/Facilities Subcommittee

a. Master Plan Update

Committee Chair Sonski reported that there is the 4th Public Session for the Master Plan on 11/16 at 6:00 pm.

b. Fiscal Department Revenue and Expenditure Reports

Committee Chair Sonski advised the Board that they have received the Finance Department financial reports as of 10/31/23. Superintendent Wihbey will follow up next month regarding the criteria for reporting A/P Disbursements and the changes in the professional services and building improvement lines.

B. Policy/Curriculum Subcommittee

Committee Co-Chair Nelson Rivera reported reviewing the 4152.6 and 4252.6 Family and Medical Leave Policy.

Lisa Connelly reported to the Board that the committee discussed the following items:

- ELA Curriculum Implementation Update
- Update on the Reading Waiver
- Summer Curriculum Projects and Program Overview
- Curriculum Council Update
- New Teacher Orientation and Beginning Teacher Support Sessions
- PD Updates
- MS Task Force Update
- Data Team Updates
- Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)
- 2024-25 School Calendar

She wanted to acknowledge the hard work of the Curriculum Coordinators.

C. Communications/Strategic Planning Subcommittee

Committee Co-Chair Aithal reported there was no meeting, but at the next Strategic Planning meeting, the committee will discuss the Board's self-evaluation and the next steps.

D. Personnel & Evaluation Subcommittee

Committee Co-Chair Roberts reported that the committee discussed the Finance and Operations job roles.

5. Board Member Reports, Announcements & Comments

A. Liaison Reports

a. LEARN

None

b. HK Youth and Family Services

Jennifer Favalora spoke on the new Director of Prevention and Mental Health. There is a craft fair on December 2nd from 9-3 at the Middle School. Therapy dogs visited the schools. The Pumpkin Run had a good turnout.

Prem Aithal thanked HKYFS for the donated vape detectors.

c. Haddam Killingworth Recreation Department

None

d. Haddam Board of Selectmen

The bridge closures have ended for 2023.

e. Killingworth Board of Selectmen

There was a question about the employment of Arcadis through the Master Plan project.

Board Sack responded that Arcadis had been hired to go through the referendum. They are a company that provides services as a personal representative to the district for the Master Plan through the referendum.

6. Executive Session

A. Personnel Matter-Interview and Approval of Director of Student Services

B. Personnel Matter-Interview and Approval of Director of Finance and Operations

Prem Aithal **MOVED**, and Peter Sonski **SECONDED** a motion to go into Executive Session for a personnel matter.

The motion was passed by a show of hands 9-0-0.

The Board went into Executive Session at 9:49 pm for a personnel matter and invited Assistant Superintendent Jennifer Miller to join.

The Board ended the Executive Session at 10:32 pm.

Superintendent Wihbey spoke to the Board about the process and protocol.

Board Chair Sack adjourned the meeting at 10:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Kaiser

Administrative Assistant to the Board of Education

Approval: _____ Date: _____
Jennifer Favalora, Vice Chair