



An informational update from the Superintendent to the RSD 17 Board.

February 2024

Superintendent's Report, Jeffrey S. Wihbey, Superintendent of Schools

Department Updates

Finance and Operations

- FY23 Accrued PO and A/R issues were resolved with the audit firm. Draft audited financials and MD&A received and reviewed with full audit process to be completed in February for March approval.
- Transitioned the Capital Improvement Priority List developed in Fall 2024 into an actionable project plan which will be funded as part of the FY25 budget process at no increase to overall spending.
- Developed new templates for Request for Proposals/Invitations to Bid and created/published RFPs for As-Needed Painting Services, Insurance Services, Copier Equipment and Services, and Security Devices and Services, all with February opening dates.
- Implemented a streamlined process for budget transfer requests for both administrative and BOE approval processes.
- Crafted a district-wide contract management tool to manage all multi-year contracts and aid in RFP/ITB planning, as well as an RFP/ITB control tool.
- Worked with the BOE to build out two new approaches to the Master Planning project.
- Participated in Superintendent's budget review meetings with program leaders and made over 150 changes to the FY25 working budget, as well as major budget driver isolation and strategy sessions. The budget development process was "frozen" on 1/31 for the development of the Superintendent's Budget Book for early February distribution.
- Rebuilt the financial sections of the "Budget Book" for a streamlined aesthetic and linked updates when changes are made, as well as a "Budget Navigation" section to guide users through account structures.

Student Services

- The Student Services Department met with Connecticut Behavioral Health to review student progress since the beginning of the school year.
- The department has been working with New Solutions to organize the focus groups to finish the program audit that is currently in progress.

Food Services



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- In early January, the Food Services Director and all head cooks attended a School Nutrition Association meeting. Attendees were able to meet and talk with other employees in the same roles. Great information was shared.
- The January Elementary School Nutrition Ambassadors enjoyed Apple Cinnamon French Toast, BBQ Wings, Chicken Empanadas, and Blueberry Pera Smoothies. These items will be featured on the February menus.

Talent, Accountability, & Human Resources

- On January 23, 2024, Title IX training was planned and delivered to the administrative team. Shipman and Goodwin presented this legally required training.
- The February [Central Office Newsletter](#) was emailed to all staff.
- Both Professional Development and Evaluation Sub-Committees met to plan for professional learning and evaluation. A focus is redesigning the teacher support and evaluation system for the next school year.
- Administrators are completing certified staff mid-year conferences via the new *Professional Growth* platform.

Curriculum Office

- Curriculum Coordinators met with Principals to reflect on implementing our MTSS practices and continue to read research on best practices.
- HKIS has been chosen to participate in the National Assessment of Educational Process (NAEP) on February 21. NAEP is the largest nationally representative and continuing assessment of what students know and can do in various subjects. NAEP is administered by the US Department of Education. The results are released as The Nation's Report Card, which provides information about student achievement to educators, parents/guardians, policymakers, and the public. Approximately 50 students from HKIS grade 4 will participate this year. Mrs. Rigatti and Mr. Larson have been planning and coordinating it.

Schools

HKHS

- The HKHS Robotics Club competed in its 3rd competition of the year at Middletown on Saturday, 1/27, up against 75 other teams from around the state. One of our teams is in the hunt to qualify for a Southern New England tournament spot. The Southern New England tournament will be held at the Bridgeport 'Total Mortgage Arena' this year on February 26th and 27th. Top teams from the Southern New England tournament will be granted slots at the VEX world tournament to be held in Dallas, Texas. <https://recf.org/vex-robotics-world-championship>



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- In January 2024, 25 HK Musicians were accepted into the Southern Region Festival, which was held at Maloney High School, and 18 of those will go on to Allstate auditions this weekend. Our school continues to be in the top three for acceptance rates into the Southern Region Festival for choir and, historically, is the most accepted into the Allstate choir in our DRG. We have a flower bulb fundraiser currently in the works, which will support our band and chorus students who are traveling to NYC on March 20th to take part in a Broadway Workshop and see *Back to the Future*, the musical.
- 9-12th grade students from our HK choir program traveled to HKMS on 1/30/24 to answer questions about the high school and course electives to a group of 40 8th-grade students. The focus was on sharing more about the Music Program electives, but students were also asked about bell schedules, passing time, the course selection process, and athletics. HKHS students plan to keep in touch as mentors for this group of 8th graders and will reconnect via email in April after the 8th-grade visit to HKHS.
- HK Drama sponsored a successful Dance Workshop on January 30th taught by our own Erica Babjeck. The workshop was open to all students and was designed to reach students who are not currently attending any afterschool programs. We will host auditions for the spring musical *Bye, Bye, Birdie* on February 15th. We have close to 40 students signed up to participate.
- Each year, The U.S. Department of Education invites states to nominate students for the U.S. Presidential Scholars Program. The White House House Commission of Presidential Scholars then selects scholars based on their academic success, artistic and technical excellence, essays, school evaluations, and transcripts, as well as evidence of community service, leadership, and demonstrated commitment to high ideals. The recognition is one of the nation's highest honors for graduating high school seniors. **We are thrilled to announce that HKHS senior Elizabeth "Liza" Murphy has been named a candidate for the prestigious U.S. Presidential Scholars Program!**
- Seniors Shylee Emigh & Caitlin Kukta have had their student film accepted into Eastern Connecticut State University's high school film festival! The festival will be held on Saturday, February 10th, from 5 pm to 8 pm on ECSU's campus in Willimantic.
- This Spring, the Athletic Department, in partnership with HKYFS, is piloting a program called Substance-Free Athletics (SFA). This brings the latest scientific evidence about substances and sports to high school athletes and the coaches and parents who support them. Through a presentation-based format, drug education and policy clarifications are discussed with coaches, athletes, and parents. From there, conversations about drugs and alcohol can become more productive. SFA empowers athletes to 1. take ownership of this topic, 2. support each other, and 3. think about what they want.

HKMS

- The Middle School leadership met with all teachers regarding the basic structures for the middle school for next year.
- A parent meeting was then held on February 1, 2024.



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- A Town meeting with students is planned for February 9, 2024.
- The iReady winter diagnostic has been completed.

HKIS

- The HKIS student council led by Mrs. Amaio and Mrs. Agro attended a field trip to the Connecticut Association of Schools Leadership Conference in January. Student council members participated in focus groups throughout the day. Activities included team-building opportunities, developing leadership skills, and how to show kindness and equity. Student council members shared their experiences with their peers during a school-wide town meeting and will be presenting skits to their respective grade levels.

BES

- All Burr students had the opportunity to participate in a cardio drumming unit in PE class. Mr. Lemke, with the support of the PTO, purchased materials and ran a one month unit providing every student with the opportunity to learn a drumming routine to at least two different songs. One class even gave a performance accompanied by Mr. Gary at our monthly Town Meeting.

KES

- KES was honored to host teams of teachers, literacy coaches, and administrators from 4 CT districts (East Lyme, Woodbridge, North Branford, and Litchfield). The visiting teams were interested in learning about and observing our comprehensive language arts instruction and program. They experienced a detailed presentation from Director Jennifer Beermuender and Literacy Coach Judy Nacca, who then visited and observed every classroom throughout the school. The day ended with a question and answer session with a panel of our teachers. We were proud to showcase the incredible work our teachers and students are doing and the feedback we received was extraordinary.



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Board Requests Follow-Up:

1. Request for additional information regarding the donation from the Killingworth Women's Organization.

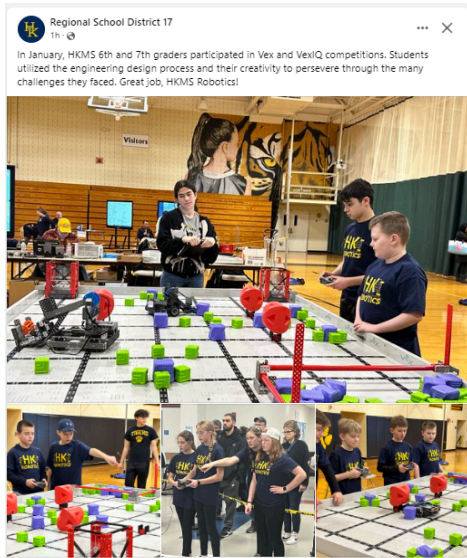
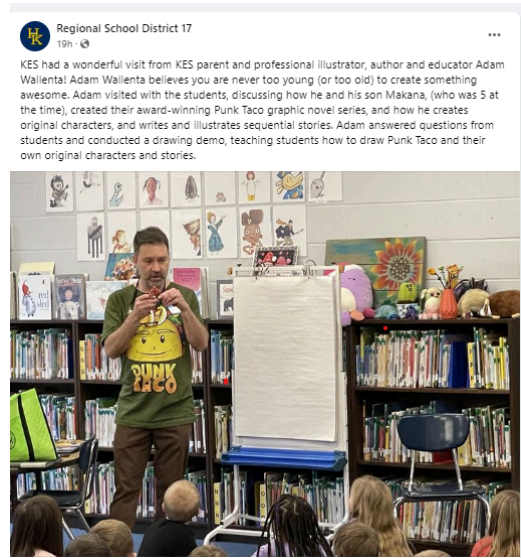
The Killingworth Women's Organization (KWO) "Giving Tuesday" committee organized a read-a-thon at KES where they had members from the KWO come and read books to each class in the school. Students and staff dressed as their favorite book characters and made a donation of \$1 each if they wanted to. The donations raised by KWO were then given to KES to buy books for the library, classrooms, or students who may not have access to books at home.

Social Media Posts:





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