



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

March 2024

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

Department Updates

Finance

- The Financial Audit was completed and delivered on 2/23. The audit was filed with State OPM and the Federal Audit Clearinghouse, and SEC filings were made before the 2/28 deadline. The audit will be presented by Seward and Monde to the F/F committee on 3/11 and BOE on 3/19.
- Resolved legacy filing/acceptance issues with W-2, 1099, and 1095 IRS forms in partnership with Human Resources.
- Insurance Services RFP was published and was opened on 2/22 with (3) responses. Evaluation is in process with the intention of bringing it to BOE in March or April at the latest.
- During an account reconciliation exercise, Finance discovered a payment from the State in the amount of \$59,481. Researched and found it was the final after-audit payment for the HKHS Roof Replacement project. These funds can be used to further pay down the HS bond principal in FY25 (\$495,999 total reimbursements received from OSCGR- completing all outstanding grant obligations).

Operations

- Workshopped draft security audits with the consultant and was tasked with refining the drafts into an actionable, consolidated report, which was received on 3/3 and is under review.
- Developed and implemented a detailed utilities tracking model which will be owned by the Operations Admin. Populated with YTD data, and will be populated with past years as time permits. After a year of data collection, the forecasting model can be implemented.
- On-call Painting Services RFP opened on 2/15 with (6) responses. Guided the review team through the process and best practices, and interviews with (3) firms are being set up for early March.
- HKHS Cooling System Replacements- The mechanical contractor concurred that to replace each failed rooftop CU, refrigerant piping, and AHU Dx coil would be an average (each is a different size) of \$100k each. The project will be packaged into a base bid consisting of (3) units serving classrooms and (1) unit serving media center, with an add/alt of replacing the (2) auditorium units and another add/alt of (1) café unit. The (1) lecture hall unit will be left offline since the space is not routinely used. Engineer quoting bid-ready documents.
- Security Devices and Services RFP published 2/1. No questions received. Opened 2/29 with (2) responses. Evaluation in process.



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- Submitted PEGPETIA grant for viewboards (\$100k) and other A/V equipment (mic system ~\$50k). If received, it would fund ~75 viewboards, which, added to the 50 carried in the FY25 budget, would replace 125 of the 130 needed. About 160 screens in the district in total. Anticipated award decision in April.

Student Services

- Participated in a presentation and submitted for a state grant opportunity to positively impact special education instruction in the area of math.

Food Services

- The state conducted and completed the 5-year audit of the Food Services program on 2/15. Participated in the exit interview to discuss findings, which were extremely minor (most corrected on the fly). Minor changes are needed to one BOE policy, which was drafted and the State auditors are reviewing prior to board action. The State auditors were very complimentary of both program management and the Food Services staff. Offered to assist the State with any upcoming regulation implementation.

Talent, Accountability, & Human Resources

- The March [Central Office Newsletter](#) was emailed to all staff.
- In partnership with Anthem, RSD17 is holding a Wellness Challenge for four weeks (3/10 - 4/6). The theme is *Get Fit on Route 66*. There are weekly challenges, incentives, and tips. Over 100 staff registered for the Walker Tracker app, and healthy snacks were offered in all district lounges to create excitement and encourage healthy habits. Feedback has been very positive!
- Form 1095s were uploaded to the Employee Self-Service portal.
- Preparation for the spring Nurse negotiations is underway, which will occur later this spring.
- In partnership with Anthem, we are automating Open Enrollment. We are completing the prework to utilize the Employee Navigator online platform later this spring. This will increase accuracy, provide a positive user experience, and increase the efficiency of collecting and importing the information to Anthem and Infinite Visions.

Curriculum Office

- Curriculum Coordinators presented mid-year data to the District-wide Data Team in January. District-level and school-based data were shared for all areas of ELA and math K-12. The data process was followed and the next steps were determined.
- The class size guidelines policy was finalized and is ready to share with the Policy Subcommittee at the next meeting.
- BES and KES successfully hosted districts from across the state to share our process for shifting instruction to align with the Science of Reading Research, including onboarding Wit and Wisdom. Districts are continuing to reach out for guidance and support.



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Schools

HKHS

- HKHS is proud to announce the top scholars from the Class of 2024. The valedictorian of the Class of 2024 is Liza Murphy, and the salutatorian is Ava Harriman!
- On Friday, March 1st, our African American, Black, and Latino studies students and teacher traveled to the Katharine Hepburn Cultural Arts Center in Old Saybrook to enjoy Breanetta Productions “Harlem on my Mind,” a musical journey through history from 1910 to 1930. This performance complimented the curriculum of this new course and was enjoyed by all.
- On March 14, HKHS students and faculty are invited to join the Math Department in a 3.14 km walk (or run) around the track to celebrate Pi Day (the value of pi is about 3.14159...). Upon finishing, participants will be treated to a piece of pie.
- HKHS is proud of this year’s CAS Art Scholars, Peyton Tyler and Alejandra Morales. Each year, HKHS selects one performing artist and one visual artist whose work and overall performance at HKHS are outstanding. These students will be honored at the CAS Art Scholar banquet later this spring.

HKMS

- HKMS increased communication regarding parent-teacher communication and clarified that conferences are available to everyone. Most of our slots are full. Teams will call parents to make alternate plans to meet with parents during the school day when all the slots are full.
- HKMS is finetuning the structures for the next school year. The support for the change is growing. They have met with numerous parents who had questions and kept the lines of communication wide open. Every question was answered and published for all families to read.
- HKMS is making PD plans with Heather Rigatti and Jenn Beermuender to prepare for the shift in instructional practices needed for double periods. They also built some relationships with schools that are currently implementing double periods successfully. They will be sending teachers there to observe and talk to teachers about their experiences.
- HKMS is planning something pretty creative for the last week in March. They are going to rearrange our schedules to mirror double periods. This way our teachers are experiencing planning for the amount of chunking (Marzano) needed to sustain the level of engagement needed for a successful transition to double periods. They will be using some of the PD time on March 9 to plan for that.
- HKMS is excited about our March Spring musical, The Pirates of Penzance. Students have been working very hard with Mrs. Jones and Mrs. Fagan.



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- HKMS had three students attending the Middle School Honors Choir for the American Choral Directors Association Eastern Division Conference.

HKIS

- 4th and 5th-grade students engaged in hands-on financial education through the stock market program led by Mr. Houlton. By learning how to buy and sell stocks at such a young age, these students are gaining valuable skills that will benefit them in the future and set them on a path toward financial literacy and responsible investing practices. It is great to see students enthusiastic about opportunities presented to them.
- It is wonderful to see Zander Honious(art) and Grace Keller(music) being recognized for their outstanding achievements in the visual and performing arts. Their talents and dedication to their craft are commendable, as well as their exemplary citizenship and cooperativeness. By excelling in their respective fields and demonstrating such positive qualities, these students serve as inspiring role models for others.

BES

- Burr students participated in a cultural arts assembly entitled Around the World. They learned about many different countries by participating in songs and folktales from around the world. Students learned about Ghana, India, Japan, Greece, and Jerusalem.
- Students celebrated the 100th day of school by dressing as 100-year-old versions of themselves, creating hats and various necklaces with 100 items on them, writing about what they would do with \$100, and writing about themselves as 100-year-olds and all of their accomplishments. A great day was had by all!

KES

- KES had planned for a fun month-long celebration for Read Across America. The theme this year is **Fly Away With Books**. The festivities will kick off on March 1st with a whole-school assembly where students enjoyed the book; The World Needs Who You Were Made To Be by Joanna Gains. Students met up with their buddy classes for a related activity. The PTO-sponsored Read-a-Thon will run from March 4th through the 13th. This traditionally is a fun and successful fundraiser. Various whole-school incentives have been set and will be earned for every 10,000 minutes read. Other activities have been planned throughout the month including a scavenger hunt, hidden characters (each week a character will be hidden somewhere in the school), book walks, books at lunch, Book-or-Treat, and an end-of-month celebration.
- KES also had the honor of recognizing students Haven Mallon and Skylar Larson at the CAS Celebration of the Arts Banquet. Haven received the art award and Skylar received the music award.

Board Requests Follow-Up:



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- 1. Was HKIS selected to participate, or did they apply to be included in the National Assessment of Educational Process (NAEP)?**

RSD17 did not apply to be included in NAEP. NAEP selects schools as part of a carefully designed sampling process that ensures NAEP-selected schools and students are representative of your district, state, and the nation. Under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, districts and states that receive Title I funds are required to participate in the biennial assessments.

- 2. Policy 5118.1 R Administrative Regulations regarding Homeless Children and Youth. Does this item also cover runaway youth aged 16-18?**

Yes, 1.D of this regulation includes unaccompanied youth. Students who are not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian are called unaccompanied youth. They are protected under the McKinney-Vento Act, when the student also does not have stable, adequate, and regular nighttime residence. This includes youth who have run away from home, have been kicked out of their homes, or have been abandoned by parents. [Homeless Student Support Frequently Asked Questions](#)

- 3. What was the equipment that was purchased in the Project Lead the Way in reference to the budget transfer 2024-2?**

It was for the 7th grade Computer Science course. We rescheduled 7th grade to have a mandatory coding class. We needed to purchase the bits to do this. It was a one year purchase and can be used over and over again.

- 4. Policy 4111.3: Increasing Educator Diversity Plan? Does this need to be Board approved to submit to CSDE? Or provided for informational purposes only?**

Per new legislation, Boards of Education need to have an Increasing Educator Diversity Plan that is board-approved, posted on the district website, and submitted to the state.

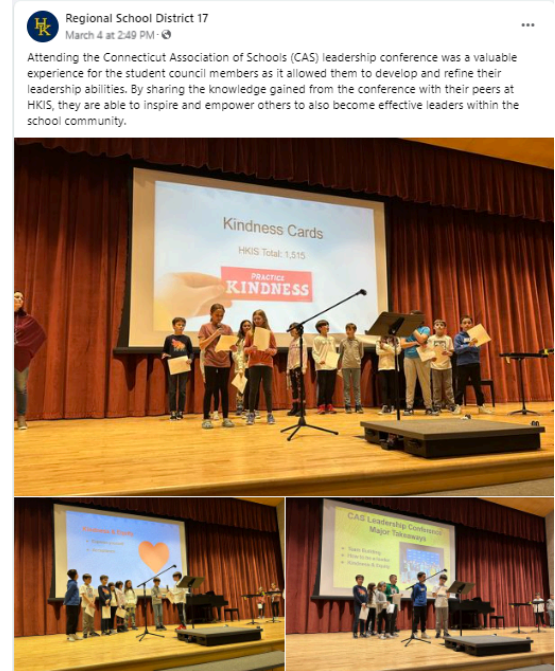
The RSD17 BOE approved [Policy 4111.3 Increasing Educator Diversity Plan](#) at the February 13, 2024 meeting. This updated policy is posted on our website and will be submitted to the state as required. The state released a plan template, but it is not required to be used.

The state may provide feedback on our submission which we will consider once received.



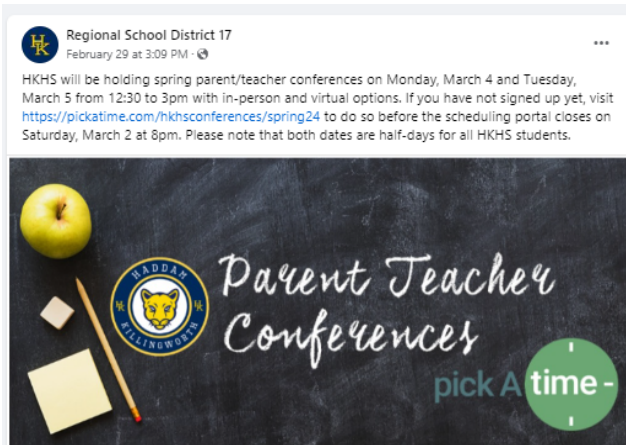
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Social Media Posts:





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