



April 2024

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

Department Updates

Finance

- Rebuilt the Superintendent's Budget Book into a fully-linked version containing three years of actuals, which will form the basis of future budget development processes. Updated to reflect BOE Proposed and BOE approved editions.
- Developed a tool to evaluate budget cut impacts, which was utilized during the final BOE budget workshop.
- Performed full evaluation of the District's credit card processing arrangements through Revtrak and how to fully implement/adjust parameters for IT, Pre-K, Cubs, and Food Services, as well as ensure proper recording of deposits and fees. Several sub-initiatives are in process.
- Analyzed current travel and credit card purchasing programs and rolled out new policies and procedures to make both processes more user-friendly, efficient, and compliant.
- Insurance Services RFP- Interviewed and evaluated (3) firms. Award recommendations will be made to F/F 4/15 and BOE 4/16. The contract starts on 7/1, but marketing for new insurance will begin immediately so that policies can be in place on 7/1.

Operations

- HKHS A/C Project- Negotiated design contract with CES, and design PO issued. Target is ITB by mid-May and construction in September.
- On-call Painting Services RFP- interviews were conducted with (3) firms, and all (3) were awarded on-call contracts.
- Summarized the two-phase master plan approach in a BOE memo and delivered an update for possible May action.
- Accepted final security audit report, developed action plan, and reviewed operational items with Principals.
- Preliminary PEGPETIA grant award received for \$22,263 (\$150k was submitted), which will fund 16 viewboards. Anticipate receiving funding in June.
- The reorganized web presence of F&O items, including consolidating budget material sections, adding a prominent location for Bids/RFPs, and adding contact information for key staff.



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Student Services

- Increase in Pre-K tuition by \$300. The Pre-K program tuition has been stagnant for at least a decade. The new union contracts have increased the cost of the program. Additionally, comparable Preschool costs in surrounding districts are either more expensive or entirely free, depending on the district. These increasing costs have made it necessary to increase the yearly tuition.

Food Services

- An anonymous donor paid off all food services delinquent balances in the District, totaling \$3,500. This same donor has extended this generosity in the past but never to this degree. Messages were sent to families who had past-due balances.

Talent, Accountability, & Human Resources

- Our Employee Exit Survey was updated to meet new legislative requirements. The exit survey includes questions about why the certified educator is ceasing employment, whether or not the certified educator is leaving the profession, the certified educator's demographics, and the areas in which the certified educator taught or served.
- The PDEC Teacher Evaluation Subcommittee continues to collaboratively draft the new evaluation plan for the next school year to align with the new State BOE Guidelines. Some shifts include eliminating ratings, differentiating by role, focusing on educator growth and agency, and reducing compliance burden.
- Human Resources is preparing for open enrollment via an online platform called *Employee Navigator*. RSD17 partnered with Anthem to create this opportunity for increased efficiency and accuracy.
- A Wellness Challenge was completed from March 10 to April 6. Over 130 staff members participated and walked over 25 million steps! Healthy snacks were provided in all District lounges, and incentives for participation and weekly challenges were awarded. This was a positive campaign to build health habits!

Curriculum Office

- State testing has begun for Spring 2024. In March, Grade 11 students took the first-ever Digital SAT, and Grade 5 students completed the NGSS science assessment. The window for testing continues through May 31, 2024.
- Jenn Beermuender organized a session for Beginning Teachers on Effective Time Management and Self-Care, presented by Judy Nacca, Andree Pias, and Jennifer Esposito.

Schools

HKHS

- HKHS Student Council's spring blood drive with the American Red Cross was held on March 15th, and 37 pints were successfully collected! This surpassed the Red Cross's goal for the event and was enough to



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save 111 lives. This brings the Student Council's total number of lives saved for the year up to 222! Dozens of volunteers from the Student Council pitched in to make it a smooth and comfortable day for all involved.

- Haddam Killingworth's JV Math Team finished the season strong with a second-place finish in the 10-school Greater Middlesex County League! Individual students Dylan Brown and Bruce Peese were honored with trophies as the first and second, respectively, highest-scoring freshmen in the entire league. Dylan also participated at the varsity level and was awarded for being the second-highest-scoring underclassman in the varsity league, as well as the top total score on both HK teams. The Varsity Math Team season continues as HKHS has qualified for the state meet on April 4th. Go, HK Math Team!
- HKHS celebrated Pi Day on 3/14 with a Pi for Pie event! Pi (Greek letter " π ") is the symbol used in mathematics to represent a constant - the ratio of the circumference of a circle to its diameter - which is approximately 3.14159. Pi Day is an annual opportunity for math enthusiasts to recite the infinite digits of Pi, talk to their friends about math, and eat pie. HKHS staff and students alike joined up to walk 3.14km around the track before enjoying their reward of pie at the finish line!
- HKTV had an amazing opportunity to visit the University of New Haven for the Fox 61 Student News Bootcamp on March 22nd! During this field trip, students experienced a college atmosphere and had the chance to learn from Fox 61 TV news professionals about TV news expectations, techniques, and goals. Our students received valuable feedback and advice from the professionals, enhancing their knowledge and skills in the field. Additionally, students got a behind-the-scenes tour of the University of New Haven's media center, which includes a TV studio and control room. It was an informative experience that broadened their understanding of media production in the real world!
- Ted Dinesmore, a local Killingworth resident, visited HKHS to share his Augmented Reality software with anatomy and physiology students! The students were able to use the equipment which allowed them to visualize and manipulate three-dimensional representations of anatomical structures, allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of the human body. The software is used at universities and colleges all over the world for students studying medicine, physical therapy, radiology, and other health care services. The software is also being used to help input information into AI systems and is helping schools screen for dyslexia.
- HK Robotics would like to thank the Lee Company for their generous donation of \$500 to the HK Robotics Club! HK Robotics is a competitive club that designs, builds, and goes head-to-head against other schools from around the state. Each year a new competition 'game' is released and new robots are built. Donations like those from Lee Co. are used to purchase new parts, motors, sensors, etc., and help with competition fees. THANK YOU LEE COMPANY, we couldn't do it without you! If you know of a business interested in supporting HK Robotics, please contact Mr. Kish at rkish@rsd17.org.
- HKHS spring sports captains traveled to North Branford High School on April 1st for a Shoreline Class Act Leadership Conference. The speakers were captains of the Yale football program. Our students had the



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opportunity to problem-solve with other Shoreline school captains on problems that all teams face, such as attendance issues, sportsmanship, and overall dedication to their sport.

- We are proud of this year's CAS Scholar Athletes, Ava Harriman and Brian Nguyen. Each year, HKHS selects one male and one female athlete whose performance in the classroom and on the field is outstanding. These students will be honored at the CAS Scholar-Athlete banquet later this month.

HKMS

- HKMS is delighted to announce and celebrate the remarkable achievement of this year's CAS Scholar Leaders, Emma Castaligioni and Trey Downing. Their exceptional dedication to academic excellence and leadership qualities have truly distinguished them. In recognition of their outstanding accomplishments, Emma and Trey will be honored at the prestigious CAS Scholar-Leader banquet scheduled for May. This recognition reflects their individual commitment to excellence and serves as a testament to the supportive environment fostered by our school community. We extend our heartfelt congratulations to Emma and Trey and express our pride in their remarkable achievements.
- Our talented students showcased their extraordinary skills and dedication in a truly remarkable performance of "Pirates of Penzance, Jr.". Through countless hours of rehearsals and unwavering commitment, our students brought the enchanting story to life with passion and flair. From the infectious energy of the ensemble numbers to the heartfelt solos that resonated with emotion, every moment on stage was a testament to their talent and hard work. We are immensely proud of our students for their outstanding achievements and for bringing such joy and entertainment to our community.
- HKMS was honored to host a truly extraordinary guest who left an indelible mark on our middle school students. John Beede, a renowned youth motivational speaker, and seasoned mountaineer who has conquered the tallest peaks on every continent, including the formidable Mount Everest, graced our campus with his inspiring presence. We are immensely grateful to John Beede for sharing his wisdom and passion with us, and we are confident that his visit will continue to positively influence and motivate our students for years to come.

HKIS

- Irene O'Connor with Channel 3 News and the Liberty Bank Surprise Squad stopped by to meet and chat with students from our Kindness Club and their amazing leader, Jodi Stupakavich! The Surprise Squad delivered baskets full of craft supplies, games, trinkets, and so much more so they could continue their mission of spreading kindness across our school and community. The kindness ninjas have been spreading joy in our school by giving compliments and spreading positivity to our community.
- We celebrated "Read Across America". Each week, students competed in literary trivia and lucky winners received a prize. Teachers became "masked readers" and students had fun guessing the mystery readers. Students were encouraged to sign up for their own library cards and complete reading challenges



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throughout the month. Creating a fun and engaging environment around reading not only helps students develop their literacy skills but also fosters a lifelong appreciation for books and learning.

BES

- Burr Elementary celebrated “March Learning Madness” which incorporated Music in our Schools month Women’s History Month and Read Across America. 2nd and 3rd graders were visited by local author and Burr parent Alyssa Hurley. Alyssa shared her new book, “A Wallop of Worries” and discussed strategies for managing worries as well as information about the process for writing and publishing her book.
- Burr select chorus students performed at the Hartford Wolf Pack game on March 16th. They sang between the second and third periods and had the opportunity to be on the jumbotron!
- Burr held its second PAWS for Mindfulness Day on March 11th. Students participated in a whole school yoga assembly to start the day and then traveled with their buddy class to different stations throughout the building.

KES

- KES celebrated Read Across America Month with a month-long celebration of the joy that books and stories can bring to us all. The theme this year was “Fly Away with Books”. The festivities began with a whole-school assembly where our State Representative Chris Aniskovich shared a story called Who You Were Made To Be by Joanna Gains. The month included various activities related to the joy of reading, including scavenger hunts, book walks, Book-or-Treating, dance parties, and a well-deserved celebration at the end.
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Board Requests Follow-Up:

1. Policy 5115: Admission to Public Schools at or Before Age Five - Procedure follow-up?

The policy will be presented in April to the policy subcommittee. The preschool did a screener with ten families. The families are getting communication to determine acceptance for kindergarten as well as what skills to work on prior to beginning in the fall.



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Social Media Posts:

Regional School District 17
April 8 at 8:47 AM · 🌐

Regional School District 17 is hiring for a Licensed Practical Nurse to support the implementation of the school district's health services program.

Apply 📄

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Learn more

Regional School District 17
March 30 at 9:10 AM · 🌐

HKIS participated in "Rock Your Socks" to celebrate World Down Syndrome Day. World Down Syndrome Day is a global awareness day that has been officially observed by the United Nations since 2012. The date for World Down Syndrome Day is 3/21 because people with Down Syndrome have 3 copies of the 21st chromosome. Since chromosomes look like socks, we "rocked our socks" to support and raise awareness of what Down Syndrome is, what it means to have Down Syndrome and how people wit... See more

Regional School District 17
March 15 at 8:39 AM · 🌐

High school Music & Drama students enjoyed a half-hour session with Dylan Armstrong who works in the informational technology field with Hartford HealthCare and is a professional musician. The presentation included post-secondary planning, music as a hobby as an adult, and ways to combine a "day job" as a business professional while acting in community theater, singing in a semi-professional or community choir, or functioning as church musician on nights and weekends. Student... See more



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