



REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 17
BOARD OF EDUCATION
MEETING MINUTES
Date March 19, 2024

A meeting of the Regional School District No. 17 Board of Education was held on March 19, 2024, in the Haddam-Killingworth High School Auditorium.

Board Member Attendance:

Board Member	Present	Absent	Board Member	Present	Absent
Prem Aithal	X		Dr. Nelson Rivera	X	
Lisa Connelly	X		Corey Roberts	X	
Jennifer Favalora	X		Suzanne Sack	X	
Shawna Goldfarb (Remote)	X		Jennifer Voegtli	X	
Hamish MacPhail	X		Dr. Kathleen Zandi	X	
Heather Pach	X				

Also Present: Superintendent Jeffrey Wihbey, Assistant Superintendent Jennifer Miller, Director Ben Whittaker, Director Dr. Aaron Puzarne, Board Administrator Sarah Kaiser, IT Manager Denis Recchia, Principal Dennis Reed, and Assistant Principal Adam Apicella

Visitors: 2

Call to Order/Opening of Meeting

Board Chair Suzanne Sack called the meeting to order at 6:26 PM. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited at the previous meeting.

Corey Robert **MOVED** and Prem Aithal **SECONDED** a motion to move items 5.F. and 6.B. after item 8 on the agenda. The motion passed unanimously by a show of hands.

Lisa Connelly **MOVED** and Corey Roberts **SECONDED** a motion to move and insert Cougar Pride and the Report from the Student Representatives when they arrive. The motion passed unanimously by a show of hands.

Public Comment

None

Superintendent's Report

The Superintendent reported to the Board on the following new items:

- Insurance Services RFP was published and was opened on 2/22 with three responses. Evaluation is being processed to bring it to BOE.
- Curriculum Coordinators presented mid-year data to the District-wide Data Team in January. District-level and school-level data were shared for all areas of ELA and math K-12. The data process was followed and the next steps were determined.
- HKHS announced the top scholar from the Class of 2024. The valedictorian of the Class of 2024 is Liza Murphy, and the salutatorian is Ava Harriman.
- HKMS increased communication regarding parent-teacher communication and clarified that conferences are available to everyone. Most of the slots were 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 excited about the March Spring musical, The Pirates of Penzance. The students have been working very hard with Mrs. Jones and Mrs. Fagan.
- 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 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.

The Superintendent provided follow-up information on previous inquiries from the Board.

Healthy Food Certification

Director Whittaker requested a vote for the annual participation in the Healthy Food Certification. Board Chair Sack read the following motions to the Board for a vote.

Motion #1: Required vote for participation in the healthy food option of HFC

Regional School District 17 BOE will participate in the healthy food option of C.G.S. Section 10-215f and follow the Connecticut Nutrition Standards (CNS). Pursuant to C.G.S. Section 10-215f, and certifies that all food items offered for sale to students in the schools under its jurisdiction, and not exempted from the Connecticut Nutrition Standards published by the Connecticut State Department of Education, will comply with the Connecticut Nutrition Standards during the period of July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025. This certification shall include all food offered for sale to students separately from reimbursable meals at all times and from all sources, including but not limited to school stores, vending machines, school cafeterias, culinary programs, and any fundraising activities on school premises sponsored by the school or non-school organizations and groups.

Dr. Nelson Rivera **MOVED** and Prem Aithal **SECONDED** to accept this motion. The vote passed unanimously by voice vote.

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
Jennifer Favalora	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A	Suzanne Sack	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A
Shawna Goldfarb (R)	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A	Jennifer Voegtli	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A
Hamish MacPhail	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A	Dr. Kathleen Zandi	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A
Heather Pach	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A		

Motion #2: Required vote to allow food exemptions

Regional School District 17 will allow the sale to students of food items that do not meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards provided that the following conditions are met: 1) the sale is in connection with an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on the weekend; 2) the sale is at the location of the event; and 3) the food items are not sold from a vending machine or school store. An “event” is an occurrence that involves more than just a regularly scheduled practice, meeting, or extracurricular activity. For example, soccer games, school plays, and interscholastic debates are events but soccer practices, play rehearsals, and debate team meetings are not. The “regular school day” is the period from midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day. “Location” means where the event is being held and must be the same place as the food sales.

Dr. Kathy Zandi **MOVED** and Lisa Connelly **SECONDED** to accept this motion. The vote passed unanimously by voice vote.

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
Jennifer Favalora	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A	Suzanne Sack	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A
Shawna Goldfarb (R)	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A	Jennifer Voegtli	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A
Hamish MacPhail	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A	Dr. Kathleen Zandi	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A
Heather Pach	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A		

Motion #3: Required Vote to allow beverage exemptions

Regional School District 17 will allow the sale to students of beverages not listed in Section 10-221q of the Connecticut General Statutes provided that the following conditions are met: 1) the sale is in connection with an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on

the weekend; 2) the sale is at the location of the event; and 3) the beverages are not sold from a vending machine or school store. An “event” is an occurrence that involves more than just a regularly scheduled practice, meeting, or extracurricular activity. The “school day” is the period from midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day. “Location” means where the event is being held and must be the same place as the beverage sales.

Prem Aithal **MOVED** and Corey Roberts **SECONDED** to accept this motion. The vote passed unanimously by voice vote.

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
Jennifer Favalora	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A	Suzanne Sack	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A
Shawna Goldfarb (R)	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A	Jennifer Voegtli	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A
Hamish MacPhail	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A	Dr. Kathleen Zandi	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A
Heather Pach	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A		

The Cougar Pride students, parents, and Mrs. Murphy arrived at 6:45 pm for the Cougar Pride presentation. Principal Reed introduced the students and Mrs. Murphy to the Board. The students shared their experiences. Mrs. Murphy and Principal Reed discussed the KES's growth since the program began.

The Cougar Pride participants and parents left the meeting.

2024-2025 School Calendar Revised Second Read and Board Approval

Prem Aithal **MOVED** and Corey Roberts **SECONDED** to approve the revised 2024-2025 RSD17 School calendar. The vote passed unanimously by voice vote.

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
Jennifer Favalora	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A	Suzanne Sack	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A
Shawna Goldfarb (R)	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A	Jennifer Voegtli	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A
Hamish MacPhail	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A	Dr. Kathleen Zandi	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A

Heather Pach	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A		
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The student representatives, Michael Perry and Madison Moriarty, arrived at the meeting at 6:53 pm.

Second Read and Board Action on Seven (7) Policies and Five (5) Items of Information

- 2140-Retention and Disposition of Records and Information
- 5131.914-Policy Regarding Student Use of the District's Computer Systems and Internet Safety
- 5131.92-Use of Private Technology Devices by Students
- 5163-Policy to Improve Completion Rates of the Federal Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)
- 6145-Enrollment in an Advanced Course or Program and Challenging Curriculum
- 6148-Equitable Identification of Gifted and Talented Students
- 9323-Construction and Posting of Agenda

Items of Information

- 2140 R-Administrative Regulations Regarding Retention and Disposition of Records and Information
- 5118.1 R-Administrative Regulations Regarding Homeless Children and Youth
- 5131.914 R-Administrative Regulations Regarding Student Use of the District's Computer Systems and Internet Safety
- 5163 R-Administrative Regulations to Improve Completion Rates of the Federal Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)
- 6145 R-Administrative Regulations for Enrollment in an Advanced Course or Program and Challenging Curriculum

Hamish MacPhail **MOVED** and Dr. Nelson Rivera **SECONDED** a motion to approve the policies as presented. The vote passed unanimously by voice vote.

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
Jennifer Favalora	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A	Suzanne Sack	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A
Shawna Goldfarb (R)	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A	Jennifer Voegtli	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A
Hamish MacPhail	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A	Dr. Kathleen Zandi	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A
Heather Pach	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A		

Student Representative Report

Madison Moriarty reported on the start of spring sports at HKHS. The athletics department partnered with HKYFS on a program called substance-free athletics to protect your game. She noted that March 27th was senior portfolio day, and Juniors will be taking the SATs.

Michael Perry reported to the Board that March 19th was Middle School Band Day, during which 8th-graders came to the high school to play in large groups in the auditorium and smaller ensembles. He noted that the college fair is coming up. Lastly, he reported that several clubs have started holding fundraisers.

The student representatives and Assistant Principal Apicella left the meeting.

Consent Agenda

- Enrollment Report
- Personnel Report
- Approval of Revised Minutes from the February 13, 2024, Board of Education Meeting
- Approval of Minutes from the February 27, 2024, Board of Education Meeting (Superintendent's Presentation)
- Approval of Minutes from the February 27, 2024, Board of Education Meeting (Budget Workshop)
- Approval of Minutes from the March 5, 2024, Board of Education Meeting (Budget Workshop)
- Approval of Minutes from the March 5, 2024, Board of Education Meeting (Joint)
- Approval of Minutes from the March 12, 2024, Board of Education Meeting (Budget Workshop)

Jennifer Favalora **MOVED** and Corey Roberts **SECONDED** a motion to approve the consent agenda as stated on the agenda. The vote passed unanimously by voice vote.

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
Jennifer Favalora	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A	Suzanne Sack	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A
Shawna Goldfarb (R)	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A	Jennifer Voegtli	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A
Hamish MacPhail	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A	Dr. Kathleen Zandi	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A
Heather Pach	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A		

Michele Loso arrived at the meeting remotely.

Acceptance of the FY23 Financial Audit Report

Prem Aithal introduced Michele Loso from Seward and Monde and gave an overview of the audit presentation to the Finance and Facilities committee.

Michele Loso of Seward and Monde gave the Board a summary of the district audit and its process.

Prem Aithal added that he wanted to thank Ms. Loso and Mr. Switaj of Seward and Monde and Director Whittaker for their hard work.

Prem Aithal and Director Whittaker spoke about the department's continued work and processes through the end of the fiscal year and into fiscal year 2024. The subcommittee recommended accepting the audit's findings.

Prem Aithal **MOVED** and Hamish MacPhail **SECONDED** a motion to accept and approve the full year 2023 Financial Audit conducted by Seward and Monde. The vote passed unanimously by voice vote.

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
Jennifer Favalora	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A	Suzanne Sack	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A
Shawna Goldfarb (R)	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A	Jennifer Voegtli	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A
Hamish MacPhail	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A	Dr. Kathleen Zandi	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A
Heather Pach	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A		

Michele Loso left the meeting.

Master Plan Update

Superintendent Wihbey and Director Whittaker provided the Board with an update regarding the master plan and a memorandum from Arcadis with information to assist the Board in the next steps. The Board discussed phase options and possible timeline options.

Personnel & Evaluation Subcommittee

Corey Roberts reported that the committee discussed staff banding, the Superintendent's mid-year evaluation, and the upcoming Nurses' negotiations.

Curriculum Subcommittee

Dr. Kathy Zandi reported that HKYFS presented the results of the Youth Voices Count survey administered to high school students to the committee. HKYFS has scheduled a presentation at the middle school for anyone who wants to attend. The committee received updates on the If You Love It Teach It course, the Internship program, extracurricular activities, the instructional vision, and the curriculum council.

Finance and Facilities Subcommittee

Prem Aithal reported from the finance perspective that Seward and Monde presented the audit findings to the committee. The committee reviewed the monthly reporting.

He also wanted to thank the Administration for their work during the workshop process.

Shawna Goldfarb reported information on the scheduling of the summer work, the high school HVAC system, and the security audit update from the facility's perspective.

Policy Subcommittee

The committee is meeting on April 4th.

Communications Subcommittee

Lisa Connelly reported that Superintendent Wihbey spoke with the committee on upcoming community speaking engagements and short articles written with information and accolades for each school. The committee will also set up the budget FAQs and an article for HK Now.

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Jennifer Favalora reported that they approved the Educator Diversity Plan at their last meeting. They also worked on a regional course where students from several schools will work with one teacher.

HK Youth and Family Services

Heather Pach reported that HKYFS launched the substance-free athletics program. She also updated the Board on upcoming events on the HKYFS website, such as Girls with a Purpose and Gearing Up for Middle School.

HK Recreation Department

Jennifer Voegtli reported that the committee met on the 28th and is looking forward to an update on the Master Plan. They also spoke about several new programs that they are offering.

Haddam Board of Selectmen

Heather Pach reported that she presented the committee with the Board's summary report and there were no questions. The meeting was focused on the referendum they held.

Killingworth Board of Selectmen

The meeting was primarily focused on their budget.

Support Services Association Contract

Prem Aithal **MOVED** and Corey Roberts **SECONDED** a motion to go into an executive session for the purposes of contract negotiation for the Support Services Association contract including the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent. The motion passed by a show of hands.

The Board entered an executive session at 7:51 pm.

The Board ended the executive session at 8:06 pm.

Prem Aithal **MOVED** and Corey Roberts **SECONDED** a motion to approve the contract agreement between the RSD17 Board of Education and the Regional School District No. 17 Support Services Association covering the period between July 2023 and June 30, 2026.

The motion passed by voice vote.

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
Jennifer Favalora	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A	Suzanne Sack	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A
Shawna Goldfarb (R)	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A	Jennifer Voegtli	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A
Hamish MacPhail	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A	Dr. Kathleen Zandi	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A
Heather Pach	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A		

Board Chair Sack thanked the Support Services Association for negotiating with the Board and hopes that it is a representation of mutual agreement of a good settlement.

Corey Roberts **MOVED** and Prem Aithal **SECONDED** a motion to go back into executive session inviting the Superintendent to discuss the mid-year evaluation and personnel matter.

The motion passed by a show of hands. The Board entered an executive session at 8:08 pm.

The Superintendent left the executive session at 8:29 pm.

The executive session ended at 9:33 pm.

Adjournment

Board Chair Sack adjourned the meeting at 9:33 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Kaiser

Administrative Assistant to the Board of Education

Approval: _____ Date: _____
Dr. Kathleen Zandi, Board Secretary