



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

September 2024

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

Department Updates

Finance

- Director Pierce has established a bi-weekly meeting with Finance, HR, and Payroll to provide efficiencies and reduce payroll errors.

Operations

- The Mold Remediation Project in a contained area at HKHS began on August 27, 2024, and is anticipated to be successfully completed by the end of September.

Student Services

- The administrative team was presented with IEP quality training through the SPDG math grant.
- The department is in the process of training an Orton Gillingham Fellow so we can provide comprehensive reading interventions and train staff in Orton Gillingham methodologies.

Food Services

- CSDE has approved the 2024-2025 HFC (Healthy Food Certification) Application.

Talent, Accountability, & Human Resources

- 100% of certified staff positions were filled for the start of the school year.
- The new educator and leader evaluation plan was rolled out across the district. Building administrators shared a slideshow created through the Personnel Development and Evaluation Committee (PDEC) at staff meetings.

Curriculum Office

- New Teacher Orientation was held on August 21st-22nd. Teachers enjoyed the opportunity to meet other new teachers and the HK community. They benefited from time for technology, understanding the culture, information from human resources and training on Marzano's New Art and Science of Teaching.
- August 26th was the first day of professional development for teachers including sessions about the new educator support plan, data, goals, SPDG math grant, and other focus areas for the year.



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- Curriculum Coordinators helped ensure a smooth transition back to school for students within our respective buildings and across the district.

Schools

HKHS

- HK Fine Arts is off to a great start! Our HK Drama Club will produce "Our Town" on November 15 & 16 with a cross-curricular connection to the English Department, which will teach the play in certain courses which culminates in students attending the show for an in-school performance. Auditions are Sept 9th.
- This summer, for the first time per CIAC, HKHS coaches were allowed to work directly with their student-athletes throughout the summer. Coaches could work with students two times a week for two hours a session. The high school had many teams that participated successfully. Student-athletes and coaches were grateful for the opportunity to stay connected and look forward to continue doing this in collaboration with facilities next summer as well.

HKMS

- The school year is in full swing, and both teachers and students are acclimating to the new structures and systems we have put in place. While we are making some adjustments along the way, there is already positive feedback about how quickly the time is passing, and it's clear that chunking and student engagement are effective.

Parents have been reaching out with questions, ideas, and many commendations, with some expressing surprise at how much their children enjoy the new schedule. To ensure we capture comprehensive feedback, a formal survey will be conducted in November to gather input on how these changes impact the school community.

- We are excited to announce the full implementation of the Wit & Wisdom curriculum in grades 6-8 at Haddam-Killingworth Middle School. This comprehensive ELA program deepens students' understanding of complex texts and fosters critical thinking. Additionally, our new teaming model allows for weekly grade-level co-planning, ensuring teachers can collaborate effectively to meet the diverse needs of our students while aligning instruction across content areas.

HKIS

- By incorporating elements of the Responsive Classroom approach, we have introduced a set of succinct and clear rules that have been instrumental in guiding our students and ensuring a seamless start to the school year. This integration has fostered a positive and organized environment where expectations are clear and behaviors are reinforced consistently.



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- Over the summer, teachers dedicated themselves to crafting curriculum and developing innovative materials designed to elevate the learning experience. Their hard work and commitment have resulted in fresh, engaging resources that can be integrated into classroom instruction.

BES

- Our school year is off to a great start! Students and staff alike are excited to be back at school, and everyone is getting back into their routines and contributing to our positive school climate. We had our first whole school Town Meeting and introduced our character trait of the month: respect.
- Our newest class of kindergarten students will be participating in their “Ringing In” ceremony later this month. This ceremony symbolizes the start of their journey as part of the Burr Family.

KES

- The staff at KES took a very collaborative approach to building school-wide and class-level schedules this year, resulting in schedules that everyone is excited about. How we use our time while in school directly impacts student learning opportunities, and we are excited about ours as we begin this year.
- Our new kindergarten students transitioned very well to KES and were immediately welcomed by all the returning students in a whole school gathering where they were introduced to the “KES WAY.”

Board Requests Follow-Up:

From Legislative Update:

Section 9 of the Act delays by two years, until the graduating class of 2027, the requirement that each student complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (“FAFSA”) or complete a waiver for such requirement in order to graduate. Section 10 of the Act exempts from this requirement students who (1) are enrolled in an incorporated or endowed high school or academy and (2) hold an F-1 visa.

- [Policy 5163 FAFSA](#)

Students graduating in 2025 and beyond are required to have satisfied one of the following prior to graduation:

- (1) completed a FAFSA;
- (2) for students without legal immigration status, completed and submitted to a public institution of higher education an application for institutional financial aid; or
- (3) completed a waiver of completion of the FAFSA and/or financial aid application, as applicable, on a form prescribed by the Commissioner of Education, signed by the student’s parent or guardian or signed by the student if the student is eighteen or older.

On and after March 15 of each school year, a principal, school counselor, teacher, or other certified educator may complete the waiver on behalf of any student who has not satisfied the above requirements if such principal, school counselor, teacher, or other certified educator affirms that they have made a good faith effort to contact the parent/guardian or student about completion of such applications.



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