



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

November 2024

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



Message from the Superintendent

It is with great excitement that I notify you that for the 2nd time in three years, both Burr Elementary and Killingworth Elementary have achieved **School of Distinction** honors from the CT State Department of Education (CSDE). Both schools were named for achieving in the top 10% of all schools in CT on the CSDE Accountability Index (AI).

KES was dually recognized for distinction because of improvement and high achievement. Very few schools are recognized in multiple categories.

I can't stress how much hard work went into these achievements by our students, staff, and families at both schools.

Because Burr has been recognized as distinguished for 3 years in a row, I have reached out to CSDE regarding potential recognition for national Blue Ribbon Status. Each year CSDE nominates 4 schools from CT for the honor.

Both the **boys and girls Cross Country** teams at HKHS have won the **Class SS State Championship** this year. I will be bringing them to the December Board meeting to recognize this achievement.

Department Updates

Finance

- Awarded \$21,781.60 for NSLP Equipment Assistance Competitive Grant Program
- Awarded \$78,473.75 for the Paraeducator Subsidy Grant Program

Operations

- 16 brand new buses have been included in the route rotation following the STA contract.
- The first meeting of the District Technology Committee took place, and they are looking forward to developing short- and long-term technology plans for the district.
- The Central Office Security upgrade is complete.

Student Services

- Student services worked with support staff from around the district to develop new measures to increase behavioral interventions within the district.



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- The Student Services Department has worked with related services to streamline the reports presented at PPT meetings.

Food Services

- Food service employee Chris Judd will be retiring in December after working at RSD17 for 28 years.

Talent, Accountability, & Human Resources

- RSD17 worked with Nutmeg Pharmacy to hold Vaccine Clinics for staff. 49 staff attended the Flu Clinic, and 30 attended the Covid Clinic.
- The November Central Office [Newsletter](#) was shared with all staff.
- Updated forms for the Educator and Leader Professional Growth Plan were completed and are live on the evaluation platform.

Curriculum Office

- At the October and November Professional Development days, the district received training on Marzano research-based practices and Wit and Wisdom PD sessions.
- Kindergarten teachers are completing the Kindergarten Entrance Inventory for the state as they do every fall. This provides the state with information regarding kindergarten readiness.

Schools

HKHS

- HKHS is exploring how to meet the changing needs of families better and has surveyed parents as to the preferred format of informational events (e.g. in-person, virtual, synchronous/asynchronous, etc). We changed the format of 8th Grade Parent Preview Night to a video that features student voice, highlights of our program, and a full collection of photos and videos that help provide our 8th-grade community with a fuller picture of what it means to be an HKHS Cougar. To enjoy the video, click here: [8th Grade Parent Preview](#)
- On Saturday, October 26th, the HK Boys and Girls Cross Country teams won the Class SS State Championship race at Wickham Park in Manchester. They were the only school out of the entire state of CT to win both the boys and girls team title and also had the most combined boys and girls All-State runners out of any program in the state! The girls' team won their 6th State championship in the last 9 years, dating back to 2015, and it was their 7th State championship in program history. For the boys, this was the Cougars' first State championship since 2021 and their 12th State title in program history! At State Opens, the girls team came in 5th and the boys in 12th. Girls qualified for New England for the second time in program history, and HK is the only Shoreline school ever to qualify.



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HKMS

- Our first Fun Flex Day, initially envisioned as "Cougar Fridays," was a success. The afternoon began with a Town Meeting celebrating student achievements and bringing staff and students together through conversations and games, followed by advisory sessions—6th grade focused on following directions, while 7th and 8th grades focused on goal setting. The highlight was the Fun Flex period, where students enjoyed activities from cupcake decorating and art projects to intramurals and socializing spaces. With overwhelmingly positive staff feedback, Fun Flex Days are set to become a regular part of our calendar, reinforcing our commitment to student engagement and community building.
- HKMS is proud to partner with our local Veterans' organization for a monthly retired flag collection. This initiative allows our school community to honor veterans by respectfully retiring worn flags and fostering civic pride. We look forward to strengthening this partnership, connecting students with veterans, and instilling values of respect and gratitude.

HKIS

- Using new VR merge cubes and iPads, students had the chance to bring science concepts to life, explore interactive simulations, and virtually travel to different parts of the world. These immersive programs aligned with the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) for 4th and 5th graders, enhancing their understanding of key science concepts.
- October also featured an Extreme Science Assembly led by The Science Wizard, where students engaged in an exciting show that reinforced scientific principles and the value of responsibility in a fun, memorable way. Students learned about Tesla coils and witnessed the sparks and electrical energy that these powerful devices create. A vortex cannon showcased flying rings of fog, giving students a visual of air pressure in action. The highlight for many was the Van de Graaff generator, which generated mini lightning bolts and even gave a few lucky volunteers an electrifying new hairstyle!
- Our October culminated with a holiday-themed "field day" afternoon run by our HKIMS PTO volunteers as we celebrated Halloween and our spirit week. The kids had a great time with their classmates competing together in their costumes.

BES

- Burr students enjoyed a cultural arts presentation from Carnival Trio. Students listened to steel drum music while learning about the cultures of the Caribbean and the important role that music plays in their lives.
- The 3rd grade yearbook committee is up and running. The class representatives are in the process of collecting votes for the theme for this year's yearbook and will present the winning design at our next Town Meeting.

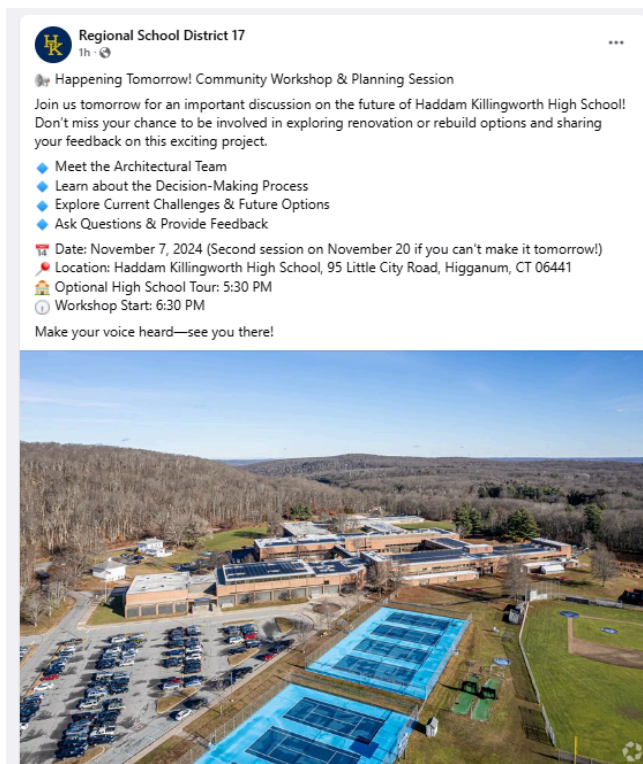


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KES

- We welcomed the Killingworth Volunteer Fire Department this month. They spent the day with us, teaching us the importance of having evacuation plans in our homes. They dressed in full gear to demonstrate to students that they were not scary while in uniform. The students even got to spend time on the trucks. The best part of the day was that a couple of former KES students are now members of the fire department and were tremendous presenters, giving back to their elementary school.
- SEL instruction is off to a great start. Up to this point, all grade levels have focused on the skills needed for learning, including learning to listen, focusing attention, following directions, and using self-talk to stay on task. Next, we will be getting into building empathy by teaching students to identify feelings, respect different perspectives, and show compassion.

Social Media Posts:





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Regional School District 17
5 days ago · 🌐

Regional School District #17: Community Workshop & Planning Sessions

Join us for an important discussion on the potential renovation or rebuild of Haddam Killingworth High School! This is a chance for our community to get involved, learn more, and share input on this exciting project.

- ◆ Meet the architectural team
- ◆ Learn about the decision-making process
- ◆ Review the challenges of the current building and explore future possibilities
- ◆ Ask questions and provide feedback

📅 **Dates:** November 7 & November 20, 2024 (Both sessions will cover the same content)
📍 **Location:** Haddam Killingworth High School, 95 Little City Road, Higganum, CT 06441
🕒 **Optional High School Tour:** 5:30 PM
🕒 **Workshop Start:** 6:30 PM

Your voice matters! We hope to see you there!

**Regional School District #17
COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS
& PLANNING SESSIONS**

Over the past two years, the Board of Education has been working through a master planning process with input from the community. The Master Plan serves as a long-term strategy to repair, rebuild, or replace the aging school buildings in RSD17. As part of this plan, the Board has chosen to focus on the high school as the first major project. Join us to discuss the potential renovation or rebuild of Haddam Killingworth High School.

Two Workshop Dates:
Both workshops will cover the same content.

- 📅 **November 7 & November 20**
6:30 PM
- 📅 **Optional High School Tour**
5:30 PM (Before Workshop Start)
- 📍 **Haddam Killingworth High School Auditorium**
95 Little City Road, Higganum, CT

MEET THE ARCHITECTURAL TEAM | **LEARN ABOUT THE DECISION MAKING PROCESS** | **REVIEW THE CHALLENGES OF THE CURRENT BUILDING** | **PARTICIPATE & PROVIDE INPUT TO THE STUDY TEAM**



Regional School District 17
October 24 at 9:12 AM · 🌐

🌟 Our fifth-graders had an incredible field trip to the Pequot Museum, diving deep into the history and culture of the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation and other Native American tribes. Students learned about the museum's mission to preserve, protect, and share the powerful stories of Native American peoples from the past to the present. What a fascinating experience! 🙌



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