



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

December 2024

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



Message from the Superintendent

Department Updates

Finance

- FY26 Budget meetings have begun with administrators.

Operations

- New BES security cameras and wiring were installed.
- Snow plows and sanders were installed on maintenance trucks and ready for the winter season. The maintenance team did a fantastic job with the year's first snowstorm.

Student Services

- Principals from HKIS, BES, KES, and the Director of Student Services participated in a panel that discussed cell phone and social media use among young students.

Food Services

- All RSD17 schools passed the annual Health & Safety Inspections administered by the Area Health District.
- Taste testing for BES & KES was conducted with glowing feedback from students. Samples included: turkey sausage, egg and cheese bites; Texas Toms (hot dog w/ turkey bacon and cheese); pear & blueberry smoothies; and roasted beets.

Talent, Accountability, & Human Resources

- The fall Wellness Challenge was completed. 132 RSD17 staff participated, walking 31,094,773 steps, equivalent to 12,759 miles! Over 70% of participants met or exceeded the challenge move goal. Positive feedback was received on the snacks and incentives.
- HR is preparing for the changes to the CT Paid Sick Leave law that will take effect in January 2025.
- A review of the Frontline Time and Attendance system is underway to ensure that this technology is being best utilized.



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Curriculum Office

- HKHS was recently notified that the \$18,730 Perkins 2025 grant has been approved. The purchases made through the grant will support various Career and Technical Education programs. Some items include a camera, microphone, table saw, router, power tools, refrigerator, robotics game field, six field trips, and three educator training sessions.
- The remaining tutoring sessions from the High Dosage Tutoring Grant are being used for students in grades 6-8 for virtual learning in math that supports their classroom instruction. The grant ends on 12/20/24.
- On December 12th, TEAM Mentors will hold a session to provide new teachers with feedback on their TEAM reflection papers.

Schools

HKHS

- The 36th Annual HKTV Holiday Telethon is almost upon us! It will be held on Friday, December 20th, from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m., benefiting Youth & Family Services of Haddam Killingworth. Community members are encouraged to tune in via Comcast channel 18, Frontier channel 6090, or by visiting <http://holidayshow.rsd17.org/>. **Last year's incredible event, which is entirely student-run, raised over \$15,000!**
- Last month, HKTV and Journalism & Broadcasting students visited NBC Studios in West Hartford to explore career opportunities. This hands-on excursion not only inspired budding journalists but it also provided invaluable insights into the intricate workings of a professional newsroom. Students observed a live working studio, taking in the fast-paced environment of the newsroom, control room, and production studio, as well as meeting industry professionals to learn from their experiences.

HKMS

- HKMS's Drone Club meets once a week for 1.5 hours to practice the skills necessary to compete in the Aerial Drone Competitions. Our first competition is at Woodstock Academy on Saturday, February 1, 2025. HKMS is hosting the second competition the following week, Saturday, February 8, 2025. We have 16 teams registered, including teams from Connecticut, Massachusetts, and New Jersey. Here is a link to watch a short 2-minute video explanation of this year's event: [Aerial Drone Competition 2024-25](#)

HKIS

- Students at HKIS worked together to support the Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO), raising an impressive total of \$19,995 between the middle school and intermediate school. This effort highlights the dedication and generosity of our student body and their families. We are fortunate to have a PTO



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that plays an important role by funding school-wide assemblies, subsidizing field trips, and organizing fun events for students. The fundraising efforts culminated in a vibrant and memorable reward, a color run!

- Our HKIS student council demonstrated leadership and compassion by organizing a Thanksgiving food drive to support local food banks. The response from our school community was overwhelming, resulting in donations to provide meals for approximately 100 families during the holiday season. A special thank you to Mrs. Amaio and Mrs. Agro for facilitating this initiative.
- The School Improvement Team has been evaluating school wide practices and looking to align with Marzano's framework for best practices. Recently, the team collaborated with a representative from Marzano Resources to analyze the data from the Level 1 survey results. This process allowed us to identify key areas of strength and opportunities for growth within our school.
- On November 21, 22, and 23, 49 HKIS students performed in "How I Became a Pirate" Younger @Part under the direction of Katie Jones (HKMS) and Adrienne Foret (BES). The show was based on the book "How I Became a Pirate" written by Melinda Long and illustrated by David Shannon. The performance featured catchy songs, humorous moments, and an exciting pirate adventure, all brought to life by the talented young performers. Their performances were the result of 11 weeks of rehearsals where they rehearsed singing, acting, and dancing. They were joined by 19 middle school and high school students who joined as tech crew, light operators, and one student even played drums in the pit orchestra. The students especially enjoyed their dress rehearsal where they were able to perform for the BES and KES students and teachers!

BES

- Burr students were excited that the Nutrition Ambassadors program was back up and running this year. Student representatives were taste testers for potential menu items for the next month. Students were honest with their feedback, and several items received two thumbs up, making the cut for being added to the menu. The current group has participated in 2 tastings, and a new group of students will take over in January.

KES

- Last month, we were proud to host our annual Veteran's Day Program. We had well over 30 veterans in attendance (all with a connection to our school in some way). The Veterans were treated with musical presentations by all the students and a formal flag folding ceremony from our 3rd graders.



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Social Media Posts:





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