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

February 2025

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

Department Updates

Finance

- The Fiscal Year 2026 (FY26) budget is in the final stages of development, and preparations are underway for the Superintendent's proposed budget presentation, scheduled for February 25, 2025.

Operations

- The district's Technology Committee has successfully concluded its second meeting of the year, focusing on key initiatives, including the development of a comprehensive District Software Database, the refinement of Technology Policies, and the exploration of Bulk Purchasing opportunities to optimize resources. Additionally, the Committee has established a subcommittee to study and assess the potential applications of artificial intelligence (AI) within the district.
- Facilities Manager John Converse has established monthly meetings with school principals to address various topics, including maintenance and custodial concerns, updates to the Safety Binder, the corrective action plan from the Safety Audit, and the summer project priority list.
- The Town of Killingworth and its contractors have scheduled a mandatory site visit for the Point-of-Entry Treatment System at KES.
- Regulatory Compliance Update - We are currently managing the online NetDMR Subscriber Agreement and permit process with the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CT DEEP).
- Lastly, the EV Charging Installation Status for RSD 17 has been updated, with the Haddam-Killingworth High School (HKHS) site withdrawn from the project.

Food Services

- The district has received the second round of funding for the Local Foods for Schools Initiative, totaling $8,430. A designated coordinator has been assigned to assist in identifying local farms willing to participate in the program and to ensure the funds are utilized by the end of the year.

- Food Service Director Shettleworth has successfully completed the annual On-Site Monitoring for all schools. This internal audit ensures compliance with meal counting and recording procedures required for reimbursement.

Talent, Accountability, & Human Resources

- The February Central Office newsletter was sent out to all staff.

- We are pleased to onboard the new Comptroller.

- Administrators are completing certified staff mid-year conferences utilizing the new Growth and Evaluation plan on our online platform.

- 2024 tax forms are being processed.

Curriculum Office

- The Middle School teachers continued their work with Literacy How on January 29, 30, 31st with a focus on explicit vocabulary instruction aligned with the Science of Reading.
- The Chemical Hygiene Plan for science, art, and tech ed labs has been recently updated.

Schools

HKHS

- HKHS Drama club is pleased to announce our spring musical: "The Drowsy Chaperone" is a Tony Award-winning musical that delights audiences with its wit, charm, and a nostalgic nod to the golden age of musical theater. It premiered at the Goodspeed Opera House in 2006 where its dazzling humor and heartfelt homage to classic musicals earned rave reviews. This success launched it onto the Broadway stage where it became a smash hit, winning five Tony Awards, including Best Original Score and Best Book of a Musical.
- HKHS hosted its first Math Honor Society induction ceremony in January. Thirteen students were inducted into Mu Theta Alpha chapter, which was launched with the support of junior Tetsu Imai and math teacher Wendy Adamczyk. In addition to good citizenship, membership requires a cumulative GPA of 3.5 or higher and an A- or better in all math classes through their advanced study.
- Students in our internship program are doing well. So far this year, ten students have completed (or are in the process of completing) 12 internships, with another in the works at the time of this report. Interns have worked or observed at sites from New Haven to Old Saybrook. They have engaged in:

    - Clinical Engineering at Yale New Haven Hospital
    - 2 Nursing at Middlesex Hospital
    - Public Health at the Connecticut River Area Health District
    - Assisting with Fire Department physical fitness testing at CertifyFit
    - Observing Mechanical Engineering at The Lee Company

    Currently, we have students working and observing at:

    - Higganum Veterinary Clinic
    - Middlesex Health Pregnancy and Birth Center
    - HK Recreation Department
    - HK Youth and Family Services
    - Burr District School - Kindergarten
    - MissionCIT Training to become an EMT

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HKMS

- On Tuesday, February 4, all students will take the SBAC Interim Math Assessment instead of the iReady Math benchmark. This assessment will provide valuable feedback to teachers and give students exposure to the upcoming state SBAC test this spring.
- On Thursday, February 6, students will take the iReady Reading benchmark, which will help teachers assess individual student growth so far this school year.
- HKMS is very excited about an upcoming assembly sponsored by the PTO. On February 6, we will welcome the Backtrack Vocals.

HKIS

- HKIS fourth and fifth-grade students recently completed the Interim Comprehensive Assessment (ICA) on the SBAC assessment portal. Following the assessment, math teachers engaged in a structured data analysis process to evaluate student performance and determine targeted next steps for instructional improvement.
- Teachers reviewed i-Ready diagnostic data in reading, focusing on identifying trends and celebrating student achievements. Many students demonstrated outstanding growth and progress toward their individual learning goals. We are also excited to welcome Adrianna Leoni, our new language arts interventionist, who will be working with small groups of students on their comprehension and fluency skills as identified through our classroom and district assessments.
- The 4th and 5th grade chorus recently performed their winter concert for the community. Students introduced each song and sang beautifully, showcasing their hard work and dedication. The event was a wonderful celebration of music and talent. Congratulations to Mr. Tedeschi and all chorus members on an outstanding performance!
- In other music news, the HKIS Select Chorus just started as an after-school club. 15 students were chosen through an audition process. We are excited to offer this new musical opportunity for our talented students.

BES

- All BES classes met their goal of demonstrating our character trait of academic risk-taking throughout the month of January. We were excited to recognize all classes at our Town Meeting.
- BES just completed all of our mid-year assessments with students and is very pleased with the progress students are demonstrating across all academic areas.

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KES

- KES will be celebrating the 100th day of school on February 5th. This is a special milestone for our students, marking 100 days of learning, growing, and making memories together. All of the classrooms engage in fun activities centered around the number 100, reinforcing important math skills and celebrating all we have accomplished so far this year.
- The school-wide theme for the month of February is perseverance. We want to help our students understand that it is okay to struggle—we all face challenges, and growth happens in those moments.

Board Requests Follow-Up:

1. **Increasing Educator Diversity Plan**

   The BOE approved the Increasing Educator Diversity Plan in April 2024. The plan was included in the BOE packet. The BOE also delegated authority to the Superintendent to update the plan with feedback provided by the state.

   Here is the approved motion:
   Hamish MacPhail **MOVED** and Lisa Connelly **SECONDED** a motion that the Board of Education approve the Increasing Educator Diversity Plan pursuant to Public Act 23-167 and move further that the Board delegate authority to the Superintendent of Schools to update and revise the Increasing Educator Diversity Plan, as needed, including in accordance with any feedback provided by the Connecticut State Department of Education.

2. **Transportation Inquiry Regarding the Roundabouts in Haddam**

   The bus company reported to us today that they have not had an issue with vehicles getting over the bridge or through the roundabout with the buses in Haddam.

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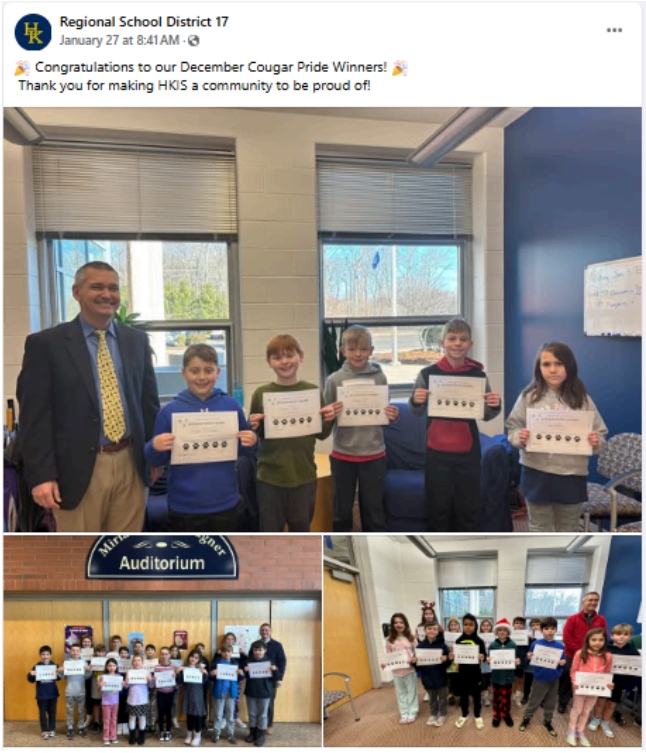
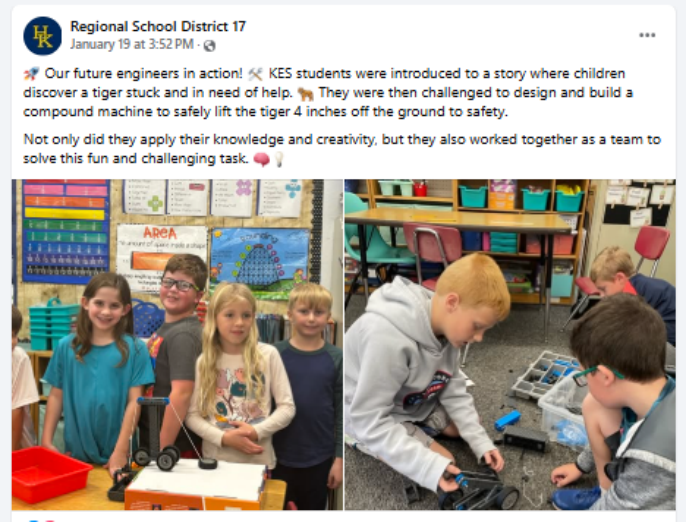
Social Media Posts:





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