

**REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 17**  
**BOARD OF EDUCATION – EDUCATION SESSION**  
**February 28, 2017**

*A meeting of the Regional School District No. 17 Board of Education was held on February 28, 2017 in the Haddam-Killingworth Middle School Media Center. Board of Education Chair, Joel D'Angelo, called the meeting to order at 7:32 PM.*

**Members Present:** Kathy Brown, Maura Wallin, Eric Couture, Susan Dean, Joanne Nesti, Suzanne Sack, Sue Twachtman, and Joel D'Angelo

**Members Absent:** Dan Chase, Jeannie Young, Neal Perron

**Also Present:** Superintendent of Schools, Howard Thiery, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, Dr. Holly Hageman, and Board Clerk, Jamie Sciascia

**Visitors:** 6

**Call to Order/Opening of Meeting**

*Board of Education Chair, Joel D'Angelo called the meeting to order at 7:32 PM. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.*

**Public Comment**

*None*

**Board Liaison Reports**

**A. Curriculum Council Update**

*Dr. Holly Hageman updated the Board on how every school (elementary, middle and high school) reported being very productive in terms of professional development work and school wide community activities. Also, they are continuing to revisit the next generation science standards for their curriculum. Further, she spoke on how Special Ed Coordinator, Tonya Gorgone, has been working with a committee relating to dyslexia. That committee is in the process of putting together a checklist of areas that pinpoint whether or not a student that has a disability, is in fact, dyslexic.*

**B. Curriculum Subcommittee**

*No report.*

**Old Business**

**A. High School Energy and Facilities Upgrade**

*Board of Education Chair, Joel D'Angelo updated the Board on how they are supporting the Building Committee's recommendations on the appointment of firms for engineering work and roof replacement. They will be meeting again on March 1, 2017. Superintendent Thiery updated the Board on how they are currently on schedule with the state as far as budget goes for the high school renovation projects. He also advised that the financing has been awarded and scheduled to close March 2, 2017.*



## New Business

### A. School Drug Education and Prevention Presentation

*Dr. Holly Hageman presented to the Board their continued efforts to provide the school, as well as the community information about the effects of drug and alcohol use. She further spoke on how the school continues to provide an exceptional spark of activities for the students to be involved in which are all truly beneficial to their students. Dr. Hageman addressed the Community norms and what is not acceptable. She also mentioned how the HKYFS and Coalition teams continue to do a fantastic job making sure parents are aware of the importance of their voice that they have with their children especially on topics like house parties, drugs and alcohol use, and educational awareness programs.*

*Dr. Jennifer Olsen presented to the Board on the Haddam-Killingworth Middle School's continued positive approach on 5-8th graders coping skills for their mental and emotional development. She further stated that they are always looking to identify important areas to focus on (i.e. stress, and how to deal with it, who does a child turn to for help and advice, and how to identify any risky behavior of a student). She embraced the importance of the community's positive connection with the students as well as the new state trooper's wonderful relationships they are building with them. She spoke about the staff attending coalition meetings to be fully knowledgeable of what is going on. Further, Dr. Olsen pointed out that there are currently 15-20 after school programs for students to enroll in for a variety of different age groups. The DARE program topic was addressed; the 6<sup>th</sup> graders take the program and it is conducted by our resident state trooper. Superintendent Howard Thiery embraced the DARE program and stated how much value it has to the students especially in building a great relationship with their resident officers. He stated that these relationships ultimately affect the students judgments, letting them know when to turn to an adult if a bad situation arises. Dr. Jennifer Olsen continued speaking on the 6<sup>th</sup> grade no bullying policy and how to stand up for themselves. She also addressed the 7<sup>th</sup> grade awareness of tobacco use and reiterated to them what the effects would be in using any narcotic. She wants to make sure they have a clear understanding of what's in front of them and how bad it is to indulge in it. Finally, the 8<sup>th</sup> graders, how they are learning about Opioids/Heroin drug misuse and the harmful effects it will have on them if used.*

*Principal Donna Hayward presented about the 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> grade health class and what the curriculum entails. This health class is a mandatory class for them to graduate. She briefly mentioned that the Haddam Killingworth Youth and Family Services Director conducts a survey with the students every 2 years based on information she receives from the community. This survey identifies certain key areas: percentage of students that are experimenting, percentage of students that have a problem, percentage of students with a parent that has a problem, the percentage of students with a significant other that has a problem and anything else of the like. She stressed the importance of students being educated on what narcotics look like. She mentioned that there are certain drugs within the community that are on the rise (i.e. edibles, which are drugs disguised as candy, maybe in a jolly rancher form, that is packaged back up for disguise). Principal Hayward finished by addressing the SADD chapter, John Morello's "DIRT" assembly for the school, staff participation in coalition meetings, and the importance of everyone truly supporting the schools drug and alcohol policies.*

*Superintendent Thiery spoke about John Morello who is very beneficial to the school. How he is not only an involved parent within the community, but he works as a federal prosecutor in the Department of Justice, and is an excellent resource to have within the community. Also, he briefly talked about the security cameras within the high school premises not only externally but 15 cameras located internally. This camera set up is beneficial to the faculty just in case a bad situation arises involving narcotics or alcohol they would have the video to look back on. He further stresses about how alcohol is still the*



number 1 drug of choice, with prescription drugs following. He reiterated numerous times to the Board the importance on building a healthy, strong relationship with each of the students. He is working hard to make realistic goals by examining any gaps that could be eliminated as far as narcotic use on the school premises.

Board Member Sue Twachtman addressed the Board first and foremost by thanking the Administration for their hard work in the drug and alcohol programs, etc. She expressed her care for the community and how safety for their students is number one priority. She then briefly suggested the possibility of a narcotic dog search, maybe at night, to limit the drugs that come on to the school grounds. She encouraged the Board that a new idea like this one, if tried, would get ahead of any bad situation.

Also, a suggestion for the creation of a Taskforce team to focus on a more in depth roll with the students and the drugs and alcohol program. Everyone embraced this idea and this topic will be on the agenda for future Board meetings.

#### **B. Update on Development of Strategic Priorities –**

Superintendent Howard Thiery updated the Board advising that the Administration is working on identifying the key strategic properties across the district. What are in the next 5-year window, critical strategic things they want to accomplish. This relates to things like research support, personnel, and facilities planning. Identify these important items by level: elementary, middle school, high school, pupil services, and technology. They currently have a draft of a plan and by the end of working year will have a concrete planning document at our fingertips.

#### **C. Pre-Budget Discussion:**

Board of Education Chair, Joel D'Angelo updated the Board that next Tuesday, March 7<sup>th</sup> Superintendent Thiery will present the budget. April 4<sup>th</sup> the Board will adopt the budget and they are holding 4 budget workshops in the next month to make progress. He stressed to make sure that everyone is prepared and reads the budget packet, come with ideas, philosophies, and questions. Superintendent Thiery stated he will have some new slides for the budget meeting that will give budget analytics; accounts that have decreased and accounts that have increased for an easier view.

#### **Board Discussions/New Suggestions**

Board of Education Chair, Joel D'Angelo informed the Board that Neal Perron resigned his Board position. Joel has accepted his resignation and will send the appropriate information to the town reflecting same. Also, now there will be an opening position for a new Board member to fill.

Superintendent Howard Thiery thanked the Board for their continued support for his use of vacation time to travel to Amman to teach. He furthered his conversation to say how dedicated this group of individuals were, who were living in a rural community, just really eager to grow and learn.

#### **Public Comment**

Amy Jacques-Purdy (former Board of Ed member and parent of HK students), advised the Board of how she currently works in the school system and they use the dog task force team to try to get drugs off of school premises. She stated how effective it has been, how it doesn't intimidate the students when they are in lockdown status and/or when the dogs come in to search for narcotics.


## Adjournment

*Board Chair Joel D'Angelo called for the meeting to adjourn at 9:50 PM*

*Respectfully submitted,*



Jamie Sciascia  
Board Clerk

Approval:  Date: 3/7/17  
Kathy Brown, Secretary