

**REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 17**  
**BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**SPECIAL MEETING**  
**March 10, 2015**

*A meeting of the Regional School District No. 17 Board of Education was held on March 10, 2015 in the Haddam-Killingworth High School Lower Media Center. Board of Education Chair, Sue Twachtman, called the meeting to order at 6:35 PM.*

**Members Present:** *Amy Jacques-Purdy, Susan Dean, Kathy Brown, Becky Valenti, Michele Amendola, Karen Perry, Joel D'Angelo, Dan Chase (arrived at 6:41 PM), Jeannie Young, and Sue Twachtman*

**Members Absent:** *Brian Gamache*

**Also Present:** *Superintendent of Schools, Howard Thiery, Assistant Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Holly Hageman, Director of Fiscal Operations Martha Vaughn, and Board Clerk Larissa Johnson*

**Visitors:** *Approximately 18*

**Call to Order/Opening of Meeting**

*Board of Education Chair, Sue Twachtman called the meeting to order at 6:35 PM. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.*

**Presentation of the Superintendent's Proposed Budget 2015-2016**

*Superintendent Howard Thiery presented the Regional School District No. 17 2015-2016 Superintendent's Preliminary Budget. He reviewed the District's mission statement as well as the budget timeline and process. He then presented a summary of the 2015-2016 Total Request, a proposed Net Budget Request of \$41,001,283.00, representing a 4.94% increase over the approved 2014-2015 budget. The large increase over last year's budget is driven by several items, most notably a \$1,571,567.96 increase in Health Insurance (220 Health Insurance), due to a high claims year. The budget increase is also being driven by a significant increase to Special Education outplacements (561 Non-Public Tuition) with an increase of \$626,920.00 as well as an increase in electricity expenses due to an increase in rates from \$0.0774 per kilowatt hour to \$0.0985 per kilowatt hour (622 Electricity) which is anticipated to increase costs by \$147,926.56. These drivers together represent greater than 100% of the 4.94% net increase, as aside from these budget drivers, the Superintendent proposed a decrease in the net budget.*

*The Health Insurance renewal estimates came back from Willis, the District's insurance broker at a \$1,571,567.96 increase for a total of \$6,424,684.29 and CIGNA, the District's health insurance provider at \$1,168,569.32 increase for a total of \$6,021,685.65. The Superintendent's Proposed Budget reflects the insurance renewal quote given by Willis. Both renewal estimates are driven by a high-claims year, where claims are running \$700,000 over claim projections.*

*Special Education costs are projected to increase due to doubling of outplaced students from 8 to 16, representing an increase of \$626,920.00 for a total of \$1,449,369.00 over the 14/15 projected tuition costs of \$822,449.00.*

*Superintendent Thiery presented a revenue comparison, which showed that projected revenue increasing by \$144,903.39 to \$1,100,801.51 from last year's budget. Superintendent Thiery also presented a pie-chart to demonstrate the break-down of different areas of the budget, including Salary, Benefits, Debt, Tuition, Support Programs, Learning Programs, Technology, Administrative Fees, Buildings & Grounds, and Transportation. He also presented a pie-chart of costs by location and a listing of Discretionary and Non-Discretionary budget areas. He also presented a listing of Total Gross Proposed Budget for Salaries*

by affiliation, RSD 17 Annual Enrollment History from 2004-2014 and Net Budget Assessment History to the towns of Haddam and Killingworth.

For the Fiscal Conservation portion of his presentation, Superintendent Thiery proposed staffing reductions of 14.5 Positions, including 2 certified FTE at the elementary level due to enrollment, 2 certified FTEs for the elementary World Language program, 0.5 FTE in LEAP, 1 custodian, 3 General Education para-educators and 6 Special Education para-educators. He also proposed a decrease in funding for instructional supplies (611) and general supplies (690) at the elementary level by aligning the elementary funding level to the middle school funding level in terms of cost per pupil. He also proposes negotiating locked-in fuel purchase rates for No. 2 heating oil and diesel, budgeting at a rate of \$2.29 and \$2.30 per gallon, representing a savings of \$289,773.57. He is also proposing that the District develop and implement in-house Special Education programs including a BCBA program at the elementary and middle school level and an 18-21 Year-Old Transition Program at the high school level, which would save the District approximately \$100,000 per year. He also proposed eliminating the High School late bus, for a savings of approximately \$48,000 and making strategic use of the State Technology Grant and District Technology Financing program to support technology sustainability and innovation. He also proposed strategic use of the Capital Improvement Account for building and grounds improvements.

As a long-term strategy to address rising insurance costs, the Superintendent proposed that the District develop a committee of Board Members, Administrators and Representatives of the Collective Bargaining Groups to study and explore strategies to contain or reduce insurance costs. In addition, to address rising Special Education outplacement costs, the Superintendent proposes the development of in-house programs for Special Education, including the continued development of BCBA programs at Burr Elementary School and the Middle School, as well as the development of the 18-21 year-old program. The Superintendent also proposed hiring a consultant to conduct a Demographic Projection study to help in short-term and long-term strategic planning.

For the Program Innovation portion of his presentation, the Superintendent summarized several areas where the District continues to grow and improve, such as continued support for Readers and Writers Workshop with Teachers College, the addition of new Project Lead the Way courses at HKHS, the development of additional enrichment opportunities at the elementary level, such as an Inter-Elementary Chorus and Band, an iPad initiative at the Elementary Schools to support STEM, Arts, Social Studies and ELA. He also proposed the development and support of a Systemic Curriculum Review, Revision and Improvement Process through the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction and the Board of Education Curriculum Subcommittee. He is also proposing the restructuring the World Language programs for grades 5-12, which would allow middle school students to take World Language Level 1 and 2 while in middle school and then continue to World Language Levels 2 and 3 upon entering high school, enabling students to complete higher levels of World Language or possibly take an additional language later in their high school career. He also presented the Maker Space Initiative K-12 which would increase the opportunity for student self-directed enrichment and exploration through Make Spaces in almost any area of student interest, including STEM, Arts, Music, Writing, and even Video Production.

In conclusion, the Superintendent presented Goals for the District including continued support and growth in the standards of excellence in instructional programming in English Language Arts and Mathematics as developed over the past several years, continuing to expand opportunities for all students at HKHS to participate in postgraduate experiences such as courses or internships, developing student-centered Maker Spaces to support self-directed learning, exploration, enrichment and creativity, developing a new World Language Program in grades 5-8, and developing cost-saving strategies relating insurance, Special Education, staffing and space usage based on demographic trends and projections.

## Adjournment

Board Chair Sue Twachtman called for the meeting to adjourn at 7:37 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Larissa Johnson

Board Clerk

Approval: Becky Valenti Date: 4-7-19  
Becky Valenti, Secretary