

REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 17
BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
February 4, 2014

A meeting of the Regional School District No. 17 Board of Education was held on February 4, 2014 in the Central Office Board Room. Board of Education Chair, Sue Twachtman, called the meeting to order at 7:35 PM.

Members Present: *Amy Jacques-Purdy, Susan Dean, Kathy Brown, Becky Valenti, Joel D'Angelo, Michele Amendola, Brian Gamache, Dan Chase, Jeannie Young, Karen Perry (arrived at 7:40) and Sue Twachtman*

Members Absent: *None*

Also Present: *Superintendent of Schools, Howard Thiery, Director of Finance Martha Vaughn, Board Clerk Larissa Johnson and Dawn MacLeod*

Visitors: *6*

Call to Order/Opening of Meeting

Board of Education Chair, Sue Twachtman called the meeting to order at 7:35 PM. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Audience of Citizens

Robin Duffield of Higganum and member of the Haddam-Killingworth Education Association welcomed the new members of the Board.

Approval of Minutes

A. Approval of Minutes for the January 7, 2014 Board of Education Meeting

*Becky Valenti **MOVED** and Amy Jacques-Purdy **SECONDED** a motion to approve the minutes for the January 7, 2014 Board of Education meeting. Motion passed 10-0-0 by the following votes:*

Michele Amendola	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/>	Amy Jacques-Purdy	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/>
Kathy Brown	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/>	Karen Perry	Absent
Dan Chase	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/>	Becky Valenti	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/>
Joel D'Angelo	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/>	Jeannie Young	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/>
Susan Dean	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/>	Sue Twachtman	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/>
Brian Gamache	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/>		

Report from Student Representatives

No report.

Board Committee Reports and Future Meetings

Board Chair Sue Twachtman welcomed Jeannie Young back to the Board of Education. She announced that Young has agreed to serve on the Finance Subcommittee and act as a Liaison to the Killingworth Board of Selectmen.

A. Facilities and Transportation Subcommittee

Brian Gamache updated the Board. The next meeting will be March 4, 2014. Gamache reported that the painting and carpeting of three classrooms has been completed, and the project is now moving into the second phase of painting and carpeting three additional rooms at the high school. He said that Room 16 at Killingworth Elementary School also needs painting at an estimated cost of approximately \$3,400.00.

Gamache also reported that Director of Facilities Michael Distefano has begun gathering information on having a professional engineer evaluate the White House for safety and building code recommended improvements. The White House is a district-owned building on the Central Office/HKHS campus rented by H-K Parks and Recreation and H-K Youth and Family Services. It was requested by H-K Youth and Family Services that the District have the building looked at for handicapped access as well as fire safety. The Board discussed this at some length and would like the Director of Facilities to request some quotations from professional engineers to have this evaluation performed.

Gamache said that Michael Distefano requested a replacement courier vehicle. The District has had a cargo van for the courier's use in delivering mail and supplies between the different buildings in the district. Michael Distefano stated that a replacement cargo van could be acquired for approximately \$12,000.00 used or \$25,000.00 new. Members of the Board asked what about what the courier has been using for transportation since the cargo van broke down and how long it has been broken down. Superintendent Thiery responded that the courier has been using the District's Toyota Rav4 for the past month and a half. Board members asked what the Rav4 is normally used for. Superintendent Thiery explained that normally, IT staff use the Rav4 for transportation of equipment around the District and also occasionally by Food Services for delivery of canned goods at the different schools. The Board discussed this item at length, including safety concerns about proper vehicle usage and the Board requested that Superintendent Thiery please provide them with an estimated value of the Rav4.

Amy Jacques-Purdy **MOVED** and Becky Valenti **SECONDED** a motion to approve an expenditure from the Capital Fund not to exceed \$12,000.00 for the purchase of a used cargo van. Motion passed 11-0-0 by the following votes:

Michele Amendola	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	A <input type="checkbox"/>	Amy Jacques-Purdy	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	A <input type="checkbox"/>
Kathy Brown	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	A <input type="checkbox"/>	Karen Perry	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	A <input type="checkbox"/>
Dan Chase	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	A <input type="checkbox"/>	Becky Valenti	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	A <input type="checkbox"/>
Joel D'Angelo	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	A <input type="checkbox"/>	Jeannie Young	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	A <input type="checkbox"/>
Susan Dean	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	A <input type="checkbox"/>	Sue Twachtman	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	A <input type="checkbox"/>
Brian Gamache	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	A <input type="checkbox"/>				

Gamache also gave an update on the HKMS irrigation project. Michael Distefano received a cost estimate of \$17,000.00 to irrigate the lower field by the same engineer, which he is challenging. The system was installed and was winterized, however it is waiting on the installation of an underground power supply to be directed by CL&P.

B. Finance Subcommittee

Joel D'Angelo updated the Board. The next meeting will be March 4, 2014. D'Angelo reported that Michele Loso of Seward and Monde presented a summary of the 2012-2013 Audit Report to the subcommittee. The subcommittee also had a discussion regarding the monthly vendor checks for December and January and also reviewed the budget transfers.

C. Policy Subcommittee

Amy Jacques-Purdy updated the Board. The next meeting is to be determined. Jacques-Purdy reported that the subcommittee met on January 31, 2014 and worked on the 6000 series, on the topic of instruction.

D. Communications Subcommittee

Susan Dean updated the Board. The next meeting will be February 25, 2014. Dean reported that though the subcommittee was not able to meet in January, however a Board Update for February was distributed. She also reported that she has been working on putting together the Board handbook with Board members. It is modeled after the Board handbook for the town of Berlin, which has been noted as an excellent resource for Board of Education members. She hopes to have the handbook completed in the spring. Dean also reported that Suzanne Sack is organizing this year's Community Conversations in Education, which is scheduled for Saturday, April 26, 2014. She is looking for volunteers to act as recorders or to assist in the planning. There will be a meeting on February 27, 2014 and she asked that if any Board members are interested, they contact Suzanne Sack or Sandy Pelletier.

E. Personnel and Evaluation Subcommittee

Karen Perry had no report. The next meeting will be February 7, 2014 at 11:30 AM.

Board Liaison Reports

A. Healthy Communities – Healthy Kids Council

Susan Dean updated the Board. Dean reported that the council met on January 16, 2014. The next meeting will be February 13, 2014. She stated that each month, the council focuses on one of the 40 developmental assets. January was "Family Boundaries" and February is "Family Involvement." She mentioned that a presentation on Internet Safety will be given on Thursday night and she also reported that on March 30, 2014 the council will be hosting its Pancake Breakfast.

B. LEARN

Kathy Brown updated the Board. She reported that LEARN is re-writing its vision, mission and core values. She also reported that she received an informational brochure with information on all of the magnet and charter schools in RESC.

C. Parks & Recreation

Brian Gamache updated the Board. He reported that at the last meeting, Frank Sparks presented a budget to the committee, which he will then bring to the town selectmen in each town.

D. Haddam Board of Selectmen

Becky Valenti updated the Board. She reported that she gave a copy of the Board Update to the selectmen and that the selectmen are working on the town budget.

E. Killingworth Board of Selectmen

Joel D'Angelo had no report.

Old Business

A. Bus Contract Proposal

Superintendent Thiery briefly explained the background of Bus Contract extension proposal. To be discussed in Executive Session.

B. Contract – Administrators Bargaining Unit

Superintendent Thiery briefly explained the status of the contract with the Administrators Bargaining Unit. To be discussed in Executive Session.

C. Budget Timeline – Revisions

The Board revised the Budget Timeline. The Board discussed several conflicts in the schedule, such as a conflict with the Boards of Finance regarding the Joint Meeting date. The revisions were summarized by Howard Thiery as follows:

A Budget Workshop will be held on Monday, March 10, 2014.

A Joint Meeting with the Selectmen and Boards of Finance from the Towns of Haddam & Killingworth will be held on Wednesday, March 12, 2014 at 7:00 PM. A Budget Workshop will immediately follow.

A Community Input Session on the 2014/2015 Budget will be held on Monday, March 24, 2014 at 6:30 PM. A Budget Workshop will immediately follow.

A Budget Workshop will be held on Wednesday, March 26, 2014.

*Karen Perry **MOVED** and Amy Jacques-Purdy **SECONDED** a motion to adjust the budget timeline dates as stated by Howard Thiery. Motion passed 11-0-0 by the following votes:*

Michele Amendola	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/>	Amy Jacques-Purdy	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/>
Kathy Brown	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/>	Karen Perry	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/>
Dan Chase	Absent for Vote	Becky Valenti	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/>
Joel D'Angelo	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/>	Jeannie Young	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/>
Susan Dean	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/>	Sue Twachtman	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/>
Brian Gamache	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/>		

Consent Agenda

- A. Acceptance of a donation from General Mills Box Tops in the amount of \$434.30 for Burr Elementary School, submitted by Eric Larson, Principal of Burr Elementary School.

- B. Acceptance of a donation from Mr. & Mrs. Brett and Brenda Williams in the amount of \$2,000.00 to be used to support the HKMS wrestling team. Submitted by Miriam Wagner, Principal of the Haddam-Killingworth Middle School.
- C. Acceptance of a donation of a MakerBot Academy Bundle, which includes a MakerBot Replicator 2 Desktop 3-D printer, MakerBot MakerCare protection plan, and a MakerBot non-toxic PLA filament. This donation totals \$2,000.00 in value and was made possible by the actions of MS Tech. Ed. teacher Carolyn Jepson who signed up for the donation through www.donorschoose.org. Submitted by Miriam Wagner, Principal of the Haddam-Killingworth Middle School.
- D. Acceptance of a donation from General Mills Box Tops in the amount of \$1,700.00 for Haddam Elementary School, submitted by Janice Harris, Principal of Haddam Elementary School.
- E. Acceptance of a donation from HKMS PTO, totaling \$125.00 to be used for bird seed to fill the Middle School Campus bird feeders, submitted by Miriam Wagner, Principal of the Haddam-Killingworth Middle School.

*Amy Jacques-Purdy **MOVED** and Susan Dean **SECONDED** a motion to approve the consent agenda as presented. Motion passed 11-0-0 by the following votes:*

Michele Amendola	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	A <input type="checkbox"/>	Amy Jacques-Purdy	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	A <input type="checkbox"/>
Kathy Brown	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	A <input type="checkbox"/>	Karen Perry	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	A <input type="checkbox"/>
Dan Chase	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	A <input type="checkbox"/>	Becky Valenti	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	A <input type="checkbox"/>
Joel D'Angelo	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	A <input type="checkbox"/>	Jeannie Young	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	A <input type="checkbox"/>
Susan Dean	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	A <input type="checkbox"/>	Sue Twachtman	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	A <input type="checkbox"/>
Brian Gamache	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	A <input type="checkbox"/>				

Karen Perry acknowledged the gift of \$2000.00 by the Williams in support of the HKMS wrestling team. Sue Twachtman also acknowledged Carolyn Jepson for her resourcefulness in utilizing www.donorschoose.org to acquire the donation of the 3-D printer.

New Business

A. 2012/13 Audit Presentation – Michele Loso, Seward and Monde

Michele Loso of Seward and Monde presented a brief summary of the finance audit. She said that the audit report was an unqualified and unmodified opinion. She said that there were no compliance issues on the State or Federal level, and that there were no internal deficiencies in controls noted. A Board member asked about a transfer of \$108,000 noted in the letter to the Board included with the report. Ms. Loso explained that it was a late transfer which was approved, and that it was Capital, non-recurring, however it had not been adjusted. Transfer adjustments over a certain materiality must be reported, however it was among several small transfer adjustments. She also briefly discussed the District's improvement in small fixed asset inventory tracking, which is due in part to the implementation of a tracking system implemented by the Finance Department.

B. Staffing and Class Size

Superintendent Thiery presented the 2014-2015 Projected Enrollment and asked the Board for guidance in what it would like to see in terms of class sizes. He mentioned that the Projected Enrollment did not have adjusted classroom sizes, that the cohorts were simply moved up a grade based on current enrollment numbers. The Board discussed the benefits of having small class size

and asked Superintendent Thiery about what data there is regarding the impact on student achievement. Superintendent Thiery said that with the exception of irregularly large classes, such as thirty students or more, studies do not show that class size has large impact on student achievement. He said that class sizes are more about what the community environment or culture climate is, rather than student achievement. The Board also talked about having different class size limits based on grade level, with allowing for smaller class sizes in the early elementary levels. The Board discussed this topic at some length. The Board felt that they were not comfortable putting any actual number limitations on class sizes at this time, and that they preferred smaller class sizes when possible.

C. Pay to Play – Athletics

Superintendent Thiery presented information regarding Pay-to-Play, a model which is used in some districts as revenue generation, where students and their families pay a fee to participate in extra-curricular sports or activities. The Board discussed this topic at some length. Superintendent Thiery explained that the fees collected would be nominal and would not actually cover the cost of athletic programs. The Board also discussed that students do provide some of their own equipment for most sports, typically cleats or appropriate footwear, which can cost families a significant amount of money. Many members of the Board expressed concerns that a Pay-to-Play policy would deter students from trying new activities, cause hardships for some families, and be inconsistent with their mission as a Board.

D. Health Insurance Market Study

Superintendent Thiery stated that he and the Director of Finance, Martha Vaughn are working with the new health insurance broker to put together a timeline to go to a market study for the District's health insurance. Meetings with Willis, the health insurance broker, have been delayed due to weather issues. Another meeting is scheduled for next week.

From the Superintendent

A. Legislative Update

Superintendent Thiery presented a Legislative Update. He thanked Sue Twachtman and Susan Dean for attending the Legislative Breakfast in Deep River last month. He also said that in light of changes to the implementation of the Teacher Evaluations as required by the State, the District's Evaluation Committee will be meeting to discuss how to leverage the changes and create a more effective evaluation system.

B. Personnel Report

Superintendent Thiery presented the Personnel Report.

C. Enrollment Report

Superintendent Thiery presented the January enrollment report.

From the Director of Fiscal Operations

Director of Finance Martha Vaughn presented four budget transfers. One transfer was for \$61,729,99 from Unemployment to Workers Compensation. The other three transfers were salary-related to cover the transfer of staff members from one school to another.

Amy Jacques-Purdy **MOVED** and Susan Dean **SECONDED** a motion to approve the budget transfers as presented. Motion passed 11-0-0 by the following votes:

Michele Amendola	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/>	Amy Jacques-Purdy	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/>
Kathy Brown	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/>	Karen Perry	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/>
Dan Chase	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/>	Becky Valenti	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/>
Joel D'Angelo	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/>	Jeannie Young	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/>
Susan Dean	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/>	Sue Twachtman	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/>
Brian Gamache	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/>		

From the Board Chair

Board Chair Sue Twachtman brought up the issue of the making up snow days for this year. The District has taken five snow days, including February 5, 2014. According to the 2013-2014 district calendar, once five snow days are taken, any additional days should be subtracted from the February break. The Board decided that if we had one more snow day, in between February 4th and February break, they would not be comfortable taking away just one day from the February break because it doesn't serve the best interest of the students to open schools for just one day. However, if the storm were to create two days of missed school between February 4th and February break, students would return for two days during February break.

Board Discussion – Areas of Opportunities for District Improvement

None

Adjournment

Karen Perry **MOVED** and Amy Jacques-Purdy **SECONDED** a motion to adjourn to Executive Session for the purposes of negotiations and personnel issues. Motion passed 11-0-0 by the following votes:

Michele Amendola	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/>	Amy Jacques-Purdy	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/>
Kathy Brown	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/>	Karen Perry	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/>
Dan Chase	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/>	Becky Valenti	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/>
Joel D'Angelo	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/>	Jeannie Young	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/>
Susan Dean	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/>	Sue Twachtman	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/>
Brian Gamache	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/>		

The Board went into Executive Session at 9:40 PM.

The Board returned from Executive Session.

Amy Jacques-Purdy **MOVED** and Susan Dean **SECONDED** a motion to approve the professional agreement between Regional School District No. 17 and the Haddam-Killingworth Administrators' Association covering the period beginning July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2017. Motion passed 11-0-0 by the following votes:

Michele Amendola	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/>	Amy Jacques-Purdy	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/>
Kathy Brown	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/>	Karen Perry	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/>
Dan Chase	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/>	Becky Valenti	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/>
Joel D'Angelo	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/>	Jeannie Young	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/>
Susan Dean	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/>	Sue Twachtman	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/>
Brian Gamache	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/>		

Board Chair Sue Twachtman called for the meeting to adjourn at 10:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Larissa B. Johnson
Board Clerk

Approval: Becky Valenti Date: 3-4-14
Becky Valenti, Secretary