

REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 17
BOARD OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL MEETING
March 5, 2013

A meeting of the Regional School District No. 17 Board of Education was held on March 5, 2013 in the Haddam-Killingworth High School Lower Media Center. Board of Education Acting Chair, Jonathan Wintsch, called the meeting to order at 6:35 PM.

Members Present: *Jamie Lehane, Susan Dean, Jonathan Wintsch, Sue Twachtman, Joel D'Angelo, Chet Harris, Amy Jacques-Purdy, Karen Perry, Becky Valenti and Jeannie Young (arrived at approximately 6:40 PM)*

Members Absent: *Steven Banaletti*

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

Visitors: *Approximately 16*

Call to Order/Opening of Meeting

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

Presentation of the Superintendent's Proposed Budget 2013-2014

Superintendent Howard Thiery presented the Regional School District 17 2013-2014 Superintendent's Proposed Budget.

Superintendent Thiery reviewed the Budget Process with a timeline of contributions and input made by the district's administrators. He also defined budget language to give clarity to the proposed budget. The Superintendent's Proposed Gross Operating Budget is \$40,250,802.10 reflecting a 3.48% increase over the 2012-2013 budget and his Proposed Net Budget Request is \$38,996,253.84 reflecting a 2.92% increase over the 2012-2013 budget. He provided a Summary of Total Request which outlined the sources of revenue to the district, such as Anticipated Excess Cost Grant, Bus Sale Revenue, Adult Education, Transportation Grant, E-Rate Reimbursement, Medicaid Reimbursement, Learn Classroom Rental, and Earned Interest on the District's bank accounts. The total anticipated revenue is \$1,254,548.66.

The Superintendent's presentation explained the areas of the budget which contributed to the increase in the overall budget, such as an increase in Salary, Benefit, Tuition, Buildings and Grounds, Learning Programs, Technology, and Transportation as well as some budget items which were decreases in the budget including Debt, Support Programs and Administration. He presented a pie chart of the break down by object in the budget and also by location. He also broke down the budget by discretionary and non-discretionary spending.

Superintendent Thiery also outlined the New Staffing Request, which includes a Lego Club Advisor at HKMS, After School Library Staff at HKHS, a Speech & Language Teacher, and a Job Coach at HKHS. The total amount budgeted for these new positions is \$64,298.00 equating to 2.14 FTE.

Superintendent Thiery also proposed a change to the Elementary Library-Media Staffing Proposal. He is proposing a cost-neutral change from employing 7 non-certified staff members with Library/Media/Technology Assignments and is proposing having 2 certified Library Media Staff and 3 non-certified Library Media Staff. This proposal would have the effect of a -\$4,747.72 net salary change. He explained that this change would allow the current Library program to expand with instruction by the Library Staff and would be more in-line with the Common Core standards.

Superintendent Thiery also presented the Total Gross Proposed Budget for Salaries 2013-2014 Increase per Affiliation, which broke down Total Certified Teacher Salaries, Total Support Salaries, Total Administrator Salaries, Total Unaffiliated Salaries, Total Custodial Salaries, Total Overtime Salaries, and Total Substitute Salaries. He also presented a Net Budget Assessment History from the 2004/2005 budget year through the 2012/2013 budget year and the proposed amounts for the 2013/2014 budget year based on estimated enrollment.

Superintendent Thiery then presented a Revenue Comparison chart comparing the revenue in the Proposed 2013-2014 Budget and the Approved 2012-2013 Budget. He also explained one of the revenue streams, Federal E-Rate Funds, which is a reimbursement to public schools and libraries of the cost of telecommunication including internet and computer networks. The Federal E-Rate program is funded through the Federal Universal Service Fee charged to companies that provide interstate and international telecommunications.

The following topic presented was the proposed Health Insurance Reserve Account Budget Offset. Superintendent Thiery explained that the District's estimated health insurance contribution for 2013-2014 is \$5,503,285.00, which reflects a 12% increase over last year's recommended contribution. This increase, Thiery explained is due to a 10% increase industry-wide and a 2% increase based on the District's claims history. The projected health insurance reserve balance as of June 2013 is \$3,824,425.00, which is \$1,572,425.00 in excess of the recommended reserve balance of \$2,525,000.00. Superintendent Thiery is proposing offsetting the increase in the health insurance contribution by \$894,440 from the health insurance reserve account, leaving a projected balance of \$2,929,985.00 in June 2014.

Superintendent Thiery discussed the expansion of the Readers Workshop program to grades 6-8 under the Innovation section of his presentation. The expansion of the Readers Workshop program is a budget increase neutral proposal by utilization of Federal Title 2 Funds and reallocation of library funds. Another Innovation is the proposed changes to the Library Media Staff, which is another budget increase neutral proposal due to the reduction of four paraprofessional level positions with library/technology duties. Another area of Innovation Superintendent Thiery discussed was Technology. The first proposed change to technology for the upcoming year is an upgrade of the infrastructure to a 100% fiber optics backbone for increased reliability and carrying capacity and support implementation of SBAC Assessment in 2015. The upgrade to the infrastructure is budget increase neutral through an offset by the Federal E-Rate Reimbursement Funds. – A second proposed technology innovation is to replace the Middle School student laptops and to then replace the Elementary school laptops with the old Middle School laptops. This proposal is also budget increase neutral by utilizing the flat funding for technology financing package. The third proposed technology is instructional improvement by supporting the Chemistry Lab and Industrial Arts Lab with technology and improving student technology at the HKHS Library. This is also budget increase neutral by utilizing the flat funding for technology financing package.

The Superintendent summarized his presentation by a statement of goals, including facilitation of adapting to National Common Core Curriculum, improvement in the integration of technology to STEM areas, increasing instructional resources related to technology and information literacy at the Elementary level, improving network reliability and increase network carrying capacity, and improving technology infrastructure to support technology component of SBAC assessment in 2015.

Board Chair Karen Perry thanked Howard and the Administrators for their time and effort in putting together the proposed budget.

A short question and answer session followed. Jonathan Wintsch asked if the new Speech and Language teacher position will allow students to stay in the district, rather than be outplaced. Superintendent Thiery responded that it will hopefully long-term, but it will not this year. He also explained that currently that position is outsourced. By having someone employed by the District there is a cost-avoidance in not paying private practice rates. In the past, the District has not been able to pay to compete with private practice rates, so a position at .25 FTE sat vacant. Superintendent Thiery stated that by increasing the position to a .5 FTE position, it will likely be filled.

Adjournment

Board Chair Karen Perry called for the meeting to adjourn at 7:28 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Larissa B. Johnson
Board Clerk

Approval:  Date: 4/2/2013
Susan Dean, Secretary