

REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 17
BOARD OF EDUCATION – EDUCATION SUBCOMMITTEE
April 24, 2012

A meeting of the Regional School District No. 17 Board of Education was held on April 24, 2012 in the Haddam-Killingworth Middle School Media Center. Board of Education Chair, Karen Perry called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM.

***Members Present:** Becky Valenti, Joel D'Angelo, Peggie Bushey, Steven Banaletti, Sue Twachtman, Susan Dean, and Karen Perry*

***Members Absent:** Amy Jacques-Purdy, Chet Harris, Jaime Lehane, and Jonathan Wintsch*

***Also Present:** Superintendent of Schools, Howard Thiery*

***Visitors:** Approximately 25*

Call to Order/Opening of Meeting

Board of Education Chair, Karen Perry called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

New Business

A. Rachel's Challenge

Cheryl Chandler, Director of Haddam-Killingworth Youth and Family Services made a presentation to the Board about Haddam-Killingworth High School's participation in Rachel's Challenge, an initiative started by the parents of Rachel Scott, who was killed in the Columbine tragedy. Rachel's Challenge encourages students to treat one another with kindness, compassion and empathy and to accept others and their differences. HKHS's participation in Rachel's Challenge was sponsored by a \$4300.00 grant from Middlesex United Way. Cheryl Chandler also thanked Maryann Grimaldi, a guidance counselor at HKHS and Kerry Smith, an HKHS social worker for their part in the facilitation of the program and for encouraging students to join Rachel's Challenge. Students including Catherine McMahon, Stephanie Nixon, Hanna Kelly, Liam Brown, and Danny Chon presented their reactions to Rachel's Challenge to the Board as well as some of the positive steps and initiatives they are taking to fulfill Rachel's Challenge, including starting a "Chain of Kindness" where students write down a good deed they have done or witnessed on a length of paper which is linked into a chain in the main hallway of the high school, "Targets of Kindness" where students give cards and baked goods to teachers who are not feeling well or birthday cards to other students, and the "Power of One Walk." Other students who participated included Sage Barton, Erin Buckley, Jessica Johnson and Gunnar Soneson.

B. Moody's Mega Math Challenge

Students Megan Tischbein, Tom Day, Rachel Roberts, Emma Soneson and Brianna Church reported to the Board that they participated in Moody's Mega Math Challenge on March 4, 2012, along with their math teacher Wendy Adamczyk. The students were asked to write a paper integrating the disciplines of math, politics, environmental policy, and economics and tackle the feasibility of a

High-Speed Intercity Rail Program, by devising a method of evaluation viability of the HSIRP for ten regions in the United States. The students had only 14 hours to complete research using only internet sources, and were unable to consult anyone else regarding the project, including their faculty advisor for the duration of the contest. The students wrote a 28-page paper and had to consider ridership, the environment, rider attitudes, cost and more. The HK team made it to the top tier of the competition and received an honorable mention, and \$1000 in scholarships. Superintendent Thiery remarked that everything the students did was impressive, that they produced a coherent and persuasive paper and agreed with one of the judges who reviewed their paper that their solution had an elegance to it.

C. Reader's Workshop

Brian Kerachsky, Regional School District 17's Elementary Teaching and Learning Specialist presented "The Big Picture of Teacher's College Reading & Writing Project." He discussed the format of the Readers Workshop, which includes a mini-lesson for students, 35-45 minutes of reading work, and teacher share. The Readers Workshop is designed to encourage life-long habits of reading and to create a community of readers. He described what the partnership between Regional School District 17 and Teacher's College is and how the Summer Readers Workshop Institute will run. At the Summer Readers Workshop Institute, two staff developers from Teacher's College will come and run the institute for four days and work with K-2 and 3-5 teachers and will also follow-up with visits during the year. Kerachsky explained that for students, this program will offer them choice in reading, high interest books, reading engagement, reading enjoyment, opportunities to learn from peers and learn positive reading habits. He also explained that the district has already begun to prepare by holding district-wide monthly meetings and has begun expanding classroom libraries. The Board also watched a video summarizing the accomplishments of Southington, Connecticut's schools have experienced since becoming a Columbia affiliate through the Teacher's College Reading & Writing Project.

Karen Perry thanked Mr. Kerachsky for his presentation.

Adjournment

Karen Perry called for the meeting to adjourn at 8:52 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Larissa B. Johnson

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Board Clerk

Approval: *Susan Dean* Date: 5/1/2012
Susan Dean, Secretary