

Summary of February 2020 Board of Education Meetings

Submitted by Jen Favalora, RSD17 Board of Education

School Educational Activities:

Cougar Pride- Eighth grader Jonah Keithan-Resnick was recognized as the first RSD17 student to win the Patriot's Pen Competition in Connecticut. As the Connecticut representative, Jonah's essay "What Makes America Great" will compete against students from each state for the national prize. Recognition was also given to the Haddam-Killingworth High School Girls Cross Country Team for winning the Class SS State Championship. The Board congratulated teammates Meara Bodak, Julia Callis, Lauren D'Amico, Ava DiMatteo, Isabel Berardino, Ali Twachtman and Brianna Minervino for their achievement.

Community Mentoring Program- Principals at the Elementary Schools approved a partnership with HK Youth and Family Services for a new School-Based Mentoring Program. The program would run during the school day and details will follow on how community members can apply to become a mentor.

Effective School Solutions- In a Special Meeting, the Board addressed the increase in Special Education Outplacements, the related costs, reasons, and outlook for RSD17. This elevation in Emotional and Behavioral Disorders is consistent in school districts across the state. In response to the marked increase, Effective School Solutions (ESS) was proposed by Administration as an effective and less expensive alternative that provides clinical services inside our schools instead of sending identified students to expensive specialized schools outside of our District. The Board gave consent to contracting with ESS beginning in March to implement at our High School and Middle School.

Math Program- The Superintendent introduced, and the Board discussed, the merits of a new math text and computer program with assessments, problem solving and testing for Kindergarten through 8th grade. The Board will consider and vote on its adoption at the next regular meeting of the Board.

Capital Improvements:

KES Roof - The Board approved immediate replacement on a section of the roof at KES, directly over the kitchen, after a failure caused damage inside the building. Construction was completed over Presidents' Day weekend and will be paid entirely through the Capital Improvement Fund.

HKHS Field House Project: The Board reviewed and approved final recommendations from the Public Building Committee on renovations to the Field House. Remediation and replacement of the Field House floor will commence in late April. Additionally the gym will be updated with new backboards, gym dividers, a center lift practice cage, paint and window tinting. Improvements will also be made to existing lighting, speakers, emergency evacuation systems and the bleachers. The approved project will cost just over \$1 million. State reimbursements are expected and the remainder will be paid through the Capital Fund. Administration has plans in place for activities that will be displaced due to the construction, such as the Project Graduation Celebration which will be moved to HKI/MS.

Other Business

Budget Freeze- Due to more than expected outplacements, the Special Education Tuition line is significantly over budget. As a result, the Superintendent has frozen all but critical expenditures in an effort to offset the costs. The BoE Finance Committee and the Superintendent continue to monitor the situation and are cautiously optimistic that we will come in just under budget for the year.

Board Resignation- Haddam Board of Education Member Gerry Mathews submitted his resignation and a grateful Board thanked him for his service. The Town of Haddam will hold a town meeting to replace Gerry's position for the remainder of the term.

On our RSD17.org website: Budget Season has begun. The Superintendent's Proposed Budget can be found under "Budget Information" and videos of meetings can be viewed under "HKTV".