

# Regional School District #17

## Board of Education



## School Board Member Handbook

**November 21, 2019**

This handbook summarizes various policies, protocols, and practices of the Board of Education to aid its members and the general public in understanding the operating principles of the Board. This is not intended to replace the full complement of RSD 17 School Policies and By-Laws, but rather to highlight commonly referenced materials.

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## **Introduction**

This handbook is a convenient guide to the operations of the Regional School District (RSD) 17 Board of Education (BoE). It is a summary of certain information, policies, and practices helpful in understanding the operating practices of the BoE. Source documents should be consulted for definitive information.

This Handbook will be posted on the Board's website and will be available at the Central Office of Regional School District 17.

## **Executive Summary**

The Regional School District 17 Board of Education is an eleven member, non-partisan Board. There are six members from Haddam and five members from Killingworth. The members of the Board of Education are local residents charged by Connecticut law to oversee the school district. They are elected by district citizens and are volunteers who serve without pay for a four-year term. Election of Board members is such that approximately half the Board is elected/re-elected every two years.

Reference: *CGS 10-46, Town Charters of Haddam and Killingworth*

## **RSD 17 Mission Statement**

The Regional School District 17 Board of Education endorses the District's mission: to engage students in an educational community that challenges them with high standards and builds their capacity for success and their aspiration to improve themselves and their society.

## **Statement of Philosophy**

We believe that it is imperative to develop a community of learners by offering comprehensive, vigorous and contemporary instructional programs and services imparted by highly trained, dedicated and caring professionals with the support of parents and citizens. Recognizing that individuals represent the most valuable resource of our school district, we stand committed to creating and maintaining a culture and climate that supports learning for all.

We are dedicated to effectively prioritizing and being held accountable for the allocation of human, financial and physical resources of the school district to ensure the effective and efficient delivery of all programs and services.

Adopted by Regional School District 17 Board of Education: August 3, 2011

## **District Core Values**

### **Children**

Guarantee a quality education based on the belief that all children have the natural disposition to learn.

### **Curriculum**

Provide a curriculum that engages and challenges all students.

### **Responsibility**

Foster a community that recognizes that education is a responsibility shared among students, families, and the schools.

### **Ethics**

Require all members of the school community to exhibit integrity, model responsible behavior, and show respect to others.

### **Safety**

Maintain a safe environment for all members of the school district.

### **Stewardship**

Ensure responsible stewardship to the communities for the resources and facilities they provide.

## **Communication**

Build collaborative relationships with the entire community through ongoing and transparent communication.

## **Diversity**

Provide an environment that respects diversity.

## **Board Goals**

### **Student Achievement**

All students in Regional School District 17 schools will achieve established, rigorous performance standards in all areas of student learning by becoming independent strategic readers, problem solvers, and critical thinkers.

### **Communication**

The RSD 17 Board of Education will establish reciprocal communication that is accessible and understandable, and that unites all citizens around the belief that high-quality public education is a very valuable community asset.

### **Facilities and Educational Adequacy**

The RSD 17 Board of Education will ensure all students have the opportunity to learn and achieve in safe and educationally adequate facilities by meeting the needs of the district with respect to adequate space and the quality of learning environments.

### **Board Governance**

The RSD 17 Board of Education will focus on continuous improvement leading to student achievement and student success through its development of policy, ongoing evaluation, and commitment to individual and Board professional growth.

### **Fiscal Responsibility**

The RSD 17 Board of Education realizes that its main responsibility is to the students of the district. However, the Board is fully cognizant of the financial education budget burden for taxpayers. Every effort is made by the Board to maintain high quality in education and facilities in fiscally responsible practices.

## **Board Functions: What Does a School Board Do?**

Boards of Education have several functions:

- Develop, implement, and monitor the district's policies including short and long term goals. These policies serve as the road map for the school district. They give direction to the administration and staff and become the foundation of accountability.
- Select, retain and evaluate the Superintendent of Schools, who serves as the district's chief executive officer and implements board policy.
- Review, approve and monitor the implementation of an annual operating budget and a capital budget.
- Serve as the impartial hearing panel on such issues as termination, expulsion and grievance.
- Build public support and understanding of public education. This means communicating and interpreting the school district's mission to the public, listening to the community, and when appropriate, incorporating citizens' views into the discussions of the Board.

## **Board Authority and Accountability**

The Board of Education is accountable for ensuring that Regional School District 17 residents have access to a free, quality education in accordance with Federal and Connecticut State law. Connecticut law imbues the Board with specific and often broad authority over the administration of district schools. For example, the Board of Education exercises control over school buildings and property, employs and supervises the Superintendent, adopts a budget, and approves textbooks. A lengthier and more specific listing of the Board's authority can be found in Chapter 10 of the [Connecticut General Statutes](#).

While the Board has broad authority over the RSD 17 schools, much of this authority is delegated to the Superintendent and other district employees. The Board of Education functions not as management responsible for the administration of the school district, but as a board of directors accountable

for establishing a vision for the District, and monitoring district progress in reaching that vision.

Reference: *CGS 10-220, Board By-Laws 9010*

## **Superintendent's Authority and Responsibilities**

The Superintendent, pursuant to state law, is the CEO of Regional School District #17. S/he is responsible for leading and managing the school district, hiring and supervising personnel, developing and administering the budget and advising the Board on educational developments, board policies, and applicable laws. The Superintendent regularly communicates to the Board the status of student learning and the district's progress in meeting its stated goals.

The Superintendent attends all meetings of the Board, works closely with the Board in developing goals and initiatives, and is responsible for the implementation of these initiatives.

Reference: *CGS 10-157*

## **Board Structure**

### **Board Officers**

The Board of Education has four officers: Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer. The term of office is two years. (**DELETE: The office of Chair alternates between Board members from Haddam and Killingworth.**)

Biannual election of officers occurs at the business meeting in December.

Officers are elected by a majority vote of the Board. (**ADD: The Board Chair may serve no more than two consecutive terms.**)

Reference: *Board By-Laws 9120*

The Board Chair presides at all meetings and serves as the Board spokesperson. S/he is responsible for appointing Board members to subcommittees, and signs documents, contracts and checks on behalf of the Board. The Board Chair works closely with the Superintendent to plan meeting agendas and can call special meetings of the Board when necessary.

Reference: *Board By-Laws 9121*

The Vice-Chair serves as Chair in the absence of the Chair. The Vice-Chair works closely with the Chair and assists that office as needed.

*Reference: Board By-Laws 9122*

The Secretary is responsible for documenting of the minutes of the Board. The Board clerk drafts minutes at regular Board meetings. The Secretary confirms the accuracy of these minutes, which are then posted within 48 hours. The Secretary signs the Board minutes following Board approval. The Secretary may also be responsible for other official Board correspondence.

*Reference: Board By-Laws 9123*

The Treasurer will sign any notes or obligations of the district in accordance with Section 10-46 of the Connecticut General Statutes. The treasurer, a key member (and typically the Chair) of the BoE Finance Subcommittee, collaborates with the Superintendent and Director of Fiscal Operations to oversee the district's finances.

*Reference: Board By-Laws 9126*

## **Board Subcommittees and Liaisons**

Because there is not enough time to accomplish all the work of the board during regular meetings, and that frequently there is a need to dedicate the necessary time, expertise and focus on individual issues, it is necessary to utilize subcommittees. The Board's committee structure is aligned with the Board's goals.

The Board of Education has six standing committees. These committees are: Communications, Curriculum, Facilities, Finance, Personnel & Evaluation, and Policy. The Board also relies on (~~DELETE: ad hoc~~ **ADD: special**) committees, appointed by the Board Chair, for those tasks that require a committee of the Board and do not fall within the parameters of the standing committees.

The Board Chair selects from among Board members to serve on the various Subcommittees. The Chair also selects the subcommittee chairs. Each subcommittee chair is responsible for the meeting schedule, agenda, and minutes. **The meeting schedule should be set for the entire calendar year, no later than January 31<sup>st</sup>. Special Meetings may be held as needed.** The process of issuance of meeting notices, agendas and minutes is governed by the FOIA.



A Board Liaison is a member of the Board who represents the Board to key stakeholder groups. The Liaison attends regularly scheduled meetings of that group.

The subcommittee chairs and the Board Liaisons report pertinent information to the full Board.

*Reference: BOE By-Laws 9130*

#### Communications Subcommittee

This subcommittee deals with communicating Board of Education information to the community.

#### Curriculum Subcommittee

This subcommittee is responsible for reviewing the District curricula and supervising any **changes suggested by the Superintendent, administrators, and/or teachers.** (**DELETE: Members of this subcommittee represent the Board at Curriculum Council meetings.**) Subcommittee members may also be included in other district or community activities involving Regional School District 17 curriculum such as activities or programs to enhance the curriculum.

#### Facilities Subcommittee

This subcommittee works closely with the district Director of Operations. Maintenance and improvement projects and the purchase of items for district buildings and property are supervised by this subcommittee.

#### Finance Subcommittee

The Finance Subcommittee oversees the monthly district finance records prepared by the district Director of Fiscal Operations.

#### Personnel and Evaluation Subcommittee

This subcommittee is responsible for the evaluation of the Superintendent, as well as for contract negotiations involving the Superintendent, the Administrators, the Teachers, the Support Staff, the Nurses, and the Custodians.

#### Policy Subcommittee

The Policy Subcommittee oversees the policies of the school system. The policies encompass numerous areas: Missions and Goals, Community Relations, Administration, Business & Non-Instructional Operations, Personnel-Certified & Non-Certified, Students, Instruction, New Construction, and Bylaws of the Board.

## **Board Liaisons**

BoE liaisons attend the meetings of the groups below and report updates to the full Board during regular meetings.

### Healthy Communities-Healthy Kids

This is a coalition subcommittee under Haddam-Killingworth Youth & Family Services. The mission of the HC-HK Coalition is to engage every sector of the community in an effort to change policy, education, and implement strategies to prevent and reduce substance abuse, other risky behavior, and to promote the wellness of the community.

### LEARN

This Board member becomes a member of the Board of Directors of LEARN, our regional education service center (RESC).

### **DELETE: Curriculum Council**

The Curriculum Council is made up of administrators, teachers, BoE members, and community members. District curriculum topics are presented and discussed.

### Haddam Killingworth Recreation Department

### Haddam Board of Selectmen

### Killingworth Board of Selectmen

## **Board Function**

### **Freedom of Information Act**

Please note: This is a high level overview of key aspects of the FOIA.

The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) provides the public access to the workings of public agencies such that the public shall have access to the meetings of public agencies, including boards of education, subject to narrow exceptions that are strictly construed. In addition, the law provides that the public shall have access to records that are developed and/or maintained by public agencies. Committee meetings of the Board must also comply with the FOIA.

Whenever the BoE holds a “meeting,” the posting, access and other requirements under the FOIA are triggered. The basic rule is that there is a “meeting” of the BoE anytime a quorum (6 of 11 members) of the BoE convenes to discuss or act upon a matter over which the BoE has responsibility. A “meeting” also occurs whenever there is a hearing or other proceeding of the BoE whether or not the quorum requirement is met. In addition, when the BoE has delegated authority to a smaller number of members, their actions are likely to be considered a proceeding of the BoE subject to the FOIA.

### **Meeting Requirements**

There are most commonly two types of “meetings” under the FOIA that Boards most typically hold (*regular* and *special*) and each has unique posting requirements. A *regular meeting* is one that has been included in the listing of regular meetings filed with the BoE clerk no later than January 31 of each year. The agenda for this type of meeting must be filed at least 24 hours before the meeting convenes and the posting must be available to the public. Generally, no business other than that listed on the posted agenda may be conducted at the meeting of the BoE, unless an item is added to the agenda by a **two-thirds vote** during a regular meeting.

Any meeting of the BoE which is not included on the list of regular meetings is a *special meeting*. Requirements for posting a special meeting are similar to those for a regular meeting: notice of the meeting, including the time and place, as well as the business to be conducted, must be filed at least 24

hours before the meeting convenes. For special meetings of the BoE, the posting must also be posted on the district website at least 24 hours before the meeting. Items cannot be added to the agenda of a special meeting.

The minutes of BoE meetings must be available to the public within seven days of the session (not including weekends and holidays when BoE offices are closed). Votes of the Board must be reduced to writing and available within forty-eight hours. The FOIA requires that minutes must contain the recording of votes and the names of those members in attendance. These requirements apply to meetings of Board subcommittee as well.

In order to appropriately apprise the public of the Board's work, Board minutes should contain the date, the time, and the location of the meeting. Also included should be the members in attendance, a brief description of any business transacted by the Board, along with any Board action, the recording of Board member votes, and a description of any executive session held, and the names of all individuals present for each executive session.

Members of the public may attend BoE meetings, except for that/those portion(s) properly designated as *executive session*. The BoE must indicate the reason for the executive session which identifies which of the five statutory reasons allowable (personnel matters, pending claims and litigation, security devices and real estate, confidential documents (such as student records or attorney-client privilege), collective bargaining issues, or other negotiations. Meetings to discuss labor negotiations where the Board acts as a hiring committee for a key position, and caucuses of the same political party are not subject to the requirements of FOIA.

Source: *Attorney Tom Mooney (Shipman and Goodwin) Practical Guide to Connecticut School Law (9<sup>th</sup> edition)*

Reference: *CGS 1-200 et seq*

## **Confidentiality**

Information and discussion in Board executive sessions is confidential and cannot be shared with the public. Information, discussion, and actions taken by Board members at disciplinary, expulsion, termination hearings is highly confidential. Much of the work of the Personnel and Evaluation subcommittee is also confidential. Disclosure of such information may violate one or more state or federal laws.

## **Robert's Rules of Order**

The Board conducts its meetings utilizing *Robert's Rules of Order*, except when these rules are in conflict with Board policy or Connecticut law. The Board Chair serves as the Board parliamentarian, unless another board member is chosen as parliamentarian by a majority of the Board.

Reference: *BOE By-Law 9325(a)*

## **Meeting Agendas**

The Superintendent, in conjunction with the Board Chair, develops an agenda for each Board meeting. Meeting agendas, along with necessary documents and material, are distributed to Board members prior to the meeting. Board agendas and the related documents are designed to facilitate discussion and voting.

## **Consent Agenda**

The consent agenda includes all voting items which are not expected to require Board discussion or debate. Consent agenda items typically consist of donations to schools, classrooms, or programs. A vote to approve the consent agenda by the Board shall approve all items listed on the consent agenda. If a Board member wishes to discuss an item, he/she shall request that the item be set aside/taken off the consent agenda, and it will be discussed and voted on separately.

Reference: *BOE By-Law 9323(a)*

## **Board Votes**

The Board of Education is a collective body and, as such, can act only via a vote by its members. Board votes must be taken in public at a properly noticed meeting of the Board and recorded in writing. Pursuant to Robert's Rules, in order to be brought to a vote, a motion must be made by one board member and seconded by another. Members may vote in favor or against a motion, or abstain from voting. Unless otherwise specified by Board policy, a majority of board members voting in favor of a particular motion is sufficient for approval.

## **Meeting Norms**

It is the expectation that the Board of Education is a professional organization whose members model appropriate behavior for the school district. Members should be prepared and arrive on time. Board meetings will be conducted via understood and established procedures as set forth in Board policy and bylaws.

If a Board member is unable to attend a Board or subcommittee meeting, he/she should inform the meeting Chair in advance.

In order to ensure that meetings of the Board are as effective and useful as possible, members will avoid surprises by articulating specific concerns in advance. The Board believes that informed, respectful discussion and debate is the best means of arriving at good decisions for the school district. Accordingly, Board members will listen attentively, consider all points of view, support their positions with facts when possible, be prepared to answer questions from other Board members, focus on the issue at hand, avoid negative and personal comments, and be prepared to compromise, understanding that the goal of debate among Board members is not to prevail but to arrive at the best possible decision for the school district.

At the beginning and end of regular Board meetings, members of the public have the opportunity to address Board members. This is not a time for debate or discussion, but instead a listening period for Board members. Any response will come from the Board Chair or the Superintendent. More complete and detailed responses may be furnished after the Superintendent and the Chair have had the opportunity to consider and/or research the remarks.

## **Board Hearings**

On occasion, Board members may be asked to serve as part of an impartial hearing board, for such hearings as student expulsion hearings, school accommodation hearings, and teacher termination hearings. For legal reasons, it is important that Board members not "prejudge" the issue prior to the hearing. Therefore, members should not be exposed to the details of the matter outside of the hearing.

## **Relationship with the Superintendent**

### **Search, Selection and Appointment of Superintendent**

The Board of Education is responsible for the appointment of the Superintendent. When conducting a search for a superintendent, the Board may vote itself as the personnel search committee. The Personnel Search Committee may meet without public notice or a requirement to allow the public to attend.

The search for, and selection of, a superintendent of schools should be thoughtful and informed, made with a clear understanding of the needs of the school district and the corresponding characteristics of an ideal superintendent, as well as an awareness of the availability of potential candidates. Although each search process is unique, generally the Board would be well advised to consult with the public and other informed individuals, both in and outside the district, when conducting a superintendent search.

### **Superintendent Evaluation**

The Board is responsible for evaluating the superintendent's performance, as well as making decisions concerning her/his contract of employment, such as compensation and contract extension. Following the conclusion of the school year, the Board shall conduct an evaluation of the superintendent's performance, utilizing a process and standards of performance that has been agreed upon in advance with the superintendent of schools.

### **Board Role in Hiring Process**

The Board does not have a primary role in the hiring process except for the Superintendent. It is Board policy to authorize the Superintendent to hire teachers and other personnel without direct involvement on the part of the Board members.

When hiring school administrators, the Board does have a more direct role. A Board member(s) selected by the Board Chair can participate in the interview process. Then the full Board interviews the recommended finalist

for the administrative position and votes to approve or not approve the recommendation.

## **Board Policies**

The Board develops and maintains policies which govern the school district and the Board and serve as guidelines for the effective and efficient operation of a school district committed to providing an exceptional educational experience for each student. Board policies are developed according to requirements set forth in Connecticut Statutes, State Department of Education recommendations, and the Board's bylaws, policies and mission statement. In order to ensure that Board policies are current and in compliance with statutory requirements, the Board may utilize attorneys or other consultants. While the Board may be advised concerning its policies by the Superintendent, its attorney or other consultants, the adoption of new policies, or the revision or repeal of existing policies is the sole responsibility of the Board.

## **BOARD ATTORNEY** (DRAFT)

**The attorney for Regional School District 17 shall be the legal advisor for the Board and its officers regarding questions related to their official duties. The Board may appoint, either full time or on a retainer basis, a law firm to serve as its legal counsel. The primary function of the attorney is to provide legal representation to the Board and the Superintendent.**

**The Board attorney shall:**

- 1. Advise the Board with respect to all legal matters relating to Regional School District 17 including, but not limited to, interpretation of the Connecticut General Statutes and all other statutes, rules and regulations affecting the District.**
- 2. Be easily accessible to the Board or Superintendent (or at the discretion of the Superintendent to his or her administrative staff) with respect to legal matters related to the day to day operation of the District.**
- 3. Review and represent the District in the preparation of any and all contracts which the District may be obliged to execute, other than**



**purchase orders issued for the purchase of goods, equipment and services.**

- 4. Give his or her written opinion on all legal questions referred to him or her by the Superintendent or Board Chairperson.**
- 5. Attend Board of Education meetings, conferences and other meetings as requested by the Board, the Superintendent or Board committees.**
- 6. Upon request, review the legality of rules, regulations and bylaws to be adopted by the Board.**

**The Board and Superintendent shall conduct an annual review of the performance of the Board attorney. At least every five years, or sooner if requested by the Board, District 17 will solicit responses to a Request for Proposals for District legal services.**

## **Budget Process**

By statute, the annual budget generation, review and approval process involves the following 8 steps

- 1) The superintendent works with the District Administration team to draft an initial budget.
- 2) This initial "superintendent's budget" is reviewed and edited by the Board.
- 3) After any adjustments are made as recommended by the Board, the resultant budget is approved by the Board.
- 4) This "proposed budget" is made available for public review, and public comment meetings are held.
- 5) The Board may update the budget, considering recommendations from town officials and residents
- 6) The Board approves the final budget.
- 7) An Annual Budget Meeting is held the first Monday in May to call the final budget to a town vote.
- 8) A referendum vote is held in each town the following day.

Reference: *CGS 10-51*

## **Board Member Function, Authority and Expectations**

### **Board Member Authority**

The Board and its individual members are not involved in the day-to-day operation of the schools.

Individual Board members have no authority except when they are meeting as a Board of Education. The Board of Education is a collective body and, by statute, can only act when a quorum is assembled in a legally constituted meeting. Outside of an official meeting, or unless otherwise designated by the board, an individual board member is an ordinary citizen, with no more authority than any other citizen. The statements or actions of individual Board members do not bind the Board of Education, except when that statement or action has been authorized by an official act of the Board. Board members should not act nor speak in a manner that suggests they are speaking or acting on behalf of the board of education or the school district when they have not been so authorized by the Board.

*Reference: Board By-Laws 9000, 9005, 9010*

### **Board Member Expectations**

Board members are expected to attend all regular and special meetings of the Regional District 17 Board, including meetings of their assigned subcommittees. While it is inevitable that, on occasion, an individual member will have a personal or professional conflict that prevents him/her from attending a meeting, ideally this is a rare and unavoidable circumstance. Service on the Board of Education is a public trust on behalf of the communities and children of Regional School District 17. It is expected that Board members will make this service a priority. The Board of Education functions best when all eleven members devote the time, energy, preparation, and seriousness of purpose necessary to accomplish exceptional work that is called for by public service.

Board members are expected to respect the confidentiality necessary for executive sessions of the Board, for special hearings of the Board, and for contract negotiations process, and other Board communications and information.

## **Board Member Qualifications**

Individuals must be registered voters in Haddam or Killingworth in order to serve on the Board of Education. Employees of RSD 17 may not serve on the Board.

It is expected that Board of Education members will share a commitment to providing an exceptional educational experience for each student, a willingness to work and study to become well-versed in public education and RSD 17 schools, and a sincere desire to be part of a high-functioning governing body that takes the responsibilities of public service seriously.

A newly elected Board member must be sworn in by her/his respective town clerk before serving on the Board.

## **Resignation of Board Members**

Board members who wish to resign from the Board of Education must submit a letter of resignation to the town clerk, with a copy to the Board Chair. A member's resignation is not effective until it is filed with the town clerk.

Reference: *Board By-Laws 9222*

## **Filling a Vacancy on the Board**

If a vacancy occurs on the RSD 17 Board of Education, the vacancy is filled by the respective town, in accordance with Section 10-46 of the Connecticut General Statutes. The new member will serve out the term of the resigning Board member.

Reference: *Town Charters of Haddam and Killingworth*

## **Discipline of Board Members**

Although the Board of Education cannot remove individuals from service as Board members, it does have the authority and ability to discipline individual members. Board members who violate the rules, regulations or policies of the Board, interfere with the orderly and efficient operation of the Board, or act in ways that are contrary to the best interests of the school district can be subject to a vote of censure by the Board. A censure vote is an expression of disapproval concerning an individual member by the Board.

Board officers can be removed from their office by a majority vote of the Board.

Reference: *Board By-Laws 9222, 9272*

## **Board Member Orientation**

Orientation opportunities are provided for newly elected members. As part of the orientation, candidates will be provided a package of materials including the Board member handbook and other appropriate materials.

## **Indemnification of Board Members**

Connecticut law provides that the school district must indemnify and hold school employees, volunteers and board members harmless from any claim, demand or judgment from negligence in the performance of their duties and responsibilities. This protection includes legal fees, expenses and other costs. Indemnification is not allowed where the member's actions are found to be wanton, reckless or malicious. Generally, this will not apply if the member is acting reasonably and in good faith.

Reference: *CGS 10-235*

## **Reference Information**

### **Board of Education Email**

The District provides a district email account for all Board members. All email correspondence pertaining to Board business, regardless of account used, is subject to the Freedom of Information Act.

### **Regional School District Website**

Board information can be found on the district website at [www.rsd17.org](http://www.rsd17.org).

### **Regional School District 17 Facebook Page**

The Regional School District 17 Facebook page can be accessed through the Facebook site or through the district website location. Photographs and articles on the site are subject to approval by the Superintendent or designee.

## **Glossary of Terms**

The following are terms commonly used when discussing various aspects of the RSD 17 school district and may provide a reference for you.

### **Adjusted Equalized Net Grand List Per Capita (AENGLC, etc.)**

The Adjusted Equalized Net Grand List (AENGL) of each town is divided by the population of that town to obtain a measure of property/income wealth per person. This is the definition currently used to compare town's ability to finance educational costs.

### **Average Daily Membership (ADM)**

Average Daily Membership is the average number of students in a school district. In October, a count is made of the number of students in a school district. From this measure, students are counted in their town of residence-the town that pays for their education.

### **Common Core State Standards (CCSS)**

Building on the best of existing state standards, the Common Core State Standards provide clear and consistent learning goals to help prepare students for college, career, and life. The standards clearly demonstrate what students are expected to learn at each grade level, so that every parent and teacher can understand and support their learning.

### **District Reference Groups (DRGs)**

A district reference group (DRG) is a classification of each school system in a state into a group of 'like' school systems. Seven data indicators are used to classify similar districts into a DRG: three indicators of socioeconomic status, three indicators of need, and enrollment. There are nine classification groups starting with the most affluent to the most in need. Regional School District 17 is in Group C.

### **Education Cost Sharing (ECS)**

Education Cost Sharing is the grant program of state aid that was created as a result of a Public Act of 1988. The new grant program (ECS) replaced both the Guaranteed Tax Base (GTB) and the Education Enhancement Aid (EEA) grant programs (which provided a formula for distribution of funds for minimum salary aid, salary aid and teacher pupil ratio aid). The new legislation also revised the Minimum Expenditure Requirement (MER) program by setting a new definition of eligible expenditures, regular program expenditures, and by eliminating alternate MERs.

### **Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)**

This federal law passed in 1993 allows employees who meet the eligibility requirements to access unpaid leave for specified purposes. The leave can extend up to twelve weeks in a twelve month period and the employer is obligated to maintain health insurance benefits during the leave period.

### Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

A federal statute that requires districts to keep student educational records confidential and not reveal such information without the prior written consent of the parent or student aged 18 or older.

### Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)

State law that requires districts to make copies of public records for the benefit of the public and to have records available for public inspection, subject to certain exceptions listed in the law.

### Individualized Education Program (IEP)

An IEP is a written statement for a child with disabilities that is developed and implemented in accordance with P.L. 94-142 regulations. The program is developed by a placement team consisting of a certified employee who is qualified to supervise special education, the child's teacher (regular and special education), one or both parents, the child, if appropriate, and other individuals at the discretion of the parent or the school. A program is developed taking into account the child's current level of educational performance, and including short term and annual goals.

### Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

A federal law addressing the needs of children with disabilities and protecting their right to a free and appropriate public education.

### Municipal Employees' Relation Act (MERA)

The Connecticut collective bargaining statute that governs negotiations between a board of education and its non-certified staff.

### Minimum Budget Requirement (MBR)

The statutory requirement replacing MER (Minimum Expenditure Requirement repealed in 2007). MBR insures that a portion of a municipality's education grant increase is directed to education. In the absence of special exceptions the amount of a town's budget for public education cannot be decreased from the previous year.

### Planning Placement Team (PPT)

The body that develops an IEP (individualized Educational Program) for a disabled student. The body consists of the parents, a certified district employee qualified to supervise special education, the child's teachers (regular and special education), and other individuals at the discretion of the parent or school.

### Regional Educational Service Centers (RESCs)

A regional educational service center is a public educational authority formed within a regional state planning area by four or more boards of education for the purpose of cooperative action to furnish programs and services to the member boards of education.

### Reduction-in-Force (RIF)

The process whereby employment is terminated because of a need to reduce the staff rather than because of any performance inadequacies of the employee.

### Robert's Rules of Order

A book embodying parliamentary rules, first published in 1876 by Major Henry Robert and revised since then. These rules are not law, and thus are not binding upon meetings of a board of education. If the book is used for guidance, care should be taken because most of the book deals with meetings of assemblies or conventions and only a portion of the book deals with board meetings.

### Scientific Research Based Interventions (SRBI)

SRBI are proven teaching and assessment methods that may be integrated in a systemic way so that students who are not successful when presented with one set of instructional methods can be given the chance to succeed with the use of other practices.

### Section 504

A federal statute providing that no otherwise qualified disabled individual in the United States shall, solely by reason of her/his disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.

### Smarter Balanced Assessment

The Smarter Balanced Assessment is the name of the collective assessments aligned to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in English language arts/literacy (ELA/literacy) and mathematics for grades 3-8 and 11.

### Talented and Gifted(TAG) Aka "LEAP" in RSD17

A program designed for students who demonstrate high performance ability or capability and who would benefit from differentiated or accelerated education. TAG programs are those special instructional programs, supportive services, unique educational materials, learning settings, and other services that differentiate, supplement, and support the regular educational program in meeting the needs of gifted students.

### Title IX

Federal statute designed to eliminate discrimination on the basis of sex in any educational program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.



## Acronyms

|        |  |
|--------|--|
| ADM    | Average Daily Membership                                 |
| AENGLC | Adjusted Equalized Net Grand List Per Capita             |
| CABE   | Connecticut Boards of Education                          |
| CAPSS  | Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents |
| CAS    | Connecticut Association of Schools                       |
| CEA    | Connecticut Education Association                        |
| CHRO   | Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities             |
| CIAC   | Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference          |
| CIP    | Continuous Improvement Plan                              |
| CCSS   | Common Core of State Standards                           |
| DRG    | District Reference Group                                 |
| ECS    | Education Cost Sharing                                   |
| EL     | English Language Learners                                |
| ENGL   | Equalized Net Grand List                                 |
| FERPA  | Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act                |
| FMLA   | Family and Medical Leave Act                             |
| FOIA   | Freedom of Information Act                               |
| FOIC   | Freedom of Information Commission                        |
| HC-HK  | Healthy Communities-Healthy Kids (under HKYFS)           |
| GED    | General Educational Diploma                              |
| HKEA   | Haddam-Killingworth Education Association                |
| HKYFS  | Haddam-Killingworth Youth and Family Services            |
| IDEA   | Individuals with Disabilities Act                        |
| IEP    | Individualized Education Program                         |
| MBR    | Minimum Budget requirement                               |
| MER    | Minimum Expenditure Requirement                          |
| MERA   | Municipal Employee Relations Act                         |
| NCEP   | Net Current Expenditures per Pupil                       |
| NEASC  | New England Association of Schools and Colleges          |
| NSBA   | National School Board Association                        |
| OCR    | Office of Civil Rights                                   |
| PPT    | Planning and Placement Team                              |
| RESC   | Regional Educational Service Center                      |
| RSD    | Regional School District                                 |
| SDE    | State Department of Education                            |
| SRBI   | Scientific Research Based Intervention                   |
| TAG    | Talented and Gifted program for students                 |
| TEAM   | Teacher Education and Mentoring Program                  |
| TNA    | Teacher Negotiations Act                                 |
| TRB    | Teacher Retirement Board                                 |

## **Helpful Reference Sites and Information Sources**

|  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| <a href="http://www.rsd17.org">www.rsd17.org</a>                                   | Regional School District 17 Website   |
| <a href="https://www.facebook.com/HKSchools">www.facebook.com/HKSchools</a>        | Haddam-Killingworth Facebook page     |
| <a href="http://www.cabe.org">www.cabe.org</a>                                     | CT Association of Boards of Education |
| <a href="http://www.nsba.org">www.nsba.org</a>                                     | National School Boards Association    |
| <a href="http://www.sde.ct.gov">www.sde.ct.gov</a>                                 | State Department of Education         |
| <a href="http://www.cga.ct.gov/">www.cga.ct.gov/</a>                               | Connecticut General Assembly          |
| <a href="http://www.learn.k12.ct.us">www.learn.k12.ct.us</a>                       | LEARN                                 |
| <a href="http://www.haddam-killingworthnow.com">www.haddam-killingworthnow.com</a> | Haddam-Killingworth Now               |
| <a href="http://www.haddambulletin.com">www.haddambulletin.com</a>                 | Haddam Bulletin                       |

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### Berlin Board of Education

Berlin Board of Education Member Handbook, adopted October 2011

### Fairfield Board of Education

Fairfield Board of Education Handbook, approved June 26, 2012

### Becoming a Better Board Member

National Association of School Boards, Third Edition, 2006

### CABE's Board Meeting Guide

(The Freedom of Information Act and Parliamentary Procedures)

Patrice McCarthy and Kelly B. Moyher

CABE, December 2013

### The Collective Bargaining Handbook

Kelly Moyher

CABE, August 2012

### Connecticut Glossary of School Board Terms

CABE, reprinted January 2013

### Media Tips

CABE, laminated pocket guide

### Parliamentary Motions

CABE, laminated pocket guide, 1991

### A Practical Guide to Connecticut School Law

Thomas B. Mooney, Shipman & Goodwin, 9<sup>th</sup> Edition, 2018

### Robert's Rules of Order

12<sup>th</sup> Printing, 1984

### Roles and Responsibilities of Board of Education Membership

CABE, revised July 2012