

Summary of October 2021 Board of Education Meetings

Superintendent Transition: In October, the District welcomed Jeff Wihbey as the new RSD17 Superintendent of Schools. Superintendent Wihbey presented his Entry Plan which includes conducting facility inspections, reviewing policies, contracts, and budgets, and holding interviews and focus groups with stakeholders throughout the community. At the completion of the entry plan, the Superintendent's observations, data analysis, and stakeholder feedback will be shared formally with the Board and at PTO and faculty meetings across the district. The Board has asked Interim Superintendent JeanAnn Paddyfote to stay on through the end of her contract to create an Employee Handbook, write district job descriptions, update district policies, and support the Superintendent during the transition.

Strategic Plan: As part of its strategic planning process launched this spring, Regional School District 17 is conducting a district-wide survey until December 1st. The survey is open to employees, parents, students, recent alumni and community members without students in the District. Involvement of the entire community is important to the long-term framework for decision-making that builds upon the common values held by the RSD17 community. The survey can be found at www.rsd17.org/district/rsd17-strategic-planning-survey

District Update Emails: The Board of Education announces a new way for Haddam and Killingworth residents to stay up-to-date with District information by signing up for email updates. Through a partnership with the Towns of Haddam and Killingworth's alert system, District emails will include board meeting summaries, occasional surveys, and information on Annual Budgets and Referendums. You can also sign up to receive updates and alerts from Haddam and/or Killingworth. Sign up for email updates at www.rsd17.org/community/haddam-and-killingworth-alerts

Science Textbook Update: The Curriculum Subcommittee recommended, and the Board agreed, to update the AP Biology textbook. The AP Board recommends textbooks be updated every 10 years, and the current textbooks are from 2011. The AP Biology curriculum is being updated to focus less on memorization and more on the scientific thought process, integrating more authentic research and incorporating online study guides.

Facilities Assessment: The Facilities Committee has received a 300 page draft of the facilities assessment report from Tecton Architects. The firm's representatives gave the committee an overview of the report and the committee sent the firm back with notes of interest and areas of concern for follow up and research. The goal is to have a presentation to the full Board in December.

Finance Committee Update: Like last year, the finance committee is tracking unexpected Covid-related expenses. As of six weeks into school, approximately \$26,000 has been spent on additional hires and equipment. The committee also reported that the initial look at the unaudited balance from the end of the last fiscal year had two items to note; an increase in approximately \$113,000 in fuel costs and about \$90,000 in revenue from the Excess Cost Share Grant.

On our Website: The Strategic Plan Survey can be found on the www.rsd17.org website under "District" → "RSD17 Strategic Planning Survey".