

Summary of November 2021 Board of Education Meetings

Cougar Pride: Superintendent Jeff Wihbey explained how he will be starting each Board of Education meeting with Cougar Pride, recognizing the accomplishments of our staff and students at HK. In November, the HKMS Unified Sports team was highlighted. HKMS Unified Sports began in 2010 with a partnership between the CIAC and the Special Olympics. This program takes a modified approach to a variety of sports, allowing students of all abilities to participate alongside mentor students and represent HK in competitions. The HK Unified Sports team has won multiple awards in CT and been a model for other schools to build their own Unified Sports teams. Middle School teachers Becky Templeton and Andrea Darmanin were recognized for leading this year's team.

Additionally Superintendent Wihbey recognized the HKHS Boys and Girls Cross Country teams for both winning a Class SS State Championship Title. This is the third time since 2015 that both teams have won in the same year. Additional High School recognitions went to the HKHS Girls Volleyball team for winning the Shoreline Championship, the HKHS Drama's production of *Clue*, which sold out to a limited audience, and finally to the twenty-one students who were inducted to HKHS National Honor Society.

State COVID restrictions relaxed Superintendent Jeff Wihbey reported on two new Covid related updates from the CT Department of Health, which will allow RSD17 to alter operations towards a less restrictive environment for our staff and students. The first allows Districts to open up arts and music performances for parents to attend. The second, titled "Screen and Stay", gives guidance on reducing quarantine restrictions for staff and students after experiencing a close contact at school, whether they are vaccinated or not. The Superintendent will work with the District Medical Advisor, Administrators, and the local health districts to come up with a solid plan and communication strategy to adopt "Screen and Stay" at RSD17.

Social Emotional Learning: The District's Student Services Department is participating in a pilot program offered by the Connecticut State Department of Education that will enable RSD 17 to monitor all students' Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) using the Aperture Assessment System. This tool allows K-8 classroom/homeroom teachers to complete a short 8 question online tool for each of their students, which asks how often a child has demonstrated specific social and emotional skills in the past month. High school students will complete self-ratings during their advisory period. Results will be shared with school teams to identify which students who are in need of additional SEL instruction and/or counseling support. The Aperture system will be administered two more times during this school year for progress monitoring.

On our Website: You can read more about "Screen and Stay" on our RSD17.org website under District →COVID-19 Resources & Communications or by following this link: <https://www.rsd17.org/district/covid-19-resources>