

**REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 17
BOARD OF EDUCATION -
MEETING MINUTES
August 15, 2023**

A meeting of the Regional School District No. 17 Board of Education was held on August 15, 2023, in the Central Office Board Room.

Board Member Attendance:

Board Member	Present	Absent	Board Member	Present	Absent
Prem Aithal	X		Dr. Nelson Rivera		X
Lisa Connelly	X		Corey Roberts		X
Dr. Joel D'Angelo	X		Peter Sonski	X	
Jennifer Favalora	X		Dr. Kathleen Zandi	X	
Shawna Goldfarb	X		Suzanne Sack		X
Hamish MacPhail	X				

Also Present: Superintendent of Schools Jeffrey Wihbey, Assistant Superintendent Jennifer Miller, Board Administrator Sarah Kaiser, Director of Fiscal and Operations David Solin

Visitors: 3

The Board meetings are videotaped and posted on the RSD17 Website under the Board of Education, BOE Meeting Schedules & Minutes for public viewing.

1. Call to Order/Opening of Meeting

Board of Education Vice Chair Jennifer Favalora called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

2. Superintendent's Report

a. Monthly Summary and Updates

Superintendent Wihbey provided the Board with an update on the Convocation event welcoming back our staff members. The event will be held on August 29, 2023, at the HK Middle School. He invited all Board members to attend. He also invited the Board to tour the schools with him on the first day of school, August 30th. The Superintendent will be visiting all the schools for a longer visit on August 31st-September 6th.

The Superintendent provided an update on transportation and the swing bridge for Haddam Neck busing status. STA completed several test runs over the summer after receiving feedback on the concerns from parents to find the best solution for the busing arrangements on the days of the bridge closures. STA will be able to pick up and drop off the students at all the normal stops on the Monday am/pm, Tuesday am/pm, and Wednesday morning routes where the bridge will be closed. The alternative route will be over the Arrogoni Bridge and up Route 9 with a contingency of going on I-95 if there is an issue with crossing the Arrogoni Bridge. In the event of any route changes, a notification will be sent to parents by the automatic notification system.

Superintendent Wihbey advised on updates to the installation of the boiler at KES, the new kiln with updated electrical was installed at the High School, and the new reach-in refrigerator for the Cougar Cafe is ready for the school year.

Food Services reported that the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) has allocated funds to the state to help families with school meals. RSD 17 will serve students free breakfast for the 2023-24 school year, and students who qualify for reduced or free meals will also receive a free lunch for the school year.

The Superintendent updated the Board that the District is close to being fully staffed for the start of the school year. He also reported that the Human Resources department is in the process of moving all annual evaluations to an online platform system.

The Curriculum Coordinators led a couple of big projects this summer. The launch of the district Curriculum Council and professional development connected with the CSDE.

3. Public Comment

Joseph Zipolo of Higganum spoke to the Board on the hiring process.

4. Committee Reports

A. Finance/Facilities Subcommittee

a. Master Plan Update

Committee Chair Sonski reported that the Committee met on the 25th of July. Tecton provided an update to the Committee on the Master Plan process. Mr. Sonski reported that they are in the process of reducing and revising the number of proposals for the building design and implementation for the future. There will be another Community session in September. He noted that they are on schedule to have the process done at or near the end of the calendar year. Currently, there is attention being paid to transportation analysis and the analysis of the financial impact on the Board budget and in turn the Towns' budgets.

Mr. Sonski reported that Principal Reed presented to the Committee a proposal for enhancement to the playground at KES to accommodate students who are wheelchair users. The Committee offered some direction to him for proposed enhancements from the Operating Budget and offered a follow-up with the Superintendent if there are any Capital expenses for further enhancements.

The Committee received updates on the Facilities projects performed at the schools. There was a discussion on the High School elevator status.

The Committee received a proposal for hiring an owner's representative to represent the Board of Education in the process of grant filings and other Board related initiatives regarding the Master Plan. Mr. Sonski noted the Committee will address any concerns presented at the next subcommittee meeting and bring an update to the Board. Superintendent Wihbey provided additional insight into some of the functions that the representative would help manage and provide support to the Board. He also spoke on the summary of the RFP process.

Mr. Sonski reported that the Finance department is working to complete all the state-required reporting that is due at the end of the month. The team also had some improvements to the year-end closeout, which will be transferred to the Capital Fund.

B. Policy/Curriculum

Committee Co-Chair Dr. Zandi reported that the Committee reviewed and updated several policies for statutory updates. The policies have been submitted to the Consent Agenda as a first read. Superintendent noted that he will be providing the Board with the recent legislative update from the last Legislative session.

5. Board Member Reports, Announcements & Comments

A. Liaison Reports

a. HK Youth and Family Services

Shawna Goldfarb provided a list of events happening at HKYFS.

- Annual free haircut event on August 27th
- Food drive for the HK Backpack program
- School supplies for HK students
- Mentoring program starting for the new year

HKYFS has a new Prevention Coordinator, Kyana Anderson, who has started and is excited to be starting the new year with the clubs and other community activities.

b. LEARN

None

c. Haddam Killingworth Recreation Department

None

d. Haddam Board of Selectmen

None

e. Killingworth Board of Selectmen

None

6. Action Items

A. Consent Agenda

- a. Enrollment Report
- b. Personnel Report
- c. Financial Report

- d. Approval of Minutes from the July 8, 2023, Board of Education Workshop
- e. Approval of Minutes from the July 11, 2023, Board of Education Meeting
- f. Handbooks 2023-2024
- g. Approval request for the Disposal of obsolete HKHS textbooks and equipment. Submitted by Donna Hayward, Principal of Haddam-Killingworth High School.
- h. Acceptance of a donation from a member of the community of a 2005 vehicle to be used as an educational tool in the Automotive program. Submitted by Donna Hayward, Principal of Haddam-Killingworth High School.
- i. Approval request for the Disposal of obsolete BES textbooks. Submitted by Jennifer Beermuender, Humanities Curriculum Coordinator.
- j. Approval request for the Disposal of obsolete KES textbooks. Submitted by Jennifer Beermuender, Humanities Curriculum Coordinator.
- k. Approval request for the Disposal of obsolete HKIMS textbooks. Submitted by Jennifer Beermuender, Humanities Curriculum Coordinator.
- l. Approval request for the Disposal of obsolete HKMS World Language textbooks. Submitted by Jennifer Beermuender, Humanities Curriculum Coordinator.
- m. First Read of ten (10) policies for Review:
 - 1101 Non-Discrimination
 - 4112.5 Employment and Student Background Checks (certified)
 - 4212.5 Employment and Student Background Checks (non-certified)
 - 4118.11 Staff Non-Discrimination Policy and Complaint Procedures (certified)
 - 4218.11 Staff Non-Discrimination Policy and Complaint Procedures (non-certified)
 - 5131 Student Discipline
 - 5131.911 Bullying Prevention and Intervention and Safe School Climate Plan
 - 5152 Policy Regarding Non-Discrimination (Students)
- n. First Read four (4) Items of Information
 - 1101 R Administrative Regulations Regarding Discrimination Complaints (Community Members)
 - 4118.11 R/4218.11 R Administrative Regulations Regarding Regarding Staff Non-Discrimination Policy and Complaint Procedures
 - 5113 R Administrative Regulations Regarding Student Attendance, Truancy, and Chronic Absenteeism
 - 5131 R Administrative Regulations Regarding Alternative Educational Opportunities for Expelled Students

Prem Aithal requested that the Enrollment report be removed from the Consent agenda for further discussion.

Prem Aithal **MOVED** and Lisa Connolly **SECONDED** a motion to accept the Consent Agenda without the Enrollment report item A.

The motion was unanimously passed by affirmative voice votes 8-0-0 with gratitude.

The Board discussed the Enrollment report. There was a request for additional information on the comparison of enrollment decline from the Middle School to the High School in terms of percentage compared to previous years. Superintendent Wihbey will research and provide an update in the September Superintendent Report.

B. SPED Audit RFP Selection

Superintendent Wihbey reported to the Board the steps that were taken in the RFP selection process. There were five firms who submitted proposals and three were brought in the interview phase. The Superintendent provided the details that the firm New Solutions, through the RFP process, was selected for Board consideration. He noted that he would like New Solutions to provide recommendations by December so they can be properly allocated for next year’s budget process.

Shawna Goldfarb **MOVED** and Kathy Zandi **SECONDED** a motion for the Regional School District No. 17 Board of Education to award the Special Education Audit/Program Review contract to New Solutions K12 to be completed during the 2023-2024 school year.

Motion unanimously passed from the following voice votes 8-0-0.

Member	Vote	Member	Vote
Prem Aithal	X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A	Dr. Nelson Rivera	ABSENT
Lisa Connelly	X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A	Corey Roberts	ABSENT
Dr. Joel D’Angelo	X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A	Peter Sonski	X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A
Jennifer Favalora	X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A	Dr. Kathleen Zandi	X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A
Shawna Goldfarb	X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A	Suzanne Sack	ABSENT
Hamish MacPhail	X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A		

7. Board Member Reports, Announcements & Comments

Nothing to report

8. Executive Session

A. Personnel Matter-Superintendent Goals and Evaluation

Vice Chair Favalora tabled this item for another month.

Board Vice Chair Favalora adjourned the meeting at 7:32 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Kaiser
Administrative Assistant to the Board of Education

Approval: _____ Date: _____
Joel D'Angelo, Secretary