

**REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 17  
BOARD OF EDUCATION -  
MEETING MINUTES  
September 12, 2023**

The Regional School District No. 17 Board of Education meeting was held on September 12, 2023, in the HK High School Community Room.

**Board Member Attendance:**

<b>Board Member</b>	<b>Present</b>	<b>Absent</b>	<b>Board Member</b>	<b>Present</b>	<b>Absent</b>
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 Operations David Solin, Director of Athletics Lynne Flint, HKHS Principal Donna Hayward

**Visitors:** Approximately 30

**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 Chair Suzanne Sack called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

## 2. Superintendent's Report

### A. Cougar Pride

#### a. HKHS Athletic Achievements

Director Flint updated the Board on the athletic accomplishments from this past year.

- 12 All-State Athletes
- 1 All-New England Athlete-track
- 37 Shoreline Scholar Athletes-1st Team All Shoreline or 1st Team All-State and have a cumulative GPA of 3.5 and above
- 2 Shoreline Championship teams-Girls Cross Country and the Boys Lacrosse
- 2 State Championship teams-Girls Cross Country and the Boys Baseball
- 1 All-American Gymnast
- 2 SCC Boys Swimmer of the Year.

Director Flint also provided an update on the status of fall sports.

#### b. Recognition of Boys' Baseball team

Principal Hayward introduced Director of Athletics Lynne Flint and the 2023 State Champion Boys baseball team. Director Flint and Coach Brookes recognized the team's accomplishments in winning the State Championship.

The team, Coaches, and visitors left the meeting at 6:40 pm, leaving two visitors.

### B. Monthly Summary and Updates

Superintendent Wihbey reported to the Board that the opening of schools was successful. RSD17 was one of the few districts that opened fully staffed with certified personnel. He acknowledged the Principals and the Assistant Superintendent for their work in hiring individuals during the summer months.

The Superintendent provided an update on the transportation status over the first week of school. He noted that STA was able to retain the order of the pickup and drop-offs for Haddam Neck students regardless of bridge closures to keep the routes consistent.

Superintendent Wihbey reported the following Department and School updates:

- The athletic fields were sodded and ready for the field hockey season.

- Per new CSGA statutes, the all-gender bathrooms have been identified with signage and privacy locks have been installed.
- A licensed social worker began at HKHS and HKIMS as part of the three-year school mental health grant RSD 17 received.
- RSD 17 will launch the Frontline professional growth module for evaluation documents this year.
- The Curriculum Coordinators worked on many projects during the Summer of 2023.
- Preliminary work has begun for the annual federal audit.
- The LEARN transition remains on track.
- The High School is pleased to announce ten junior class members received recognition for their performance on the PSAT. The students were awarded the National Rural and Small Town Award.

The Superintendent provided the Board with a summary of 2023 Legislative Updates. The areas of statutory changes involved areas such as District Operations, Students, Special Education, Teaching and Curriculum, Employment, and other items. He also spoke to the FY2024-FY2026 Educational Cost Sharing Entitlements.

### **3. Public Comment**

None

### **4. Discussion Items**

#### **A. High School Graduation Presentation**

Principal Hayward presented the outcomes analysis for the Class of 2023 to the Board. She noted trends for this year include the slight increase in the percentage of students choosing to continue their formal education after HKHS. The acceptance rate overall also increased, although there was a decrease in the percentage of applications sent to Most Competitive colleges compared to the Class of 2022. STEM-related fields and Business were the students leading intended major categories for our students, which is a shift from the historically more popular health sciences. Principal Hayward also noted that she is monitoring the number of students in each graduating class pursuing a career in education.

Two members of the public left the meeting at 7:18 pm. Principal Hayward and Director Flint left the meeting at 7:21 pm.

### **5. Action Items**

#### **A. Consent Agenda**

- a. Enrollment Report
- b. Personnel Report
- c. Expenditure and Revenue Report
- d. Approval of Minutes from the August 15, 2023, Board of Education Meeting
- e. Acceptance of a donation in the amount of \$100.00 received from the Haddam Women’s Club. This donation will be deposited directly into the Student Activity Fund to be used towards student scholarships. Submitted by Dorothy Ventura, Principal of Haddam-Killingworth Middle School.
- f. Acceptance of a donation in the amount of \$100.00 received from the Haddam Women’s Club. This donation will be deposited directly into the Student Activity Fund to be used towards student scholarships. Submitted by Eric Larson, Principal of Haddam-Killingworth Intermediate School.

Jennifer Favalora **MOVED** with gratitude, and Lisa Connolly **SECONDED** a motion to accept the Consent Agenda as presented.

**Motion unanimously passed from the following voice votes 10-0-0.**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Vote</b>	<b>Member</b>	<b>Vote</b>
Prem Aithal	X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A	Dr. Nelson Rivera	X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A
Lisa Connelly	X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A	Corey Roberts	X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A
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	ABSENT	Suzanne Sack	X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A
Hamish MacPhail	X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A		

B. Second Read and Board Action on Eight (8) policies and four (4) Items of Information:

- 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)

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 Student

Hamish MacPhail **MOVED**, and Dr. Joel D’Angelo **SECONDED** a motion to approve the policies as presented.

**Motion unanimously passed from the following voice votes 10-0-0.**

Member	Vote	Member	Vote
Prem Aithal	X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A	Dr. Nelson Rivera	X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A
Lisa Connelly	X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A	Corey Roberts	X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A
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	ABSENT	Suzanne Sack	X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A
Hamish MacPhail	X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A		

## 6. Committee Reports

### A. Finance/Facilities Subcommittee

Master Plan Update - A Tecton representative reviewed the project's current status with the Committee. Mr. Sonski reported that a third community conversation will be held on September 13th at 6:00 pm following an open house tour of the High School. The Committee has been working to refine the number of proposals to the Towns based on feedback and the committee's review of several factors, such as

efficiencies and how we see education being delivered to the students in the future.

Mr. Sonski spoke about the financial report provided to the Board. There was a reported estimated fund balance of \$150,000.

Owner’s Rep RFP -

Mr. Sonski spoke to the Board on a request to procure an Owner’s Representative to guide the District in the pre-referendum phase of the Master Plan process. Mr. Sonski provided areas of services that a qualified candidate would be responsible for during the project process. The Board discussed the qualifications needed to support the project process successfully and the cost of this phase of the project.

Peter Sonski **MOVED**, and Prem Aithal **SECONDED** a motion to authorize the Superintendent to release an RFQ for an Owner’s Rep for Board consultation on the Master Plan not to exceed \$35,000.

**Motion unanimously passed from the following voice votes 10-0-0.**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Vote</b>	<b>Member</b>	<b>Vote</b>
Prem Aithal	X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A	Dr. Nelson Rivera	X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A
Lisa Connelly	X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A	Corey Roberts	X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A
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	ABSENT	Suzanne Sack	X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A
Hamish MacPhail	X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> A		

**B. Communications/Strategic Planning**

Prem Aithal reported on a special meeting with the full Board to discuss the strategic plan and align the plan with the Superintendent’s priorities and the Board’s goals. The committee also discussed the subcommittee structure and Board self-evaluation.

**5. Board Member Reports, Announcements & Comments**

**A. Liaison Reports**

a. HK Youth and Family Services

Jennifer Favalora reported on the following events:

- There was a successful free haircut event
- Backpack and Supplies program for students in need
- Accepting requests for the holiday gift-giving program
- Youth peer advocate Samantha Pach was one of two students the Governor's Prevention Council asked to speak at a press conference with Senator Blumenthal to advocate to stop the sale of flavored vapes.
- Through a received grant, HKYFS will provide training for the High School and Middle School Assistant Principals on the Catch Your Breath Program.
- Scott Driscoll will hold internet safety presentations for grades 4-8 and a Zoom conversation for parents.
- October 29th will be the Pumpkin Run.

b. Haddam Killingworth Recreation Department

Corey Roberts reported that their summer program was successful with higher attendance, and the fall sports program has started.

c. Haddam Board of Selectmen

None

d. Killingworth Board of Selectmen

Dr. Zandi reported that the committee met and appreciated the Board updates.

6. Executive Session

A. Personnel Matter-Superintendent Goals and Evaluation

The Board invited the Superintendent to attend the session.

Hamish MacPhail **MOVED**, and Lisa Connolly **SECONDED** a motion to go into Executive Session.

The Board went into Executive Session at 8:11 pm.

The Board ended Executive Session at 8:28 pm. The Board noted that they recognize and are grateful for the work and leadership the Superintendent is demonstrating for the District.

Board Chair Sack adjourned the meeting at 8:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Kaiser  
Administrative Assistant to the Board of Education

Approval: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Joel D'Angelo, Secretary