

Summary of December 2023 RSD17 Board of Education Meeting

Cougar Pride

Burr Elementary School Principal Whidden and Music Teacher Adrienne Foret introduced the BES Chorus, who performed God Bless America and You'll Sing a Song and I'll Sing a Song by Ella Jenkins for the Board and a large audience.

Superintendent Wihbey also presented the new RSD17 logo, designed by HKHS students in their career tech education class.

Welcome New Board Members

Board Chair Sack officially welcomed new BoE members Heather Pach from Haddam and Jennifer Voegtli from Killingworth on behalf of the full Board. Both members introduced themselves to the Board and the public.

Election of Executive Board Officers

The Board elected its new Executive Board as follows:

Chair - Suzanne Sack

Vice Chair - Jennifer Favalora

Treasurer - Prem Aithal

Secretary - Kathy Zandi

Student Representatives Report

Madison Moriarty and Michael Perry reported on events happening at the High School. Madison shared about Alumni Day, where graduates from last year come to talk to seniors about life after high school. The remaining student body attended an elective fair at the second event, where they heard about elective courses from fellow students before making course selections. Michael spoke to the Board first about the December concert and the 35th Annual Holiday Telethon that took place the day before the winter break. The charity chosen by the students this year is Kindness Over Muscular Dystrophy.

Board Chair Sack spoke about a recent HK News article about Madison Moriarty, whose cross-country coach called her "one of the most positive, upbeat, and encouraging athletes to come through our program."

Superintendent's Report

Reading Waiver

The State Department of Education approved the District's reading waiver request in a letter received on December 1st. RSD17 was one of only 17 districts that were approved by the State Department of Education. Superintendent Wihbey thanked Jennifer Beermuender and Judy Nacca for all of their work and leadership during the process.

Kindergarten Entry Legislative Change

Beginning with the 2024-25 school year, children must turn 5 on or before September 1st to enter kindergarten in CT for any given school year. Parents of students with birth dates ranging from September 1st to December 31st are allowed (per state language) to request early entry to kindergarten. The waiver process requires an assessment to determine readiness.

Master Plan Update

Jack Butkus from Arcadis presented an updated report on the Master Plan project. He discussed where the district is in the process, with four options being explored in further fiscal detail. The Board of Education will meet with the Boards of Selectmen and Finance from both towns on January 18th to present the progress to date.

Prem Aithal provided information on the two most recent surveys conducted to allow the public to share their priorities and preferences for the future of RSD17 properties. The BoE would like to thank the community members who participated in the surveys.

On Our Website

The RSD 17 Master Plan Information is available on the website under the District Facilities menu option [RSD 17 Facilities Study and Master Planning Website](#). Email masterplan@rsd17.org with any questions regarding RSD17's Master Plan project.