

Summary of May 2024

RSD17 Board of Education Meeting

Cougar Pride

Principal Brienne Whidden introduced the PE/Health Teacher Garrett Lemke and seven of his BES students who performed Cardio Drumming.

Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Wihbey recognized the district Teachers of the Year: Rebecca Aithal from BES, Jennifer Esposito from KES, Michael Czarkowski from HKHS, Kerry Geoghegan from HKMS, and Jessica Spearrin from HKIS. He also announced that Rebecca Aithal will be the RSD17 District Teacher of the Year.

The Superintendent reported to the Board on the following items:

- USI was onboarded as the new commercial insurance brokerage firm and began the marketing process for FY25 renewals.
- New vinyl composition tile flooring was installed at KES.
- Work has begun with stakeholders across the district to implement recommendations from the New Solutions program review.
- HKHS' Josh Hagewood has been named the winner of the 2024 Connecticut Council for the Social Studies John H. Stedman Passion for the Social Studies Teaching Award.
- The Superintendent provided the Board with a follow-up summary document on class size guidelines.

Student Representative Report

Madison Moriarty thanked the Board for her time as Student Representative over the last two years and provided updates on the following May and June HKHS events:

- Senior Outing
- Street Fest
- Senior Prom

Michael Perry reported on the AP testing and AAPPL testing for students in world languages who want to earn the seal of biliteracy. He also spoke about the Annual Award Night held on May 23rd. Board Chair Sack presented Michael and Madison with a certificate and thanked them for their hard work and service to the Board this year.

Middle School Plan Presentation

Principal Ventura presented the Middle School plan update to the Board, including what has been completed so far, plans and priorities, and next steps. She presented the shared vision statement, examples of the whole school structure and individualized support systems, and ways that communication has been implemented with parents and staff. Principal Ventura also discussed the focus on student achievement in math. She then presented scheduling changes and provided a comparison of the schedule from the 2023/2024 schedule to the 2024/2025 schedule.

SPED Program Review Presentation

Nathan Levenson from New Solutions presented the findings from the Special Education Program Review to the Board. He emphasized the special education and general education partnership and that this is a system-wide set of recommendations as well as opportunities for the next steps.

FY25 Debt Service Funding Recommendations

Director Whittaker discussed the district's debt service obligation in FY25 attributable to the HKHS Improvement General obligation bond issuance totaling \$930,000 in principal and interest. In an effort to mitigate the general budget increase for FY25, final State grant reimbursements related to the project that were received in FY24 (totaling \$495,999) were deposited into the Fund 35 account with the intention of paying debt service from the fund in FY25. This enabled the FY25 general budget to carry a debt service budget of \$430,001, representing the estimated portion of the FY25 total debt service payment of \$930K that will not be paid by Fund 35. The total will vary slightly as interest is currently accruing in the account, and the final payment out of the fund will be made in an amount that will liquidate the fund, closing the account. The Board unanimously approved a motion to partially fund the FY25 debt service obligation through Fund 35 to fully liquidate and close the fund, with the balance of any remaining debt service obligation to be paid through the FY25 General Budget.

Personnel & Evaluation Subcommittee

Corey Roberts reported that the committee discussed the PDEC teacher evaluation update, which will be presented to the Board in June. They also discussed the HR Central Office structure, the controller position, the Finance and Operations position, and an update on the Nurses' negotiations. The committee also discussed the Superintendent's evaluation process.

Finance & Facilities Subcommittee

Prem Aithal reported that the committee reviewed the monthly financial reports and any material change updates since the last forecast. He noted that the health insurance line was examined, which resulted in a favorable outcome of more than \$500K vs. the budget. Mr. Aithal also advised that the ECHMC rate will increase by 8% for FY25 versus the budgeted 7% and that the amount should be able to be absorbed from the savings expected for the FY24 health insurance review. Mr. Aithal reported that the end-of-year budget is projected to be unofficially under budget, with the capital being funded at the full 2% with this notification of the health insurance line item.

Policy Subcommittee

Hamish MacPhail reported that the committee addressed the first reading of the policies discussed at this evening's meeting. The committee also initially discussed a code of conduct/code of ethics.

Communications Subcommittee

Lisa Connelly reported that the committee met with Nick Caruso from CAFE, who presented the benefits of CAFE membership.

On Our Website:

RSD17 Board of Education information and calendars can be found at <https://www.rsd17.org/district/board-of-education>.