

Summary of November 2024 RSD17 Board of Education Meeting

Cougar Pride

HKMS Principal Ventura introduced 8th-grade student Alyssa Behnke, who read her Patriot Pen competition essay. Then Principal Ventura introduced Ben Bayley, Olivia Gait, Isla Barry, and Austin Sierota, who spoke on the school's new American flag retirement initiative. Flags are collected at the school on the first Wednesday of each month to be disposed of properly.

Student Representatives

Student representatives Michael Perry and Emma Giaccone reported to the Board on the following items:

- Southern Regional Musical Festival for the band and chorus students on November 23rd
- Junior/Senior Cougar Bowl November 25th - The Juniors were the champions this year
- The newly formed Math Honor Society
- The annual Principal's Cup Football Game will be held at HK on November 26th
- HKHS Chorus Concert December 5th
- HKHS band and jazz band concert on December 12th
- 5th annual K-4 concert December 13th

Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Wihbey reported to the Board on the following items:

- Both Burr Elementary and Killingworth Elementary have once again achieved "School of Distinction" honors from the CT Department of Education.
- The boys and girls Cross Country teams at HKHS have won the Class SS State Championship.
- RSD17 was awarded a National School Lunch Program Equipment Assistance Competitive Grant.
- RSD17 was awarded a Paraeducator Subsidy Grant.
- Sixteen new buses have been introduced in the district route rotation.
- Student services and support staff worked to develop new measures to increase behavioral interventions within the district.
- The Superintendent acknowledged Food Services employee Chris Judd, who is retiring in December after 28 years of service to the District.
- Updated forms for the Educator and Leader Professional Growth Plan were completed and are live on the evaluation platform.
- HKHS changed the format of the 8th Grade Parent Preview after exploring how to meet the changing needs of families and surveying parents as to the preferred format of informational events.

HKHS Feasibility Study

Michael Ayles from Antinozzi and Jack Butkus from Arcadis provided the Board with an update on the feasibility study and pre-referendum services. Mr. Ayles reported that Antinozzi has collected and reviewed facility information over the past few weeks and assessed the campus. The team began interviews with HKHS staff and obtained input on the educational programming and space needs of the high school. Two community workshops

were held on November 7th and 20th in the HKHS Auditorium. The workshops were designed to engage the community and inform them about the decision-making process for the high school project. The team discussed the potential of renovation vs rebuild, the current building challenges, and exploring future possibilities. They also actively encouraged community participation and input. Mr. Ayles and Mr. Butkus discussed the HKHS Feasibility Study Committee (HKHS-FSC) with the Board. They discussed the meeting dates that will take place from mid-December through February, all of which are posted on the RSD17 website and are open to public attendance. The committee includes BOE, BOS, and BOF representatives from the towns of Haddam and Killingworth.

Policy Subcommittee

Hamish MacPhail reported that the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent presented some administrative letters of process for informational purposes. The committee also reviewed the policies offered to the Board for the first read.

Curriculum Subcommittee

Kathy Zandi reported that the committee met with HKMS Principal Ventura, who provided an update on the Middle School Task Force and primarily focused on the positive status of the block scheduling. Student Services Director Puzarne presented an update on the New Solutions findings and discussed the professional development provided to math teachers through the SPDG math grant. The second topic discussed with the committee was that special education students need to be held to grade-level standards by aligning their skills learned to the standards. The third topic presented was regarding social-emotional learning. Lastly, the committee reviewed the textbook proposals presented for the first read.

Finance & Facilities Subcommittee

Suzanne Sack reported that the committee reviewed the monthly financial reports. Financial Director Pierce presented an updated presentation on the capital priority list and the master plan. The committee also reviewed the quarterly special education financial reports.

Announcements

Hamish MacPhail announced that he would be resigning from the Board effective as of mid-December. The Board chair thanked Hamish for his service and commitment to the Board and the District.

ON OUR WEBSITE:

RSD17 Board of Education information and past updates may be found at:

<https://www.rsd17.org/district/board-of-education>.

Information on the Master Plan and HKHS Feasibility Study may be found at [Master Plan Project \(google.com\)](#).