

Summary of December 2024 RSD17 Board of Education Meeting

Cougar Pride

- **Burr Elementary School**

Principal Brienne Whidden introduced her third-grade students who read to the Board what they had learned about the sea during their Wit & Wisdom unit.

- **HKHS Cross Country Teams**

Superintendent Wihbey discussed the accomplishments of the HKHS Boys and Girls Cross Country Championship teams. Board Chair Sack then presented the team members with a recognition certificate for their achievements.

- **BES and KES - Both Schools of Distinction**

Superintendent Wihbey announced that both Elementary Schools have again been named Schools of Distinction by the Connecticut Department of Education based on their academic excellence. This is the third year in a row for BES and the second in three years for KES. The Superintendent and the Board recognized the hard work and achievements of the Principals, Teachers, Staff, and Students. Board members and Assistant Superintendent Miller presented banners to the Principals and school representatives in recognition of the honor.

Student Representatives

Student representative Michael Perry reported to the Board on the following items:

- 16 HKHS students were accepted to the Southern Regional Music Festival. Most will audition for the All-State festival.
- The winners of the 2024 Gingerbread House competition were Jeffrey Thebeau and Alejandra Hubbard, who will be featured on WTNH Good Morning CT.
- The HKHS 36th Annual Telethon took place on December 20th and raised over \$10,000 for Haddam-Killingworth Youth and Family Services.
- Alumni Day was held on January 8th, where seniors had the opportunity to talk with recent graduates about their experiences after high school.

Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Wihbey reported to the Board on the following items:

- Initial budget meetings have been completed with administrators across the district.
- Principals from HKIS, BES, KES, and the Director of Student Services participated in a panel that discussed cell phone and social media use among young students.
- All RSD17 schools passed the Area Health District's annual health & safety inspections.
- Human Resources is preparing for the changes to the CT Paid Sick Leave law that will take effect in January 2025. HKHS was notified that the \$18,730 Perkins 2025 grant had been approved.
- HKMS's drone club will have its first competition at Woodstock Academy on February 1st and will host the second competition on February 8th.

HKMS Washington DC Field Trip May 2025

HKMS Principal Dorothy Ventura presented a request for approval of the 8th-grade trip to Washington, D.C., scheduled for May 2025. The Board unanimously voted to approve the trip.

HKHS Feasibility Study Team Update

Superintendent Wihbey advised the Board that Nelson Rivera and Corey Roberts will provide updates to the Board following Team meetings. They explained their roles and the expectations as liaisons to the Board moving forward. The Team reviewed the draft of the Educational Specifications and the existing HKHS space utilization, as well as the results from the community workshops. This information will all contribute to the development of options.

Mike Ayles and Fran DiFiore presented the Board with the first draft of the Educational Specifications draft for the High School project and the process perspective. The Board discussed the presented information and provided feedback. Board members discussed their initial questions and comments, and Mike Ayles from Antinozzi and Jack Butkus from Arcadis provided the Board with an update on the feasibility study and pre-referendum services.

Policy Subcommittee

Jennifer Voegtli reported that the committee continued discussing the code of ethics document. The Board voted to approve the following policies/updates:

- 1101-Policy and Administrative Regulations Regarding Non-Discrimination (Community)
- 3110-Board Budget Procedures and Line Item Transfers
- 4112.5/4212.5-Employment and Student Teacher Background Checks
- 4118.12/4218.12-Policy Regarding Employees and Sections 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990
- 4152.6/4252.6-Family and Medical Leave
- 5113-Student Attendance, Truancy, and Chronic Absenteeism
- 5115 Admission to Public Schools at or Before Age Five
- 5141.21-Administration of Student Medications in the School

Communications Subcommittee

Lisa Connelly reported that the committee reviewed the Board's self-evaluation survey, which drives the Board Development section of the Board's January workshop. The committee received an update from Heather Pach regarding CAFE and noted that Board members have been attending conferences and workshops. Mike Ayles from Antinozzi provided information on the high school project communications as well as a preliminary FAQ sheet.

Curriculum Subcommittee

Kathy Zandi discussed that the committee reviewed the high school Opportunities Book and upcoming course changes. HKHS Assistant Principal Adam Apicella provided additional clarifying information to the Board. The committee reviewed an additional textbook request and legislative updates related to the curriculum.

Personnel & Evaluation Subcommittee

Corey Roberts reported that the committee discussed the 2024-25 C.O. staffing plan. Director Pierce and Assistant Superintendent Miller presented the plan to the committee, stating that the comptroller position approved in the budget will be filled in 2025. A request was made for additional financial staffing information to be brought back to the committee.

Finance & Facilities Subcommittee

Director Pierce provided the committee with an internal OSHA standards report update and an update on the audit process. The committee reviewed the monthly financial reports and there were 7 of 10 discussions on the closure of the bank account for the self-insured bank account as the account was at \$0. The committee began a review regarding the upcoming busing contract.

Semi-Annual Board of Education Workshop

The Board held its semi-annual Strategic Planning Workshop on Saturday, January 11th. The agenda included a presentation and discussion regarding the HKHS project with representatives of Mike Ayles of Antinozzi and Jack Butkus of Arcadis. Preliminary information, including Educational Specifications were discussed. Superintendent Wihbey presented a current academic update, and the group worked on Board development and goals regarding the Strategic Plan.

ON OUR WEBSITE:

RSD17 BOE information and past updates may be found at:

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

Information on the HKHS Feasibility Study may be found at:

<https://sites.google.com/view/hkhsproject>.