



REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 17
BOARD OF EDUCATION
MEETING MINUTES
April 22, 2025

A meeting of the Regional School District No. 17 Board of Education was held on April 22, 2025, in the Haddam-Killingworth High School Community Room.

Board Member Attendance:

Board Member	Present	Absent	Board Member	Present	Absent
Joseph Centofanti	X		Dr. Nelson Rivera	X	
Sonja Charpentier	X		Corey Roberts		X
Lisa Connelly	X		Suzanne Sack	X	
Jennifer Favalora	X		Jennifer Voegtli (6:49pm)	X	
Shawna Goldfarb		X	Dr. Kathleen Zandi	X	
Heather Pach	X				

Also Present- Superintendent Jeffrey Wihbey, Assistant Superintendent Jennifer Miller, Director of Finance and Operations Alison Pierce, Director of Student Services Aaron Puzarne, Board Administrator Sarah Kaiser, Principal Eric Larson, Principal Donna Hayward, Principal Dorothy Ventura, Michael Ayles from Antinozzi Associates, Jack Butkus from Arcadis

Visitors: 9

Call to Order/Opening of Meeting

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

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Cougar Pride

Principal Larson and Music Teacher Nick Tedeschi introduced a choral video from the Connecticut Music Educators Association (CMEA) music festival, which featured selected HKIS students. Mr. Tedeschi explained that five students were chosen to participate in a statewide band and/or chorus collaboration, which involved several hours of rehearsals at Central Connecticut State University and culminated in a concert. Eleanor Holland (band), Reid Bobbie (chorus), and Connor Sperry (chorus) shared with the Board their favorite part of the experience and what they learned from it.

Mr. Tedeschi, students, and parents left the meeting at 6:40 pm.

Student Representative Report

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

- On April 23rd, the HK Art Show will be held at the Westbrook Outlets
- On April 23rd, following the Art Show, the Honor Society Induction will be at the Westbrook Outlets
- On May 2nd-3rd, the High will be performing the spring musical, The Drowsy Chaperone
- The Spring band and chorus concert will be on May 15th
- During the April break, 33 French students participated in the trip to France.
- The Junior Prom will be on April 25th. The theme is Under the Sea.
- On April 22nd, 8th-grade students visited the high school for a tour and information session.

Dr. Nelson Rivera **MOVED** and Lisa Connelly **SECONDED** a motion to move items 6.A. and 6.B. to immediately after item 4. The motion passed unanimously, as indicated by a show of hands from all members present.

Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Wihbey introduced State Representative Renee LaMark Muir. Representative LaMark Muir spoke to the Board, providing an update and information on bills recently passed, the state budget, and education-related items.

The Superintendent reported to the Board on the following items:

- The district has engaged PowerSchool E-Enrollment and E-Forms, and the implementation process is now underway, marking a key step in streamlining our digital student registration and form workflows.
- The Community Room has been equipped with hardwired connections to ensure a strong and reliable internet connection for virtual participants, thereby enhancing the quality of hybrid meetings and events.
- The team is currently working with Orton Gillingham to increase the number of staff who are trained in the science of reading.
- RSD17 participated in the UCONN NEAG School of Education Career Fair. This recruitment effort provided an opportunity to showcase our district and attract high-quality candidates.

- HKHS's Amelia Petersen became the first HK female wrestler to win a state championship at the 2025 CIAC Girls State Wrestling Championship on March 1st! Amelia (18-0) won her fourth girls' tournament of the season by pinning Stratford's winner in 3:29 in the final match of the 138 lb. class.

Public Comment

- Seth Thomen of Higganum addressed the Board regarding the High School project and his support for the Technical Education Program.
- Jamie Ritone of Higganum addressed the Board regarding changes in the District Leadership positions.

High School Graduation Date

Heather Pach **MOVED** and Jennifer Voegtli **SECONDED** a motion to have the Class of 2025 Graduation date set as June 11, 2025.

Motion unanimously passed from the following roll call votes 9-0-0

Member	Vote	Member	Vote
Joseph Centofanti	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A	Dr. Nelson Rivera	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A
Sonja Charpentier	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A	Corey Roberts	ABSENT
Lisa Connelly	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A	Suzanne Sack	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A
Jennifer Favalora	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A	Jennifer Voegtli	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A
Shawna Goldfarb	ABSENT	Dr. Kathleen Zandi	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A
Heather Pach	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A		

Principal Hayward and the student representatives left the meeting at 7:10 pm.

Approval Request for the 8th Grade Class Trip to Washington, D.C., May 2026

Principal Ventura presented to the Board a proposal for the 8th grade class to visit Washington, D.C., in May of 2026. She discussed the planning details and provided some of the attractions that were expected to be part of the trip. The request was scheduled at this time to allow for preparation purposes.

Dr. Kathy Zandi **MOVED** and Lisa Connelly **SECONDED** a motion for the Board of Education to approve the HKMS 8th Grade Class Trip to Washington, D.C., scheduled for May 2026.

Motion unanimously passed from the following roll call votes 9-0-0

Member	Vote	Member	Vote
Joseph Centofanti	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A	Dr. Nelson Rivera	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A
Sonja Charpentier	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A	Corey Roberts	ABSENT
Lisa Connelly	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A	Suzanne Sack	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A
Jennifer Favalora	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A	Jennifer Voegtli	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A
Shawna Goldfarb	ABSENT	Dr. Kathleen Zandi	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A
Heather Pach	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A		

Principal Ventura and Principal Larson left the meeting at 7:13 pm.

Quarterly Financial Reporting

Director Pierce presented an overview of the Quarter 3 review and analysis. She reported on the FY25 estimated budget revenue amount of \$1,285,128, with 77.5% of the amount collected year-to-date. Director Pierce reviewed the expenditure budget and discussed the year-to-date balances, as well as the explanations for any overages in the series. She reviewed risks and opportunities, as well as highlighting an analysis of significant sources of revenue and expenditures. Director Pierce concluded with recommendations and action steps.

Consent Agenda

- a. Enrollment Report
- b. Personnel Report
- c. Policies for Review-First Read
 - 6146 P - High School Graduation Requirements
 - 6147 P - Weighted Grading and Calculation of Grade Point Averages
- d. Approval request for the inventory disposal of 45 obsolete Grade 4 Social Studies books. Submitted by Jennifer Beermuender, Humanities Curriculum Coordinator.
- e. Approval request for the inventory disposal of 54 obsolete Grade 7 Introduction to Chemistry workbooks and teacher edition book. Submitted by Heather Rigatti, Curriculum Coordinator for Math, Science, and Technology.

- f. Approval of Minutes from the March 18, 2025, Board of Education Meeting. Approval of Minutes from the March 18, 2025, Board of Education Community Input Meeting
- h. Approval of Minutes from the March 25, 2025, Board of Education Meeting (Budget Workshop)
- i. Approval of Minutes from the March 28, 2025, Board of Education Special Meeting
- j. Approval of Minutes from the April 1, 2025, Board of Education Meeting (Annual Hearing)
- k. Approval of Minutes from the April 1, 2025, Board of Education Special Meeting

Heather Pach **MOVED** Sonja Charpentier **SECONDED** a motion to approve the consent agenda as presented.

Motion unanimously passed from the following roll call votes 9-0-0

Member	Vote	Member	Vote
Joseph Centofanti	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A	Dr. Nelson Rivera	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A
Sonja Charpentier	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A	Corey Roberts	ABSENT
Lisa Connelly	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A	Suzanne Sack	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A
Jennifer Favalora	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A	Jennifer Voegtli	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A
Shawna Goldfarb	ABSENT	Dr. Kathleen Zandi	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A
Heather Pach	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A		

HKHS Project Update - Feasibility Study Team Update

Superintendent Wihbey reported that the Feasibility Team met on April 21st to review the feedback from the public community forum.

Dr. Nelson Rivera provided an introduction that offered an overview of the team members. Dr. Rivera addressed the team's charge, which was to select a conceptual design that met the educational specifications for the high school program. In the process, the team factored in the programming, the curriculum, and the values of HK. Other factors involved state requirements, project costs, impact on students, and consideration of value to the community. He reported that the team came to a consensus twice to recommend a new conceptual design for a build to

the Board of Education. The first was prior to the public forum session, and the second was following the April 10th public forum session. He noted that the Feasibility Team has met the charge and returned the item to the Board.

The Board engaged in a thorough discussion following the final update presented by Dr. Rivera. Members reflected on the process, lessons learned, considerations of project options, and the need for clear communication. The Board discussed the submission of the grant application in June 2025 and determining the referendum date at a later time.

Public Comment- Related to the High School Project

Eileen Blewett of Killingworth addressed the Board regarding Board representation at the April 10th public community forum meeting.

Board Action Connected to the HK High School Project

Dr. Nelson Rivera **MOVED** and Lisa Connelly **SECONDED** a motion that the Regional School District 17 Board of Education accepts the recommendation of the Haddam-Killingworth High School Feasibility Study Team to put to community referendum the new high school option. This option includes retaining and renovating space for Central Office and other District Support functions.

Motion passed from the following roll call votes 6-2-1

Member	Vote	Member	Vote
Joseph Centofanti	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A	Dr. Nelson Rivera	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A
Sonja Charpentier	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A	Corey Roberts	ABSENT
Lisa Connelly	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A	Jennifer Voegtli	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A
Jennifer Favalora	☐ YES X NO ☐ A	Dr. Kathleen Zandi	☐ YES X NO ☐ A
Shawna Goldfarb	ABSENT	Suzanne Sack	☐ YES ☐ NO X A
Heather Pach	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A		

Jack Butkus and Michael Ayles left the meeting at 9:06 pm.

Reserve Fund For Educational Expenditures Approval Request

Director Pierce presented to the Board a request to allocate \$200,000 from the reserve fund to purchase items supporting the first year of the elementary school FF&E project.

Director Pierce responded to key questions to further expound on the project.

- For each school, which grade level will receive the new FF&E first?

- A comprehensive four-year package will be developed and implemented in phases. Both principals have agreed to begin with the third-grade classrooms, as well as shared instructional spaces, subject to financial availability.
- What specific items will be purchased?
 - The scope includes classroom furniture such as desks, chairs, bookcases, storage cabinets, shelving, and activity tables. In addition, special area rooms (e.g., art, library) will receive items including art tables, activity tables, standard tables, chairs, storage units, and library shelving.
- What is the approximate cost to outfit the grades?
 - The project will be budgeted as a four-year initiative, with a total estimated cost not to exceed \$800,000. This equals \$200,000 per year based on assessed needs, but not to exceed \$200,000.
- What is the anticipated timeline for delivery and installation?
 - Installations are planned for the summer months. Upon the conclusion of the academic year, the removal of existing furniture will commence, followed by the delivery and installation of new furniture, fixtures, and equipment (FF&E), the completion of punch lists, and final close-out activities.

Director Pierce noted that she will follow up with updates on the project and provide information on the items that were completed in September.

Lisa Connelly **Moved** Dr. Nelson Rivera **Seconded** a motion to authorize the allocation of \$200,000 from the reserve fund for educational expenditures to support the first year of a four-year plan for the elementary school's furniture, fixtures, and equipment (FF&E) project.

Motion unanimously passed from the following roll call votes 9-0-0

Member	Vote	Member	Vote
Joseph Centofanti	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A	Dr. Nelson Rivera	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A
Sonja Charpentier	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A	Corey Roberts	ABSENT
Lisa Connelly	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A	Jennifer Voegtli	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A
Jennifer Favalora	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A	Dr. Kathleen Zandi	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A
Shawna Goldfarb	ABSENT	Suzanne Sack	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A
Heather Pach	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A		

Policy Subcommittee

Heather Pach reported that the committee reviewed the two policies presented for first read.

Curriculum Subcommittee

Dr. Kathy Zandi reported that the committee discussed professional development for teachers. The curriculum coordinators presented information on the Art of Science and Wit and Wisdom. The committee also discussed the SPDG grant, which focused on professional development for teaching math and special education skills together. Lastly, they discussed the proficiency scales to be used at the middle school and high school.

Finance Subcommittee

Joe Centofanti reported that the committee was provided an update on the EV charging stations. The committee conducted the monthly financial reporting and discussed the budget lines. The committee discussed the FF&E request that the Board approved. The committee also reviewed a capital assets/capitalization document, which will be developed into a draft policy.

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Jennifer Favalora reported on the grant for regional service, stating that RSD17 will be a recipient for the next three years.

HK Youth and Family Services

Heather Pach reported on the following items and events:

- The Ignite PSAs are now complete, and the whole campaign will be available in the next few weeks.
- Spark students assisted with an event for 5th-grade students to help with the transition to middle school.
- April 26th is National Prescription Drug Take Back Day.
- May is mental health awareness month.
- June 1st is the Mud Run.

Haddam Killingworth Recreation Department

None

Haddam Board of Selectmen

None

Killingworth Board of Selectmen

High School Project discussion.

Announcements/Comments

None

Adjournment

Board Chair Sack adjourned the meeting at 9:25 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Kaiser

Administrative Assistant to the Board of Education

Approval: _____ Date: _____

Dr. Kathleen Zandi, Board Secretary