



**REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 17
BOARD OF EDUCATION
MEETING MINUTES
November 18, 2025**

A meeting of the Regional School District No. 17 Board of Education was held on November 18, 2025, in the HKHS Community Room.

Board Member Attendance:

Board Member	Present	Absent	Board Member	Present	Absent
Joseph Centofanti	x		Corey Roberts	x	
Sonja Charpentier (remote)	x		Suzanne Sack	x	
Lisa Connelly	x		Ben Sodergren	x	
Jennifer Favalora	x		Jennifer Voegtli	x	
Shawna Goldfarb (remote)	x		Dr. Kathleen Zandi	x	
Heather Pach	x				

Also Present: Interim Superintendent Paul K. Smith, Assistant Superintendent Jennifer Miller, Director of Finance and Operations Karen Asetta, Director of Student Services Dr. Aaron Puzarne, Data and Technology Manager Stacy Perez, Student Representative Evan Berardino, Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent Sarah Kaiser, HKHS Principal Donna Hayward, HKMS Interim Assistant Principal Steven Fitzgerald, National Junior Honor Society Advisor Kerry Geoghegan, National Junior Honor Society Advisor Robin Duffield, Board Administrator Krystal Hanley

Visitors: 23

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

The Superintendent welcomed student representatives from the National Junior Honors Society, which currently has 28 members. The Society officers spoke about the Society's traditions and principles and outlined some of the service projects they will be undertaking. This includes a drive to collect used crayons for repurposing as well as a food drive. The students will create a communications committee to inform the community about their projects. They will also be attending two leadership conferences this year.

The Honors Society students and their guests left the meeting at 6:39 PM.

Dr Kathy Zandy **MOVED** and Jennifer Voegtli **SECONDED** a motion to move agenda item 5.E. HKAA Union Contract Negotiation Update to Item 9.

The motion passed unanimously by a show of hands.

Student Representative Report

Student representative Evan Berardino reported to the Board on the following items:

- The boys' and girls' cross-country teams won both the Shoreline and Class SS titles, and the girls qualified for the New England championship.
- The boys' soccer team had a historic run to the finals.
- Next Tuesday, the football team will have its Principal Cup.
- A 7-school volleyball tournament was held, which was a great collaborative event that finished with a co-op game and pizza party.
- Band day is on December 2nd, when students from the middle school visit the high school to watch and participate in the high school band's performance. The Chorus concert will be held on December 4th, and the band concert will be on December 11th, both in the auditorium.
- On December 12th, students in grades 2-5 will visit the high school to watch the jazz band and chorus perform.
- The leadership council is in full swing and planning a field trip for December 5th.
- An email about the upcoming telethon will be sent to board members soon.

Superintendent's Report

Before beginning the Superintendent's Report, Board Chair Suzanne Sack gave recognition to outgoing Board members Dr. Kathy Zandi, Corey Roberts, and Joe Centofanti. Board Chair Sack thanked the members for their service and expert contributions to the work of the Board. Recognition was also given to outgoing Assistant Superintendent Jen Miller and Interim Superintendent Paul Smith. The Board is grateful for their hard work and dedication to improving the District.

In his report, Superintendent Smith announced that the General Assembly has increased town reimbursements by an additional 5%.

Superintendent Smith congratulated the cross-country and soccer teams. He also announced that the diving blocks are now being replaced.

The Superintendent reported that 21 principals from China visited the middle school today and were thoroughly impressed with our school and facilities.

Chair Report

As this was Board Chair Sack's final meeting as Chair, she wished to thank everyone for their support and noted that serving as Chair was an honor. She is excited about the new leadership and noted that the top priority of the Board will be to ensure a smooth transition for the new Superintendent. She noted that the Board should continue to focus on the following priorities:

- Financial Integrity and Stability
- Facilities and Infrastructure
- Leadership Capacity
- Chain of Command and Community Trust
- Updating Our Strategic Plan
- Engagement With The Community
- Operational EfficiencyFinancial integrity

Evan Berardino and Principal Hayward left the meeting at 7:09 PM.

Public Comment

None

Discussion of preliminary budget requests

Superintendent Smith explained that the presented report shows all the budget requests, including those from parents and staff. The next step will be for principals to determine which requests can be met. An updated report will be shared at the next Board meeting.

Preliminary review of capital list 2026/27

Superintendent Smith explained that the presented report is a rough draft that was presented at the last Finance subcommittee meeting. Further discussion will take place in January/February.

Update on Ed Specs and High School project

Jen Favalora explained that the new architect is now reviewing the Ed Specs from the previous version of the High School project. The finalized version of the Ed Specs should be ready for

review at the December Board meeting. This should not cause a delay in the project's timeline. She reported that the Feasibility team met for the first time last week and discussed the need for the High School to have a clear identity. She also emphasized that the Board will continue to review Capital Plan projects in other schools. It was also noted that the incoming Superintendent has been informed of the details of the High School plan and will be fully involved at the December Board meeting.

Steve Fitzgerald left the meeting at 7:31 PM.

Lisa Connelly reported that communications were recently sent out to the community, providing an update and thanking them for their support. Information will also be sent out regarding how community members can participate in the project's discussion.

The Board members reviewed a handout showing details of the High School building use. The building is highly desirable due to its athletic facilities, and the Recreation Department and community utilize the building extensively. This information can be used as evidence for the space waiver and demonstrates why redevelopment of the building is a worthy investment.

Sonja Charpentier has been reviewing the questions and comments received from the community during the last version of the High School project in order to identify main themes. Some of the themes included impact on taxes, how grants work, clarification on the space waiver, timeline, environmental and energy considerations, and how renovations might impact educational programs. There were also questions about who the Feasibility team members are and how they communicate with the Board. Sonja said she will also review question cards and emails received from the public.

It was reported that PAC is currently on hold, but recruitment is currently underway, and the first meeting is likely to take place in January. The HKHS Facility/Feasibility Study website is now live and will be updated regularly.

Board update on Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent roles

It was reported that a new Superintendent was hired and a special meeting took place to interview a new Assistant Superintendent. The new Superintendent has since hired an individual for that role. Superintendent Smith has outlined the responsibilities of the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent roles, and this information will be posted on the District website and shared with town leaders.

Appointment of feasibility study team committee

Board Chair Sack explained that the Board members discussed the roles of the Feasibility team members and approved Jen Favalora to recruit the team.

Corey Roberts **MOVED** and Dr Kathy Zandi **SECONDED** that the Board of Education hereby establishes a High School Feasibility Study Team to recommend next steps concerning possible renovation of the High School, and that the Board of Education appoints the following people to that Team:

Jennifer Favalora, BoE Vice Chair; **Suzanne Sack**, BoE Chair; **Paul Smith**, Interim Superintendent; **Joe Centofanti**, Board of Finance; **Jen Voegtli**, Board of Education; **Dr. Patti Sullivan-Kowalski**, Incoming Superintendent; **Kate Anderson**, Board of Selectmen; **Eric Couture**, First Selectman; **Donna Hayward**, High School Principal; **Tim Lucas**, Vice President of Construction, Bob's Discount Furniture; **Lisa D'Angelo**, Associate Provost for Research, Yale University; **Mike Distefano**, Former RSD17 Facilities Director; **Todd Hajek**, Director of Public Works, Town of Clinton; **Lauren Braren**, Architect Planner - Yale University; **Ryan Kish**, HKHS Tech Ed Teacher and Department Head.

Motion passed from the following roll call votes: 11-0-0

Member	Vote	Member	Vote
Joseph Centofanti	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A	Corey Roberts	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A
Sonja Charpentier	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A	Ben Sodergren	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A
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	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A	Suzanne Sack	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A
Heather Pach	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A		

HKYFS - Youth Voices Count Survey

Jen Favalora provided details about the Youth Voices Survey. She explained that the survey has been in place for 20 years, is voluntary and anonymous, and parents can opt their children out of the survey if they wish. The survey is completed by students in grades 7-12, and there are two versions: one for Middle School and one for High School. Copies of the survey questions are available for review by parents at each school. Results from the survey are used to inform decisions on which programs to run and how grant money should be allocated. Information about the surveys has already been sent to Middle School parents, and will soon be sent to High School parents.

Heather Pach **MOVED** and Lisa Connelly **SECONDED** a motion to authorize the Youth Voices Count Survey to be administered at HKHS.

Motion passed from the following roll call votes: 10-0-1

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

2026 Board Meeting Calendar Second Read

The Board reviewed revisions to the 2026 Board of Education Meeting calendar, which would schedule some meetings in the Town of Killingworth and some in the Town of Haddam. The members discussed the effort that was made to facilitate the change.

Lisa Connelly **MOVED** and Jen Favalora **SECONDED** a motion to approve the 2026 Board Meeting calendar as presented.

Motion passed from the following roll call votes: 11-0-0

Member	Vote	Member	Vote
Joseph Centofanti	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A	Corey Roberts	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A
Sonja Charpentier	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A	Ben Sodergren	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A
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	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A	Suzanne Sack	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A
Heather Pach	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A		

2026-2027 School Calendar Second Read

The Board reviewed the school calendar presented for a second read.

Lisa Connelly **MOVED** and Heather Pach **SECONDED** a motion to approve the 2026-2027 School Calendar as presented.

Motion passed from the following roll call votes: 11-0-0

Member	Vote	Member	Vote
Joseph Centofanti	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A	Corey Roberts	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A
Sonja Charpentier	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A	Ben Sodergren	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A
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	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A	Suzanne Sack	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A
Heather Pach	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A		

Consent Agenda

- a. Enrollment Report
- b. Personnel Report
- c. Approval of requested inventory disposal form for HKIMS library books as submitted by the curriculum coordinator, Jennifer Beermuender.
- d. Textbook proposals for first read.
- e. BOE Handbook 2025
- f. Authorization Signature change for the ED-099 Agreement for Child Nutrition Programs. The designated representative Signature line 1 changed to Dr Patricia Sullivan-Kowalski, Superintendent from Paul Smith. The designated representative Signature line 2 changed to Karen Asetta, Director of Finance and Operations from Jennifer Miller.
- g. Policies for review as first read
 - 1260 Policy Regarding Advertising at District Facilities
 - 1500 Policy Regarding Naming
 - 3200 Identification Badges for Employees
- h. Items for Information for review as first read

- 3110 Administrative Regulations Regarding Reserve Fund for Educational Expenditures
- i. Bylaws for review as first read
 - 9010 Transaction of Business
 - 9120 Officers
 - 9121 Official Duties - Chairperson
 - 9130 Committees
- j. Approval of Minutes from the October 21, 2025, Board of Education Meeting
- k. Approval of Minutes from the October 28, 2025, Board of Education Special Meeting #1
- l. Approval of Minutes from the October 28, 2025, Board of Education Special Meeting #2
- m. Approval of Minutes from the November 3, 2025, Board of Education Special Meeting

Corey Roberts **MOVED** and Lisa Connelly **SECONDED** a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented, less Bylaws 9120 and 9130.

Motion passed unanimously from a show of hands vote: 11-0-0

The Board discussed Bylaw 9120 Officers, specifically section C, which states: “A Board Chair may serve no more than two consecutive terms.”

The Board also discussed Bylaw 9130 Committees, specifically Section 4, in reference to the Executive Committee.

Ben Sodergren **MOVED** and Corey Roberts **SECONDED** a motion to approve Bylaw 9120 Officers, less the sentence “A Board Chair may serve no more than two consecutive terms.” and Bylaw 9130 Committees less Section 4.

Motion passed from the following roll call votes: 11-0-0

Member	Vote	Member	Vote
Joseph Centofanti	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A	Corey Roberts	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A
Sonja Charpentier	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A	Ben Sodergren	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A
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	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A	Suzanne Sack	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A
Heather Pach	X YES ☐ NO ☐ A		

Policy Subcommittee

Heather Pach reported that the subcommittee is reviewing approximately five bylaws per meeting. The Policy Regarding Naming and the Identification Badges for Employees policy was also reviewed at the last meeting. A query was raised about how to record when a policy has been reviewed but not changed. The committee members will discuss establishing a process for this.

Curriculum Subcommittee

Dr. Kathy Zandi reported that the proposed new Science textbooks apply to all three middle school grades. She also noted that the current Psychology textbook is outdated, so a new version is needed. Dr. Zandi reported that a review found that the state-mandated inclusion of Asian American and Pacific Islander Studies in the curriculum is already in place in most grades, and any gaps will be addressed.

Dr. Zandi gave an update on the New Solutions report. Our primary focus has been on establishing a stronger connection between Gen Ed and Special Ed. We have been working on this via PD days with math teachers and integration via the MTSS system.

Dr Aaron Puzarne reported that there has been an unexpected spike in behavioral issues this year across all schools. Aaron is asking teachers to collect data on this to help determine the cause. Aaron is also working on providing access to more community support programs and involving HKYFS to provide wrap-around services.

Facilities Subcommittee

Shawna Goldfarb reported that the committee met and discussed the Capital project and the preliminary budget. She also noted that a bidder was chosen for the KES boiler, and work will begin in the next few weeks. An application for a demolition permit for the White Barn was submitted. There is a 6-month period during which the community can submit concerns or objections. Superintendent Smith will ensure that a communication is sent out to the community. Shawna also reported that they received the technology hardware inventory. She also said they are waiting for an update from the Director of Finance and Operations regarding possible reimbursement for the Google incident. Shawna also reported that the transportation RFP is now public.

Finance Subcommittee

Joe Centofanti reported that the lunch fund is still being monitored. He also noted that, as things currently stand, the District will have to use approximately \$100,000 of the contribution to the Educational Expenditures fund to balance the budget. Some costs being charged to the building improvement line need to be reclassified. The format of the capital plan needs to be reformatted so that all information is presented together.

LEARN

Jennifer Favalora reported that a CABE leadership conference is being held on December 9th. She also noted that HR changed their process for getting applicants and is now using Indeed and filling positions quickly. Jennifer reported on a state program for providing Mental Health support to rural communities. The LEARN director is looking into whether HK would qualify.

HK Youth and Family Services

Heather Pach reported on the following events:

- Stuff a Cruiser - November 30th
- Holiday Craft Fair - December 6th at HKMS
- Christmas at the Farm - December 6th
- Parenting Series will meet on December 5th

She also reported that this is the final year for the Prevention Coordinator in Connecticut grant. She also reviewed the first quarter metrics: There were 27 events, 1,152 participants, 20 agency partnerships, and 414 volunteer hours.

Haddam Killingworth Recreation Department

The group met virtually in October. There will be an update at the next Board meeting.

Haddam Board of Selectmen

Heather Pach reported that the bridge and roundabout construction is now complete, and the cell towers in Haddam Neck and Tylerville are about to be switched on. She also noted that the voter turnout for town elections was very high this year.

Killingworth Board of Selectmen

Lisa Connelly reported that voter turnout in Killingworth was also high. The Board was appreciative of the report provided.

Announcements & Comments

Superintendent Smith noted that the CABA conference is taking place this Friday.

Corey Roberts **MOVED** and Kathy Zandi **SECONDED** a motion to move to executive session.
Motion passed unanimously from a show of hands vote: 11-0-0

Karen Asetta, Dr. Aaron Puzarne, Stacy Perez, Sarah Kaiser, Kerry Geoghegan, Robin Duffield, and Krystal Hanley left the meeting at 9:01 PM.

The meeting entered executive session at 9:02 PM.

The meeting came out of executive session at 9:16 PM.

Adjournment

Board Chair Sack adjourned the meeting at 9:16 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Krystal Hanley
Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent

Approval: _____ Date: _____
Jennifer Favalora, Board Vice Chair