Haddam Killingworth High School
Nov | Dec 2025 Newsletter



From the Principal:

Every holiday season brings a familiar rush of accomplishments and celebrations here at HKHS. Our musicians once again draw in family and friends for our holiday performances, our student clubs rally to support families in need, and seasonal traditions add the color - from the wreath and poinsettia sales to the beautifully crafted gingerbread house designs. Inside the classroom, teaching and learning remain in full stride as we approach the end of the first semester. And while we still smile thinking back on an exciting fall sports season, our winter athletes are already hard at work, preparing to represent HKHS with pride.

Even as the days grow shorter, the energy within our school only grows stronger. We continue to be inspired by the talents, dedication, and spirit our students bring to everything they do. It is a joy to share just a glimpse of the Cougar pride that fills HKHS each and every day.

Congratulations to our 2025 HK Community Superheroes!

The HKHS football program has a wonderful tradition in which senior players choose a teacher or staff member from the high school who has made a positive impact on them. Seniors wrote thank you letters and provided "*HK Community Super Heroes*" t-shirts to the teacher or staff member who has most impacted them as well as invited their "superhero" to the Thanksgiving Principal's Cup game vs Valley Regional High School.

Congratulations to Mrs. Siciliano, Mr. Todzia, Mrs. Adamczyk, Mr. Czarkowski, Mrs. Brown, Ms. Kummer, Mrs. Schlosser, Mrs. Ritter, Ms. Bing, Mrs. Ahearn, Ms. Landers, and last but not least, Mr. White!













"If you have to put someone on a pedestal, put teachers. They are society's heroes."

– Guy Kawasaki





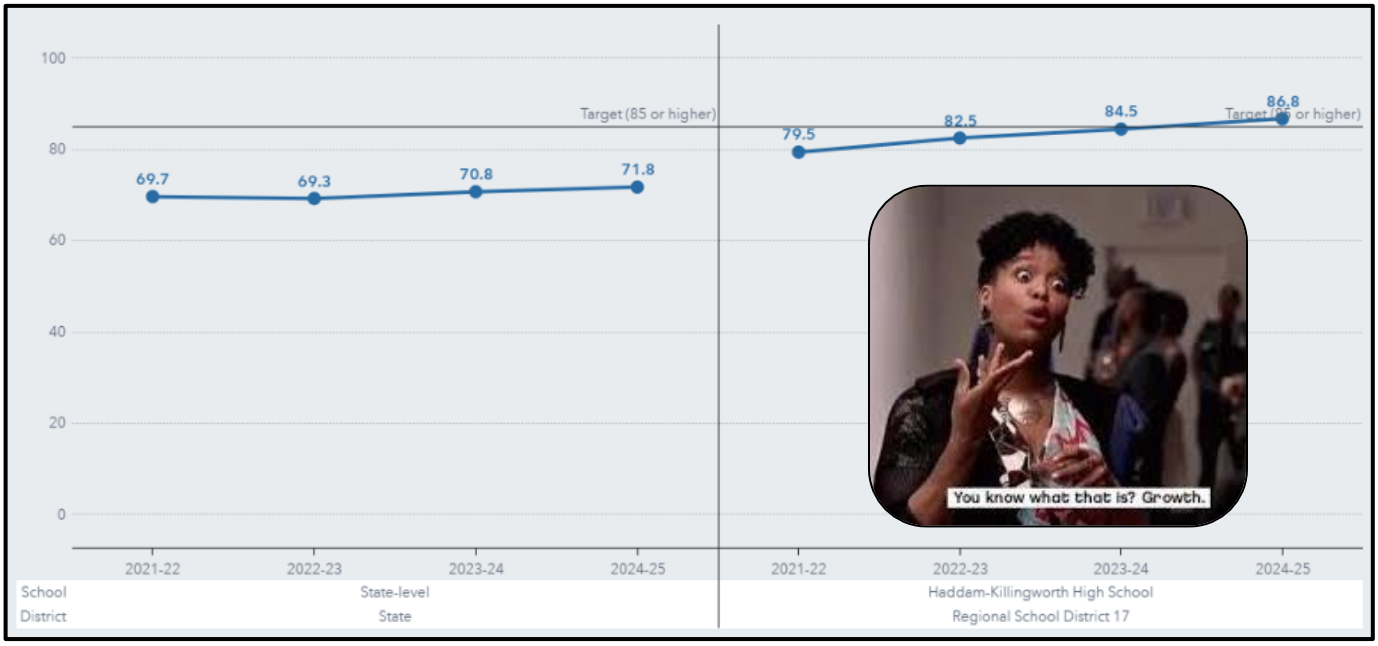




HKHS earns SCHOOL OF DISTINCTION Award!

Haddam Killingworth High School is proud to have been recognized as a **"School of Distinction"** by the Connecticut State Department of Education! This means we are within the **TOP 10%** of schools in the state based on the *Next Generation Accountability Index*. HKHS continued its upward trajectory by scoring an 86.8 out of 100 for the 2024-25 school year. This puts us well above the state average of 71.8 and past the target goal of 85.

According to **EdSight**, Connecticut's official source for education data: *"Connecticut's Next Generation Accountability System is a broad set of 12 indicators that help tell the story of how well a school is preparing its students for success in college, careers and life. It provides a holistic, multifactor perspective of district and school performance. Districts/schools earn points on each indicator (achievement, growth, chronic absenteeism, college and career readiness, high school graduation, postsecondary entrance, physical fitness, and the arts) and performance is measured against a target. Student group performance receives additional weight in the system. The Accountability Index is the percentage of points earned across all available indicators."*



You can read the CSDE press release from October 30th by clicking here or view the full accountability results by visiting the Next Generation Accountability Dashboard on ct.gov.

Speaking of PROGRESS...



We have just passed the halfway point of the 2nd quarter. Progress reports were made available via PowerSchool as of Wednesday, December 3rd. Please log into PowerSchool to check your student's grades and reach out to their teachers if you have any questions. The format for teacher email addresses is FirstInitialLastName@rsd17.org.

***REMINDER**: If you do not have a Parent Portal account through PowerSchool, please reach out to counseling secretary Amy Giarnella at agiarnella@rsd17.org for instructions on how to set one up!*

[Poster created by Myra Cortes]



$$$ Donations LOADING...*(hopefully!)*

Our HKTV students are thrilled to announce that Love From Lincoln will be the featured beneficiary of this year's **37th Annual Holiday Telethon!** This beloved community tradition, produced and broadcast live *by the students* of HKHS, brings together viewers across the region to celebrate the spirit of giving while raising funds for the beneficiary; this year, funds will be donated to an organization that assists families awaiting heart transplants and spreading awareness for organ donation.

During their own hospital stay, the founders of Love From Lincoln, Ashley and Michael Stanger, became close with many families awaiting heart transplants. They witnessed firsthand the incredible challenges these families face—not just the child awaiting a new heart, but parents and siblings enduring months or even years of uncertainty. The emotional, physical, and financial tolls are immense: lost income, housing expenses, medical bills, and long separations from loved ones.



Through Love From Lincoln, the Stangers now provide comfort, encouragement, and practical support to families walking this same difficult path—reminding them to "***Just Keep Going.***" The organization offers grocery, gas, and meal gift cards; toys and clothing for children and siblings; comfort and wellness items for hospital stays; and housing assistance to bring warmth and hope to families during challenging times.

The HKTV Holiday Telethon is a cherished Haddam Killingworth tradition that highlights the power of community and compassion. Each year, students dedicate months to producing this live, three-hour broadcast, featuring entertainment, special guests, and heartfelt stories that inspire generosity and connection. Watch the promo video HERE and make sure to tune in on Comcast channel 18, Frontier channel 6090, or online at HolidayShow.rsd17.org/. *Click to follow them on Facebook!*

Tune in live on Tuesday, December 23rd, from 8:00am to 11:00am!

Pledges can be made during the live broadcast by calling (860) 554-5490, online at HolidayShow.rsd17.org/, or by check (payable to HKHS) and all proceeds will go directly to Love From Lincoln. As a special thank-you, all pledges of $25 or more will be entered into the Fish Bowl Prize Drawing, and donors may choose to be acknowledged live on air.

LOVE FROM LINCOLN
Hope from Hailey

Together, we can bring love, comfort, and community to families in need this holiday season while also spreading the vital message of organ donation.

Congratulations to the HKHS Robotics Team 1188A who were the recipients of the "**Judges Award**" at the Daniel Hand 11th Annual Vex Robotics State Qualifier competition in November.



This award is given to a team that displays "***exemplary effort, perseverance, effective communication skills, teamwork, professionalism, and a student-centered ethos***." Congratulations to Team 1188A and their Robert, **Anomaly**! You can watch the entire High School Push Back Qualifier event play out here on YouTube!

Tangled HOCO

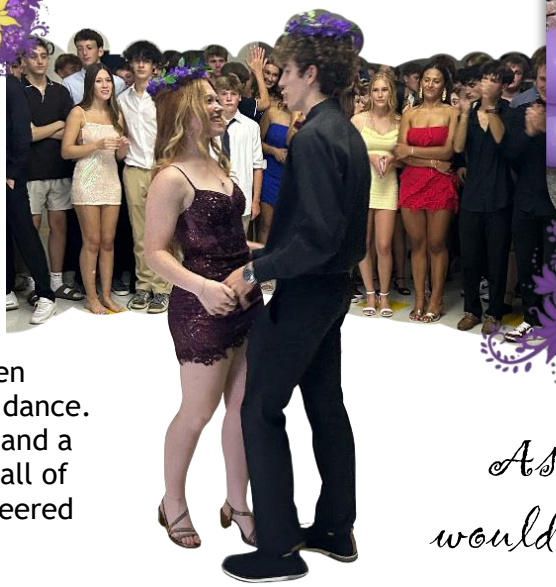


The HKHS Student Council hosted this year's annual Homecoming dance on October 9th. With the help of many student and staff volunteers, **the night was a great success with more than 350 people attending**! This year's theme was "Tangled," and students put in many hours of hard work planning and decorating for the event. Shout out to Dance Director Peyton Dixon, President Mikayla Ruggiero, and the rest of the Student Council leadership for all their hard work. A special thank you to Mr. Cannan as well who helped with the fabulous backdrop shown here!





There was also a new addition to the dance this year: ***a photobooth***! This was a **huge hit** among students and teachers, and everyone was able to leave with a token to bring home. **Brielle Kent & Jake Woldfrat** were presented with Homecoming King & Queen honors and they shared a solo dance. Everyone had a fabulous time and a huge **THANK YOU** goes out to all of the staff members who volunteered their time to chaperone.



As Rapunzel herself would say, ***"Best day ever!"***

Why GLAM it up when you can JAM it up?!

PJ Day for the kids
CELEBRATING 15 YEARS

Connecticut Children's FOUNDATION | Presented by: Hyundai Hope on Wheels

The HKHS Drama Club is pleased to help coordinate this year's annual **PJ Day for the Kids** to benefit Connecticut Children's Medical Center (CCMC) held on Friday, December 12th. This important fundraiser helps support childhood cancer warriors, their families, and the doctors and nurses who care for them. Donate $1, *or more*, to wear pajamas in support of kids at Connecticut Children's who wear their pajamas for long periods of time while enduring treatment.



SCAN TO DONATE

The RSD17 donation website is live and we have a goal of raising $3,000 as a district before next Friday! Funds for this incredible cause will be collected during the morning news on PJ Day itself but you can visit https://give.connecticutchildrens.org/RSD17_2025 or scan the QR code to contribute. ***TOGETHER, the possibilities are limitless.***

Supporting Connecticut Children's Since 2011

Ms. Legman: HK TEACHER SPOTLIGHT

Ms. Legman ROSE to the Challenge!

HKHS's very own Mallory Legman, Director of Bands, will be marching in the **Pasadena Rose Parade**!

The Saluting America's Band Directors project has assembled more than 300 band directors from across North America to march on January 1st under the theme, **"America's band directors: We teach music. We teach life."** The band will accompany a colorful, animated float along the 5.5-mile parade route in order to recognize the extraordinary dedication and accomplishments of band directors and music educators everywhere. Throughout their careers, the music educators in this band have collectively mentored and taught hundreds of thousands of students. These professionals not only teach and conduct music, they teach about life itself.



According to Legman, "*It is an honor and a privilege to participate in this parade. I love seeing how music creates community, and I am excited to connect with the other band directors who are participating and share our music on a national level.*"

The band will be directed by nationally known music educator and innovative band director Jon Waters, who will also lead rehearsals and other performances of the band when in Pasadena. You can read more about this wonderful project at banddirectorsalute.org/ or the Rose Parade itself by visiting tournamentofroses.com/.

Please help us in congratulating Ms. Legman and let's all plan on watching come January 1st! Click here for information on where to stream the parade: https://tournamentofroses.com/about/where-to-watch/.

AMERICA'S BAND DIRECTORS
We teach music. We teach life.

Inaugural RSD17 Legacy Walk!



Haddam Killingworth High School held its first ever **Legacy Walk** on October 3rd for RSD17 kindergarten and 12th grade students. This event brought both the young and the "old" together to share a meaningful moment meant to inspire younger students and symbolize a "passing of the torch" as the first group is beginning their educational journey and the second group is preparing for graduation.

Roughly 140 students participated, split evenly between our elementary schools and the high school. Seniors welcomed kindergartens to the district with a gift bag that contained a cartoon drawing of the field with students, coloring supplies, cougar paw stickers and tattoos, and a welcome letter from the class of 2026.**The event was a great success and we look forward to growing this new tradition!**





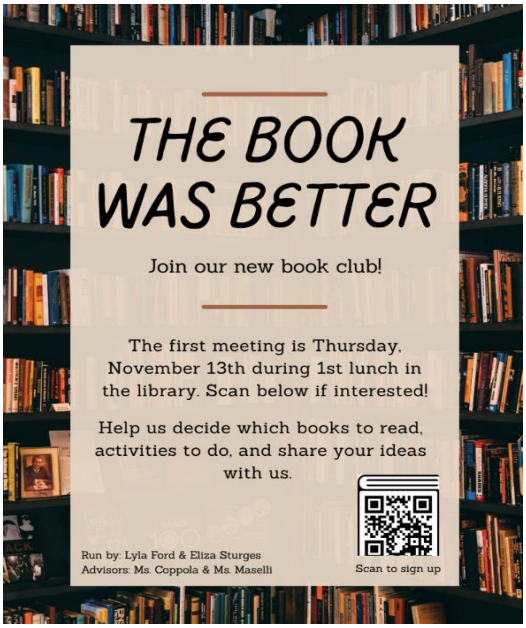
Collaboration in Action:
Woodworking Class Enhances the Library



The library has two beautiful new additions, thanks to a collaboration with the Technology Education Dept. Recently, the library reached out to Mr. Bartholomew to see if his woodworking class could help create a new display for highlighting books. Rising to the challenge, Mr. Bartholomew took on the project with a team of three talented students, Jackson Bottaro, Ethan Casini, & Tyler Dickinson.



They didn't just build the furniture; they designed and crafted two custom display shelves from scratch. The result is a stunning example of student craftsmanship that benefits the whole school. **Students and staff are encouraged to swing by the library to admire their handiwork and check out the new titles on display!**



BOOKWORMS WANTED!



Love to read? Looking for a new crew? The Library Media Center is launching a brand-new book club, and we want YOU to join us! We are diving into our very first pick, **Fake Skating by Lynn Painter**. Whether you are an avid reader or just looking for a fun discussion, everyone is welcome.

Interested students should stop by the library to pick up a flyer and get the details!

Congratulations to the cast & crew of the HKHS fall play,

Arsenic & Old Lace!

The drama club was pleased to welcome a wonderfully supportive and appreciative audience over two days of performances in early November. **There were lots of laughs and plenty of surprises!**









Save the date for our spring musical…

LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS

on May 1st & 2nd, 2026!



JOIN the HKHS Choirs at the…

Please come and support HKHS students as they perform along with choirs from Portland, Middletown, and Mercy High Schools at an event sponsored by the Exchange Club of Portland.

Holiday Evening of Harmony

Tickets are $10 for adults and $5 for seniors & students and can be purchased at the door or by scanning the QR code here.

December 14th @ 3:00pm, Mercy High School



Southern Region Festival Audition Acceptances!

We are proud to announce that **19** HKHS music students have been accepted into the 2025 Southern Region High School Festival! This honor recognizes their dedication, musical growth, and the hard work they demonstrated throughout the audition process.

The next step in their journey begins in January, when accepted students will gather at Middletown High School for a series of combined choral and instrumental ensemble rehearsals with peers from across the region. These intensive rehearsals will culminate in a public concert on January 17th, showcasing the outstanding talent of students from many districts.

In addition, all Southern Region participants become eligible to audition for the Connecticut All-State Music Festival. All-State auditions will take place on February 7th, 2026, and students who are selected will perform at the All-State Festival on March 26th-28th held at the Connecticut Convention Center.

***A HUGE CONGRATULATIONS** to Christopher Sanders-Roberts, Nicholas Stegman, Zi Abbott, Owen Voegtli, Kaylee Chlodnicki, Paul Birkmeyer, Eliza Sturges, Eleanor Barry, Hailey Buckie, Juliette Harriman, Elijah Sorrentino, Madelaine Therrien, Isabella McGinley, Hannah Decaro, Hayden Gouin, Ryland Harvey, Willow Whiteside, Scarlett LeBlanc, and Adam Livingston!*

We are incredibly proud of our students and look forward to celebrating their accomplishments on stage! For more information on purchasing tickets, check the CMEA website in early January 2026.

HKHS represents at the Shoreline Music Festival!

This past October, HKHS chorus and band students took part in the annual Shoreline Music Festival that brought together students from local schools for two afternoons of rehearsals, sectionals, and music-making with guest conductors. ***It was a great chance for them to meet other musicians, try new musical ideas, and represent HKHS in a positive way.***



HKHS Has (spooky) Spirit!



HKHS students showed no lack of school spirit this year for our group Halloween Costume Contest! It was a tight race but the ladies swept the podium. **1st place went to the Girls Volleyball** team who played hard to beat with a theme of "Toy Story".



2nd place went to the Girls Swimming team cosplaying as characters from "The Lorax" with **3rd place going to Girls Soccer** for "Most Timely" theme of the "Louvre Robbers" - pictured below with many other fantastic characters!



There was no shortage of fun characters roaming the halls! Our math teachers even got in the spirit.

All 6…7 of them… 😜





HKHS's Internship Program is off to a strong start this year, with students gaining real-world experience in a variety of fields including veterinary care, education, law and local historical societies, among others. Students are developing professional skills, building confidence, and contributing meaningfully to the organizations that have welcomed them. When asked how their work has been going, **Mikayla Ruggiero**, interning at the Chester Veterinary Clinic says, "*I get to shadow and observe some very nice veterinarians and vet techs each week, who have been really helpful and kind to me. So far, I have had a lot of fun and have learned so much about veterinary practice*." Over at the Haddam Historical Society, **Maggie DiNapoli** is having a great time and says, "*I have really enjoyed getting to work with Haddam's artifacts. Being hands-on with the whole process has been super exciting and eye opening!*" **Addison Burr**, an aspiring elementary educator interning at Killingworth Elementary commented that, "*One of my favorite unexpected moments from my kindergarten internship was when the kids all decided to draw fun pictures of me. It reminded me how creative they are and how fun it is to be part of their world.*"



As we continue to support their growth and success, we also look ahead to next year's cohort. **Current juniors who are interested in pursuing an internship next year should reach out to the internship coordinator, Mr. Gallagher**, and their guidance counselor for more information and next steps.



Guest SPEAKERS

Two guest speakers recently visited our Technology Education department to share valuable insights into career opportunities at Electric Boat and the educational pathways available through Lincoln Tech. Students from a wide range of Tech Ed classes attended the presentations, gaining a clearer understanding of the skills, training, and qualifications needed to succeed in these high-demand fields. The speakers offered firsthand perspectives, answered student questions, and highlighted multiple routes that can lead to rewarding, well-paying careers in engineering, manufacturing, and skilled trades.



If any students or families are curious about either pathway, stop by the Metal Shop or contact Mr. Gallagher for more information. There will be a follow up representative visit from Electric Boat in January to talk specifically about their Summer Internship Program, a paid, hands-on experience offered to students finishing their junior year at HKHS.

IVY LEAGUE ACCOLADES for Amelia Riggs!

The Yale Club of New Haven held its annual Yale-Seton Book Award event on October 1st where 48 Connecticut high school seniors were honored. This national recognition program selects winners for this award through their schools based on ***"outstanding personal character and intellectual promise."***



The 2025 Yale-Seton Book Award winner from Haddam Killingworth High School was **Amelia Riggs**, pictured here with her fellow winners, Head of College Anjelica Gonzalez, event chair Elaine Piraino-Holevoet '75, and most importantly, Handsome Dan. You can read more about this wonderful event here! ***Congratulations Amelia!***

Student Council Blood Drive



The HKHS Student Council Blood Drive on October 31st was a stellar success! President Mikayla Ruggerio, Vice President Julia Downing, and Blood Drive Coordinator Maizie Irons planned a *record-breaking* drive with more pints than ever collected in the fall before. **50 pints of blood were collected from 49 individuals, which correlates to 150 lives saved within the span of a few hours!** Students and staff who donated also received $10 gift cards and the satisfaction of saving lives on a SPOOKY day. The entire Student Council would like to send a special thanks to everyone involved and a reminder to sign up to donate again in the spring! You can also visit www.redcrossblood.org/ to find a blood drive near you.







American Red Cross

Math Team DOMINATES!

We are midway through the Greater Middlesex County Math League season and HKHS continues to defend our top ranking. After winning 1st place at all THREE of our meets so far, we lead the pack by a comfortable margin. All HKHS competitors are also at the TOP of the leaderboards for individual points scored by grade level.

Varsity 2025 - 2026 Raw Scores				
School	Meet #1	Meet #2	Meet #3	Total
HKHS	68	81	66	215
LOL	51	39	45	135
Xavier	30	51	41	122
Portland	26	35	34	95
Guilford	45	15	27	87
RHAM	37	25	24	86
DHHS	44	19	21	84
Mercy	17	26	22	65
Westbrook	13	13	8	34
Old Saybrook	1	0	0	1





The team is led by Tetsuya Imai, Jameson Conte, Dylan Brown, Bruce Peese, & Owen Voegtli. Meet #4 will take place on January 8th at Daniel Hand High School. You can find out more about the league and upcoming events at www.ctstatemath.org/greater-middlesex-county/.

Save the Sound®
Action for our region's environment.

SAVE THE SOUND ~ Community Clean-Up!

On October 5th, members of both the Spanish Honor Society and French Honor Society joined forces for a meaningful environmental service project at Haddam Meadows. Working side by side, students spent the morning collecting litter along the riverfront as part of the annual **Save the Sound** initiative.

Their teamwork made a visible impact: together they removed six full bags of trash, including cigarette butts, plastic waste, bottle caps, and assorted debris that harms local wildlife and reduces the beauty of the park.

This collaborative effort not only supported our local ecosystem but also allowed students to model leadership, responsibility, and community pride. We are incredibly proud of their commitment to keeping our environment clean and protecting the natural spaces we all share.



SOCIÉTÉ HONORAIRE DE FRANÇAIS

Read more about this effort here!

Invasive Vine Removal Project at Haddam Meadows



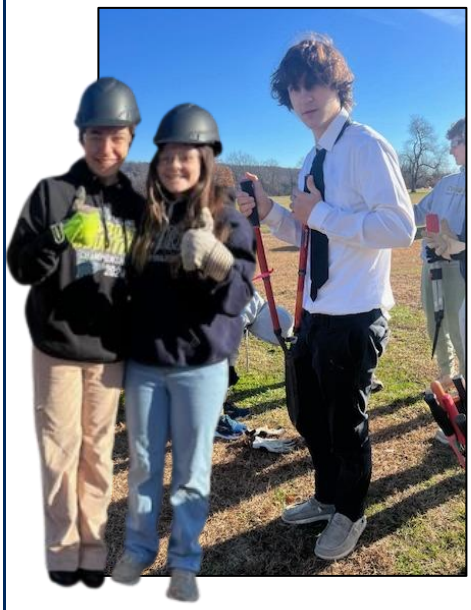
This November, HKHS students from our Environment Club and UConn: Horticulture class joined an ongoing effort to save endangered trees at Haddam Meadows State Park where a severe issue of Oriental Bittersweet and other invasive vines has put dozens of mature trees at risk. This effort will help protect the environment by improving the health of the trees.





According to a press release by Peter Fleischer (who helped organize the event):

"Haddam Meadows State Park is heavily used by the surrounding communities. Boating, walking, relaxing, jogging, fishing, and ice-skating are common uses of this popular green space, containing a variety of mature oak, maple, beech, and pine trees. Unfortunately, the fast-growing invasive vines have grown among a substantial portion of the trees, climbing and attaching themselves as they grow. These destructive plants can be seen in the leaf canopies of trees reaching as high as seventy feet. Scientists from the Yale School of Forestry, the Connecticut Invasive Plant Working Group at UConn, and the Cornell School of Forestry agree that over time these vines will suffocate and kill many invaded trees, threatening the beauty and bucolic state of the park.



This second ever student-event was intended to empower young men and women to become stewards, taking responsibility for environmental and recreational assets through citizen action."

This fall, the HKHS Select Choir classes traveled to Sacred Heart University to participate in an a cappella choir workshop. During the visit, students worked closely with SHU's choral faculty and student performers, exploring vocal techniques, blend, balance, and stylistic approaches specific to contemporary a cappella singing.

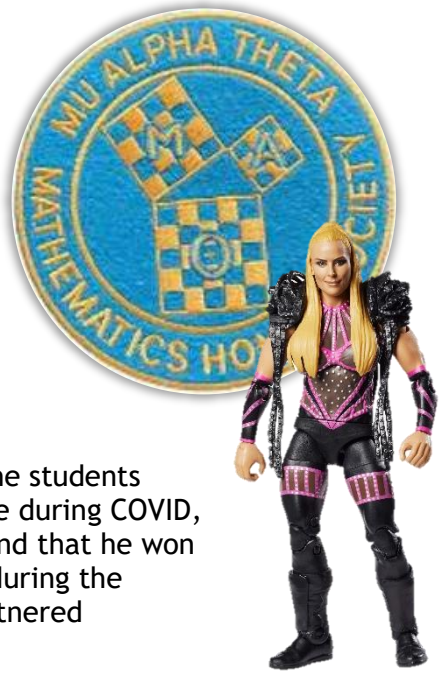
The workshop gave our singers the chance to rehearse in a collegiate environment, receive feedback and make adjustments, and experience what music-making looks like at the university level. They also had the opportunity to watch SHU's a cappella groups in action, which was a fun and inspiring way to end the day. ***We're grateful to Sacred Heart University for welcoming our students and providing such a positive learning experience!***





ALUMNI IN THE HOUSE!

HKHS Class of 2006 graduate, Grant Salzano, visited with our Math Honor Society members to share about his path after high school. After graduation, Grant went on to Boston College where he majored in mathematics. Currently, Grant is employed by Webster Bank as the Director & Product Owner of Banking Systems. His job there includes both finance and internet technology work.



Two fun facts that Grant shared with the students include how he earned his pilot's license during COVID, stating there was "nothing else to do" and that he won back-to-back Wheel of Fortune games during the WWE Celebrity Week where he was partnered with WWE superstar Natalya!

Speaking of NUMBERS...

A team of students from our Personal Finance course are currently in **2nd place** in Connecticut for **"The Stock Market Game"**. Maizie Irons & Chyann Barnes have earned the 2nd highest amount of money (so far!) out of 2,192 teams from across the entire state!

This educational online game allows students to learn how the stock market works in real life by investing $100,000 imaginary dollars in stocks, bonds, and mutual funds. The game then tracks the market value based on real-world prices from Wall Street. HKHS' "Crop Market", led by our fearless Mr. Cropper-Alt, has earned over $29,378 so far! The game is coming to an end Dec 5th at which point top teams will win real-life scholarship money. Learn more here: https://www.stockmarketgame.org/!

Rank	Team ID	Nickname	% Return Above/Below S&P 500 Growth	Total Equity	Region	School / Organization	School District
1	CT_53_ZZ2606	CT_53_ZZ2606	36.3257	$137,774.38	High School	Engineering - Science University Magnet School	NEW HAVEN
2	CT_53_ZZ1281	CROP MARKET	25.9108	$129,378.83	High School	Haddam-Killingworth High School	RSD17
3	CT_53_ZZ2455	CT_53_ZZ2455	24.0275	$125,476.15	High School	Westhill High School	Stamford CT
4	CT_53_ZZ781	KYLER	12.0190	$115,487.01	High School	Montville High School	Montville Public Schools
5	CT_53_ZZ1991	CT_53_ZZ1991	11.6483	$114,796.21	Middle School	Timothy Edwards School	South Windsor Public Schools
6	CT_53_ZZ3173	KYLE V	13.1781	$114,329.18	High School	Joseph A. Foran High School	Milford
7	CT_53_ZZ2784	CT_53_ZZ2784	12.5881	$114,030.16	High School	Greenwich High School	Fairfield
8	CT_53_ZZ675	CT_53_ZZ675	10.4449	$113,912.90	High School	Rocky Hill High School	Rocky Hill PS
9	CT_53_ZZ593	CT_53_ZZ593	10.1750	$113,642.96	High School	Rocky Hill High School	Rocky Hill PS
10	CT_53_ZZ1073	CT_53_ZZ1073	10.0849	$113,552.91	High School	Brunswick School	Private

LET'S GET BAKING!

December 1st meant the official start of the annual gingerbread house decorating contest! Before the Thanksgiving break, students designed, baked, and built their gingerbread houses and gathered their desired candy supplies. They've spent this week decorating their seasonal creations and are excited to show them off!

All high school staff will vote on the fully decorated houses, and the top three will earn prizes—*along with some serious bragging rights*. The first-place team will also choose one member to appear with Mrs. Siciliano on the Channel 8 Good Morning America kitchen segment.



BE SURE TO WATCH FOR US ON DEC 19TH AT 9AM!

Together, WE ARE HK!

The HKHS **Unified Sports** team hosted a Volleyball Tournament on November 17th where we competed with seven other schools. In attendance was the girls' basketball team, football team, cross country runners, many family members, a CIAC representative, and even international delegates being hosted by an opposing team (*they also made a donation to our program*)!







Several cheerleaders helped open up the event and cheered throughout it, doing a wonderful job. The national anthem was sung by a mix of students from HK – a true team effort. Schools rotated around to play seven volleyball games against the different schools, then completed a final round with students from various schools mixed together in the true spirit of unity. The event concluded with a large group photo and pizza, leading to lots of smiles all around.

It was a wonderful event and other schools even commented that it was their favorite Unified Sports event of the year! Way to go HK!

HKHS Choir to the Hartford Wolf Pack hockey game

The Hartford Wolf Pack are excited to welcome Haddam Killingworth High School on Wednesday, December 10th as they take on the Wilkes-Barre/Scranton Penguins at the PeoplesBank Arena. Come support HKHS Choir as they perform the national anthem to kick off the game! **Tickets can be purchased here:** https://www.gofevo.com/event/Hkchoir2.

HKYFS YOUTH VOICES COUNT SURVEY

HKHS, in partnership with HK Youth & Family Services, will be administering a survey on youth behavioral health later this December to students in grades 9-12. This survey will ask questions about youth experiences and feelings regarding substance use, anxiety, social media, gaming, gambling, and extracurricular activities. A copy of the survey is available in the HKHS main office, as well as at Haddam Killingworth Youth & Family Services office, for anyone who would like to review the survey before it is administered on December 17th. Here are some important facts however:

- *Participation in completing this survey is important because it allows HKHS and Haddam Killingworth Youth & Family Services to provide programming, activities, events, and education for youth, parents, and community members tailored to the responses of the survey.*
- ***The survey is anonymous and voluntary**. Responses cannot be traced to individual students.*
- *The survey will take most students less than 15 minutes to complete.*
- *There will be an opportunity to opt out of the survey.*

Art is long. Life is short.

Our Ceramics students recently took a field trip to The Florence Griswold Museum in Old Lyme.



Students went on a docent-led tour of the current collection of impressionist paintings, as well as viewed the "*Wee Faerie Village*" created by a variety of artists and organizations exhibited throughout the property.





Students also sharpened their drawing skills, by sketching the landscape and discussing the relationships between man and nature and how it is shown through a variety of artworks.





Before we RUN out of space — let's hear it for Cross Country!

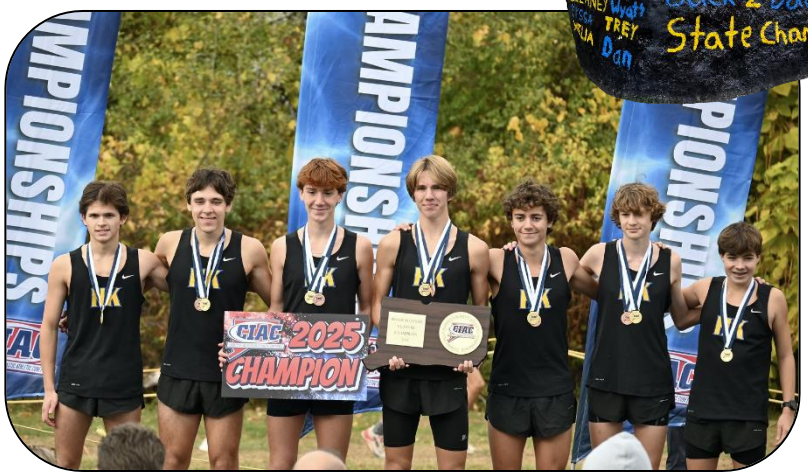
The HKHS boys and girls cross country teams wrapped up an incredible season at the Nike Northeast Region Championship meet held at Bowdoin Park in Wappingers Falls, NY. Over the course of the season, our girls won the **Shoreline Championship** (*for the 5th year in a row, 9th in the last 11 years*), won the **State Championship** (*for the 2nd consecutive year, 7th in the last 10 years*), placed 5th at **State Opens**, qualified for **New Englands**, and then capped off the season by winning the **Nike Northeast Open** race where they raced against teams and individuals from Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey.



At the State Championship, the girls were led by junior Charlotte Behnke who was the **Class SS Individual State Champion** (*the first ever girl in HKHS history!*) running a time of 19:39 over the hilly 3.1-mile course. She was followed by seniors Julia Downing, who placed 2nd in a time of 19:59, and Grace Mitchell placing 3rd just behind her in a time of 20:08 to finish **1-2-3** in the entire race...**also a first in program history**! By virtue of finishing in the top 12, Charlotte, Julia, and Grace all earned All-State accolades - *for Grace it was her 3rd time earning All-State honors.*



The HKHS boys cross country team also came out on top at the **Shoreline Championship** with their 10th title in the last 12 years before winning the **Class SS State Championship** race along with the girls team (*again, for the 2nd consecutive year, 13th state title in program history*). HKHS was the only school out of the entire state of Connecticut to win **both** the boys and girls team titles! *We also had the most combined boys and girls All-State runners out of any program in the state with eight runners earning All-State accolades*. In addition to the three girls mentioned above, All-State honors also went to juniors Evan Berardino and Wyatt Voegtli and seniors Cash Smigel, Alex Frederickson & Anthony Frederickson.





The entire cross country team would like to thank the Haddam Fire Department (*especially Captain Josh Meyer*) as well as the Killingworth Fire Department and Eric Bergman for providing fire truck escorts with lights and sirens for the team bus as it made its way through town to celebrate their state championships.

Upcoming EVENTS

- **SATs** | Saturday, Dec 6th [*non-HKHS event*]
- **Winter Band Concert** | Thursday, Dec 11th @ 6pm
- **"Cuties Concert"** [*KES, BES, & HKIS to visit the HKHS band!*] | Friday, Dec 12th @ 10am
- **ACTs** | Saturday, Dec 13th
- **Junior Planning Night [**Class of 2027**]** | Monday, Dec 15th @ 6pm
- **Professional Development Day** | Tuesday, Dec 16th – ***Early dismissal for students!***
- **37th Annual Holiday Telethon** | Wednesday, Dec 23rd – ***Early dismissal for students!***
- **Winter Break** | Thursday, Dec 24th through Friday, Jan 2nd – ***No school!***
- **Alumni Day** | Wednesday, Jan 7th - *please invite your recent graduates to join us!*
- **Quarter 2 Ends** | Wednesday, Jan 14th
- **Elective Fair for Students** | Wednesday, Jan 14th during Advisory
- **Midterm Exams [***tentative***]**| Thursday, Jan 15th through Wednesday, Jan 21st
- **Southern Region Music Festival** | Friday, Jan 16th & Saturday, Jan 17th
  - *Snow dates are Jan 23rd & 24th*
- **Martin Luther King Jr. Day** | Monday, Jan 19th – ***No school!***
- **K-12 Portfolio Day** | Tuesday, Jan 20th – ***Early dismissal for students!***
- **Semester 1 Ends** | Wednesday, Jan 21st
- **Quarter 3 [& Semester 2] Begins** | Thursday, Jan 22nd
- **8th Grade Parent/Guardian Orientation** | Monday, Jan 26th @ 6pm
  - *Snow date of Jan 27th* [students can attend but do not need to]
- **All-State Music Festival Auditions** | Saturday, Feb 7th
- **Professional Development Day** | Tuesday, Feb 10th – ***Early dismissal for students!***
- **ACTs** | Saturday, Feb 14th
- **President's Day Break** | Monday, Feb 17th & Tuesday, Feb 18th - ***No school!***

We look forward to seeing you at our school events and around campus.
Thank you so much for all you do to support our students and on behalf of the entire HKHS family, we wish you and your family a most joyous holiday season!

Respectfully,

Donna L. Hayward,
Principal

• Guidance Counseling Dept Update •



JUNIOR FAMILIES!

The school counselors are hosting our Junior Planning Night on Monday, Dec 15th at 6pm in the high school auditorium. We will present on a variety of topics, including the college search process and standardized testing. There will be time for questions and answers following the presentation. An invitation was sent out via email from the HKHSGuidance@rsd17.org account. RSVPs are NOT required but you can respond "Yes" to that calendar invitation if you would like. ***We hope to see you there!***

Small group meetings with junior students during their Advisory period occurred this week with the remainder meeting next Wednesday. Our advisory meetings and the evening event kick off our **post-secondary planning process** with the Class of 2027. We will be scheduling individual meetings with each of our juniors during the second semester. Meetings will be held during the school day, typically during a class that a student will be able to catch up in if they miss it. Parents and guardians are invited to attend, whether in-person or virtually. These meetings are tailored to students' individual plans, whether they plan to attend college, go into the workforce, or take another path.

PSATs

Students in grades 9th – 11th took the PSATs on October 22nd, 2025. PSAT scores are now available to view in your student's personal College Board account. College Board no longer sends paper score reports to schools. If you would like to see your student's scores, please have them log into their account on www.collegeboard.org. If your student has issues logging into College Board that cannot be resolved by resetting their passwords, they will need to call College Board's Customer Service line at (866) 630-9305 as we do not have the ability to assist with account access.

Alumni Day!

HKHS is holding our annual Alumni Day on Wednesday, Jan 7th, 2026. This event allows our current seniors to learn about the college and work experiences of our recent graduates. If you have a student who graduated from HKHS in 2024 or 2025, **please ask them if they would like to be a part of this event**, whether they are home from college, attending a technical school or program, or have joined the workforce or military, we'd love to hear from them! If interested, please have them contact Amy Giarnella at agiarnella@rsd17.org.

AP Students

Ms. Stone is back in the office and recently sent home an Advanced Placement letter to all families with students who are enrolled in at least one Advanced Placement class. Students enrolled in an AP class **must** take the AP exam in May. **All exams have been ordered** for students which leaves the last step of the process: payment. The letter outlines how to submit payment for exams. Any questions with regard to this process should be directed to Ms. Stone. Payment is due by March 6th, 2026 and if it is not received by this deadline the fee will become a UFO.

SENIOR FAMILIES!

Remember to complete the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) as part of the college application process. It is important to check with the college(s) your student has applied to regarding their individual deadlines.

There are FAFSA resources posted on the HKHS counseling website which can be found here or under the Counseling tab on the main HKHS website.

Some colleges also require the CSS Profile as part of their financial aid process. Please check the requirements at each college to which you have applied. As a reminder, the RSD17 Board of Education requires that all members of the Class of 2027 either submit the FAFSA or complete a waiver should they choose not to submit the FAFSA. The school counseling office will provide waivers this Spring.

Self-reported Transcript & Academic Record System (*STARS*)

It is important for seniors to monitor their application status at **ALL** schools that they have applied to. Many colleges require students to submit a "Self-reported Transcript and Academic Record System" (STARS) report in addition to sending in their transcripts, letters of recommendation, and/or test scores. ***Please be sure that students have submitted all components of their applications***. Many colleges require applicants to send mid-year grades for example. Please note that the school counseling office sends these automatically once first semester grades are stored in January.

Scholarship Season is Fast Approaching!

The school counseling office receives information from many local scholarship organizations every year. We typically receive these applications (or updates for scholarships we already have on file) throughout the winter. These are in the process of being transferred into SchooLinks as we are no longer using Naviance. Seniors will be able to search for, favorite, and complete applications from SchooLinks. Please note that the majority of **local** scholarship deadlines are between March to mid-May. Seniors interested in applying for scholarships should check SchooLinks regularly starting in January and the school counselors will share more information about scholarships with our seniors in Advisory this winter.

In addition to Naviance, students should explore https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/ for career, college, and/or scholarship opportunities.

Thousands of regional and national scholarships exist that we will not have listed in SchooLinks so students are encouraged to explore Big Future for all of the opportunities that can be found there! In addition to SchooLinks, students should check with organizations that they have personal connections to (either directly or through a family member).