

Summary of June 2020 Board of Education Meetings

Cougar Pride:

The Board held its annual recognition ceremony via video conference to celebrate the Class of 2020's Top 10 graduates, award the District's Teachers and Staff of the Year, and give recognition to District Retirees for their many years of service. Notable awards went to this year's Valedictorian, Arjun Badami of Higganum and Salutatorian, Zachary Houlton of Higganum. Beth LiPuma, of Central Office, was named District Staff Member of the Year, and Paige Callahan, of Haddam-Killingworth Middle School, was named Teacher of the Year. With gratitude we celebrated the retirements of Eileen Mills, Patricia Zeidler, Nancy Chase, Cindy Klein, and Gary Shepherd.

End of the School Year:

Each RSD17 school ended the year in a special way for their students, from a Reverse Parade at KES, to a Ringing Out Ceremony at Burr. HKMS 8th graders had their promotion event with students arriving in their festively decorated cars with teachers and staff cheering as they were driven through to receive their promotion certificate, a gift bag and ice cream. The HKHS Class of 2020 also celebrated their Diploma Day with a heartfelt drive through celebration. With teachers cheering, music and signs for each Senior lining the drive, the Seniors exited their cars dressed in their caps, gowns and HK facemasks, to cross the stage. As their name was announced, Principal Hayward got to speak to each student, award them their diploma and instruct them to turn their tassel. The ceremony was videotaped, professional pictures were taken for each student, and Project Graduation handed out very generous gift bags to each Senior. **The in-person Commencement for the Class of 2020 that had been scheduled for August has been moved up to July 17th, as many colleges have moved their start dates to early August due to Covid-19.**

Next School Year:

Superintendent Hageman has pulled together a team of District Staff, Teachers, Administrators and Board Members for a committee to plan for the reopening of schools in the fall. Initial guidelines from the State were released indicating all students will go back to school this fall. This committee will meet throughout the summer and more details will follow.

Curriculum

The Board agreed to purchase \$7,500 worth of K-12 books from the '19-'20 budget to infuse curricular materials with rich literature from diverse authors with multiple points of view and perspectives, as well as books that teach about empathy, understanding, and the richness of diversity. This injection of texts into classroom libraries is part of a curriculum plan for language arts with the intention to later expand to the social studies curriculum.

RSD 17 Fund Balance:

With many uncertainties facing the district next year due to Covid-19, the Board voted to use '19-'20 fund balance savings due to Covid-19 to pre-purchase items that were approved for the '20-'21 budget. This decision was made with the clear understanding that this \$500,000, which was saved only because of the Covid closure, will be used only for Covid related expenses, such as software needed for distance or hybrid learning or items that can no longer be shared between students. Any unspent funds from this will be returned to the towns in the '20-'21 audited fund balance.

Capital Improvements:

HKHS Field House- The abatement and demolition of the HKHS Gymnasium Floor is progressing on schedule and OWI Construction, LLC was awarded the bid to complete the gym renovation. Contractors for lighting and the Voice Evacuation System were also chosen.

On our Website:

You can watch videos of the Teacher and Student Recognition Ceremony and Class of 2020 Diploma Day on our RSD17.org website under "Community" - "HKTV" - "Click Here to View Channel 18 Live".