

MANCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION

Regular Meeting October 25, 2021 Lincoln/Virtual

PRESENT: Heinrich, Hughes, Meggers, Pattacini, Patterson, Thames
New member: Mix

ALSO PRESENT: Superintendent of Schools Geary, Deputy Superintendent Curriculum & Special Services Radikas, Assistant Superintendent Clancy, Assistant Superintendent Sone-Moyano

ABSENT: Stefanovicz

A. OPENING

A.1. Meeting Called to Order

Chairperson Thames called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. Mr. Thames mentioned that the Board is recognizing the need for changes to be made in the process of requesting to speak during the public speaking portion of the meeting. Goal is to make the virtual experience as parallel as possible to the in-person meeting. The public is asked to follow the regular expectations of the process. The Board is also debuting a community question segment for the Superintendent's section. Questions may be submitted to the Superintendent to be addressed during the meeting. The district Facebook page is no longer being monitored during the meeting.

Mr. Thames announced the resignation of Committee Members Gunderson, effective August 2, 2021, and Luna, effective October 1, 2021.

A.2 Action to fill Board of Education Vacancy

Secretary Pattacini made a motion for Elizabeth Mix to fill the vacancy on the Board left by **Emily Luna** due to her resignation effective 10/1/2021. The term will be through November 2023. **Seconded by Patterson.** There were no other nominations.

6-0 Voted in Favor

A. 3 Oath of Office for New Board Member

Town Clerk Joe Camposeo performed the swearing in of new committee member Elizabeth Mix.

A. 4 Pledge of Allegiance.

All in attendance participated in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, led by Mr. Thames.

A. 5. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting

APPROVED – Minutes Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of September 27, 2021. Secretary Pattacini moved and Mr. Heinrich seconded the motion.

7/0 – Voted in favor.

B. COMMITTEE REPORTS

B. 1 Mr. Pattacini presented the minutes of the Policy Committee meeting held on September 13, 2021.

B. 2 Ms. Patterson presented the minutes of the Personnel and Finance Committee meeting held on September 27, 2021.

C. CONSENT CALENDAR

Mr. Geary presented eight items on the Consent Calendar for Board approval.

C.1. Personnel Action

Details had already been provided to the Board members with their agenda.

C.2. Transfer of Funds

None.

C.3. Establish an appropriation for the United Way Community Investment Grant for the FY 21/22 in the amount of \$45,000

C.4 Establish an increase in appropriation for the IDEA 611 Grant for the FY 21/23 in the amount of \$20,320, bringing the total award to \$1,944,847

C.5 Establish an increase in appropriation for the IDEA 619 Grant for the FY 21/23 in the amount of \$470, bringing the total grant award to \$66,393

C.6 Establish an appropriation for the ED-244 Adult Education Grant for the FY 21/22 in the amount of \$1,552,228

C.7 Permission to apply for the Title IV, Part A, Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grant for the FY 21/23 in the amount of \$148,559

C.8 Establish an appropriation for the Title I, Part A - Improving Basic Programs Grant for the FY 21/23 in the amount of \$2,027,650

C.9 Establish an appropriation for the Title II, Part A - Supporting Effective Instruction Grant for the FY 21/23 in the amount of \$235,679

The Chairman called for a motion.

Secretary Pattacini moved and Ms. Patterson seconded the recommendation to adopt the Consent Calendar as outlined in this evening's agenda.

7/0 - Voted in favor.

D. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT

Leila Affini and Alexandra Hamza were both present. Alexandra shared that the first quarter is almost over. The quarter closes next Friday, on Nov. 5.

Sports are still ongoing and each sports team has been able to have a full season.

Clubs such as the Student Equity Advisory Team, Future Health Professionals and the MHS Roundtable Singers have been able to have regular in-person meetings.

This week is Homecoming Week and staff and student leaders have planned a Spirit week to raise school spirit before the Homecoming game against Middletown this Friday along with the Homecoming Parade.

Many of the students are very excited that there will be a homecoming dance happening on November 20th.

And finally, there will be a Diaper Drive from 5:30pm to 7pm going on as well at the entrance to the game this Friday.

E. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Thames reviewed the rules of engagement for public speakers. He noted that speakers should not expect an immediate response, though at the Chair's discretion it is possible. Written comments are also acceptable. Mr. Thames noted that this is not the forum or personnel or legal issues and asked speakers to refrain from derogatory and profane language.

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, In reference to Labor Day there is a book called "Heroes of American History" that gives a good overview of heroes who put their lives on the line in our country over the last century with all backgrounds and ethnicities.

Mr. Stringfellow mentioned a news article out of Franklin, Kentucky where they unveiled a statue of a black Union Soldier, responding to the confederate statue nearby, and represents the black men who fought in the Union Army and Navy.

In response to a recent letter to the editor regarding getting rid of Critical Race Theory in the schools, Mr. Stringfellow mentioned a book "The History of White People" by Nell Irvin Painter that talks about discrimination among whites, and how they discriminated against each other. Another book, "America for Americans: A History of Xenophobia in the United States" by Erika Lee. WE have to take the good with the bad, but move forward.

F. Superintendent's Report

F.1. Update on COVID-19

Mr. Geary presented an update on the district's response to COVID-19.

Mr. Pattacini asked if the district is anticipating the average absence rate at 40 days to be at 10%, or 4 days. Mr. Geary responded that the numbers should come down and that the average student daily participation rate is good.

Mr. Pattacini mentioned regarding student and staff quarantines that there doesn't appear to be in-school transmissions. He wondered if there were cases of breakthrough cases where individuals who are vaccinated but test positive and then spread the virus. Mr. Geary responded that the policy is if you test positive, then you must quarantine regardless of your vaccination status. The district is concerned about in-school spread. They are noticing that of the students who are quarantining, none of them are testing positive. **Mr. Pattacini** noted that the numbers are heading in the right direction, and thanked the staff for their hard work.

Ms. Patterson thanked Mr. Geary for the update and asked if there was any specific guidance on the practice of requiring siblings of students who are quarantining to quarantine as well. Mr. Geary reported that the only people who have to quarantine are those individuals who have had close contact with the person who tested positive. Not close contact of close contacts.

Mr. Geary read an online question regarding schools gathering and concerts. He mentioned that the guidelines for these situations have just been updated and still need to be reviewed. However, there do appear to be opportunities for some form of concerts.

Mr. Geary reminded everyone that, regardless of the reason for a student absence, and if it's excused or unexcused, if you have missed 10% of classes you will be on the chronic absence list.

Mr. Thames remarked that it is good to see the virus trending the way it is. He asked if we have had any staff refuse to get tested. Mr. Geary reported that there are very few who will not test and are not vaccinated. Those individuals are not working and are not getting paid. We are following the Governor's lead in his handling of state employees and will wait 45 days before acting. **Mr. Thames** asked how interaction between the new attendance workers and the students are working out. Mr. Geary stated that the Student Engagement Specialists and Student Advocates are reviewing attendance data and those students with higher

than average absences are being placed on the staff case loads. Staff are working with students and families to create positive incentives for the students to participate, and are engaging the Family Resource Centers and school social workers to overcome barriers. **Mr. Thames** asked if home visits are being conducted during COVID restrictions. Mr. Geary replied that home visits are encouraged since nothing can really replace that in-person visit, but staff stay safe and remain outside. **Mr. Thames** responded that it's good to have this program running. Board members are also helping to bridge the gap between school and home. The position of liaison for the buildings is allowing them to make the connection between what they do in their role as committee member and the impact in the schools. It's a wonderful opportunity, and staying vigilant in reaching these students to keep them engaged is so important. Mr. Thames thanked the entire FRC staff for their forward thinking work.

F.2. Update on Hiring and Talent Development.

Ms. Sinthia Sone-Moyano, Assistant Superintendent of Human Capital and Talent Development, and members of her department presented an update on recruitment and employee wellness.

Ms. Patterson remarked that the presentation was extremely informative and that it was powerful to see the progress. She is very impressed with the innovative approach to recruiting a diverse workforce and cannot wait to hear more.

Mr. Thames mentioned attending the New Faculty Orientation held this past August. He is seeing major increases in the diversity of our staff and that it has been great to be a part of it.

G. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

G.1 Mr. Pattacini moved and **Ms. Patterson** seconded the motion to approve the revisions of the following policies:

- 1. Prohibition of Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment in the Workplace - Policy # 4013**

[Prohibition of Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment in the Workplace](#)

- 2. Prohibition of Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment - Students - Policy # 5013**

[Prohibition of Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment Students](#)

- 3. Non-Discrimination - Policy 1503, 4114, 5014**

[Non Discrimination - Community](#)

[Non Discrimination - Personnel](#)

[Non Discrimination - Students](#)

4. Bullying and Safe School Climate - Policy # 5131.1

[Bullying](#)

5. Health Examinations/Assessments and Immunizations - Policy # 5141.3

[Examinations, Assessments, and Immunizations](#)

6. Deadly Weapons and Firearms - Policy #1504

[Deadly Weapons and Firearms](#)

7/0 Voted in Favor

H. NEW BUSINESS

H.1. Policy Recommendations:

The Policy Committee submits to the full Board its recommended policy changes for a first reading in accordance with its policy on policy changes. These items will be voted on at a future Board meeting. Mr. Geary noted that most are in response to new COVID restrictions

A. Credit for Online Courses [Optional and Remote Learning] Policy # 5127.12

[Credit for Online Courses](#)

B. Meeting Conduct Policy # 9000 - Bylaws

[Meeting Conduct](#)

C. Community Use of School Facilities Policy # 1330

[Community Use of School Facilities](#)

D. Visitors and Observations in Schools Policy # 1300

[Visitors](#)

E. School Volunteers Policy #1401

[Volunteers](#)

F. Green Cleaning Policy # 1506

[Green Cleaning](#)

G. Transportation Policy # 3541

[Transportation](#)

I. PUBLIC COMMENTS (Limited to items on tonight's agenda)

Mr. Thames again reviewed the rules for public speakers.

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, supports all of the items on the Consent Calendar and under item H and the many grants for Adult Education for the needs of the students, especially special needs, in giving them assistance to get them through college.

Mr. Geary gave a good presentation on COVID. There are good articles from the Boston Globe and USA today that talk about getting the right number of students vaccinated across the country, a plan through through President Biden, as well as the mental health of the children. There is an effect in the hospitals because there are not enough beds to deal with the mental health patients and the cost of working with parents getting children vaccinated

Regarding the safety in schools, there is an article by someone that mentions 3-D weapons that can be built at home.

The presentation by Mrs. Sone-Moyano and staff was very good.

How to be an Antiracist by Dr. Ibram X. Kendi which talks about looking at yourself as a person of color, and watching out for our own anti-racism and colorism among ourselves.

J. COMMUNICATIONS

None

K. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

Monday, November 8, 2021 - Reaffirmation of Board of Education Bylaws/Bowers Update

Monday, November 22, 2021 - Update on Humanities/STEM PK-4/Update on Building Projects

Monday, December 6, 2021 - Fall Data Update

L. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Thames called for a motion to adjourn.

Secretary Pattacini moved and Ms. Patterson seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting.

7/0 - Voted in favor.

Adjournment 8:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christopher Pattacini
Board Secretary