

MANCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION

**Regular Meeting
November 22, 2021
Lincoln/Virtual**

PRESENT: Eisenthal, Kohls, Mix, Orsene, Patterson, Stefanovicz, Thames

ALSO PRESENT: Superintendent of Schools Geary, Deputy Superintendent Curriculum & Special Services Radikas, Director of Finance & Management Clancy, Director of Human Resources Sone-Moyano

ABSENT: Meggers, Pattacini

A. OPENING

A.1. Meeting Called to Order

Acting Chairperson Patterson called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. All in attendance participated in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, led by Ms. Patterson.

A.2. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting

Ms. Patterson made a friendly amendment to A.3. to substitute "ceremonial" for "official".

APPROVED – Minutes Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of November 8, 2021 as amended. Acting Secretary Thames moved and Mr. Eisenthal seconded the motion.

7/0 – Voted in favor.

B. COMMITTEE REPORTS

None.

C. CONSENT CALENDAR

Mr. Geary presented 18 items on the Consent Calendar for Board approval. Mr. Geary walked through each item on the Consent Calendar for the benefit of the new Board Members. He explained that in the future, Board members will review items on the Consent Calendar prior to the meeting and ask any questions they may have at the meeting. Items can be removed from the Calendar before approval if there are pending issues or questions.

C.1. Personnel Action (All personnel actions require Board approval.)
Details had already been provided to the Board members with their agenda.

C.2. Transfer of Funds (Transfers of funds between certain accounts require Board approval.)

- Transfer from Martin School Administration General Supplies and Materials account to Martin School Administration Dues and Fees account in the amount of \$200.00
- Transfer from System-wide Medical Services Medical Supplies and Materials account to System-wide Medical Services Professional Development account in the amount of \$1,587.00
- Transfer from Manchester Regional Academy Special Education Printing and Advertising account in the amount of \$900.00 and transfer from Manchester Regional Academy Special Education Travel and Lodging account in the amount of \$100.00 for a total transfer to Manchester Regional Academy Special Education Professional Development account in the amount of \$1,000.00
- Transfer from System-wide Music Education Field Trips account to System-wide Music Education Instructional Supplies & Materials account in the amount of \$5,000.00

C.3. Extended Field Trip Request - Fifty (50) MHS Students, Four (4) Chaperones, MHS Roundtable Singers, Chamber Orchestra, Percussion Ensemble, Handbell Choir - Competition & Performance Tour - Boston and Plymouth, MA - April 21, 2022 - April 24, 2022 (Field trips out of state require Board approval.)

C.4. Permission to apply for the Nellie Mae - New Beginnings: Supporting Young Immigrants and Refugees Grant for the FY 21/22 in the amount of \$25,000

C.5. Permission to apply for the Federal Head Start Grant for the FY 22/23 in the amount of \$2,288,170

C.6. Permission to apply for the ARP ESSER Homeless Children and Youth (HCY) II Grant for the FY 21/22 in the amount of \$47,023

C.7. Permission to apply for the ESSER II Special Education Recovery Activities Grant for the FY 21/23 in the amount of \$120,000

C.8. Permission to apply for the ESSER II Bonus Special Populations Recovery Grant for the FY 21/23 in the amount of \$25,000

C.9. Permission to apply for the ESSER II Bonus Dyslexia Recovery Grant for the FY 21/23 in the amount of \$11,050

C.10. Establish an appropriation for Alliance District Grant for the FY 21/22 in the amount of \$9,133,576

C.11. Establish an appropriation for the Priority School District (PSD) - Extended School Hours Grant for the FY 21/22 in the amount of \$131,566

C.12. Establish an appropriation for the Priority School District (PSD) Grant - Summer School for the FY 21/22 in the amount of \$153,450

C.13. Establish an appropriation for the Priority School District (PSD) Grant for the FY 21/22 in the amount of \$829,434

C.14. Establish an appropriation for the Manchester Federal Head Start Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act and

American Rescue Plan Fund for the FY 20/23 in the amount of \$206,651

C.15. Establish an appropriation for the Enfield Federal Head Start Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act and American Rescue Plan Fund for the FY 20/23 in the amount of \$152,742

C.16. Establish an appropriation for the Title III, Part A English Language Acquisition Grant for the FY 21/23 in the amount of \$60,720

C.17. Establish an increase in appropriation for the Manchester Federal Head Start Program for the FY 21/22 in the amount of \$163,313 bringing the total amount to \$1,463,336

C.18. Establish an increase in appropriation for the Enfield Federal Head Start Program for the FY 21/22 in the amount of \$78,832 bringing the total amount to \$1,039,719

The Acting Chairperson called for a motion.

Acting Secretary Thames moved and Ms. Stefanovicz seconded the recommendation to adopt the Consent Calendar as presented on the agenda.

DISCUSSION:

Ms. Stefanovicz wondered how many refugees we have. Mr. Geary will get that information. He noted we partner with community organizations.

Mr. Eisenthal wondered when we know the amount of the Alliance Grant. Mr. Geary noted that we have 7 years left in a 10 year projection. There is a new state funding formula so we have a projected \$1.5 million added to the base amount each year.

The vote was called.

7/0 - Voted in favor.

D. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT

Leila Affini and Alexandra Hamza were both present. Leila reviewed that MHS will be wrapping up school before Thanksgiving break this Wednesday at 11am and despite being called "No-school November," MHS has had an eventful month.

The senior class took home the top prize for their float and performance during the Homecoming parade and each student was invited to a successful FanFest before the homecoming game.

The senior class is also tackling college head-on. Parents and students were invited to a financial aid night earlier this month and the school has hosted a click and submit event as well as after-school help sessions.

Currently, the Fall sports season is coming to a close with celebrations of seniors on the volleyball, swim, football and soccer teams. The winter sports teams have had their informational meetings and will begin their seasons soon.

Last week was home to some big events including: The first MHS play in over a year, *She Kills Monsters*. This was a successful production that received many glowing reviews from students and staff.

The first homecoming dance in over a year was held on Saturday and despite the cold many students stated that they had a good time.

Turkey bowl is also occurring next Thursday, which both the seniors and juniors are very excited for.

Last, MHS students have been given an opportunity to make a change in schools in Connecticut through the Voice4Change grant proposal program.

E. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms. Patterson reviewed the rules for public speakers.

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, reminded us this is Native American Awareness Month. He suggested several articles and books, including *Women of the Bible*, an article about Pearl Harbor, and the emotional learning of transgender youth.

Mr. Geary mentioned there were references to the Dads on Duty news clip seen recently. We will see a presentation on climate and culture soon and there will be opportunities for families to get involved. There is also a family survey out looking for input.

F. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT – PART I

F.1. Update on Humanities PK-4

Mr. Geary introduced Diane Sheehan-Burns, Director of Humanities PK-4. Ms. Burns gave a presentation that is available on the website.

Ms. Mix wondered if the numbers presented were only one school. Ms. Burns reviewed the numbers representing grade 2 across the district, which is 480 students.

Ms. Eisenthal wondered how this compares to prior years. Ms. Burns stated this is the largest gap we have ever seen in the district. The foundational skills and strategies that students missed learning in person are critical to 2nd and 3rd grade learning. These students were in Kindergarten when COVID hit.

Ms. Stefanovicz asked about the difference between Dibels and F&P. Ms. Burns noted that the Dibel just looks at fluency while the F&P shows both fluency and decoding skills to see if a student actually understands what they are reading. Ms. Stefanovicz pointed out that in 2nd grade students should be reading chapter books but 30-40% are still reading at an early Kindergarten level. Typically the bulk of 2nd graders are reading at grade level. Ms. Stefanovicz wondered if there were take-home materials for parents to help their children. Ms. Burns noted that at parent/teacher conferences in December teachers will help parents help their students.

Mr. Thames asked Ms. Burns to review the reading ability and tiers of intervention. Ms. Burns noted that if a student is reading at benchmark that is tier 1 with no extra interventions. If the student is not quite where they need to be (does not meet grade level) they would then fall into tier 2 (about a year behind) with extra help three times a week. If they are further behind, that puts them in tier 3 interventions, which is direct, intensive instruction five days a week in addition to classroom learning. Mr. Thames wondered what grades this approach was used for. Ms. Burns noted this is used through 8th grade.

Mr. Orsene asked when this data is from. Ms. Burns noted the data is from the fall and instruction shifts about mid-October. We revisit numbers in January but progress monitoring is ongoing. Teachers collect weekly running record and want to see growth in fluency and comprehension.

Ms. Stefanovicz wonders how we find time in a student's day to pull out for individual instruction. Ms. Burns noted we do not want the child to miss grade level tier 1 instruction. We have reimagined what some of that instruction looks like and there are often several adults in the class working in small groups.

F.2. Update on STEM PK-4

Ms. Pari Ghetia, Director of STEAM PK-4, gave a presentation focused on math available on the website as well.

Mr. Eisenthal wondered about the concept of math fluency. Ms. Ghetia reviewed basic fact fluency for lower grades and computational fluency for upper grades.

Ms. Mix wondered if there was any movement to change the standards since there is so much pressure on these children to catch up when we all had a global catastrophe. Mr. Geary noted catching up is a multi-year approach, which is why ESSR funding can be used through September 2025. Dr. Radikas noted we need more opportunities to show parents where their students are and how to help them reach their goals.

Ms. Stefanovicz felt this is a lot of responsibility on instructional coaches shoulders. She wondered how many coaches we have and if there are plans to expand that number. Mr. Geary answered that we cut coaches from 18 to 6 about 4 years ago when our budget was cut. At that time there was a literacy and numeracy coach at every elementary school. Now each school shares coaches with 2 other schools.

Mr. Eisenthal noted we are leading the effort to deal with serious problems and he looks forward to hearing about the progress in January.

G. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

G.1. Policy Recommendation

The Policy Committee submits to the full Board its recommended policy changes for a second reading in accordance with its policy on policy changes.

Acting Secretary Thames moved to approve the following policy additions and revisions:

- 1. Credit for Online Courses [Optional and Remote Learning] Policy # 5127.12.**
- 2. Meeting Conduct Policy # 9000 - Bylaws**
- 3. Community Use of School Facilities Policy # 1330**
- 4. Visitors and Observations in Schools Policy # 1300**
- 5. School Volunteers Policy #1401**
- 6. Green Cleaning Policy # 1506**
- 7. Transportation Policy # 3541**

Mr. Eisenthal seconded the motion.

DISCUSSION:

Ms. Stefanovicz asked if the transportation policy had been edited. Mr. Geary noted the correction with K-6 being 1 mile and 7-8 1.5 miles for busing.

The vote was called.

7/0 - Voted in favor.

H. NEW BUSINESS

None.

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

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, gave his support to the Consent Calendar. He noted grants are important and thanked Mr. Geary for his work in obtaining them. Mr. Stringfellow also enjoyed both presentations this evening. He noted that if parents aren't satisfied with public school they are welcome to home school or send their child to a parochial school. Mr. Stringfellow recommended the book *What White People Can Do Next*. Last, Mr. Stringfellow pointed out an article about pregnant women and the COVID vaccine.

Mr. Geary reviewed a couple questions from Facebook. The data is available to the public and the Fall data breakdown will be done at the next meeting. Concerts will resume in Bailey Auditorium with restricted numbers.

J. COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Thames mentioned the 14 year old missing girl in town. Kimberly Claudio has been missing since November 10th. She is 5'3" and about 100 lbs. She is white with black hair. Call Manchester Police at 860-645-5500 if you have any information. Our hearts go out to her parents. (Update - as of the writing of these minutes the child has been found and returned home).

K. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

Monday, December 6, 2021 - Fall Data Update

Monday, December 20, 2021 - Update on Humanities / STEM 5-12

Monday, January 10, 2022 - Budget Presentation

L. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Patterson called for a motion to adjourn.

Acting Secretary Thames moved and Mr. Eisenthal seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting.

7/0 - Voted in favor.

Adjournment 8:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Darryl Thames,
Acting Board Secretary