

MANCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION

**Regular Meeting
February 28, 2022
Lincoln/Virtual**

PRESENT: Eisenthal, Kohls, Meggers, Mix, Ntem-mensah, Orsene, Pattacini, Patterson,

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

ABSENT: Stefanovicz

A. OPENING

A.1. & 2. Meeting Called to Order

Chairperson Pattacini called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. All in attendance participated in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, led by Mr. Pattacini.

A.3. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting

APPROVED – Minutes Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of February 14, 2022. Secretary Patterson moved and Mr. Eisenthal seconded the motion.

8/0 – Voted in favor.

B. COMMITTEE REPORTS

B.1. Policy Committee

Mr. Orsene reviewed the last meeting was held February 14, 2022. The members present included Richard Kohls, Mike Orsene, Chris Pattacini, and Melanie Stefanovicz. Others Present: Matt Geary, Lauren Rodriguez.

The following policies were reviewed and will be moved to the full Board for two readings and adoption. The updates to the policies are aligned to legislative changes. The policies discussed included:

Graduation Requirements
Retention of Electronic Records
Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug-free Workplace
Weighted Grading and Calculation of Grade Point Averages
Student Privacy
Attendance, Truancy and Chronic Absenteeism
Drug and Alcohol Use by Students
Chemical Health for Student Athletes

The Committee also reviewed the Homework policy and will draft a revision using the Board of Education Equity Policy and research on homework provided by the superintendent. This discussion will be held at the next policy committee meeting. The full policy agenda which contains a description of the changes.

C. CONSENT CALENDAR

Mr. Geary presented three 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

- Transfer from System-wide Maintenance Capital Repair account to System-wide Maintenance Contracted Services account in the amount of \$862.00
- Transfer from Bentley Alternative Education Dues and Fees account to Bentley Alternative Education Field Trips account in the amount of \$1,200.00
- Transfer from System-wide Medical Services Travel and Lodging account to System-wide Medical Services Professional Development account in the amount of \$199.00

C.3. Extended Field Trip Request - Fourteen (14) MHS Students, Two (2) Chaperones, MHS Italian Club - Roma, Pompei, Napoli, Sorrento, Isola DiCapri Italy - April 7, 2023 - April 15, 2023

The Chairman called for a motion.

Secretary Patterson moved and Mr. Eisenthal seconded the recommendation to adopt the Consent Calendar as outlined in the agenda.

DISCUSSION:

Mr. Eisenthal inquired if the field trip complies with policy. Mr. Geary confirmed it does. This trip is scheduled for April of 2023. It is exciting to see international field trips resume so some of our students can see other parts of the world.

The vote was called.

8/0 - Voted in favor.

D. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT

Leila Affini reported that -Winter sports are coming to a close and we have had some strong displays of athleticism on our winter sports teams this year with many teams, such as the track, wrestling, basketball, and cheerleading teams, competing at the state or regional level.

Manchester students brought their talent to California during the long weekend. Students on the team known for the production of 'The Pulse' participated in the Student Television Network Convention.

This weekend, the high school hosted a support day to help any students who had missing assignments or anything school-related.

Finally, today was the first day where students could elect to have their masks on. It was a mixture of masks and no masks in the hallways today.

E. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms. Rose Bunker, 33 Otis Street, has been a crossing guard for 13 years. Her post is at the corner of Broad and Hilliard. She sees students from Bennet and Illing. From her post she can see a bus stop at Hilliard and Griffin. Ms. Bunker believes this is an unsafe place for a bus stop. There is no crosswalk there and she has seen several close calls. Many of the students walk to her to cross and catch the bus at the bus stop near her. Ms. Bunker would like the district to look at the location of crossing guards in deciding where to place bus stops and she would like to see this unsafe stop eliminated. (Mr. Geary confirmed he would look into this stop.)

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, spoke about the masks becoming optional and he hopes that people will respect others' wishes regarding mask wearing and hopes they will not ridicule anyone for their position on the topic. Mr. Stringfellow recommended a National Geographic article on slave ships and mentioned this being the end of Black History Month. Mr. Stringfellow mentioned Brown v BOE and how to talk to the kids about what is happening in the Ukraine. Last, Mr. Stringfellow spoke about banned books and suggested that we read them. N

F. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT – PART I

F.1. Winter Data Update

Mr. Geary presented F&P results both by school and by grade level (K-4). Although we are still not back to pre-pandemic numbers, we are making progress. There is still an achievement gap.

Mr. Geary noted that there was a concentrated effort this year in Grade 2 reading and Grade 4 math. It is clear that the extra effort has resulted in higher scores.

Regarding the SATs, Mr. Geary noted that many colleges are making that optional now. Our scores have stayed about the same.

The data may be accessed through our website.

Mr. Eisenthal pointed out that the F&P data showed about 100 fewer students this year than in 2019 with an increase of those that meet or exceed state standards. He also asked about student engagement professionals. Mr. Geary

noted that there are various reasons and stories why students have attendance problems. Fewer financial resources will not help the problem. We were in need of these engagement specialists prior to the pandemic and are fortunate to have the funding now to hire them.

Mr. Eisenthal wondered how important it is to receive the budget increase requested in order to complete the next steps. Mr. Geary explained that we are lucky to have the ability to use the Alliance Grant and ESSER funding to hire reading consultants and create smaller class sizes. He would like to continue this.

Mr. Eisenthal asked about suspension numbers by children and not instances. Mr. Geary will get that information.

Ms. Patterson would like to compare the attendance data with the suspension data. As for the intentional efforts in grade 2 reading and grade 4 math, she wants all students to excel and hopes these efforts will impact those most marginalized as well. Mr. Geary noted the Equity work being done will help teachers to understand their student's experiences and how to best teach those children.

Ms. Patterson knows we are working on increasing the number of staff of color in the district. Mr. Geary reviewed that the research shows that having a teacher that looks like you raises achievement.

The high school experience was last on Ms. Patterson's questions. Mr. Geary noted that many high schools look very similar to how they operated 20 or 30 years ago. MHS is very different from the past. This connects to student engagement.

Mr. Orsene wondered if teachers get training on how to connect with and get to know their students. Mr. Geary stated we do have some PD around that but could always do more. Bennet does mentoring every other day while Illing has CREW. At MHS they have mentoring Mondays.

Mr. Pattacini is encouraged that when we focused our energy in a space (gr 2 reading/gr 4 math) we saw a change in the numbers. That was a powerful testament to the work going on in our district. He wondered if we will be targeting other grade levels, or continue with grades 2 and 4. Mr. Geary mentioned that these two areas were chosen with purpose. It is important for a third grader to read well and the current 2nd graders had their early reading learning interrupted the most by the pandemic. In grade 4 is when math gets more difficult, and is the basis for all future math. Mr. Geary noted he is ready to target Kindergarten next (now!!). Mr. Pattacini noted that throwing money at a problem does not necessarily fix the problem, but for us, having more money helps fix this problem. He added it is important to avoid a funding cliff.

G. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

H. NEW BUSINESS

H.1. Policy Recommendations

The Policy Committee brought to the Board policy changes for four policies this evening: Graduation Requirements; Retention of Electronic Records; Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug-free Workplace; and Weighted Grading and Calculation of Grade Point Averages.

Mr. Pattacini reviewed that this is the first of two readings of these policy changes and we can approve them at the next meeting. Mr. Geary noted all the changes were driven by legislative changes. When legislation changes our attorneys at Shipman and Goodwin recommend policy changes.

For graduation requirements the policy broadens the requirements as previously planned. Regarding the drug-free workplace, it was clarified the location and items included extend to any area of the school as well as vapes and cannabis. The weighted grade point calculation is a reflection of what we currently do.

Mr. Eisenthal wondered why counsel chose two separate paragraphs relevant to marijuana. He felt they could be more concise and use just one paragraph. Mr. Geary will look into that.

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

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, supports the Consent Calendar. He felt the report from Mr. Geary was good. Mr. Stringfellow pointed out that some students have incarcerated parents or may even be homeless. He touched on medical marijuana along with epi--pens and insulin. In the current *TIME* magazine there is an interesting article on kids making a difference. He recommended an article on the university crisis as well as student health. The *JJ* had an article stating that America needs more black doctors.

Mr. Geary stated there was a written question about the construction traffic for Bowers and how traffic flow will be managed. He noted there will be an update on that in the Spring.

J. COMMUNICATIONS

None.

K. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

Monday, March 14, 2022	Update on Technology Update on Food Services
Monday, March 28, 2022	Update on Humanities / STEM 5-12
Monday, April 25, 2022	Manchester Regional Academy Update

L. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Pattacini called for a motion to adjourn.

Secretary Patterson moved and Mr. Ntem-Mensah seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting.

8/0 - Voted in favor. Adjournment 8:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Tracy Patterson, Board Secretary