

MANCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION

**Regular Meeting
May 9, 2022
Lincoln Center/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:

A. OPENING

A.1. & 2. Meeting Called to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Pattacii at 6:00 p.m.

Mr. Eisenthal moved to go into Executive Session. Mix seconded the motion.

8/0 - Voted in favor.

Executive session concluded at 6:38 p.m.

Chairperson Pattacini called the meeting back to order at 7:01 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 April 25, 2022. Secretary Patterson moved and Ms. Mix seconded the motion.

8/0 – Voted in favor.

B. COMMITTEE REPORTS

None.

C. CONSENT CALENDAR

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

C.1. Personnel Action

None.

C.2. Transfer of Funds

- **Transfer from System-wide Curriculum & Instruction Dues and Fees account in the amount of \$19,724.00. Transfer to System-wide Curriculum & Instruction Instructional Supplies and Materials account in the amount of \$17,666.00 and transfer to System-wide Curriculum & Instruction Computer Equipment account in the amount of \$2,058.00 for a total transfer of \$19,724.00**

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.

8/0 - Voted in favor.

D. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT

Leila Affini shared the MHS update:

-At Manchester High School, 4th quarter is moving right along with progress notes closing this week.

- Many students are also in the midst of taking AP tests. Most testing ends this week except for a few make-up tests next week.

-One thing Manchester prides itself on is making room for students to create change. Paris Bazemore, a junior at MHS, was recognized by the Voice4Change program. For her efforts, MHS will have a designated makerspace.

-As the year is winding down, the senior festivities are just getting started with prom this Saturday at the Hartford Marriott.

-End of the year concerts are also coming up and this year Modern Band will be having a concert next Tuesday May, 17th at 7pm at the Bailey Auditorium.

-The spring sports season continues to be going smoothly at MHS.

-Finally the Student Equity Advisory Team will be attending the UCONN Human Rights Summit next Wednesday to give a presentation on youth voice and equity.

Mr. Pattacini wanted to hear more about the Student Equity Advisor Program, maybe at another meeting. Leila is actually chair of that group that was created in 2020. We have one of the most diverse high schools in the state and this group is about cultural appreciation in school.

E. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, attended the State Board of Education meeting recently. They spoke about racial imbalance and student attendance. Mr. Stringfellow talked about how racism is real and there are hate groups out there, as well as BLM and PowerUp. He recommended the book *Systemic Racism 101*. Mr. Stringfellow also talked about Mental Health Awareness Month and suicide prevention. Last, he mentioned that the history of women in a positive light was shown on CBS this morning.

Ms. Debbie Streeter, 25 Eastfield Street, noted that employees usually think of the "Board" as the administration. She shared a picture of the difference between equal and fair. She works with students with disabilities to help them be successful. Sometimes administration treats paras like teachers, when they want classes covered, but when it comes to the increase in health insurance costs and the percentage paras

pay, both are at a higher percent than teachers, nurses and others, all who make more money than paras.

Ms. Streeter wondered why the pay schedule shows increased steps, but this did not increase the pay of those on top, but makes it take longer to get to those top steps. She would like to see paras able to select a balloon payment or be able to divide their pay evenly through the year like teachers can do. They don't work in the summer, which means no pay, but they also are excluded from collecting unemployment benefits.

Mr. Colin McNamara, 47 Grandview Street, feels equity means nothing, it is a nonsense term. He went on to make jokes about privilege.

F. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

F.1. Update on Senior Stories

Mr. Geary introduced Katelyn Miner, Principal of MHS. Mr. Geary shared that about a month ago he had the opportunity to sit through multiple senior stories. Ms. Miner reported that a team of hardworking people are responsible for this work, backed by the support of the Barr Foundation. Ms. Miner's presentation can be seen on the website.

Mr. Eisenthal mentioned that this was in a pilot phase and wondered if next year there would be a formal rollout. He also wondered if we are following another district on this project, or are we a trailblazer. Ms. Miner noted that we took ideas from several districts and made this project our own.

Ms. Mix is confused, wondering if each teacher will advise a group. Ms. Miner mentioned the Wednesday mentor program, where almost all staff members mentor 10-11 mentees. They build relationships with students outside of a classroom setting. Some topics covered include career planning, college prep, interview prep as well as senior story work across grades 9-12.

Ms. Patterson thought this was excellent work, foundational work, for our students. The "rest of life" is a big thing to think about and she likes this incremental approach starting in grade 9. Ms. Patterson wondered if there is

work done to identify strengths such as assessments or is this just self-discovery? Ms. Miner reviewed there are inventory tools in Naviance and also some self-discovery. It represents a set of experiences over time.

Mr. Ntem-Mensah thought this was a job well done, phenomenal!

Mr. Pattacini mentioned two grantors, The Barr Foundation and the RISE Network. These are private foundations that tend to offer competitive grants for something innovative. Mr. Geary added that the RISE Network is part of the Dalio Foundation. We were invited to apply for these grants to continue cutting edge work at the high school. Many of these types of grants operate on an invitation to apply only basis. Mr. Pattacini had recently attended a civics class at MHS and every student wrote about the 25th credit and how excited and helpful it has been and how every student should have this experience.

G. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

G.1. Ratification of the Manchester Federation of Paraeducators Local #3175, AFT CT, AFL-CIO Contract

Mr. Pattacini reviewed that this item was reviewed in a prior agenda and tabled. This contract is up for ratification this evening. **Mr. Geary** added that this contract was negotiated with the Para Union and ratified by the union.

Ms. Mix had previously asked for this item to be tabled. As a new member of the Board, she waited time to review the process and she is comfortable with the contract negotiations. She believes this contract moves in the right direction.

Mr. Pattacini supports this contract, which was negotiated in good faith. He noted items in it can be changed in a future contract.

Secretary Patterson moved to approve the Manchester Federation of Paraeducators Local #3175, AFT CT, AFL-CIO Contract, covering the period of July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2026. Mr. Eisenthal seconded the motion.

8/0 - Voted in favor.

H. NEW BUSINESS

H.1. Healthy Food Certification

Mr. Geary noted that each year the Board has to reauthorize the Healthy Food Certification (HFC) as required by statute (C.G.S. Section 10-215f). There are two parts, first to approve and second if approved, to allow the sale of non-approved items at events and fundraisers, etc.

Secretary Patterson moved to approve that pursuant to C.G.S. Section 10-215f, the Manchester Board of Education certifies that all food items offered for sale to students in the schools under its jurisdiction, and not exempted from the Connecticut Nutrition Standards published by the Connecticut State Department of Education, will comply with the Connecticut Nutrition Standards during the period of July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2023. This certification shall include all food offered for sale to students separately from reimbursable meals at all times and from all sources, including but not limited to, school stores, vending machines, school cafeterias, culinary programs and any fundraising activities on school premises sponsored by the school or non-school organizations and groups. Mr. Eisenthal seconded the motion.

8/0 - Voted in favor.

If the Manchester Board of Education votes "yes" for the healthy food option, the Manchester Board of Education must also vote "yes" or "no" on whether to allow food and beverage exemptions.

Secretary Patterson moved that the Manchester Board of Education will allow the sale to students of food items that do not meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards and beverages not listed in Section 10-221q of the Connecticut General Statutes provided that the following conditions are met: 1) the sale is in connection with an event occurring after the end of the regular

school day or on the weekend; 2) the sale is at the location of the event; and 3) the food and beverage items are not sold from a vending machine or school store. An "event" is an occurrence that involves more than just a regularly scheduled practice, meeting, or extracurricular activity. For example, soccer games, school plays, and interscholastic debates are events but soccer practices, play rehearsals, and debate team meetings are not. The "regular school day" is the period from midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day. "Location" means where the event is being held and must be the same place as the food and beverage sales. Ms. Mix seconded the motion.

8/0 - Voted in favor.

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

Ms. Debbie Streeter, 25 Eastfield Street, stated this was a moot point since the contract for the paras was approved this evening. She feels that sometimes paras are treated like teachers, but yet they are not afforded the balloon payment or summer income that teachers can opt for and cannot collect unemployment during unpaid vacations or during the summer. Paras also have fewer paid holidays, although over the next several years those will be gradually added. Ms. Streeter feels everyone should get paid for all holidays, such as Three Kings Day or Eid. She realized this could have gone to arbitration. These are unprecedented times and Ms. Street hopes the Board sees that and approves an MOU to reflect appropriate pay.

Ms. Laurel Fragne, 55 Academy Street, stated her son Preston will be graduating from Bentley this year. She wanted to thank the Bentley staff and teachers for such a well-run program. She wondered, with the recent increase in covid numbers, would there be any changes to graduation. If so, when does the administration anticipate notifying families? Mr. Geary responded that because graduation is outside this year he hopes there will be no changes. The only reason he would see a change is if the Department of Public Health mandates it. This was one of the reasons graduation was intentionally planned to be outside.

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, though it was a good presentation from Ms. Miner. He is a proud 1974 graduate of MHS. He has seen change for the better

recently. He wished the seniors all the best and enjoyed the video presentation. We always see negative things about public high schools. We have to take all comers while private and parochial schools do not. He thinks the 25th credit is a good program and agrees with the food services healthy food mandate.

Mr. Geary stated he received a question about school vouchers and he clarified that these are not available in Connecticut.

J. COMMUNICATIONS

Ms. Patterson had the opportunity to attend the Bennet concert last week with a guest appearance of an Illing student. A singing child is a happy child! She saw a room full of pride and joy!!

K. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

Monday, May 23, 2022 2022-2023 Budget Update

Monday, June 13, 2022 Adult Education Update

Monday, June 27, 2022 Close of School Update

**It was noted that the May 12 Budget Workshop has been canceled.

L. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Pattacini called for a motion to adjourn.

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

8/0 - Voted in favor. Adjournment 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Traey Patterson, Board Secretary