

MANCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION

Regular Meeting

March 22, 2021

Lincoln/Virtual

PRESENT: Gundersen, Heinrich, Luna, Meggers, Pattacini, 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: Hughes

A. OPENING

A.1. & 2. Meeting Called to Order

Chairperson Thames called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m. All in attendance participated in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, led by Mr. Thames.

A.3. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting

APPROVED – Minutes Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of March 8, 2021. Secretary Pattacini moved and Mr. Heinrich seconded the motion.

8/0 – Voted in favor.

B. COMMITTEE REPORTS

None.

C. CONSENT CALENDAR

Mr. Geary presented six 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 Social Work Instructional Supplies and Materials account to System-wide Social Work Dues and Fees account in the amount of \$80

C.3. Establish an appropriation for the Enfield Head Start Training and Technical Assistance Grant for the FY 21-22n in the amount of \$11,241

C.4. Establish an appropriation for the Enfield Head Start Grant for the FY 21-22 in the amount of \$949,646

C.5. Establish an appropriation for the Manchester Head Start Training and Technical Assistance Grant for th FY 21-22 in the amount of \$15,208

C.6. Establish an appropriation for the Manchester Head Start Grant for the FY 21-22 in the amount of \$1,284,815

DISCUSSION:

Mr. Thames asked for information on the Head Start grants. Mr. Geary explained these are regular yearly Head Start grants. He reminded the Board that Manchester serves as the fiscal agent for Enfield Head Start as well.

The Chairman called for a motion.

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

8/0 - Voted in favor.

D. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT

Alexandra Hamza informed us that the MHS Chamber Orchestra and regular Orchestra are planning to record both solos and a version of Mr. Rogers "Won't you be my neighbor" in order to share with the community. Students are excited for the start of most spring sports, which are scheduled to start next Monday the 29th. The SAT's are on Wednesday for all Juniors. The Sophomore and Freshman classes have already taken their PSATs during two Wednesdays this March. Last, Ms. Hamza mentioned that while the Freshman and Sophomore classes were taking their PSATS, other students who are taking AP classes were able to attend online AP review sessions.

Leila Affini told us that Ms. Miner has asked students to fill out a form to gauge interest for potential classes with college credit for next year including: Principles of Criminal Justice, Environmental Studies and Justice, Big Data for Big Policy Problems, Poetry in America: The City from Whitman to Hip Hop, and Introduction to Engineering.

Science Research students took home awards at the virtual Connecticut Science and Engineering Fair awards ceremony this past Saturday. Ms. Affini stated that a lot of students are excited for the start of 4th quarter on the 1st as well as Spring Break! Fully in-school learning is set to start on April 19th, after students come back from spring break.

E. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

F. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT – PART I

F.1. Martin Elementary School Improvement Plan

Mr. Geary introduced Ms. Sophia Krisch, Principal of Martin, along with many staff members. Their presentation is available on the website and highlighted Martins School Improvement Plan and how their Race and Equity work are impacting life at Martin.

Mr. Pattacini thanked the Martin staff for placing race and equity at the forefront of their work. Hearing staff and student's stories and how the work

affects them is very powerful. He enjoyed seeing this work come alive in the school as it is powerful and meaningful. This is a trying time to connect with students and Martin is doing a great job.

Mr. Thames noted that race can be a difficult thing to talk about and he was blown away with the great approach Martin has taken. He likes the work going on and enjoyed being one of the highlighted readers in the past. Mr. Thames also noted that Amanda Gorman has a children's book available, *Change Sings*. Mr. Thames feels Martin is an example for the rest of the district to follow, with their engaging and dynamic approach.

F.2. Update on Covid-19 and Return to School

Mr. Geary first noted that the second budget workshop with the Board of Directors is this THURSDAY, not Wednesday as he previously stated.

We are on track for grades 5-12 Hybrid students to return to full time, in-person learning on April 19th. That date was chosen intentionally to give time to watch the March variants and to have vaccines underway. Mr. Geary also noted that the CDC agreed with the reduction to 3 feet of social distancing with masks as long as the community spread remains low. There are a couple of issues to work out still, including cafeteria lunch time. Dattco is going through bus lists to remove students from the roster that have not ridden the bus this year. There is a slight conflict of end times with pre-Kn and elementary. These minor issues are being worked through and we are on track for April 19th.

Most staff that desired a vaccine were able to take part in several closed clinics. Some received the Moderna vaccine, which has 4 weeks between doses and the second dose is scheduled for April 6th. The remainder of staff received the Pfizer vaccine with a 3 week space. Second doses are scheduled for April 1 and 2 and grades 5-12 will be remote on April 1st (April 2nd is Good Friday). Once a staff member is 14 days past the second dose of the vaccine, they no longer have to quarantine for exposure unless they show symptoms. This will make it vastly easier to remain fully staffed. Mr. Geary noted that Illing went full remote for the rest of the week due to staff shortages.

Mr. Geary also noted he is working to hold a vaccine clinic for students at the high school age 16 and up once they are eligible, which should be mid-April.

We are watching the community spread carefully. Manchester is still in the red band with 15.6 new cases per 100,000 people. Once we drop below 15 we move into the orange band. There was a one day rise in the CT rate, nearing 5% positivity, but now we are back to the low 2's. Occupancy limits have been removed from restaurants and churches and inside gatherings can be up to 25 people. Outside gathering limits have also been raised. End of year activity planning is underway. One guideline currently being revised is around travel. Connecticut has backed off on guidance so Mr. Geary is trying to formulate rules around travel (ie if you are vaccinated, have already had Covid, or have a negative rapid test you won't have to quarantine upon return).

Mr. Geary anticipates smaller high school graduation ceremonies and currently there are focus groups of parents and students discussing the possibilities. Other end of year celebrations, including for grade 4, are being discussed. Mr. Geary is still planning to deny community use of buildings or grounds for the next several months.

The Summer Planning Team Meeting is being held Wednesday and Mr. Geary is excited to engage students in both learning and fun this summer.

Ms. Luna liked the idea of holding a vaccine clinic for our eligible students so they can be vaccinated in a timely manner.

Mr. Thames acknowledged the tremendous amount of work it has been to develop a scenario where we can return to buildings full time.

G. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

H. NEW BUSINESS

None.

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

Mr. Geary noted there was one FaceBook comment about the bus problem with Pre-K, which we are working on.

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, noted we are in Women's History Month. He mentioned several women of note, including Madame Curie and Rosalind Franklin. Mr. Stringfellow mentioned the next *TIME* issue has an article about Asian discrimination. He suggested two books: *Uncomfortable Conversations with a Black Man* and *This is The Fire*. Last, Mr. Stringfellow noted Sesame Street is also talking about being black in America.

J. COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Thames extended condolences to anyone that lost loved ones in Georgia. This was a tragic event and his heart goes out to the community as a whole.

Mr. Thames also wanted to shout out to the MHS staff. They received their 10 year accreditation recently and this is a rigorous process to go through during "regular" times, nevermind during a pandemic.

Mr. Meggers asked for Mr. Pattacini to say something about a new scoreboard and basketball court. Mr. Pattacini mentioned a discussion at the previous Buildings & Sites Committee meeting and he looks forward to further discussions about improvements in the district. Mr. Thames agreed, mentioning some of those improvements include solar panels.

K. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

THURSDAY, April 8 - Highland Park School Improvement Plan

Monday, April 26 - Verplanck School Improvement Plan

Monday, May 10 - Adult Education Update

L. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Thames called for a motion to adjourn.

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

8/0 - Voted in favor.

Adjournment 8:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christopher Pattacini
Board Secretary