

MANCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION

Regular Meeting

June 14, 2021

Lincoln/Virtual

PRESENT: Gundersen, Heinrich, Hughes, 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:

A. OPENING

A.1. & 2. Meeting Called to Order

Chairperson Thames called the meeting back to order at 7:18 p.m. He explained the Board had previously been in Executive Session from 5:40 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 May 24, 2021. Secretary Pattacini moved and Ms. Patterson seconded the motion.

9/0 – Voted in favor.

B. COMMITTEE REPORTS

None.

C. CONSENT CALENDAR

Mr. Geary presented nine 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 District-wide Information Services Repairs account to District-wide Information Services Computer Supplies & Materials account in the amount of \$2419

C.3. Permission to apply for the Manchester Head Start Services Grant for the FY 21/22 in the amount of \$145,127

C.4. Permission to apply for the Manchester Head Start Innovative Enhancement Grant for the FY 21/22 in the amount of \$63,000

C.5. Permission to apply for the Enfield Head Start Innovative Enhancement Grant for the FY 21/22 in the amount of \$100,000

C.6. Permission to apply for the IDEA 611 Grant for the FY 21/23

C.7. Permission to apply for the IDEA 619 Grant for the FY 21/23

C.8. Establish an appropriation for the Elementary and Secondary School Education Relief Fund II (ESSER II) for the FY 20/24 in the amount of \$6,888,207

C.9. Extended Field Trip Request Form for Manchester High School's Boys/Girls Cross Country to Manchester, N.H., 16 students, 4 Chaperones - September 24-25, 2021

The Chairman called for a motion.

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

9/0 - Voted in favor.

D. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT

Leila Affini reported they are in their last week of school and despite being in a pandemic year many events have gone smoothly and there are many plans made for the summer.

The senior class celebrated the end of their high school careers with a senior picnic at High Meadows on May 21st and two graduation ceremonies held last Saturday, as well as a senior prom held on June 11th.

The Student Equity Advisory Team is still spreading awareness. They partnered with the World Language Club together to educate students and teachers about Asian Pacific Islander Month through videos and announcements. SEAT has put together a bulletin board in order to celebrate members from that community. They have also installed a Pride Month board that will be up until we come back in the fall. To close out the year, SEAT members were selling black excellence stickers in the cafe which ended up being very popular amongst staff and students.

This summer, students have been provided with opportunities to keep busy such as tutoring jobs, enrichment programs and leadership courses.

Alexandra Hamza reports rising seniors will have the opportunity to receive help on college essays via Workshops being offered through the school.

The Sports Season has been dying down and MHS had multiple All-Conference athletes on the golf, baseball, Tennis and track teams.

The MHS Chamber Orchestra has recorded multiple concert pieces for the community to enjoy. They can be found on the MHS Homepage.

Finally, the MHS Cello Ensemble is planning an evening of music in the park on July 7th at 7pm. This ensemble includes players of all grades and even past MHS students. Everyone is invited to attend.

E. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

F. Superintendent's Report

F.1. Teachers of the Year

Mr. Geary announced the Teacher of the Year for each school as well as the district. Teachers are nominated for this honor by their colleagues which makes it even more meaningful. There is a district committee that meets to choose the district Teacher of the Year from among those who earned the title from each school.

Bennet - Hope Mulholland

Bentley -Carolyn Mather

Bowers - Stephanie Avery

Buckley - Siobhan Leonard

Highland Park - Linda Poland

Illing - Sarah Burdacki

Keeney - Catherine Kratz

Manchester High - Mathew Cieslowski

Manchester Middle Academy - Michael Gomez-Hixon

Manchester Preschool - Amber Carbone

Manchester Regional Academy - Brendan Ashe

Martin - Chrisstina (Nikki) Kupec - DISTRICT TOY

Verplanck - Carey St. Germain

Waddell Michelle Alexandrin

Mr. Geary notes any year is difficult for teachers, but this year was particularly hard. Teachers had to think outside the box, connect with families in different ways, and learn new technology. We would not have been able to provide the level of support and instruction to our students without such awesome staff. Mr. Geary also expressed appreciation to the teacher's families for their sacrifices as well.

Ms. Stefanovicz stated that if this meeting were in person, we would give these teachers a standing ovation. She thanked them for their effort, their big hearts, how much they love the children, and for pushing through this crazy year and soaring! This is their life's work and she appreciates them!

Mr. Pattacini congratulated and thanked the teachers for all their work over the last year plus. No one had ever experienced what we just went through and he appreciates all their effort working both in-person and remotely.

Mr. Thames thanked the teachers for what they brought to the table. They have had to change the way they interact with both students and parents while maintaining high expectations and nurturing our young people. Everyone learns differently and has different interests and teachers are the conduit to help students find their interests and passion.

F.2. Waddell School Improvement Plan

Mr. Geary introduced Aisha Florez, Principal of Waddell. Ms. Florez, along with a couple of staff and several Waddell students, presented their School Improvement Plan, which can be viewed on the website.

Mr. Pattacini thought the presentation was amazing and the students were great examples for Manchester Public Schools. He noted that clearly the pandemic did not slow down the Waddell staff as they helped students be successful.

Ms. Patterson loved that Waddell teachers make sure all students hear that every one of them is capable. She thanked the students for being so brave this evening.

Mr. Thames notes they clearly have fun at Waddell and the teachers enjoy the work. He was intrigued by the mindfulness topic and would like to attend a PD on the subject.

F.3. MPS Safe Return to In-Person Learning Plan

Mr. Geary read parts of a document required as part of the American Relief Act. He noted Mr. Daly would continue as the Covid liaison. The plan is required to address health and safety, continuity of services, take public input and be in an understandable format.

Mr. Geary touched on some points of the very long document, which will be available for viewing on the website. Handwashing will continue to be encouraged. Ventilation will continue to be addressed. Contact tracing will also

continue. Parents will continue to screen their children at home before sending them to school (for fever, loss of taste/smell, etc). Consideration will also be made to health equity.

Regarding remote learning next year, we are still monitoring interest and at this time about 80-90 families are interested. Full in-person learning will resume in September.

Part of the document was "a day in the life", reflecting a student's experience. This will look much more like pre-pandemic days, though there are some things that we found helpful that will stay.

We will continue to provide technology for students. Social distancing when able and masks will still be required. We may try to limit transitions in some buildings. Next year we expect to have full extra-curricular activities as well as visitors allowed back in buildings. We may hold more PPTs and conferences remotely as that proved to be an efficient way to schedule meetings and was helpful for many parents.

We will have more summer school guidance soon. The full document will be shared with the community for feedback soon.

G. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

H. NEW BUSINESS

H.1. Approval of Keeney Education Specifications

Secretary Pattacini moved for the Board of Education to approve the plans and specifications for Additions and Renovations to the Keeney Elementary School date June 14, 2021, prepared by TSKP Studio, for submission to the Department of Administrative Services, Office of School Construction Grants for Review of Final Plans and Construction Authorization. Ms. Patterson seconded the motion.

DISCUSSION:

Ms. Stefanovicz questioned the last item which specified a 1:2 ratio for laptops to children. She wondered if we should update that since we are 1:1 at this time. Mr. Geary noted they went back and forth regarding technology. We do not purchase technology with bonded money, so really that is a placeholder. While the Board has been able to use grants and/or federal funds to purchase technology currently, there may be a point where the Board budget cannot support a 1:1 ratio and we would fall back to our previous 1:2 policy. There will no longer be charging stations in classrooms though, as students currently bring their devices home to charge.

The vote was called.

9/0 - Voted in favor.

H.2. Grant Application

Secretary Pattacini moved for the Manchester Board of Education to authorize the Superintendent to submit an SCG049 Grant Application and Summary of Educational Specifications for Keeney Elementary School to the State Department of Education for a construction grant in accordance with CGS §10-283 and Chapter 173 of the Connecticut General Statutes. Ms. Luna seconded the motion.

9/0 voted in favor.

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

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, (due to technical difficulties, some of this discussion was unable to be transcribed) suggested the book *One Real American: The Life of Ely S. Parker, Seneca Sachem and Civil War*. He also suggested the book *National Geographic's Old West* by Stephen G. Hyslop. Mr. Stringfellow also noted this is the 100 year anniversary of the Tulsa massacre in 1921.

Mr. Geary read a Facebook comment by Sarah Summers asking when the Board of Education would resume in-person meetings. Mr. Thames noted he has also been asked that question and he will poll members to get their preference. He thinks it may be possible to have a hybrid, with some members in-person and others participating

remotely. Mr. Thames noted that everyone's health situation is different and their comfort at meeting in person will vary. We will hope to have an answer to this question by the next meeting. Mr. Geary noted that remote participation rules from years past will be looked at as well.

J. COMMUNICATIONS

None.

K. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

Monday, June 28 - Close of School Update

Monday, July 12 - Spring Data Update

Monday, August 30 - Opening of School

L. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Thames called for a motion to adjourn.

Secretary Pattacini moved and Mr. Heinrich seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting.

9/0 - Voted in favor.

Adjournment 9:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christopher Pattacini
Board Secretary