

MANCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION

Regular Meeting

October 9, 2018

Bennet Academy

PRESENT: Conyers, Maio, Pattacini, Patterson, Scappaticci, Stefanovicz

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

ABSENT: Hagenow, Meggers, Thames

A. OPENING

A.1. & 2. Meeting Called to Order

Chairperson Pattacini called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. Mr. Pattacini noted that the Superintendent, along with three board members, were attending a SMARTER2 public forum at Highland Park Elementary this evening and would be joining the Board meeting after that forum. All in attendance participated in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, led by Mr. Pattacini.

A.3. Secretary's Welcome

Acting Secretary Mr. Scappaticci wished a warm welcome to everyone present and to the Face Book Live viewers. He, along with the Board and the Superintendent, were pleased to be joined in celebrating the achievement, reviewing information, and discussing areas for growth, along with making policy decisions related to the effective operation of the Manchester Public Schools. Mr. Scappaticci explained that this is a regular meeting of the Board and all items that will be discussed or voted on this evening have been posted, as required by state law.

Mr. Scappaticci explained that as the Manchester Board of Education, they are here to set goals, listen to reports of the Superintendent, approve budgets,

contracts, and personnel appointments, and to create policy for the district. They are not here to make management decisions or solve the problems of individuals.

A.4. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting

APPROVED – Minutes Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of September 24, 2018. Acting Secretary Scappaticci moved and Ms. Stefanovicz seconded the motion.

5/0 – Voted in favor.

B. COMMITTEE REPORTS

B.1. Joint Policy & Personnel & Finance Committee

Mr. Conyers reviewed the joint committee meeting that was held September 24 with Mr. Geary, Ms. Clancy, Mr. Conyers, Mr. Pattacini and Mr. Thames present. The Committee recommended the policy additions listed to be forwarded to the full Board for adoption based on an audit of Manchester Public Schools Policies as compared to Shipman and Goodwin model policies.

- Family and Medical Leave Act - The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for leaves taken by employees of the Board under the Federal Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA). This policy reflects current practice and will ensure consistent implementation of calculations of leave, use of intermittent leave, and "light duty" work provisions.
- IDEA Fiscal Compliance - The policy sets forth compliance with the requirements of state and federal law with regard to special education fiscal compliance. It provides administration regulations, addresses supplanting of Board funds, purchase and inventory of equipment and intervention services. The policy reflects current district business practices and special education procedures, but given the fiscal climate a policy is recommended.
- School Activity Funds - This policy reflects current district practice. Activity funds can generate large sums of money and are susceptible to fraudulent activity, making a policy advisable.

- Education Stability Procedures - This policy addresses coordination with DCF for students placed in DCF care and aligns with current district practices.

The Committee also recommended the following policy revisions be forwarded to the full Board for revision based on the same audit.

- Tuition Fees - The revision replaces the word "normal" with the word "standard" in describing services.
- Gifts, Grants and Bequests - This revision replaces dated titles of staff and addresses donations of classroom furniture and other materials and equipment that could cause inequities in schools.

The committee discussed the Transportation Policy and have asked the Superintendent to gather data around chronic absenteeism as well as potential costs of expanding busing to include more students, and to report back.

The committee heard an update on the redistricting planned for 2019-2020 as part of the MPS 2025 plan.

Last, the committee tabled the revisions to the Budget Procedures and Line Item Transfers policy.

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 Medical Services Other Purchased Services account to Medical Services Manchester Middle Academy Medical Supplies and Materials account in the amount of \$1,811
- Transfer from System-wide Curriculum and Instruction General Supplies and Materials account (\$10,327) and transfer from System-wide Curriculum and Instruction Instructional Supplies and Materials account

(\$5,652) and transfer from System-wide Curriculum and Instruction Periodicals account (\$521) for a total transfer of \$16,500 to System-wide Curriculum and Instruction Library Databases account

- Transfer from System-wide Language Arts Instructional Supplies account to System-wide Language Arts and Other Purchased Services account in the amount of \$2,950

C.3. Extended Field Trip Request - MHS Barr Grant Wider Learning Ecosystem Fall Convening - 4 students - 10/22/18 to 10/23/18 (2 school days missed) - Burlington, VT - 6 Administrators/Teachers

The Chairman called for a motion.

Acting Secretary Scappaticci moved and Ms. Stefanovicz seconded the recommendation to adopt the Consent Calendar as outlined in Section C of tonight's agenda.

5/0 - Voted in favor.

D. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT

Krista Myrie noted tomorrow is PSAT day at MHS. This is the last opportunity for juniors to prepare for the SAT. The NMSQT merit based scholarship is an opportunity for those doing well in this preparatory exam.

Ms. Myrie noted the Homecoming Parade is approaching and floats are under construction. There will also be a spirit week during homecoming. T-Shirt sales for the event end this week.

Imagine College has two upcoming field trips, one on October 18 to Brown University and Rhode Island College and one on November 14 to NorthEastern University and Boston College.

Mr. Scappaticci wondered what date the Homecoming Parade is and what the theme of Homecoming this year is. Ms. Myrie noted "Road Trip" is the theme this year and the parade is on October 19th.

E. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, noted yesterday was Columbus Day and there are 7 states that have changed the name to "Indigenous People's Day". Mr. Stringfellow wrote an op-ed yesterday noting all explorers should receive credit, even non-European explorers. Mr. Stringfellow recommended the September 24th TIME magazine article about teachers needing a second job to make ends meet. He suggested an article in National Geographic regarding the lost tribes of the Amazon. Mr. Stringfellow recommended a movie coming out, "First Man" regarding Neil Armstrong, as well as a children's book on the topic. He also recommended books on Leif Erikson and Pablo Picasso. It was noted that this is Hispanic Heritage Month.

F. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT – PART I

F.1. Bennet Academy Opening Update

Dr. Radikas introduced Principal Joe Chella, along with the two vice-principals, Meghan Thompson and Cathy Amadasun. The trio gave an update on the changes that have taken place in Bennet over the last year, with the construction and welcoming the district's entire 5th grade staff and students to the complex.

Mr. Conyers wondered what the class sizes are in grade 6, with the increase of approximately 70 students. Mr. Chella noted that with the new staff member hired last week, class sizes in grade 6 were down to 23-24 students.

Mr. Scappaticci welcomed Ms. Amadasun and asked the team what "Bear Time" is. Mr. Chella explained that students have a full 43 minute period for lunch, in which 20 minutes is spent in the cafeteria and the other 23 minutes is either a recess or math support. They switch daily (or can be flexible depending on weather) and may do online math, such as Fastmath.

Mr. Scappaticci gave kudos to the administration for handling the additional 70 6th graders so well. Parents are hearing good things about Bennet and are choosing to keep their children in town because of that. Mr. Scappaticci also complimented the staff for the inspirational and historic items he sees in the halls, along with the great student work. It is a welcoming school.

Last, Mr. Scappaticci pointed out that Elizabeth Bennet, whom the school is named for, was principal of the school when it was named Barnard School and at the same time she was principal of both Washington and Nathan Hale Elementary Schools.

Ms. Patterson gave kudos to the administration. She is a parent at Bennet and her daughter has had an amazing experience from day 1. She was pleased with the warm environment.

Mr. Pattacini was surprised to hear about the increase in expected 6th graders this year. He wondered when we typically find out which students will be staying with us for grade 6 or transferring to a magnet school. It was explained that the magnet lottery is opened in February and most students are notified in May or early June of their acceptance. Parents then have time to decide, but many student records are requested in June. However, students that are pulled off the waiting list may not be notified until after school starts, so all summer there is a trickling of students that notify the school of their transfer, up through the first weeks of school. Mr. Chella also noted that Bennet had approximately 15-20 new 6th grade students register after day 1 this year, in addition to having fewer grade 6 students move to magnet schools.

Ms. Stefanovicz wondered how to move the class size from 23/24 to 21, asking if it was a matter of more staff needed, or lack of space. Mr. Chella noted there is a shortage of classroom spaces.

G. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

H. NEW BUSINESS

H.1. Policy Recommendations

Mr. Pattacini noted the full policy revisions and recommendations were provided to the Board members in their packets.

A. Policy 4309 - Family and Medical Leave Act

B. Policy 3543 - Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Fiscal Compliance

C. Policy 3544 - School Activities Funds

D. Policy 4310 - Educational Stability Procedures for Transportation Coordination with the Department of Children & Families

Revised Policies:

E. Policy 3240 - Tuition Fees

F. Policy 3280 - Gifts, Grants & Bequests

Ms. Stefanovicz was not comfortable with married spouses that both work for the district needing to combine their 12 weeks of Family Medical Leave. She wondered what the financial impact would be to provide each person with their own 12 week allowance and striking the part of the policy that requires the couple to share that time. Mr. Pattacini noted the administration will look into that and provide a response at the next meeting.

As there were no other questions, Mr. Pattacini noted the other policies will come back to the Board for approval at the next meeting. A response to the question on Policy 4309 will be provided at that meeting and if that issue is resolved, that policy will also be up for passage.

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

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, enjoyed the Bennet update. He noted the diverse staff and hopes people will be aware of unconscious bias. Mr. Stringfellow noted he was once a student at Bennet, though it didn't look this modern back then. Mr. Stringfellow recommended a flyer he took from the State Department of Education on preparing 6th graders for success. Mr. Stringfellow spoke about special education fiscal responsibility and was glad that we are in compliance with state laws, noting that about 15 years ago the district was cited for over-identifying minority students for services. Mr. Stringfellow also noted that students can be anxious about school. He pointed out that public schools have to take all students and Manchester has done well as a district. Last, Mr. Stringfellow recommended an article in Reason magazine, which puts Connecticut 19 or 20 in the Nation. He noted it is worth investing in public education and he hopes more parents get involved.

J. COMMUNICATIONS

None.

K. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

In addition to the below agenda items, Mr. Scappaticci would like to hear an update from the Chief of Police on the SRO program at Illing and MHS. Mr. Geary noted we may wait for a new Policy Chief to be appointed.

October 22 - Update on Equity Informed School Climate Assessment

November 13 - Illing School Improvement

November 26 - Fall Data Update; Reaffirmation of Board of Education Bylaws

December 10 - Update on Technology; Update on Capital Projects

L. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Pattacini called for a motion to adjourn.

**Acting Secretary Scappaticci moved and Ms. Stefanovicz
seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting.**

6/0 - Voted in favor.

Adjournment 7:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jason Scappaticci
Acting Board Secretary