

MANCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION

Regular Meeting

November 9, 2015

Keeney Elementary School

PRESENT: Crockett, Cruz, Hagenow, Leon, Pattacini, Pazda, Scappaticci, Stafford, Thames

ALSO PRESENT: Superintendent of Schools Geary, Assistant Superintendent for Pupil Personnel Services Matfess, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum Radikas

ABSENT: Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Management Brooks

A. OPENING

A.1. & 2. Meeting Called to Order

Chairperson Pattacini called the meeting to order at 7:09 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 October 26, 2015. Secretary Scappaticci moved and Mr. Crockett seconded the motion.

9/0 – Voted in favor.

A.4. Recognition of Mr. Michael Crockett and Ms. Maria Cruz

Mr. Pattacini presented both retiring Board members with plaques commemorating their service to the Board of Education, Mr. Crockett 2005-2015 and Ms. Cruz 2009-2015. Board members all shared memories and appreciation for both Mr. Crockett and Ms. Cruz's years of service to the children and families of Manchester Public Schools.

Mr. Scappaticci congratulated both Mr. Crockett and Ms. Cruz for their excellent service and thanked them for all they have taught him. He noted Mr.

Crockett taught him that real men wear pink and also red cowboy boots. He admired Mr. Crockett's quick wit. Ms. Cruz was very helpful to Mr. Scappaticci in his first election and he has learned an immense amount from her.

Mr. Stafford noted he was here for Mr. Crockett's first meeting, as they were elected at the same time in 2005. Although Mr. Stafford left the Board for a time before returning last year, he is now here for Mr. Crockett's last meeting as well. He thanked Mr. Crockett for all the times they worked through issues and admired his dedication. To Ms. Cruz, Mr. Stafford thanked her for her leadership and help.

Ms. Pazda thanked both for their many years of service to Manchester students. She wishes them well in their next chapters of life, including Ms. Cruz's doctoral studies and Mr. Crockett's golf game in South Carolina. She said they will be missed and it was a pleasure serving with them both.

Mr. Thames thanked Mr. Crockett and Ms. Cruz for their time and dedication. He felt Ms. Cruz was always the voice of reason and thanked her for her gift of a book upon his election. With Mr. Crockett, Mr. Thames stated it was a pleasure to work with him and noted you never had to wonder what was on his mind, and every board needs a member that speaks his mind like that.

Ms. Hagenow echoed everyone in wishing them luck and noted she will miss them.

Mr. Leon noted it is not just the meetings twice a month that Board members attends, but the many committees, events, and caucuses that Board members attend that people do not realize. He appreciates both of them and the time they have given Manchester and noted they will be missed.

Shania Stanton, Student Representative, thanked Mr. Crockett and Ms. Cruz for making her time here easy and noted she appreciates their time and service for making her education important.

Mr. Pattacini felt that Ms. Cruz' role as a social worker helped the Board's perspective and he hopes to take that forward. To Mr. Crockett he reflected that his service as Chair of the SMARTR Committee led to a referendum that was approved and will begin renovation of the elementary schools with a full plan in place, something that had been talked about for many years and now is coming true. He noted both members considered students first, along with families and community members. He respects them both and appreciates their commitment and dedication.

Ms. Cruz noted that over her term of six years and four months she is pleased to say she has gained many important personal characteristics and professional skills. She has learned how to manage difficult tasks and solve problems effectively; to communicate positively with people with different points of view and to encourage agreement; and to stand strong for her point of view no matter how difficult that may be. Ms. Cruz informed us that she will be pursuing a doctoral degree in public administration. She thanked her community, neighbors, friends, teachers, and student body for giving her the pleasure of leading such a dedicated team. She will miss the healthy debates and bringing the Board's ideas to fruition. To Chairman Pattacini she thanked him for his leadership and focus. To Mr. Leon she thanked him for making her job on the board fun. To Mr. Crockett she thanked him for his continued friendship and support. Ms. Cruz noted that Mr. Scappaticci has brought positivity and humor to some serious moments and she has enjoyed his history lessons. She thanked Ms. Hagenow for instilling in her passion and understanding for all the hard work we do. She thanked Mr. Thames for his perspective and feedback as related to the board's advocacy for our families. To Ms. Pazda, she thanked her for providing her with the wisdom and grace in advocating positive change and coaching when setting our expectations high and wanting our district to meet the mark in the effective teaching of our children. To Mr. Stafford she thanked him for his objectivity on all subject matters. To Mr. Geary, Dr. Radikas and Ms. Matfess she thanked them for strengthening her skill set by sharing their wealth of knowledge and ideas so willingly. Ms. Cruz thanked Mrs. Brooks for being her rock and toughening her up and helping her become fiscally responsible. To

recording secretary Miss Carla she thanked her for providing water and candy and for taking of our board minutes. Ms. Cruz thanked the student representatives and encouraged them to continue their leadership and wished them continued success in their future endeavors. Last, Ms. Cruz expressed her thanks to Mr. Stringfellow, a frequent public speaker, for his words of encouragement. She thanked everyone for their kindness, support and friendship. She encouraged everyone to keep the passion, keep advocating for our schools, facilities, curriculum, technology, and most importantly for our families and children.

Mr. Crockett had three things left on the table he would like the Board to think about fixing in the near future. First, Mr. Crockett feels that out of towners should not be allowed to speak at Board meetings. He pointed out a meeting over the summer where dozens of out of towners spoke and he noted this is not allowed in the Board of Director meetings, nor in other towns. He hopes this will be addressed in the bylaws. Second, Mr. Crockett would like the Board to adopt a policy about Board of Education members not being eligible for hire in the district until two years after the end of their service. He feels it doesn't look right and he notes the town has a two year clause. Last, Mr. Crockett spoke about high school graduation and the tradition that only the Board Chairperson speaks at graduation. Mr. Crockett feels that other board members should have the opportunity to address the senior class.

Mr. Crockett noted that even though members are elected as members of political parties, and he has never (save a 6 month period) sat with the majority party on the board, but he has never felt this was a politically motivated board, and mostly has worked in consensus.

To Mr. Stringfellow, Mr. Crockett noted that he listened to a lot of what he had to say and he is proud of him for continuing to come to meetings and acting as a role model in this community. He noted that many of Mr. Stringfellow's ideas have come to fruition, including the academies at the high school. Mr. Crockett noted that they do listen, but good government and good education take time.

He encourages Mr. Stringfellow to keep coming and feels he is an asset to the community and to the Board.

B. CONSENT CALENDAR

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

B.1. Personnel Action

Details had already been provided to the Board members with their agenda.

B.2. Transfer of Funds

- Transfer from Systemwide Special Education Contracted Services account to Systemwide Special Education Computer Supplies and Materials account in the amount of \$50,000
- Transfer from Systemwide Special Education Other Purchased Services account (\$26,500) and Systemwide Special Education Contracted Services account (\$25,000) to Systemwide Special Education Other Professional Services account in the total amount of \$51,500
- Transfer from Waddell School Admin Professional Development account to Waddell School Admin Instructional Supplies and Materials account in the amount of \$900
- Transfer from Martin School Admin General Supplies & Materials account to Martin School Admin Postage account in the amount of \$300
- Transfer from Illing Middle school Math Instructional Supplies and Materials account to Illing Middle school Field Trips account in the amount of \$276

B.3. Permission to apply for Title I, Part A - Improving Basic Programs Grant for FY 15/16 in the amount of \$1,715,711

B.4. Permission to apply for Title II, Part A - Teacher and Principal Training and Recruiting Fund Grant for FY 15/16 in the amount of \$145,627

B.5. Permission to apply for Title III, Part A - English Language Acquisition and Language Enhancement Grant for FY 15/16 in the amount of \$57,810

B.6. Establish an appropriation in the amount of \$119,453 for FY 15/16 for the USDA Head Start breakfast and lunch programs

B.7. Establish an appropriation in the amount of \$100,000 for FY 15/16 for the 21st Century Community Learning Centers Grant for the after school programs at Washington, Verplanck, and Robertson Elementary Schools

B.8. Extended Field Trip Request - MHS, Jobs for America's Graduates - 1 student - 1 teacher chaperone - Washington D.C. National Student Leadership Academy - December 2, 2016 through December 6, 2015

B.9. Extended Field Trip Request - MHS Roundtable Singers/Percussion Ensemble/Chamber Orchestra - Williamsburg, VA - Concert Tour/Competition - 70 students, 8 chaperones - April 20, 2016 - April 24, 2016

Secretary Scappaticci moved to amend the Consent Calendar and add item B.10. Permission to apply for the Nellie Mae College and Career Readiness Through Continuous Improvement and Central Office Redesign Grant in the amount of \$150,000 for the time period January 2016 through June 2017. Mr. Leon seconded the motion.

DISCUSSION:

Mr. Geary spoke briefly about the grant and noted the application will be submitted tomorrow.

Ms. Pazda wondered if this was in addition to the other funds Nellie Mae has granted us. Mr. Geary noted that this is an addition 150,000.

Ms. Cruz wanted to know when the district will find out if we receive the grant. Mr. Geary stated we would find out sometime in January.

9/0 - Voted in favor of amending the Consent Calendar.

The Chairman called for a motion.

Secretary Scappaticci moved and Mr. Crockett seconded the recommendation to adopt the Consent Calendar as amended.

9/0 - Voted in favor.

C. COMMITTEE REPORTS

C.1. Building and Sites Committee

Mr. Crockett reviewed the last meeting was held October 26. In attendance were himself, Mr. Leon, Mrs. Pazda, Mr. Stafford, Mr. Geary, Mrs. Brooks and Mr. Staye.

Mr. Staye provided the committee with a list of projects completed throughout the district. To date approximately \$500,000 of work has been completed or contracted. Mr. Staye discussed a grant opportunity with the committee. The State Department of Administrative Services (DAS) has announced a grant opportunity that provides funding for building projects such as those included in the new 3-year capital plan. Manchester Public Schools would be eligible for \$1,710,000 for the upcoming fiscal year. Potential adjustments to the operating budget for FYE 2017 were discussed. Last, the Bennet Academy Project has completed the Construction Document phase. Plans are available for review at the Buildings & Grounds office and Chris Till's office. The next meeting will be held January 11, 2016 at 5:30 p.m.

D. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE

Ms. Shania Stanton stated things at MHS are going well. She told us the Turkey Bowl is scheduled for November 12th and grades are coming to a close for the quarter.

E. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, thanked Mr. Crockett and Ms. Cruz for their wonderful comments and their years of service on the board. Mr. Stringfellow spoke about Native American Awareness month and an article in *USA Today* this morning about a movie regarding the settlers, which will air mid-November. He recommended a book *Heart and Soul*, which is a historical passage of a black life. For younger students, Mr. Stringfellow recommends the book *What Was The Underground Railroad*.

F. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT – PART I

Mr. Geary asked everyone to take a moment of silence in memory of Justus Joy, a member of the class of 2016, who passed away this weekend. Thoughts and prayers go out to his family and friends.

F.1. Update on Keeney School Improvement Plan

Mr. Geary introduced Julie Martin-Beaulieu, Principal of Keeney Elementary School. Ms. Martin gave a presentation that was supplemented by many staff members and several videos of the children. The full presentation is available to view on the website.

Mr. Scappaticci thanked Ms. Martin and her staff for a great presentation and thought it was great to see the four pillars used in action. He asked about the social thinking curriculum. Ms. Martin spoke about the curriculum being adopted throughout the district, Superflex. He was also intrigued about the student at MHS and hopes more students will have that opportunity in the future.

Ms. Pazda thanked Ms. Martin and her staff and noted it is important for board members to see how schools implement their School Improvement Plan. She loved that there is continuous improvement for both the students and adults.

She was curious about the genius hour and enrichment clusters. Ms. Martin explained they are different, but related programs.

Mr. Pattacini felt there was phenomenal work going on here and seeing it connected back to specific student stories.

F.2. Manchester Pre-School Update

Mr. Geary reviewed that the Board invested significant funds to make Head Start a full day program this year. He introduced Mrs. Shelly Matfess, Assistant Superintendent for Pupil Personnel Services and Mrs. Sone-Moyano, the principal at the Preschool Center. Their presentation is available on the website.

Ms. Pazda wondered if the children are followed into Kindergarten. She realizes those with IEPs would be followed, but the unidentified children is whom she is asking about. She wonders how well they are doing. She questioned 60 children going to Washington and what percentage of kindergarteners that represents there. She was also curious about how many students in Manchester do not have Pre-K experience. Ms. Moyano stated four of their classrooms are designated for Washington and they try to set up the classrooms with advocates for specific schools. It provides another person to help the families tied to the school. The Kindergarten and preschool teachers do communicate but the administrators in the district are looking to improve the coherence of the process to collaborate more and follow through with those children. Ms. Matfess will look into the numbers about those without preschool experience. Ms. Pazda wondered if those without preschool have to play catchup from the start.

Mr. Thames noted his grandson is a student at the Manchester Pre-K. He can attest to the tremendous job they do in maintaining contact with his parents. He likes the school itself and it is an engaging environment. Mr. Thames asked about the parent literacy workshop and what the process is for evaluating the academic process of children and articulated to the parent. Ms. Moyano noted literacy workshops are held throughout the school year. An instructional tutor runs workshops to teach parents literacy skills and strategies they can use at

home with their children. They tackle one book per workshop to guide parents how to work with kids at home. Babysitting and dinner is provided, along with 10 books at the end of the sessions. In regards to assessments, Ms. Moyano noted they give the DECA and TS Gold aligned with the CT early learning developmental standards. Children are assessed three times a year and assessed in 9 domains: social, emotional, physical (fine and gross motor skills), cognitive, oral language, math, and science. This information is shared with parents in conferences. Home visits are held in the spring.

Mr. Pattacini would also like to know the number of students entering kindergarten without a preschool experience, by category. He was intrigued by the links between the preschool program and Kindergarten. He wonders if there is a superflex-type curriculum to begin in pre-K. Ms. Moyano reviewed we have a licensed marriage and family therapist in the building who supports the classroom and teachers with best practice in regards to behavioral management strategies and supports the family advocates to help parents meet their family partnership goals. She serves as a resource to connect families to services they may need. This therapist would like to link up with Christa Perkins regarding using similar strategies in pre-K to the Superflex to enhance the curriculum they use, Second Step. This is in the works. Ms. Moyano also spoke about collaboration with the Family Resource Centers. Mr. Pattacini asked about the 60 students in the preschool center that will attend Washington. Ms. Moyano noted they try to keep students together in preschool based on their home school so they will build relationships with those students they will attend elementary school with. Mr. Pattacini encourages the board to start looking at pre-K space as we renovate schools in the future.

G. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

G.1. Policy Recommendation

This was the second reading of this recommended revision to Board Policy 6120 - Manchester Public Schools - Mission Statement.

Secretary Scappaticci moved to adopt Board Policy 6120 - Manchester Public Schools - Mission Statement. Mr. Crockett seconded the motion.

DISCUSSION:

Mr. Pattacini thanked the administration and Board for working together on this mission statement.

9/0 - Voted in favor.

H. NEW BUSINESS

None.

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

Connie England, 225 Briarwood Drive, had a daughter that participated in our preschool program previously and a son who currently attends preschool at Keeney. She would like to see parent teacher conferences and home visits, along with behavior evaluations, available to children who participate as peer role models as well as those student already receiving services. She does have concerns about her son and she recalls this was not available for her daughter when she attended as a peer in preschool.

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, supports the Consent Calendar, especially the Head Start appropriation. He enjoyed the presentation about the preschool and feels it is important that kids get fed and learn. Mr. Stringfellow feels the English language enhancement grant is vital. He thinks it is important to be multilingual. Mr. Stringfellow thought the Keeney presentation was amazing and he thinks the staff is doing a wonderful job. Mr. Stringfellow was once a student here at Keeney. He recommended a book, *Back to School - Everybody Deserves a Second Chance*. An article in the Springfield *Point of View* newspaper was recommended, along with an article in *TIME* on families. Mr. Stringfellow likes the Minipage in the *Journal Inquirer*, and suggested the one on math fun.

Rebecca Thorough, 103 Diane Drive, has two children - one is in the pre-K program at Keeney and one is in their second year at the PreSchool Center. Both programs do an

amazing job and she has had a phenomenal experience, but she fears not all families have the same experience. Ms. Thorough feels the special education population will grow as autism rates and developmental delays grow. She feels we need to match the peer role model population. Ms. Thorough also feels the differences in facilities also impacts learning.

J. COMMUNICATIONS

None.

K. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

None.

L. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Pattacini called for a motion to adjourn.

Ms. Cruz moved and Ms. Pazda seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting.

9/0 - Voted in favor.

Adjournment 9:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jason Scappaticci
Board Secretary