

## MANCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION

### Regular Meeting October 15, 2014 Lincoln Center

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

**ALSO PRESENT:** Superintendent of Schools Geary, Assistant to the Superintendent for Finance & Management Brooks, Assistant Superintendent for Pupil Personnel Services Matfess, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum Radikas

**ABSENT:**

#### **A. OPENING**

##### **A.1.& 2. Meeting Called to Order**

**Chairperson Pattacini** called the meeting 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. Adoption of Minutes of Previous Meeting**

Due to an error in the agenda, the minutes of the 9/22/14 meeting were omitted and will be adopted at the next meeting.

#### **B. CONSENT CALENDAR**

**Mr. Geary** presented eleven 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**

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

- Transfer from System-wide Science Instructional Supplies account to System-wide Science Field Trips account in the amount of \$3,000
- Transfer from MHS Administrative Postage account to MHS Administrative Dues & Fees account in the amount of \$350
- Transfer from Martin Admin General Supplies & Materials (\$2,000), Math Instructional Supplies & Materials (\$1,000) and Administrative Office

Supplies & Materials (\$1,000) accounts to Martin Art Contracted Services account in the amount of \$4,000

- Transfer from System-wide Science Instructional Supplies and Materials account to System-wide Science Field Trips account in the amount of \$1,525
- Transfer from MHS Art Instructional Supplies and Materials account to MHS Art Replacement Equipment account in the amount of \$244
- Transfer from the FY2013-2014 Budget from the following accounts: Salaries (\$840,489.34), Professional Fees (\$132,618.31), Other (\$26,338.08) to the following accounts: Employee Benefits (\$40,656.92), Contracted Services (\$51,027.78), Other Purchased Services (\$321,981.20), Supplies (\$217,981.51), and Property/Equipment (\$367,798.32) for a total transfer of \$999,445.73

**B.3. Extended Field Trip Request – MHS – Percussion Ensemble and Chamber Orchestra; Toronto, ON, Canada – 45 Students; Teacher/Parent Chaperones – 2 days of school missed, 4/23/15-4/26/15**

**B.4. Establish an appropriation in the amount of \$102,000 for the Adult Education College Transition Pilot (REACT I) Grant for FY 14/15**

**B.5. Establish an appropriation in the amount of \$27,209 to be funded by the Manchester Education Association (MEA) for payment of 0.50 release time for MEA President for FY2014-15 school year**

**B.6. Establish an appropriation of \$91,805 for the USDA Head Start breakfast and lunch grant for FY14/15**

**B.7. Establish an appropriation for \$150,000 under the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center Grant, to be funded by the Connecticut State Department of Education for FY14/15**

**B.8. Extended Field Trip Request – MHS – Activities Planning Board, CASC Student Leadership State Conference at Crowne Plaza, Southbury, CT – 1 day of school missed – 11/21/14 – 11/22/14 – approximately 10 students – Teacher Chaperone**

**B.9. Permission to apply for Title I, Part A – *Improving Basic Programs* Grant for FY 14/15 in the amount of \$1,645,784**

**B.10. Permission to apply for Title II, Part A – *Teacher and Principal Training and Recruiting Fund* Grant for FY 14/15 in the amount of \$144,249**

**B.11. Permission to apply for the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving grant for FY 15-19 in the amount of \$5,599,674**

**The Chairman called for a motion.**

**Secretary Scappaticci moved and Mr. Crockett seconded the recommendation to adopt the Consent Calendar as outlined in Section B of tonight's agenda.**

**9/0 - Voted in favor.**

**C. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None.

**D. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT – PART I**

**D.1. Update on Teacher & Administrator Evaluation Plan**

**Mr. Geary** reviewed last year the new teacher and administrator evaluation model was started. Mr. Geary reviewed the changes made to the performance evaluations recently. His full presentation is available on the website. Mr. Geary explained that the state's Performance Evaluation Advisory Council has scaled back the number of times some teachers need to be observed, with higher rated teachers being formally observed one time every three years. Also delayed for another school year is the linking of state standardized test results to a teacher's final rating.

The changes to the Manchester Teacher Evaluation Plan include:

- A reduction from 73 pages to 56 pages
- The elimination of two forms (Dispute Resolution and separate Whole School Goals)
- Clarified that each school's whole-school learning objectives are identified in the principal's goals conference with the principal's evaluator
- Updated the dispute resolution process so superintendent has the final say in all disputes about the evaluation process
- Teachers self-report the results of the student achievement components and the parent feedback component of their evaluation
- Clarified the distinctions among formal observations, informal observations, and reviews of practice.

Overall, Mr. Geary feels the evaluation plan is now more flexible. He notes that the debate on whether to use student achievement in evaluations will continue.

Regarding the Administrator Evaluation Plan:

- Updated the information on the number of formal observations required for each type of administrator
- Administrators self-report the results of the student achievement and parent feedback components of their evaluation
- Eliminated separate form for reporting whole-school goals
- Updated the dispute resolution process so superintendent has the final say in all disputes about the evaluation process

**Ms. Pazda** asked about the 45% of teacher evaluation dependent on student achievement previously. Mr. Geary explained that this school year the waiver means the Smarter Balance data, which is a brand new test, and NWEA data will not be used. He noted that curricular assessments are one indicator and we can go back to some standardized measure in the future, though this may not be a good indicator of teacher performance. Ms. Pazda wondered how staff and administrators feel about this plan. Mr. Geary feels that it was not reasonable to roll out a new curriculum, new assessments, and a new evaluation system at the same time. He also notes there is very little research to suggest using data in the classroom to determine teacher performance is an effective way to promote student growth. We are doing work around professional learning communities and collaboration though we do not believe the monitoring of that work is enhanced at all through the use of student test scores, though we will comply with requirements.

## **D.2. Curriculum & Instruction Update on English Language Arts**

**Dr. Ratchford** updated the Board on the Humanities with a focus on English Language Arts. He noted excited work is being done in Literacy, Social Studies, and World Language. His full presentation is available on the website.

**Mr. Leon** wondered if teachers are buying into this platform. Dr. Ratchford stated the curriculum is being built by teams of teachers and discussed in grade level teams. The feedback suggests the teachers they are in favor of working this way. Teachers are still learning the workshop approach. It is a simple system in one sense, but with differing levels of students in one class, it will take some time to learn how to work with that. Dr. Ratchford noted that the more work done in the younger grades, the less need to explain the process in the upper grades.

Mr. Leon stated he can see how collaboration can happen at Bennet and Illing because they are divided into teams and it is easier to collaborate across subject matter, but how would elementary school teachers collaborate. Dr. Ratchford noted that each elementary school has 3-4 teachers per grade level and they would collaborate in their PLC meetings and review their questions. Also, professional development will be utilized.

Mr. Leon noted that the data shows some elementary schools perform better and wondered if the curriculum is rolled out differently. Dr. Ratchford noted that the curriculum is consistent throughout as it allows for personalized learning. Teachers can set up groups to target instruction to the different student levels.

**Ms. Pazda** thanked Dr. Ratchford for the comprehensive overview K-12 of the Humanities. She is encouraged for Manchester and our students. She knows that supporting teachers supports students.

**Mr. Pattacini** thanked Dr. Ratchford and the teachers and administrators for the work being done and noted it is clear we are bringing reading and writing to life in the classroom.

### **D.3. Building Project Update**

**Mr. Geary** reviewed that over the previous two weeks he has held information sessions at the Manchester Senior Center, Manchester Country Club, Boy Scouts, Robertson Faculty Meeting, Keeney PTA Meeting, Bowers PTA Meeting, Highland Park Faculty Meeting, Waddell PTA Meeting, Republican Town Committee Meeting, Buckley PTA Meeting, Bowers Faculty Meeting, Martin School PTSA, and Bennet PTA Meeting. Anywhere from 10-30+ people have attended these sessions.

Mr. Geary listed the locations for upcoming information sessions.

#### **Manchester Senior Center**

Thursday October 16  
6:30 PM – 8:00 PM

#### **Dougan Art and Framing**

1071 Main St  
Wednesday October 22, 2014  
6:30 PM – 8:00 PM

#### **Washington School**

Saturday October 18  
10:00 AM – 11:30 AM

#### **MCC on Main**

Thursday October 23  
6:30 PM – 8:00 PM

#### **Manchester Community College**

Community Commons  
Monday October 20, 2014  
6:00 PM – 7:30 PM

Mr. Geary's full presentation is available on the website and an information flyer is being mailed to all Manchester residents. He outlined the Board of Education's goals in the plan:

- All elementary school students in a 21st century learning environment
- Fully utilize space at Bennet Academy and Highland Park School
- Maintain class sizes between 17-22 students

- Address the critical building improvements and repairs
- Efficient use of elementary school classroom space
- Minimize student movement/relocation
- Sustainable racial balance, as required by law, in each elementary school
- Cost effective plan that optimizes State reimbursement

Mr. Geary hopes people will be thoughtful about the whole plan and he has been encouraged so far by the questions being asked. In review, Phase I of the plan, which is the November referendum, includes renovating Cheney for a Bennet/Cheney 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> grade academy; Like-new renovations at Waddell and Verplanck; Closing Washington and Robertson Schools; along with about \$3 million in work at MHS. Phase II includes renovations at Buckley, Keeney, Bowers, and Martin.

The timeline for the proposed referendum work:

Year	Activity
Summer 2016	Construction begins at Cheney-Bennet
2017-18	Cheney-Bennet Complete New area used as swing space for Waddell students
2019-20	Waddell renovation Complete All 5 <sup>th</sup> graders move to Cheney-Bennet Welcome redistricted Robertson students to Waddell and Buckley Verplanck students move to Robertson (swing space)
2020-21	Phase 1 complete Verplanck renovation complete Welcome redistricted Washington students to Verplanck, Bowers and Highland Park School Complete remaining redistricting

Mr. Geary reviewed projected costs for the projects, noting the typical homeowner would see an increase in taxes of approximately \$120-140/year.

**Mr. Leon** thanked Mr. Geary for his efforts in getting out to the community for these sessions, but has been disappointed in the community for their lack of participation. He notes we are 20 days from the vote and he has not heard much talk, positive or negative, from the community. He is unsure where the SMARTR Committee is to help push this through. Mr. Leon wondered what will happen if the referendum doesn't pass, noting the district elementary schools are at 98% capacity currently. Mr. Geary is hopeful that people are processing the complexity of the

project in order to come to a thoughtful conclusion. As far as SMARTR, Mr. Geary notes some members of smarter have participated in his TV show on the topic.

**Ms. Pazda** is also concerned and agrees with Mr. Leon. She feels the PTA's should be endorsing this plan to their members. Mr. Geary has been to many PTA meetings and notes that Waddell PTA has done great work in getting the information into the hands of their members.

**Ms. Cruz** spoke about the issue at a recent Head Start Policy Committee meeting and was surprised nobody knew what she was talking about regarding the referendum. She wonders how the topic has been advertised and how the dates of information sessions are posted and noted not everyone has access to the public access TV show.

**Mr. Crockett**, speaking on behalf of SMARTR as its Chair, noted the committee asked to be involved, but the Board of Directors has not responded to that request, though they were told not to disband. He appreciates the efforts of Mr. Geary and hopes the public starts speaking about the issue, good or bad.

**Mr. Thames** commended the efforts of Mr. Geary, feeling that he does a good job of explaining the information. Mr. Thames suggested other places to reach out to people, including the grocery stores, synagogues, Main Street, and other community organizations. He notes we want a decision made by informed voters.

**Mr. Leon** agrees that we need other ways to get the word out, but that is not solely the job of the Superintendent and feels the Board members and other parents should be pushing this. Ms. Cruz noted Trick or Treat on Main would be a great opportunity to get out and talk to people.

**Mr. Pattacini** has attended some information sessions and some have been very well attended. He wondered about the possibility of an open house at Highland Park, so members of the public can see firsthand a renovated elementary school. Mr. Geary notes that is being planned. Mr. Pattacini also reminded the members of this board and the Board of Directors to attend these sessions as well. He noted that tomorrow a brochure is being mailed to all Manchester households reviewing the referendum question. He notes if the referendum is defeated, in the end it will cost more to fix the problems in the district. We need more space and we need to get our kids into a 21<sup>st</sup> Century learning environment.

**Mr. Stafford** pointed out the blow-up of the mailer present in the lobby of Lincoln Center and wondered how many of those exist. Mr. Geary stated there are 8 and some are located in Central Office, the library, Verplanck, Waddell, and used at the information sessions.

**D.4. Update on Family and Community Engagement Plan**

**Mr. Geary** reviewed that last spring the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving awarded \$50,000 planning grants to Manchester and 7 other schools in the Hartford area who are Alliance Districts in an effort to support the work being done through the Alliance Grant. Part of the money was to be used develop a plan to get at family and community engagement and to serve as a proposal to the Foundation for additional funding.

Mr. Geary noted the district has worked hard since May with a good size group of community members with assistance from the Connecticut Center for School Change, town employees, and multiple community members throughout the district to put together a steering committee and a subset of that committee working on planning to do research in the area of community and family engagement.

Mr. Geary reviewed on the Consent Calendar tonight was the request for Manchester to apply for a \$5.5 million grant from the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving. He noted that through the Alliance Grant, Family Resource Centers were added to five of our schools, and this work would make those Centers even stronger and serve to coordinate our work throughout the district. Mr. Geary's full presentation is available on the website.

The plan outlines that student outcomes are a shared responsibility between parents, community, and schools. Building trust is a key area of work. Programming efforts need to be coordinated. Ultimately we want all students to have access to equal opportunities.

Areas we can look to grow with this grant include creating opportunities to support families; develop trust relationships between community/school/families; and to increase access and awareness of all the available supports to that they are being utilized.

**E. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

None.

**F. NEW BUSINESS**

**F.1. Policy Revisions**

**Mr. Geary** reviewed the revisions to Policy 6212 – Adult/Continuing Education recommended by the Policy Committee. Changes include changing the age from 16 to 17 and a change in the credits required to complete the program. These are procedural adjustments to assure the policy is in line with state guidelines.



**Mr. Pattacini** noted this was the first reading of these policy revisions and would come back at the next meeting for adoption.

## **G. COMMUNICATIONS**

Joseph Coyne, Student Representative, was present and gave an update on the goings on at the high school over the past couple of months.

- LINK Crew welcomed Freshman
- Seniors celebrated 183 nights
- Power Hour going well – raffles to encourage meeting with teachers
- Welcome Back dance – about 200 students
- Miss MHS – about 400 students – winner Kaitlin Maloney
- Freshman Class Board elections
- Involvement Fair to showcase extracurricular clubs
- Homecoming – coming up October 24<sup>th</sup>

## **H. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **H.1. Personnel & Finance Committee**

**Mr. Leon**, reviewed the meeting was held on September 17<sup>th</sup> with Mr. Crockett, Ms. Hagenow, Ms. Brooks, and himself in attendance. The committee entered into Executive Session to discuss contract negotiations. In open session Mrs. Brooks provided the June 30, 2014 Financial Statement and budget transfers. The next meeting will be October 22 at 5:30 at Central Office.

### **H.2. Policy Committee**

**Ms. Pazda** reviewed the meeting was held on September 22<sup>nd</sup> with Ms. Cruz, Ms. Hagenow, Ms. Pazda, and Mr. Stafford in attendance. After an Executive Session, in open session the proposed changes to Policy 6212 presented this evening were discussed. The committee also discussed the need to clarify Policy 3510, Facilities and Maintenance, and directed the administration to bring a draft back for review next month. The committee also directed the administration to research other Boards of Education and their governance structure, specifically around vice chairs. The findings will be brought to the committee in October. In November the committee will begin work on several policies in the 4000, 5000, and 6000 series. The committees sent several policies in the 1000 series to the Community Relations Committee for their review. The next meeting will be held on October 27<sup>th</sup>.

### **H.3. Community Relations Committee**

**Mr. Leon** reviewed the last meeting was held on September 29<sup>th</sup>. In attendance were himself, Mr. Pattacini, and Ms. Pazda. The policies #1121, #1330, and #1400 sent to the committee by the Policy Committee were discussed and will be revised. Mr. Geary shared the work being done to develop a comprehensive Family and

Community Engagement Plan. The committee directed the Superintendent to research who watches the Board meetings live and draft a calendar that would include one Board of Education meeting per month to be held at a school site. The next meeting will be October 29<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m.

#### **H.4. Buildings & Sites Committee**

**Mr. Crockett** reviewed the last meeting was held October 2<sup>nd</sup> with Mr. Leon, himself, Mr. Scappaticci, and Mrs. Brooks in attendance. Mrs. Brooks updated the Committee on the current projects. The Committee asked Mrs. Brooks to look into whether project reports could be produced from the current work order system. The Robertson Elementary School library was visited. The next meeting will be November 6<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 p.m. at the Buckley Elementary School library. All future meetings will be held at 5:30 p.m.

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

Tracy Maio, 57 Horton Road, is the Secretary of the Waddell PTA and stated she will neither advocate nor condemn the [referendum] plan. She sees her job being to inform the school of what is going on and provide facts. Ms. Maio feels if you make a PTA political you wind up alienating one side or the other and she wants everyone to feel welcome and comfortable with the PTA. She cautions against making PTAs political. While Ms. Maio has no problem sharing her own opinion of the plan, she will not tell people which way to vote, feeling they need to make up their own mind with the facts. Ms. Maio stated if the Board wants this plan to pass they need to sell it.

Denise Curran, 65 West Middle Turnpike, is the President of the Waddell PTA. She reviewed the PTA has publicized the dates of information sessions and gone above and beyond to get the information out. She agrees with Ms. Maio that they will not make the PTA political and it is the job of the Board to sell their plan. Ms. Curran feels it is a little late to have brochures coming out now. As far as holding Board meetings at schools, she is in favor of that idea, noting it will bring people out that do not normally come to meetings.

Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, supports the Consent Calendar #7 as he feels it is important for education to be life-long. Mr. Geary's presentation was good about community engagement. He had a personal meeting recently and felt Mr. Geary is a good listener. As for the referendum, everyone's input should count and it is up to people to come out and vote. He is keeping an open mind on the issue. As for Dr. Ratchford's presentation, Mr. Stringfellow thought was good. He recommended some reference guides on the humanities. Mr. Stringfellow felt some of the classics, like *Moby Dick* to be boring and he feels a balance is needed in classes. He recommended an article on dyslexia from the *Boston Globe*. Mr. Stringfellow noted a third of Connecticut's population are immigrants and they contribute to this country in many

ways. He notes we are all in this together. Last, he watched a school climate conference on CTN yesterday and thought it went well.

**J. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS**

**Ms. Pazda** requested an update from the administration on Power Hour.

**K. ADJOURNMENT**

**Mr. Pattacini called for a motion to adjourn.**

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

**9/0 - Voted in favor.**

**Adjournment 8:49 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

Jason Scappaticci  
Board Secretary