

MANCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION

Regular Meeting October 27, 2014

Lincoln Center

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 to the Superintendent for Finance & Management Brooks

A. OPENING

A.1. & 2. Meeting Called to Order

Chairperson Pattacini called the meeting to order at 7:02 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 September 22, 2014

ADOPTED – Minutes Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of September 22, 2014. Secretary Scappaticci moved and Mr. Leon seconded the motion.

9/0 – Voted in favor.

A.4. Adoption of Minutes of Previous Meeting October 15, 2014

ADOPTED – Minutes Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of October 15, 2014. Secretary Scappaticci moved and Mr. Crockett seconded the motion.

9/0 – Voted in favor.

B. CONSENT CALENDAR

Mr. Geary presented six 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. Establish an increase in appropriation for FY 14-16 for Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) 611 grant by \$80,105, bringing the total grant award to \$1,658,730

B.3. Establish an appropriation for FY 14-15 for the Bilingual Education grant funded by the State Department of Education in the amount of \$9,665

B.4. Establish an increase in appropriation for FY 14-15 for the Adult Education Transition Pilot (REACT I) grant by \$500, bringing the total grant award to \$102,500

B.5. Transfer of Funds

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

- Transfer from Manchester High School Science Instructional Supplies account to Manchester High School Science Field Trips account in the amount of \$1,000

B.6. Resolution for the State of Connecticut, Office of Policy and Management, Community Diversion Initiative, Right Response CT, Network Grant

The Chairman called for a motion.

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

9/0 - Voted in favor.

C. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, spoke about the anniversary of the War of 1812 and recommended the book *Civil War of 1812* by Taylor. He also liked the book *American Colonies – Settling of North America* by the same author. Mr. Stringfellow enjoyed the welcome back column penned by Mr. Scappaticci in the *Livewire* newspaper for MCC. He spoke about a gap year that some students take between high school and college. Mr. Stringfellow talked about recent domestic violence in the news, especially

an article in the *East Hartford Reminder* on October 2nd. He also spoke about the school tragedy in Washington that occurred recently. *Prehistory of the Ancient World* was another book Mr. Stringfellow recommended.

D. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT – PART I

D.1. PTA President Report

Mr. Geary introduced Jackie Madore, who welcomed all the new PTA board members that had recently taken office. Ms. Madore reviewed many of the recent PTA events, including a Harvest Festival and Trunk or Treat at Verplanck, Back to School cookouts at many schools, and upcoming BINGO events at Buckley and Waddell. A popular local fundraiser is the Grandma's Pies that is currently going on in many of the schools with delivery in time for Thanksgiving. The Waddell Playground Fundraiser kickoff was wet but successful and continues with events at Sweet Frog as well as crazy hair day, hat day and other events at the school. November 6th is the kickoff for the Science Fair K-8. The district winners will move on to the State Convention. Ms. Madore recommends joining the PTA Council Facebook page to keep up with all the happenings.

D.2. Student Centered Learning

Mr. Geary noted the Google Summit was held last week, and was the first held in Connecticut.

Mr. Geary explained that in the next week or so there is a grant application due for additional Nellie Mae funding for 3-6 years.

The proposal focuses on Student Centered Learning, which is personalized learning in which students have a choice and a voice. The learning is competency-based, and a student advances when they achieve mastery. Learning is not restricted to the classroom or defined by the length of the school day. Students have ownership over their learning. Mr. Geary explained that this is a significant change to how we think of learning. Mr. Geary's full presentation is available on the website.

Ms. Pazda wondered if this was happening in grades K-12. Mr. Geary explained the concept began at the high school mostly funded through the Nellie Mae grant, but has gone down to the grade school level as well. Ms. Pazda was glad this concept was explained because she feels it could be misconstrued that we lose rigor and challenge with this concept. Mr. Geary stated rigor is actually increased and higher level thinking and creativity are achieved instead.

Mr. Scappaticci agreed with Ms. Pazda, and felt that it is great we will not lose the rigor. He likes the "no worksheets" mentality. Mr. Scappaticci was curious about the Maker Space, wondering if it was a new program. Mr. Geary stated it was

started this year and has taken over the space vacated by the former computer labs. A 3-D printer and various tools, along with adult supervision, are available in the labs. Inherent in the struggle to solve a problem or make something is that students learn. This area is open so students can go there during their free periods or during Power Hour. Mr. Geary also pointed out that the middle school has moved more towards robotics and away from woodworking.

Mr. Pattacini shared a recent experience his wife and daughter had while editing a paper. During the editing, two of his daughter's friends were also editing her paper at the same time. Mr. Pattacini liked that students could communicate this way and also felt they were learning to both accept and provide constructive criticism with their peers.

D.3. Update on Building Project

Mr. Geary pointed out it is one week until the vote on the referendum. He feels people have been very thoughtful about the plan, asking pertinent questions. He pointed out the plan addresses critical facilities needs, keeps class sizes small, and addresses racial balance. He notes that there is always frustration associated with closing schools, but even those concerned about that may have started to come around to this plan. He feels that doing nothing is not ok. Three more information sessions are scheduled for this week: Lincoln Center Tuesday 10/28 at 6:30 p.m., Highland Park for an open house Wednesday 10/29 5:30-7:00 p.m., and Central Office Thursday 10/30 at 6:30 p.m. Mr. Geary has appreciated the community's questions and recognizes it is important to do something.

Ms. Pazda thanked Mr. Geary for spending so much time at the many information sessions he has held to be sure residents have the information needed to make an informed decision.

E. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

E.1. Action on Revision of Policy Section 6212(a)

Mr. Geary noted this is the second read for the minor changes made as a result of a State visit in the spring.

Secretary Scappaticci moved to approve the Policy Committee's proposed revision to Policy 6212(a) – Adult/Continuing Education. Mr. Crockett seconded the motion.

9/0 – Voted in favor.

F. NEW BUSINESS

None.

G. COMMUNICATIONS

G.1. Student Representative

Joseph Coyne reported that 10/23 was Financial Aid night for seniors and parents to learn about the financial aid process, including review of the FASFA and discussions around other available avenues of aid for college. Homecoming was 10/24 with a parade theme of "Box Office Blitz". The seniors won with their Greece float. Unfortunately, the homecoming football game against Glastonbury was lost 13-14. The homecoming dance the next evening was a great success, packed with about 550 students attending. Mr. Coyne invited the community to come to the Halloween Party on November 1st, where young kids can partake in a fun time with many of the activities being free due to a grant received by the Activities Planning Board. Some of the attractions will be a haunted house, cookie decorating, a moon bounce, and other fun activities. The proceeds will help pay for FBLA and DECA state conferences in the spring. Class ring previews for students in grades 10-12 will be available through the Balfour representative during Power Hour on Tuesday or Wednesday this week. Mr. Coyne also shared that friends of his had recently gone into the Maker Space lab and created a brain with the 3-D printer for a project, which he thought was pretty cool.

H. COMMITTEE REPORTS

None.

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

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, supports the Consent Calendar, especially the bilingual grant. He would like an update from Dr. Kearney regarding Adult Education. Regarding Mr. Geary's presentation on student-centered learning, Mr. Stringfellow feels it is vital and hopes for positive peer pressure. He hopes this helps prepare students for the time management skills they will need in college. An article in the *Boston Globe* recently about what screens do to kid's minds was suggested, along with the magazine *Your Teen for Parents*, which had articles on ADHD, gap years, and headphone use. Mr. Stringfellow also recommended the book *Everything Parent's Guide to Teen Addiction*. Mr. Stringfellow hopes for cultural diversity in the number of clubs available at the high school. He would also like an equity report from Ms. Philbert.

J. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

None.

K. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Pattacini called for a motion to adjourn.

Secretary Scappaticci moved and Mr. Crockett seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting.

9/0 - Voted in favor.

Adjournment 7:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jason Scappaticci
Board Secretary