

MANCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION

Regular Meeting

March 9, 2015

Robertson Elementary School

PRESENT: Crockett, 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: Cruz

A. OPENING

A.1. & 2. Meeting Called to Order

Chairperson Pattacini called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m. All in attendance participated in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, led by Mr. Pattacini. Mr. Pattacini noted this is the second meeting being held in a school so as to better connect with the school community.

A.3. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting

APPROVED – Minutes Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of February 23, 2015. Secretary Scappaticci moved and Mr. Crockett seconded the motion.

7/0/1 – Voted in favor.

B. CONSENT CALENDAR

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

B.1. Personnel Information

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 Special Education Other Purchased Services account to System-wide Special Education Office Supplies and Materials account in the amount of \$10,000
- Transfer from System-wide Elementary Art Periodicals account to System-wide Elementary Art Professional Development account in the amount of \$241
- Transfer from MHS Language Arts Textbooks account to MHS Classroom Instruction Contracted Services account in the amount of \$2,000
- Transfer from MHS Interscholastic Sports Athletic Supplies/Materials account to MHS Interscholastic Sports Professional Development account in the amount of \$1,000

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.

8/0 - Voted in favor.

C. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, spoke about the Civil Rights magazine and the 100 Year Fight for Civil Rights. He pointed out the MCC Livewire information about Black History Month. Mr. Stringfellow again recommended the movie *Selma*, which is also about Civil Rights. He recommended the magazine *Education Next*. He also recommended the book *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Vaccinations*.

D. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT – PART I

D.1. Update on SAAM

Mr. Geary noted he is excited to be in schools learning about the work that goes on in each building. This evening Mr. Geary and Mr. Pattacini recognized the students who placed in the Robertson Elementary School Science Fair. The students were presented certificates. Some of the students qualified to participate in the district Science Fair at Illing.

Mr. Stuart Wolf welcomed us to Robertson. He thanked Dr. Radikas for her vision and support in the transformation of the media center. Mr. Wolf gave a Powerpoint presentation, which was supplemented by teachers, parents, and the coordinator of the Robertson Family Resource Center.

Mr. Pattacini asked Ms. Parsons, the first grade teacher, how often she holds "pop-ins" for her parents. This happens twice a year, scheduled about six weeks before each report card conference.

**A brief recess to allow the families to leave was called at 8:03 p.m.
Back in session at 8:10 p.m.**

E. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

F. NEW BUSINESS

F.1. Policy Revision - Facilities Maintenance Policy 3510

Mr. Geary reviewed that the community expressed their concerns about the maintenance conditions of our buildings through thoughtful dialogue during the time the referendum was being discussed. Key changes have been made in the guidelines. The full policy is available on the website. Mr. Geary reviewed that the Policy Sub-committee took a close look at the Facilities Maintenance Policy. It was divided into four major areas, custodial supplies and materials, maintenance supplies and materials, limited scope capital improvements (now called minor capital improvements), and capital repairs.

Current spending on custodial and maintenance supplies was reviewed. Currently we spend 25 cents per square foot on custodial cleaning supplies and 30 cents per square foot on maintenance supplies, which is in line with other districts, so we left those figures alone.

Major changes were made in capital improvements. These are not large scale capital improvements, but minor improvements. The actual IRS definition was used in the policy and the amount would be in excess of \$10,000. Examples are given in the policy. Previously, the Board set aside not less than 0.3% of the

budget for these items, now that has doubled to 0.6% of the budget. It means more money to keep the buildings maintained.

The second section is capital repairs. There are language changes in this section and it clarifies these repairs are to maintain efficient operating conditions of the property and restore to previous conditions. These would be items we did not necessarily anticipate needing to take care of. Now 0.35% of the budget is earmarked for this, which was previously 0.25%. The way they arrived at this figure was by looking at the last three years expenditures and averaging them.

Mr. Leon thinks this is a great thing we are doing, but that 0.6% of the budget only equals \$700,000, which is still an extremely low amount money. It is great we are doubling it, but it is still low. We are doing what we can with the money we have and he supports this.

Mr. Pattacini wondered if we want to establish any upper limit amount to refer to the Board of Directors for referendum. He supports this policy revision and feels the community asked for this.

Mr. Geary added that the dollar amounts in this revised policy were used in creating the budget this year.

This policy revision will come back for approval at the next Board of Education meeting.

F.2. Policy Revision - Requirements for Graduation from Manchester High School Policy 5127.1

Mr. Geary reviewed the current graduation requirements include 22 credits and this new policy, which comes from state legislation, requires 25 credits. The full policy is available on the website. This would affect the incoming class next year. Mr. Geary reviewed the changes.

Mr. Leon asked about the 1.0 credit in Fine/Performing Arts. Mr. Geary clarified that broadly includes music and art classes for this credit.

Mr. Leon wondered if we have the staff to support requiring 2 credits in World Language. Mr. Geary noted we will need to add staff in a couple of years and may consider giving credit for classes taken at Illing. He is also looking to possibly add Chinese and American Sign Language as options. Mr. Leon thinks it is a great idea to add Chinese and ASL. He wonders what happens if we adopt this policy prior to budget funding for more staff. Mr. Geary noted the option for a Chinese teacher in 2015-16 is through collaboration with Confucius Institute from CCSU and the Board would pay half the salary (no benefits) through the Alliance Grant for possibly two teachers.

Mr. Pattacini would like some clarity about the math courses, now with 4 credits instead of 3. He was not clear and asked for wording change in "and either Algebra II **or** Probability".

Mr. Geary spoke about student grade levels equally specific credits. The state statute currently requires CAPT as one way to meet a graduation performance standard. We no longer give the CAPT test. Currently MHS has graduation performance standards (where students must demonstrate mastery). Manchester High School has seven academic guidelines plus a service learning project as a graduation requirement. It is likely the state will require us to look at SBAC as they previously did with CAPT and we may need to come back to this policy with changes in the future. Support for the students is critical and Saturday Algebra is one support already in place. We may need to add more supports.

Mr. Pattacini noted this policy will come back for adoption at the next Board of Education meeting.

G. COMMITTEE REPORTS

G.1. Policy Committee

Ms. Pazda reported the Policy Committee met on February 23rd. In attendance were Ms. Cruz, Ms. Hagenow, Ms. Pazda, and Mr. Geary. The committee endorsed the Facilities Maintenance Policy 3510 and the Requirements for Graduation Policy 5127.1 presented this evening. The committee requested the

administration to review the draft Professional Growth Policy and connect the language to outcomes for students and bring it back to the committee. The committee endorsed the concept of an Advertising Policy and requested the administration clarify language in the draft policy and bring it back to the committee. The committee discussed school uniforms, which are currently in place at Bennet and Illing. The committee agreed that it was not necessary to have the Manchester Public School logo on the polo shirts and will allow parents/guardians to purchase polos without logos. The committee also requested that the administration clarify other dress code issues, including relaxing the requirement that students tuck their shirts in, as well as identifying a dress down day process for students. The next meeting will be held March 23rd at 5:30 p.m.

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

Ms. Tracy Maio, 57 Horton Road, loves having meetings at schools and hearing about different schools. She also loves the artwork in this library and thinks we should do something similar in all the libraries, maybe one a year making it part of a senior art project. As for the Facilities Maintenance Policy - she thanked the Board for listening to public feedback.

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, enjoyed the Robertson presentation, including seeing the parents and students present. He thinks it is good to see a diverse group of parents. Mr. Stringfellow recommended the Minipage in the *Journal Inquirer* which had an article on the Vietnam War, which ended 40 years ago. He feels the Facilities Maintenance Program was understandable. The high school graduation requirements was presented thoroughly. Mr. Stringfellow recommended an article in the *Boston Globe* on changes in community colleges. He also recommended two books: *Colleges, Careers, and Common Core* along with *Ten Things Employers Want You To Know*.

I. COMMUNICATIONS

Joseph Coyne, the Student Representative, was present to give an update about the goings on at MHS.

- Winter Wonderland - FBLA hosted a party on December 13th for local children, which included games, a moon bounce, and pictures with Santa.

- Food Share - On December 19th Mr. Blade took six students to Shoprite to select food for families in need. Shoprite donated \$350 worth of food for three families. In addition to the food, the daughter of the Student Activities Secretary, Mrs. Wabble (along with her friend) shopped for Christmas presents for the kids in those three families.
- Leadership Conference - On January 7th students from MHS and other schools in Connecticut gathered at Trinity College for the annual middle school leadership conference hosted by the Connecticut Association of Schools. The students had the opportunity to facilitate workshops to middle school students.
- Student Ambassador Program Pep Rally - On January 15th.
- Snow Ball Dance - About 550 students attended.
- End of Indoor Sports Season
- Murder Mystery Dinner at MHS - March 6th, pasta and ice-cream and a skit written by Kelly Cecchini and Kathy Mazzotta. This is always a fun event and fundraiser for the junior class.
- Power Hour Update - Teachers have been encouraged to deliver detentions for students who arrive late to class after PH.
- Third Quarter Progress Notes - Closed March 5th and are due for teachers March 11th.

Mr. Crockett wondered what FBLA stood for. Future Business Leaders of America.

Mr. Pattacini wondered if the detentions for returning late from Power Hour were resulting in a decrease in tardies. Mr. Coyne felt there has been an improvement seen recently.

Ms. Hagenow received an invitation to join "Next Door Verplanck" which is an online network to share with community members upcoming events, recommendations, sales/free items, crime safety concerns, and ideas on how to make the neighborhood better.

J. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

Mr. Crockett wondered about the Policy Committee having the authority to drop the logo from the uniform shirts. He wondered if this should be a Board decision. Mr. Pattacini noted requiring the uniform is a Board decision, but how to implement it is at

the administrator's purview. Mr. Leon would like to see this come before the Board as well. Mr. Pattacini recommended to send it back to the Policy Committee for consideration. Mr. Crockett wondered why not bring it back to the full board, not just the Policy Committee. Mr. Geary clarified that in 6th grade students were not being required to tuck shirts, but at Illing they were and also the logo change with adding Bennet moving from an Illing logo to a MPS logo.

K. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Pattacini called for a motion to adjourn.

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

8/0 - Voted in favor.

Adjournment 8:49 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jason Scappaticci
Board Secretary