

MANCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION

Regular Meeting

March 23, 2015

Lincoln Center

PRESENT: Cruz, Hagenow, 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: Crockett, Leon

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. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting

APPROVED – Minutes Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of March 9, 2015. Secretary Scappaticci moved and Ms. Pazda seconded the motion.

6/0/1 – Voted in favor.

Mr. Pattacini announced the agenda would be amended, which requires the approval of $\frac{2}{3}$ of the voting members present. Mr. Geary noted the amendment would be to add an executive session to discuss a pending personnel matter, with himself and Mrs. Brooks.

Mr. Scappaticci moved to amend item K on tonight's agenda to an Executive Session for a discussion regarding settlement of matters concerning teacher's employment. Ms. Pazda seconded the motion.

7/0 - Voted in favor.

B. CONSENT CALENDAR

Mr. Geary presented three 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 MHS Admin Office Supplies/Materials account to MHS Guidance Field & Athletic Trips account in the amount of \$552
- Transfer from System-wide Science Professional Development account (\$600) and System-wide Science Dues & Fees account (\$400) to System-wide Science Instructional Supplies & Materials account for a total transfer of \$1,000
- Transfer from Curriculum & Instruction Field & Athletic Trips account to Curriculum & Instruction Dues & Fees account in the amount of \$1,650
- Transfer from System-wide Elementary Art Travel & Lodging account to System-wide Elementary Art Professional Development account in the amount of \$241
- Transfer from Illing Middle School Interscholastic Sports Athletic Supplies & Materials account to Illing Middle School Interscholastic Sports Field Trips account in the amount of \$1,200
- Transfer from System-wide Special Education Consultants account (\$10,000) and System-wide Special Education Contracted Services account (\$30,000) to SYstem-wide Special Education Instructional Supplies & Materials account for a total transfer of \$40,000
- Transfer from System-wide Elementary Art Travel & Lodging account to System-wide Elementary Art Periodicals account in the amount of \$520

- Transfer from Bennet Administration General Supplies & Materials account to Bennet Administration Professional Development account in the amount of \$700
- Transfer from Martin School Administrative General Supplies & Materials account to Martin School Administrative Professional Development account in the amount of \$300

B.3. Appropriate for FY 14/15 \$348,769.84 from the designated fund account to pay retroactive salaries to Paraeducators and Tutors under the contract settlements

The Chairman called for a motion.

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

7/0 - Voted in favor.

C. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, noted April 9th is the 150 anniversary of the end of the Civil War. He suggested articles in several magazines, including *Civil War Times* and *American History* magazine, as well as *American Archeology* magazine. Mr. Stringfellow feels that students should know about local history. Last, he suggested an article in *National Geographic's* March issue regarding the war on science.

D. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT – PART I

D.1. Recognition of Board Member Service

Mr. Geary recognized that this is Board Member Service month. He informed the public that Board members are volunteers who work tirelessly for our children. The administration gave Board members a token of appreciation for their service - an Ipad cover with the new Manchester Public Schools logo.

D.2. Update on uniforms

Mr. Geary reviewed that we have no formal policy regarding uniforms. There are procedures and processes outlined at the two schools that use uniforms. Currently there is some inconsistency in how the uniforms are implemented; at one school shirts are tucked and at another they are not. Mr. Geary administratively recommended students not be required to tuck shirts. Mr. Geary also noted that originally, with uniforms only at Illing, the logo on the shirts was an Illing logo. When Bennet adopted uniforms a Manchester Public School logo was used for both schools, and colors incorporating both school colors were added. Uniform shirts are now either black, grey, burgundy, green, or blue. By removing the logo and allowing parents to purchase polo shirts in the approved colors anywhere, it provides a savings for families. There is also a process in the teacher's contract about dressing down on paydays with a donation, and dress down days for the students was discussed.

Mr. Pattacini thanked the administration for their efforts and effective implementation.

D.3. Summer Advantage Academy of Manchester (SAAM) Update

Mr. Geary reminded the Board that the SAAM program is currently funded through the Alliance Grant. We have been told from the State to anticipate a similar degree of funding for the Alliance Grant, so we are hopeful the grant will remain the same at approximately \$3.8 million.

Dr. Radikas presented a Powerpoint on the program, which was instituted to limit the summer slide, but now also will focus on acceleration. The site coordinators are again Grace DeAngelis at Highland Park and Ann Johnston at Bennet Academy. There continues to be a 20:2 pupil/teacher ratio. Last week on March 13th 972 invitations were sent. The program will run June 29 through August 7, with the first and last week being an optional Parks & Rec program only, with the academics being conducted only July 6 through July 31st. This is in line with other summer programs in the district. The same two guidance counselors from last year will also be working this summer. The full presentation can be found on the website.

This year there is a dedicated webpage for SAAM. There are three registration assistance nights for parents to attend if they have questions or need help completing their applications: 3/17, 3/25 and 3/31 from 3:30 - 5:30. There will also be a meet and greet before camp starts in conjunction with Parks & Rec and an on-the-go exit survey conducted the last week of SAAM.

Mr. Scappaticci wondered how the 3/17 registration help night went. Dr. Radikas noted only one parent attended, but she is hopeful more will come to the next one. During report card conferences teachers encouraged participation.

Ms. Cruz wondered, with 972 invitations sent, how many slots are open. Dr. Radikas stated we would accommodate however many accept the invitation.

Ms. Pazda wondered if only half of the 972 students come, will we still have a 20:2 ratio? Dr. Radikas noted no teachers have been hired yet as we won't know how many are needed until the parents respond to the application. She noted many of the same teachers as last year will be rehired.

Ms. Pazda was delighted to hear that acceleration will be a focus this year. She also believes maintaining the same guidance counselors are important. Dr. Radikas noted there would be one counselor at each school and they conduct home visits, help students, and act as a liaison between the site coordinators and parents.

Ms. Pazda wondered about the journals and phone calls and work being sent home. Dr. Radikas noted in the past journalling and phone calls were about behavior, but this year there will be more communication in general.

Mr. Thames can see the evolution of the program. He commends Dr. Radikas for listening to parent feedback and making adjustments. He wondered what the criteria was for the 972 invitations. Dr. Radikas stated they look at children in the lowest 20% of the grade level, using DRA results for grades K-2 and benchmark assessments in grade 3. Teacher and principal feedback is also utilized. Mr. Thames wondered if consideration was given to including siblings. Dr. Radikas noted it was and siblings will be invited and placed at the same camp.

D.4. School Climate Report

Mr. Geary gave a presentation on Culture and Climate as part of the District Improvement Plan. The District Improvement Plan outlines work in four areas, Academics - Talent - Culture and Climate - Systems and Operations. Tonight's focus is on Culture and Climate. Creativity, Collaboration, Courage and Excellence are the words defined on tee-shirts that were given to Board members and all staff in the district. These words are kept at the forefront of what we are doing. There are two goals in the area of culture and climate, one is that students will demonstrate personal responsibility, character, cultural understanding and ethical behavior and the second is that we will build trusting relationships with all of our partners, including parents and community members. These goals are connected to each other and to student learning. The entire Power Point can be viewed on the website.

Ms. Hagenow wondered about enrichment participation, who identifies those who qualify and is behavior part of the qualification? Mr. Geary noted COGAT assessments and teacher recommendations are used to identify students for the CORE program. Behavior also plays a role, though we should not exclude a student based on behavior alone.

Ms. Pazda liked that there is a lot of math support, but wondered about support for ELA. Mr. Geary reviewed there is already support in place for ELA, including writer's and reader's workshop and enrichment (CORE) is literacy based. We have had 7 visiting authors in district as well. Mr. Geary also reviewed our students can earn MCC credit and UCONN credit in Senior English.

Ms. Pazda was curious about the drop in Grade 6 math under the Asian category from 8 to 4. Mr. Geary noted we will keep an eye on it.

Ms. Pazda also asked about a gender breakdown. Mr. Geary noted more males are suspended than females. Females participate more in enrichment and AP courses.

Ms. Pazda shared a favorite quote from Albert Einstein: "Everybody is a genius, but if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life

believing it is stupid.” She noted change is hard and challenges our belief system.

Mr. Thames noted the student population in all schools reflects the diversity of our district as a whole. He wondered how the teachers and administrators reflect the diversity of the district. He would like that data. Mr. Thames was not surprised by the discipline data. He noted a trend in public schools across the nation, that they have become a gateway to the juvenile justice system and this is dangerous. He wondered how many arrests or juvenile justice interventions resulted. Mr. Geary noted we have done a good job with the Youth Service Bureau to reduce the number of school-based arrests. He will get the actual numbers. Mr. Geary added that we have a very positive, strong relationship with local police, Youth Services, and the Office of Neighborhoods and Families. In the near future we will also hear from Ms. Romeo-Rivers regarding recruitment of staff and talent development.

Ms. Cruz noted a decline in discipline incidents at the high school from 2011-12 to 2014-15. She wondered what contributed to the decline. Mr. Geary feels it is about making connections and relationships with students. He notes we need to do a better job to be sure every kid has an adult they connect with. Ms. Cruz wondered if there was a decline in the middle school as well. There was, and Mr. Geary noted we are working at the elementary level still to be consistent across schools.

Mr. Pattacini noted there is hope and progress being made. He is encouraged by the graduation rate increases and the referral/suspension declines. He pointed out this is not about stopping discipline in schools. If a student is not receiving an ISS (in-school suspension), what might the consequence be? Mr. Geary noted consistent rules and enforcement are being utilized. We are simply responding to behavior differently. Society changed and we have to change with it with making rules that need to be enforced. We have to teach children what it means to be a good citizen with a code of conduct. One example of an alternative to ISS would be requiring a student to volunteer at an elementary school. Mr. Pattacini is excited that we recognized problems and are coming up with solutions. He is also encouraged by the increase in math opportunities.

E. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

E.1.a. Policy Revision

The policy revision of Facilities Maintenance Policy 3510 is available in full on the website. This is the second reading of this policy revision. Mr. Geary reviewed the changes, which double the amount of money put aside in the budget for maintenance, from 0.3% to 0.6%.

Secretary Scappaticci moved for the Board to adopt the changes to Policy 3510, Facilities Maintenance Policy. Ms. Pazda seconded the motion.

Mr. Pattacini noted if passed, this policy will go into effect immediately and he assured the Board that adequate funding for this was put into the budget currently being considered for next year.

7/0 - Voted in favor.

E.2.a. Policy Revision

The policy revision of Requirements for Graduation from Manchester High School Policy 5127.1 are available in full on the website. This is the second reading of this policy revision, and Mr. Geary reviewed it changes the number of credits required for graduation from 22 to 25 and will go into effect with the next freshman class.

Secretary Scappaticci moved for the Board to adopt the changes to Policy 5127.1 Requirements for Graduation from Manchester High School. Ms. Pazda seconded the motion.

7/0 - Voted in favor.

F. NEW BUSINESS

None.

G. COMMITTEE REPORTS

G.1. Curriculum & Instruction Committee

Mr. Scappaticci reviewed the last meeting was held on March 9th. In attendance were Ms. Hagenow, Ms. Pazda, Mr. Scappaticci, Mr. Stafford and Dr. Radikas. Also present were Mr. Geary, Ms. Sheehan-Burns, and Mr. Berry. A discussion took place regarding the current art, music, and physical education programming K-8 and scheduling in grades 6-8. At Bennet Academy presently all teachers teach English Language Arts and they are looking at specialized teaming more common in secondary settings. A discussion around student centered learning through electives took place. The next meeting will be held April 6th at Verplanck School at 5:30 p.m.

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

Tracy Maio, 57 Horton Road, feels the Family Resource Centers in schools will play a huge part in involving parents with working with the school as a partnership. This is a huge resource to partner with schools and build trust. Ms. Maio also noted the District Science Fair was this past Saturday and there were many great ideas and fun projects presented and she thanked Dr. Radikas.

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, felt Mr. Geary gave a good presentation. He hopes students of color are encouraged to take AP classes. He wants to see more students of color taking Honors courses as well. Mr. Stringfellow would also like a presentation on alternatives to college, maybe from the business office, going into the service, etc. He notes he is a taxpayer and stakeholder and his opinion counts so he hopes the Board listens. Mr. Stringfellow recommended the book *Ten Things Employers Want You to Learn in College*. He suggested an article in *TIME* magazine about choosing a college, and an article in *Attitude* magazine regarding special needs students taking the SATs and obtaining driver's licenses. Last, Mr. Stringfellow pointed out an article in the *Reminder* on Mr. Jones, principal of Verplanck.

I. COMMUNICATIONS

Ms. Pazda attended the District Science Fair this past weekend. She thanked Dr. Radikas, Dr. Oliver and the PTA for an incredible opportunity. Ms. Pazda congratulated

all students who participated and she was impressed with what they were inventing. Ms. Pazda also commented on the new website - she thinks it is phenomenal and noted you can access each school's own website from the main site as well.

J. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

Ms. Pazda would like a presentation from Ms. Romeo-Rivers regarding performance evaluation and talent development.

K. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Secretary Scappaticci made a motion to move into Executive Session. Ms. Hagenow seconded the motion.

7/0 - Voted in favor. Executive Session 8:45 p.m.

**Ms. Cruz moved to come out of Executive Session at 9:04 p.m.
Mr. Scappaticci seconded the motion.**

7/0 - Voted in favor. Back in Public Session 9:04 p.m.

L. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Pattacini called for a motion to adjourn.

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

7/0 - Voted in favor.

Adjournment 9:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jason Scappaticci
Board Secretary