

MANCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION

**Regular Meeting
January 11, 2021
Lincoln/virtual**

PRESENT: Gundersen, Heinrich, Hughes, Luna, Meggers, Pattacini, Patterson, Stefanovicz, Thames

ALSO PRESENT: Superintendent of Schools Geary, Deputy Superintendent Curriculum & Special Services Radikas, Director of Finance & Management Clancy, Director of Human Resources Sone-Moyano

ABSENT:

A. OPENING

A.1. & 2. Meeting Called to Order

Chairperson Thames 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. Thames.

A.3. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting

APPROVED – Minutes Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of December 14, 2020. Secretary Pattacini moved and Mr. Meggers seconded the motion.

9/0 – Voted in favor.

B. COMMITTEE REPORTS

B.1. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee

Ms. Luna reviewed that the last meeting was held December 9, 2020. Committee members in attendance at this virtual meeting were: Ms. Luna, Mr.

Meggers and Ms. Patterson. Community members present: Angela Bellas, Maria Cruz, Linda Harris, Dana McDonald, Keren Prescott and Teresa Quintana. Staff members present were: Mr. Geary, Dr. Kearney, Ms. Krisch and Jessica Pepin.

Dr. Kearney reviewed the Board of Education resolution that created the committee and the work to date of the MPS Office of Equity.

Community members and Board members shared their thoughts on the following questions:

- What role do you play in the community?
- What do you want to see for your community?
- Who's your audience?
- How can we support each other?
- If you do have a concern about a community member, how can we help?

The major themes of the discussion centered on the following:

- Understanding the difference between equity and equality.
- Acknowledging and appreciating the cultural differences within the Black and Latino communities.
- Need to empower those from marginalised communities.
- Need to consistently communicate in multiple languages.
- Importance of supporting each other and working together on any concerns.
- Work is not about fighting, it is about educating, accessing and encouraging individuals.
- Significant issues beyond education (including economic and health issues, homelessness, food and nutrition, and mental health) need to be addressed.
- Pandemic taking the hardest toll on members of the community that have limited resources.
- Significant concern for families who are undocumented, who do not have access.
- Talking is important but action is required at the systemic level.

Dr. Kearney shared her contact information as well as Mr. Geary's, along with the schedule for 2021.

C. CONSENT CALENDAR

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

C.1. Personnel Action

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

C.2. Transfer of Funds

- Transfer from Manchester High School Mathematics Field Trips account to Manchester High School Mathematics Instructional Supplies & Materials account in the amount of \$2,000
- Transfer from Manchester High School Library Music Software Licenses and Fees account to Manchester High School Music Software Licenses and Fees account in the amount of \$3,500

C.3. Permission to apply for the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving COVID-19 Reopening Grant for the FY 20/21 in the amount of \$24,998.34

C.4. Establish an appropriation for the Enfield Head Start Services Innovative Enhancement Grant for the FY 20/21 in the amount of \$100,000

C.5. Establish an appropriation for the Manchester Head Start Innovative Enhancement Grant for the FY 20/21 in the amount of \$63,000

C.6. Establish an appropriation for the Manchester Head Start Services Grant for the FY 20/21 in the amount of \$145,127

C.7. Establish an appropriation for the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Secondary Basic Grant for the FY 20/22 in the amount of \$119,485

C.8. Permission to apply for the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving Grant for the FY 20/22 in the amount of \$262,500

The Chairman called for a motion.

Secretary Pattacini moved and Mr. Heinrich seconded the recommendation to adopt the Consent Calendar.

DISCUSSION:

Mr. Pattacini asked Mr. Geary to explain C.8. Mr. Geary reviewed that the latest round of Hartford Public Giving Grants is an 18 month grant, running January - December. We run a fiscal year of July - June. The entire grant is \$262,500, which translates to \$175,000 for our fiscal year. This grant funds part of the FRCs, positive youth development and equity work among other items. We appreciate the support from the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving.

The vote was called.

9/0 - Voted in favor.

D. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT

Leila Affini noted hybrid classes resumed in the building today. It was nice to see everyone. After school activities continue through Google meets. The classes of 2022 and 2023 continue with their "merch" sales.

Tiffany Henry noted a winter concert video from all the music ensembles is posted on the Manchester Newsletter. Teachers have taken time to check-in with students after the Capitol Hill Riot on Wednesday. A lot of students are having a hard time refocusing after the break, which is to be expected, but with the quarter closing in two weeks we have time to straighten out again.

E. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

F. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT – PART I

F.1. Budget Presentation

Mr. Geary reviewed that they looked at previous years budgets for some items and estimated others. Over the course of the next couple of years we need to Respond Recover and Reimagine our district.

The 20-21 adopted budget was \$117,774,174. That represented a 1.1% increase over the prior year's budget.

Factors considered in formulating the 21-22 budget included:

- Local economic impact due to the pandemic
- CT budget headed into year 1 of a new 2 year budget cycle
- CT budget deficit of approximately \$2 Billion
- Alliance/ECS funding a 10 year phase-in which should result in an additional \$1,695,521 for Manchester
- Recent Federal Relief Package
- Potential savings in the 20-21 budget
- Covid-19 vaccine timeline

Mr. Geary also reviewed the budget terms:

- Object refers to the category
- Location shows the physical location
- Programs refer to the specific department (ie LA, Math, etc)

The district is projecting savings in the 20-21 budget lines for transportation of approximately \$500,000, Substitute coverage of about \$400,000 and Overtime of approximately \$150,000 for a total savings amount of \$1,050,000.

The 2021-2022 proposed budget amount is \$121,042,676. This represents an increase of 2.78% over the previous year's budget (\$3,268,502). However, Mr. Geary reviewed that with the increase in Alliance money expected (an additional \$1,695,521) and any actual savings outlined above (estimated to be \$1,050,000) plus any additional Federal funding the budget increase is closer to 1.3% over the current budget.

Cost drivers continue to be:

- Intervention/acceleration
- Salaries (certified and non-certified contractual obligations)
- Outplacements and magnet tuition (including SPED needs)
- Board policies that support funding of capital repairs of a specific amount as well as computer and equipment costs

Mr. Geary reviewed that the 15 remote teaching positions that were needed this year are being kept in the budget. If we do not need to continue remote classes, the plan is to use those teachers in K-2 classrooms to facilitate smaller classes to help students catch up.

Mr. Geary also expressed his gratitude for the various grants we have access to that help allow for innovative work.

We will know more about the funding sources over the next couple of months. There will be three budget workshops to dive deeper into the numbers. January 21st will focus on salaries and benefits; January 28th will look at purchased professional services and February 4th will round out the workshops so adoption at the February 8th meeting is possible.

Mr. Pattacini thanked Mr. Geary for his presentation and appreciates his flexibility. Mr. Pattacini asked about the anticipated \$1 million in savings this year - wondering if we give that money back to the town and then ask for it back. Mr. Geary agreed that is the plan. There is also the possibility of using some of those funds to pre-purchase necessities as well.

Mr. Pattacini asked about possible summer learning. Mr. Geary stated that would depend on the willingness of families. He did note we will need more planning time over the summer for staff to prepare for next year.

Mr. Pattacini asked for Mr. Geary to review the life of a teacher currently. Mr. Geary noted teachers are working harder than ever before. Their energy and enthusiasm in creating plans, structuring home learning and prioritizing what is taught in person vs online is amazing. Mr. Geary also noted that behavior techs, tutors, paras and other staff are also working hard to contribute to the student's success. Mr. Pattacini passed along his thanks to the staff.

Ms. Patterson wondered what is being built into the budget to address the health and wellness of teachers and staff. Mr. Geary noted currently with the late start Wednesdays staff has time for support. Outside services are being utilized to help support mental health and remove the stigma associated with it. Some of this will be funded by grants (Nellie Mae, RISE, etc).

Ms. Patterson asked for clarity on who typically qualifies to receive overtime. Mr. Geary noted that applies to hourly employees and typically includes secretarial staff, custodians (especially late summer), maintainers, paras, tutors and nurses (especially now when they may be staying late/working weekends to contact trace).

Mr. Thames acknowledged Sinthia Sone-Moyano for her work on health and wellness.

Ms. Stefanovicz noted that we used to “hope” that the Alliance funding would come through and now it seems like more of a guarantee of funding. She wondered if we have to continue to apply for this each year. Mr. Geary noted we do have to apply, but it is more intended to correct ECS funding and the new 10 year phase-in provides money directly to school districts.

Ms. Stefanovicz asked about how we are narrowing down what is essential to learn in the curriculum. Mr. Geary noted we are asking if it is something critical to learn and what is the impact of it being or not being in the curriculum.

Mr. Heinrich asked about the Federal Relief Package. He knows that \$495 million was given to the state but it is still unknown what the town will receive. Do we have any idea how that money will be distributed? Mr. Geary said it is hard to say at this point. Previous federal funds followed Title I distributions.

Mr. Thames thanked the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, the RISE Network, and the Barr Foundation for their continued support. He also appreciates the work of the administration in pursuing alternative competitive funding sources.

Mr. Thames asked for clarification of defined contribution vs defined benefit. Mr. Geary explained that over the last five years or so the town has been moving away from a pension and all new employees are in the defined contribution category. Pension plans (defined benefit) are more costly. As staff retire the number of people that are in the defined benefit category drops.

Mr. Thames asked for an explanation of self-insured versus a typical insurance company. Mr. Geary explained that the town acts as the insurance company and

pays out any claims. All staff are now on HSA plans. Ms. Clancy added that the town pays the claims and administers the plan.

Mr. Geary's full budget presentation is available for view online.

G. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

H. NEW BUSINESS

H.1. Manchester High School Roof Replacement

Mr. Geary reviewed the needs of MHS, with concrete overhangs being of concern, leaks in certain areas and the need to repair or replace sections of the roof prior to installation of solar panels. The town has an old roof bond with about \$600,000 available and the state reimbursement on this project will be about 60%. Between those two funding sources, there is only a little left to fund.

Secretary Pattacini moved for the Board of Education to approve and adopt the attached Educational Specifications dated December 21, 2020 for a roof replacement at Manchester High School. Ms. Luna seconded the motion.

9/0 - Voted in favor.

H.2. Grant Application/Summary of Educational Specifications

Secretary Pattacini moved for the Board of Education to authorize the Superintendent to submit an SCG049 Grant Application and Summary of Educational Specifications for a School Building Project to the State Department of Education for a construction grant in accordance with CGS §10-283 and Chapter 173 of the Connecticut General Statutes. Mr. Meggers seconded the motion.

9/0 - Voted in favor.

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

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, mentioned that we have a new Commissioner of the State Board of Education as Mr. Cardona is moving on to Education Secretary under President Biden. Mr. Stringfellow mentioned Dr. King day next Monday and he hopes we can come back together as Americans after the Washington DC incident last week. There has been a rise in hate groups and that affects all of us. He hopes we can work on that.

Mr. Stringfellow noted February is the 95th anniversary of the start of Black History Month and he hopes for recognition of that. He recommended a book about African American Civil Rights Attorney Dovey Johnson Roundtree entitled *Mighty Justice*. Discrimination has no place in today's world.

J. COMMUNICATIONS

None.

K. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

January 25 - Retreat

February 8 - Adopt Budget

February 22 - Winter Data Update/Update on Student Behavioral Supports

L. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Thames called for a motion to adjourn.

Secretary Pattacini moved and Ms. Patterson seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting.

9/0 - Voted in favor.

Adjournment 9:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Christopher Pattacini
Board Secretary