

## **MANCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION**

### **Regular Meeting**

**February 8, 2021**

Lincoln/Virtual

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

#### **A. OPENING**

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

**Chairperson Thames** called the meeting to order at 7:03 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 January 11, 2021. Secretary Pattacini moved and Ms. Patterson seconded the motion.**

**8/0 – Voted in favor.**

##### **A.4. Approval of Budget Workshop of January 21, 2021**

**APPROVED – Minutes Budget Workshop Meeting of the Board of Education of January 21, 2021. Secretary Pattacini moved and Mr. Heinrich seconded the motion.**

**8/0 – Voted in favor.**

**A.5. Approval of Budget Workshop of January 28, 2021**

**APPROVED – Minutes Budget Workshop Meeting of the Board of Education of January 28, 2021. Secretary Pattacini moved and Ms. Luna seconded the motion.**

**8/0 – Voted in favor.**

**A.6. Approval of Budget Workshop of February 4, 2021**

**APPROVED – Minutes Budget Workshop Meeting of the Board of Education of February 4, 2021. Secretary Pattacini moved and Mr. Gundersen seconded the motion.**

**DISCUSSION:**

**Mr. Pattacini** expressed the Board’s appreciation to Recording Secretary, Carla Berman, for her hard work transcribing all the meeting minutes. [It is my pleasure!]

**The vote was called.**

**8/0 – Voted in favor.**

**B. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**B.1. Curriculum & Instruction Committee**

**Ms. Luna** reviewed that the last meeting was held January 11, 2021. In attendance at this virtual meeting were: Ms. Luna, Mr. Gundersen, Mr. Meggers, Dr. Radikas, Ms. Sheehan-Burns and Ms. Ghetia.

The Committee was taken through a mock academic meeting by the Directors of Teaching & Learning, Ms. Sheehan-Burns and Ms. Ghetia. The Committee was exposed to the components and process of an academic review. Current grade level and district data was used to highlight how data is used as a springboard

for conversations between administrators and teachers to identify instructional strengths, challenges, and next steps.

After the mock academic review was conducted, Committee members had an opportunity to review an additional data set and formulate their own notices and wonders. This conversation allowed the Committee to further understand the resources in place to support students, staff and administrators and the process used to further adult reflection and changes in instructional strategies to meet the needs of all students.

The next meeting will be held March 8, 2021.

### **C. CONSENT CALENDAR**

**Mr. Geary** presented three 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 District-wide Information Services Repairs account to District-wide Information Services Computer Supplies & Materials account in the amount of \$2,419.
- Transfer from System-wide Information Services Professional Development account to System-wide Information Services Computer Supplies & Materials account in the amount of \$1,361.
- Transfer from System-wide Language Arts Instructional Supplies & Materials account (\$1,622) to System-wide Language Arts Professional Development account in the amount of \$1,535 and to System-wide Social Studies Contracted Substitutes account in the amount of \$87, for a total transfer of \$1,622.
- Transfer from System-wide Psychology Travel and Lodging account to System-wide Psychology Professional Development account in the amount of \$1,000.
- Transfer from System-wide Social Studies Professional Development account to System-wide Social Studies Contracted Substitutes account in the amount of \$262.

**C.3. Establish an appropriation for The Hartford Foundation for Public Giving COVID-19 Reopening Grant for the FY 20/21 in the amount of \$25,000**

**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 item C.3. for the public. Mr. Geary reminded us of the \$75,000 grant given to districts in the Spring that were used to support reopening efforts. In addition, laptops were donated at the high school level by a public/private partnership that is now dissolved. This additional grant is earmarked for repairs (i.e., key and screen replacements, etc.) for technology.

**The vote was called.**

**8/0 - Voted in favor.**

**D. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT**

**Alexandra Hamza** reported that MHS is now in the third quarter and they are getting used to the hybrid schedule. The class officers have been making great efforts to provide fun events for students, including the Snow Fest February 4th, which had lots of fun (socially distanced) activities such as snowshoeing, sled racing, hot chocolate and prizes. Ms. Hamza reported the new psychology class, "Psychology and the Good Life" is awesome and there is the potential to earn 3 college credits. Yearbook staff are busy collecting senior quotes. The National Honor Society induction was held January 26th.

**Leila Affini** mentioned the videos being produced by a group of students and shown to the student body this month for Black History Month. The videos have highlighted black women in leadership and the history of the black lives movement so far. The Student Equity Advisory Team has actually set up a bulletin board near the senior lot that highlights black figures, artists and poets as well as Black History Month as a whole. Since it was just set up today there is only one poster but they hope to have more on it by Friday. This board will be updated for other history months that occur as

well. Ms. Affini also told us students have been given the option to take their own yearbook portraits and send them in by February 28th.

**Mr. Thames** expressed an interest in viewing the videos mentioned. Ms. Affini wasn't sure how to access them, as they are shown live, but Ms. Miner may know how to show them to the Board members.

#### **E. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None.

#### **F. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT – PART I**

##### **F.1. Update on Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief**

**Mr. Geary** started by acknowledging the new class mentioned by our Student Representative - Psychology and the Good Life. This is a collaboration with Yale. He noted that sometimes we forget about all the good things happening in the district and he is glad to hear the positive feedback from the students.

About a week ago we found out the amount of the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief II (ESSERII) and Mr. Geary gave a brief overview of how he envisions allocating those funds. This will be a two year Respond Recovery and Reimagine scenario, starting this spring.

The State's ESSERII Priorities will be centered around:

- Academic support, learning loss, learning acceleration and Family and Community Connections;
- School safety and social-emotional wellbeing of the students and staff; and
- Remote learning and staff development and the digital divide.

Covid-related items:

- Coordination with local health department to respond to Covid - such as working together to distribute the vaccine.
- Addressing learning loss with a focus on low income students, students with disabilities, homeless and foster children.
- Provide principals and leaders with resources.
- Provide activities for the unique needs of the focus groups listed above.

- Develop and implement procedures and systems to improve the preparedness and response efforts of local educational agencies.
- Training and professional development for staff on sanitation and minimizing infectious diseases.
- Purchase supplies for sanitation and cleaning.
- Purchase technology (including hardware and software as well as connectivity).
- Planning, coordination of activities during long-term closures including meals, special education needs and assistive technology.

Next Steps include:

- Clarify the vaccine timeline, hopefully by March teachers will be vaccinated.
- Plan increased school time for spring.
- Develop a flexible summer program, both remote and in-person.
- Plan for fall remote and/or in-person.
- Develop an ESSERII Grant Proposal.

**Ms. Luna** wondered when we would see what the summer school plan looks like. Mr. Geary noted he plans to hire early as many districts will be running summer programs. He sent a survey to certified staff recently to get an idea of availability. Mr. Geary should have a draft school calendar at the next Board meeting that will start July 1st. He will also share ideas to be finalized in early April to target in-person experiences with some remote.

Ms. Luna wondered if the program would be open to all students. Mr. Geary stated that is the idea. For sure any students struggling will be invited, but all students have experienced this unusual situation and he encourages them receiving both academic and social and emotional supports PK-12. The program will likely be a full day program with both recreational and academic activities.

**Mr. Gundersen** asked about the process of acquiring these funds and if the two year stipulation had a "hard stop" date that funds need to be spent by. Mr. Geary stated the application for the first grant (ESSERI) was very specific, so he expects this one will be as well, though we have not seen it yet. The grant will be written as general as possible to provide flexibility. September 2023 is the

hard stop for funding. Mr. Geary pointed out that there is also the possibility of another Covid relief fund for schools as well.

**Mr. Thames** hopes the teachers are vaccinated by March and he asked who in our district has been vaccinated thus far. Mr. Geary noted that school nurses and related service providers (such as OT/PT/Psychologists) have been vaccinated. He is hopeful that some of those staff members will be able to assist in giving the vaccine once we are able to move to the next group. Mr. Geary did state that some places have had to cancel the second round of vaccinations due to lack of vaccine, so he is not sure 100% of our related service providers were vaccinated already. We have been in contact with CVS, who we do flu clinics with, to discuss the possibility of vaccine clinics.

Mr. Thames asked if the summer program would be similar to SAAM. Mr. Geary acknowledged that it would be similar, though larger, and will require a significant number of staff members. There will be a connection with the recreation department and staff will be used in a targeted manner. There should be opportunities for high school students as well as those returning from college for summer jobs.

## **G. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

### **G.1. Manchester High School Roof Replacement**

**Secretary Pattacini moved for the Board of Education to approve and adopt the attached, revised Educational Specifications dated February 5, 2021 for a roof replacement at Manchester High School. Ms. Patterson seconded the motion.**

#### **DISCUSSION:**

**Mr. Pattacini** asked if this was a revision of what was approved at an early meeting. Mr. Geary reviewed previously the square footage of the roof was inaccurate as the part of the roof over the pool was missed. This attachment is accurate so the motion was redone.

**Mr. Thames** asked about the impact on the cost and what the State matches.

**Mr. Geary** reviewed the State reimburses about 62%.

**Ms. Clancy** noted the cost estimate for the roof went from \$2.5 to \$3.5 million, which is a conservative estimate so hopefully it will be less. She also corrected Mr. Geary, stating the reimbursement from the State is 67%. She also reminded us the town has an old bond being used to support this work as well.

**The vote was called.**

**8/0 - Voted in favor.**

## **G.2. Grant Application and 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. Ms. Patterson seconded the motion.**

**8/0 - Voted in favor.**

## **H. NEW BUSINESS**

### **H.1. Adoption of Budget**

**Secretary Pattacini moved for the Board of Education to adopt the Board of Education 2021-2022 Budget in the amount of \$117,774,174. Ms. Luna seconded the motion.**

#### **DISCUSSION:**

**Mr. Geary** pointed out this represents a 0% increase in our budget.

**Mr. Pattacini** noted the 0% increase was achieved through the hard work of our administration and staff to deliver services to our students and keep our



budget flat for local taxpayers. Mr. Pattacini thanked Mr. Geary, Ms. Clancy and all our staff who support our students.

**Mr. Thames** expressed feeling blessed by the additional relief funds. He feels our budget is fiscally prudent as always. He will support the budget fully.

**Ms. Patterson** echoes Mr. Pattacini, stating this is an unprecedented year. She thanked the staff and superintendent for their ability to pivot and assess and meet student needs. This was no easy task. Ms. Patterson thanked the Mr. Geary for his commitment and dedication. She always appreciates the information provided and she looks forward to next year.

**The vote was called.**

**8/0 - Voted in favor.**

## **H.2. Establishment of an Unexpended Education Fund**

**Secretary Pattacini moved for the Board of Education to approve the establishment of a non-lapsing account from the prior fiscal year from the budgeted appropriation for education up to 2% of the current budget. Mr. Gundersen seconded the motion.**

### **DISCUSSION:**

**Mr. Pattacini** noted that the Board members understand the request for this fund, but asked Mr. Geary to explain for the public. Mr. Geary reviewed that we cannot "bank" unspent money at the end of the fiscal year. If you under-spend your budget, the Connecticut General Statutes allow us to ask for the creation of this fund. If the Board of Directors creates the fund we will specify the monies be used for capital projects and capital repairs as well as unexpected overages in Special Education and Magnet costs. We cannot put more than 2% of the previous year's budget. Ms. Clancy added that the state changed the maximum amount of this fund from 1% to 2% in recent years. They obviously could see the need for this type of fund.

**The vote was called.**

**8/0 - Voted in favor.**

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

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, stated that this year marks 45 years of Black History Month, founded by Carter Woodson. Mr. Stringfellow recommended the book *Africa* by John Reader. He also suggested the book *The Bone and Sinew of the Land* by Anna-Lisa Cox as well as Eric Foner's book *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution*.

**Mr. Thames** thanked Mr. Stringfellow for his comments, remarking he is the unofficial historian for the Board of Education. Mr. Thames appreciates his research and comments.

**Mr. Geary** reported a question from FaceBook about the possibility of increasing the number of minutes in the school day at the middle and high school level. Mr. Geary hopes that maybe after April vacation there might be an increase in extended day programming.

**J. COMMUNICATIONS**

None.

**K. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS**

February 22 - Winter Data Update

March 8 - MHS Improvement Plan

March 22 - Martin School Improvement Plan

**L. ADJOURNMENT**

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

**Secretary Pattacini moved and Mr. Heinrich seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting.**

**8/0 - Voted in favor.**

**Adjournment 8:07 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Christopher Pattacini  
Board Secretary