

MANCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION

Regular Meeting January 13, 2020 Lincoln Center

PRESENT: Heinrich, Hughes, Meggers, Pattacini, Patterson, Scappaticci, Stefanovicz, Thames

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

ABSENT: Gundersen

A. OPENING

A.1/2. Meeting Called to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

Chairperson Thames called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. All in attendance participated in the Pledge of Allegiance, led by Mr. Thames.

A.3. Secretary's Welcome

Secretary Pattacini stated that as Secretary of the Board of Education, he wished to extend a warm welcome to everyone present and to the television viewers. He, along with the Board and the Superintendent, were pleased to be joined in celebrating the achievement, reviewing information, and discussing areas for growth, along with making policy decisions related to the effective operation of the Manchester Public Schools. Mr. Pattacini explained that this is a regular meeting of the Board and all items that will be discussed or voted on this evening have been posted, as required by state law.

Mr. Pattacini explained that as the Manchester Board of Education, they are here to set goals, listen to reports of the Superintendent, approve budgets, contracts, and personnel appointments, and to create a policy for the district. They are not here to make management decisions or solve the problems of individuals. Members of the public with individual concerns may contact the Superintendent directly. It was explained that meetings of the Board are open to the public, but are not meetings with individual members of the public. Therefore, comments from the audience will be confined to the time designated for the public to address the Board.

A.4. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting

APPROVED – Minutes of Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of December 9, 2019. Secretary Pattacini moved and Mr. Scappaticci seconded the motion.

8/0 – Voted in favor

B. COMMITTEE REPORTS

None.

C. CONSENT CALENDAR

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

C.1. Personnel Actions

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

C.2. Transfer of Funds

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

C.3. Establish an appropriation for FY 19-21, for the Title I, Part A - Improving Basic Programs Grant in the amount of \$1,859,022

C.4. Establish an appropriation for FY 19-21, for the Title II, Part A - Supporting Effective Instruction Grant in the amount of \$266,286

C.5. Establish an appropriation for FY 19-20, for the Bilingual Education Grant in the amount of \$7,888

C.6. Establish an appropriation for FY 19-21, for the Title III, Part A, English Language Acquisition and Language Enhancement Grant, in the amount of \$53,358

C.7. Establish an appropriation for FY 19-20, for the Priority School District Grant in the amount of \$829,017

C.8. Establish an appropriation for FY 19-20 for the Priority School District - Summer School Grant in the amount of \$151,506

C.9. Establish an appropriation for FY 19-20 for the Alliance District Grant in the amount of \$5,609,443

C.10. Manchester Board of Education Head Start - Quality Improvement Plan

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

C.11. Establish an appropriation for FY 19-21 for Nellie Mae Education Foundation, Inc - *Understanding Root Causes of Inequities* Continuation Grant in the amount of \$50,000

C.12. Establish an appropriation for FY 19-20 for the Extended School Hours Grant in the amount of \$128,948

The Chairman called for a motion.

Secretary Pattacini moved and **Mr. Scappaticci** seconded the recommendation to adopt the Consent Calendar as outlined in this evening's agenda.

There was no discussion.

8/0 - Voted in favor.

D. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT

None

E. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Genaro Gonzalez III, 4 Pearl Street, mentioned that he has a daughter that attends Illing Middle School who walks and rides her bike to school. He is concerned that there is a high number of registered sex offenders that live in Manchester and fears for the safety of his daughter on her way to and from school. He asked the Board to review the transportation policy.

Mr. Gonzalez also requested that the Board review the need of School Resource Officers in the schools when we have several security guards on site at both Illing and Manchester High School.

Ms. Nyia Harris Biscette, 13 Emerson Street, has a child who will be entering Kindergarten. She is wondering what the Board can do to assist the schools with funding to give teachers which will help the students produce good results, and to do better academically as compared to other towns. She is concerned that when researching a school and sees that it is rated at 25%, that her daughter may not be given the best education here in Manchester.

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, presented a book called "The War Before the War", by Andrew Delbanco, that is a missing link that should be in our history books that deal with slavery in a new way beyond "Huck Finn" and "Uncle Tom's Cabin", even beyond just our country. With the holiday for Martin Luther King coming up, there is also a book "Franchise" by Marcia Chatelain about the civil rights era when black franchises were being supported and opened across America.

Mr. Stringfellow responded to the previous comment about test scores and Manchester being compared to other schools where we continue to fall short, but maybe it might not be about money. What can be done when some students are better test takers? Rich parents can send their children to better schools, but we do the best we can as a public school.

F. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

F.1. Presentation of 2020-21 Superintendent's Recommended Budget

Mr. Geary presented the 2020-21 Recommended Budget which is available on the website.

Mr. Pattacini thanked Mr. Geary for the presentation and was excited to hear about the diversity in our district and the benefit it brings to our students. Regarding the "50 in 5" program, Mr. Pattacini wanted to understand the genesis of this program and if it has had success elsewhere. Mr. Geary admitted that this

was created here in our district and was built to support the current minority staff members who have such a great relationship with our students and naturally connect with our students. The roles they hold as Security Guards, Behavior Technicians and Hall Monitors allow them to thrive but we want them to be Social Workers, Guidance Counselors and Teachers. Some want to get their Bachelor's Degree but run into financial barriers to finish their education. We hear a lot in our community about diversity, and if it's a priority then it's a cost that we have to bare. Our experience in the last five years of recruiting has proven that we will not move from our current status.

Mr. Pattacini mentioned that he supports this program and is excited to be part of this groundbreaking program, and knows that if we can get this moving, others will follow.

Mr. Pattacini also asked to clarify the percentage of the cost of the tuition and outplaced services of the net increase, which is going up more than 2.8%. He wondered if the budget increase would actually be less if it were not for this cost.

Ms. Stefanovicz appreciated the Venn Diagram, and supports the idea of getting the right people "on the bus". Her concern is that we have secured funding for the length of the proposed program "50 in 5". Mr. Geary mentioned that if the Board of Education supports and votes for this program, then we would also seek support from the Town Board of Directors with a commitment to this program long term. Ms. Stefanovicz also mentioned that there may be some private organizations that could offer financial support for this program.

Ms. Patterson thanked Mr. Geary for the presentation and is looking forward to the workshops to dive deeper into the budget. Regarding the Venn Diagram, she wondered where the teachers would fall into the diagram and support wanting them to succeed and retain. Mr. Geary explained that to be in a space to be comfortable to talk about race and equity, and to support health and wellness, we need to put our teachers in a place where they feel recognized and appreciated right along with our families and students.

Ms. Patterson also wanted to know how we can measure the success of a health and wellness program to support our staff, understanding that an answer might not be ready now.

Mr. Thames appreciates the initiative of “growing our own”, and believes that we can yield results and be supportive of our students soon to be teachers and offer guidance. He urged Board members to review the information of the budget so that the budget meetings can be productive. He thanked Mr. Geary and his staff for the budget presentation.

G. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

H. NEW BUSINESS

H.1. Board of Education 2020-2021 School Calendar

Mr. Geary presented the 2020-2021 School Calendar which is available on the website.

Mr. Geary highlighted that school will start prior to Labor Day, and the inclusion of some ethnic holidays such as Three Kings Day and Eid al-Fitr to support both Latino and Muslim populations.

Ms. Stefanovicz wondered if there should be a policy set for a methodical way to decide what holidays should be recognized. She also wondered why April Break was not following Good Friday like it usually does. Mr. Geary mentioned that the calendar holidays are based on general population, and the April break is usually in line with surrounding towns.

Secretary Pattacini moved and **Mr. Scappaticci** seconded the recommendation to approve the Manchester Board of Education Calendar for the 2020-2021 School Year.

8/0 - Voted in favor

I. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, thanked Mr. Geary for presenting the budget in a manner that could be followed and understood, and appreciated comments about diversity. Mr. Stringfellow wondered if having a presentation by the Student Resource Officer might help with understanding what they do. In regards to “growing our own”, Mr. Stringfellow suggested the opportunity to have alums who are not in education could also have an impact with students to show different ways that one could succeed, in a manner like Career Day. It is everyone’s business to get involved in education.

Mr. Amus Lace, 90 Ludlow Road, thanked Mr. Geary for the presentation. He has two daughters who attend Highland Park and believes that the only person of color in that school is the Principal. He is concerned that his daughters don’t see the right representation in the classroom. Mr. Lace requested information as to how diversity is controlled with the teachers in the schools, if there is a formula for distributing educators as well as students throughout the district. Mr. Lace also described his concern regarding the lack of a challenging curriculum for his daughters.

J. COMMUNICATIONS

None.

K. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

Wednesday, January 15, 2020	Budget Workshop #1
Wednesday, January 22, 2020	Budget Workshop #2
Monday, January 27, 2020	Regular BOE meeting Update on Equity Update on STEAM
Wednesday, January 29, 2020	Budget Workshop #3

Budget meetings will be held in Room 293 at Manchester High School.

L. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Thames called for a motion to adjourn.

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

8/0 - Voted in favor.

Adjournment 9:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christopher Pattacini
Board Secretary