

MANCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION

Regular Meeting January 27, 2020 Lincoln

PRESENT: Gundersen, Heinrich, Hughes, Pattacini, Patterson, Scappaticci, Thames

ALSO PRESENT: Superintendent of Schools Geary, Deputy Superintendent Curriculum & Special Services Radikas, Director of Finance & Management Clancy

ABSENT: Meggers, Stefanovicz

A. OPENING

A.1. & 2. Meeting Called to Order

Chairperson Thames 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. Thames.

A.3. Secretary's Welcome

Mr. 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 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.

Last, Mr. Pattacini noted he is proud of this school system and appreciates the public for their interest in this evening's meeting and the Manchester Public Schools.

A.4. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting

APPROVED – Minutes Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of January 13, 2020. Secretary Pattacini moved and Mr. Scappaticci seconded the motion.

6/0/1 – Voted in favor.

A.5. Approval of Budget Workshop Minutes

APPROVED – Minutes Budget Workshop of the Board of Education of January 22, 2020. Secretary Pattacini moved and Mr. Scappaticci seconded the motion.

7/0 - Voted in favor.

B. COMMITTEE REPORTS

B.1. Buildings & Sites Committee

Mr. Heinrich reported the last Buildings & Sites Committee meeting was held January 13, 2020. In attendance were Mr. Pattacini, Mr. Hughes, Mr. Heinrich and Ms. Clancy.

An RFQ/P for architectural services for school renovations was issued. A non-mandatory pre-submission meeting and walkthrough of the buildings was held on December 19, 2019. Ten proposals were received with eight meeting eligibility requirements. A nine member committee will convene on January 16th

to review the evaluations based on a specific rating scale. The committee will select three or four firms to invite them for an interview/presentation to the committee, with the final firm to be selected and notified by the end of January.

The open Facilities Director position has been revised and renamed Facilities & Operations Manager. A copy of the job description was distributed to committee members for review. The district is seeking an individual who is data driven, progressive, innovative, with a forward thinking vision. The position was posted January 6, 2020.

Capital project requests at each school are presented by principals to Central Office administration during the budget process for approval in the following year's budget. Projects for Bowers, Buckley and Keeney will be addressed through school renovations, with the exception of the Bowers Elementary School bus loop, which is in need of repairs to damaged curbing.

We have engaged the services of an architectural firm to assist in identifying the designing space for an additional classroom at Highland Park Elementary School.

Bennet Academy has requested conversion of office space into a seclusion room for Every Day Program students based on an increased need.

Illing Middle School has requested a permanent solution to an increased need in privacy in student locker rooms. Buildings & Grounds supervisors have been in communication with school administration to begin to address the concern in the current fiscal year, but have included it in next year's budget as necessary.

Other than as mentioned above, most elementary schools capital project needs have been met or will be addressed through school building renovations. The Illing Middle School parking lot, sidewalks and front entrance were repaved/updated last year. Manchester High School is in need of some attention and will be the main focus of the capital project budget for 2020-2021. Manchester High School and Illing Middle School are the two remaining schools that will eventually need to be renovated. Those discussions should begin now, as the process takes years.

C. CONSENT CALENDAR

Mr. Geary presented six 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 System-wide Science Field Trips account to System-wide Science Dues and Fees account in the amount of \$6,975

C.3. Increase in appropriation for the Manchester Head Start for FY 19-20 in the amount of \$21,830, bringing the total amount to \$1,255,132

C.4. Increase the appropriation for the Manchester Head Start for FY 19-20 in the amount of \$15,182, bringing the total amount to \$872,928

C.5. Establish an appropriation for the FY 20-21 for the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving in the amount of \$175,000

C.6. Approve the revised 2020-2021 Board of Education School Calendar

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.

DISCUSSION:

Mr. Hughes asked what the calendar changes were. Mr. Geary pointed out a half day in October was moved to accommodate the testing schedule for the PSAT.

The vote was called.

7/0 - Voted in favor.

D. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT

Tiffany Henry reported:

- The F.A. Verplank Chapter of the National Honor Society held their induction ceremony last week for students in the classes of 2020 and 2021. Congratulations to the inductees!
- Young Men's Leadership just finished up their weeklong food drive to support the food pantry at the Second Congregational Church of Manchester. They collected about 700 cans of food and the church was very thankful to have them in time for the holiday season.
- The Youth Equity Squad co-facilitated the monthly district equity team meeting with Our very own Director of Humanities, Diane Burns. They focused on analyzing curriculum units of study using Gorski's multicultural framework. In the future, the Youth Equity Squad wishes to engage and work collaboratively with teachers and other district leaders to further analyze curriculum through a multicultural lens.
- Winter sports have begun this week.
- On December 17th the MHS music department hosted their first concert of the school year.
- Academies has assemblies this week there will be student recognition including honor roll.
- On January 16th there was a midwinter concert for all the auditioning music groups,

E. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Genaro Gonzalez, III, 4 Pearl Street, expressed his displeasure with having a school resource officer stationed at Illing Middle School. He feels they don't really help, teach or guide the students. Most of the time they are not doing much, just sitting. Mr. Gonzalez feels if we get rid of the officer we could save about \$60,000 and use that month to hire two more security guards. He thinks the security guards there do a great job. In the end he feels this would save money. Mr. Gonzalez went on to say his

daughter doesn't need to know history. He feels we need a Director of Race & Equity, someone to teach the difference between races and talk about where the children's ancestors come from. Mr. Gonzalez feels all knowledge comes from overseas. He feels our teachers are not grounded. They don't teach things like who the Moors were. Mr. Gonzalez is upset to think that he, without an education, knows more about nationalities and races than most teachers do.

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, reminded us that the 75th anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge was last month. He agrees that students need to learn the history of Africans, Latinos and mixed races. He recommended a book, *Indigenous People's History of the US*, a book about systemic discrimination. He recommended an article in *National Geographic* about slaves. Mr. Stringfellow recommended the book *Barracoon, The Last Black Cargo Slave*. He feels we need to understand cultural diversity. In *National Geographic*, Mr. Stringfellow recommended an article about black inventors. He recommended the books *Who Knew - Women in History* and *Age for Heroism*. Mr. Stringfellow thinks diversity is not just a buzzword. We need the whole truth in a balanced way.

F. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT – PART I

F.1. Budget Update - Salaries and Benefits

Mr. Geary reminded us that this is effectively the second budget workshop and the topic is salaries and benefits. On Wednesday we will discuss supplies, utilities and equipment. The budget is slated to be adopted February 10th at a regular board meeting.

Mr. Scappaticci pointed out a new program in Connecticut that can make attending a community college free for students. The CT Pact is a last dollar program, meaning the student uses any federal aid first. Students must be accepted into a community college and completed the FASFA before July to qualify. Mr. Geary pointed out the high school has funding to help parents fill out the FASFA.

Ms. Patterson wondered how the program 50 in 5 will be advertised. Mr. Geary noted that with Ms. Sone-Moyano, they would talk with former students,

some of whom work for us or the rec already. In year 1 it would be "door knocking". In year 2 they would likely promote the project at the high school and advertise.

Ms. Patterson wondered about the 34% increase in the hall monitor salary line. Mr. Geary noted that additional hall monitors were slated for Illing and Martin. At Martin it is more of a bus issue, but it is hard to find someone willing to work the short and split hours of a bus monitor, so they are employing someone who will then also monitor the halls of the school. Illing added one hall monitor to the floor and transferred another person from Buckley to work the door.

Mr. Gunderson wondered about the 50 in 5 program and what the commitment requirement would be for a student completing their certification. Mr. Geary stated they would have a 5 year commitment to work in Manchester. Mr. Gunderson wondered what would happen if a student dropped out of the program mid-way. Mr. Geary noted they are currently in discussion with the attorneys about what a contract would look like. He noted they did not build in funding for drop-outs, assuming students would complete the program, even if requiring an extra semester or two.

Mr. Hughes asked what the eligibility requirements for the 50 in 5 program would be. Mr. Geary noted it is for students of color who are interested in education and want to work with kids. He confirmed Mr. Hughes question that multi-racial students would qualify.

Mr. Pattacini asked about the two additional staff at Illing and Martin and Mr. Geary noted that the Office of Family Partnership has a secretary funded half through this budget. Also, Ms. Ortega's salary is partially funded as well. It is just a shift in funding sources, not new costs.

Mr. Pattacini noted that the grant from the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving is lower this year (\$175,000) than in the past. Mr. Geary agreed, noting that about a year ago the Foundation revamped its priorities. The focus is on equity and 20 other areas. They want to empower communities to do

community-based work. Our focus is on chronic absenteeism and restorative practice/discipline.

Mr. Pattacini thinks the 50 in 5 program seems like a forward looking approach that has not been tried before. He wondered if there may be private foundations willing to help with funding. Mr. Geary feels that the potential for private support might center more around mentoring programs.

Mr. Pattacini is impressed with this budget proposal and the quality of work in developing the 50 in 5 program. He is looking forward to our district being on the leading edge of equity.

Mr. Gundersen complimented Mr. Geary on his command over the numbers. He wondered if there was thought given in the 50 in 5 program for a reduced salary for participants. Mr. Geary stated he had not thought of that and could possibly talk to the teacher's union. Mr. Gundersen wondered if the 50 in 5 program would be for new positions or to fill open spots. Mr. Geary noted it would fill open spots. Mr. Geary noted that they may converse with participants after their first two years of school about shortage areas so that they are more likely to be easy to place.

Mr. Scappaticci is not in favor of a payback component to the 50 in 5 program. He feels it would not only be a union issue, but would cause inequity. He feels there are many scholarships for many different groups of people, recalling he received one for being a gay man. Mr. Scappaticci works with students who took advantage of workplace scholarships (it is popular with insurance companies, banks, etc.). Typically, students may wait a couple of years to get into a program like that. He doubts we would have any issue with recruitment. Mr. Scappaticci also feels non-completion is also a non-issue, as we would be providing wraparound supports. He mentioned "stop-out" not "drop-out", where a student might take a semester off, but not drop out completely. He is excited about the program.

Mr. Geary mentioned that when the state identifies shortage areas they often can add years to the experience level of a new hire (a physics teacher is an

example). At some point the state has to invest in funding minority teachers. Mr. Geary mentioned the EMT diversity program went well.

Mr. Scappaticci felt the scholarship opportunity would result in a student likely living in town as well. Mr. Geary wondered if housing could be tied into the program.

Mr. Thames is a proponent of the 50 in 5 program. The workforce should be a reflection of the community. Diversity helps all students and this is a worthwhile program.

Mr. Geary noted that having more staff of color is beneficial to both students of color and white students.

The next budget workshop is Wednesday. The topics will be supplies, utilities and equipment, which is a very small part of the budget. By Wednesday evening, Mr. Geary noted we need an idea if another budget workshop will be needed or if we think the Board is prepared to approve this budget proposal.

G. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

H. NEW BUSINESS

None.

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

Genaro Gonzalez, III, 4 Pearl Street, didn't think it sounded fair to give out a loan to one person and not another.

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, felt Mr. Geary gave a good presentation. He recommended an article in the *JI Minipage* about political primaries and other issues. Mr. Stringfellow is glad we are looking at hiring teachers of color. He talked about the use of state money for religious schools. Mr. Stringfellow recommended an article in *Attitude* magazine about ADD and how students learn in different ways, along with techniques for teachers. He was interested to hear about the changes to the

community college but would also like to talk about non-college bound children, noting college is not for everyone. Lastly, Mr. Stringfellow mentioned that Cheney Tech won an app design challenge.

J. COMMUNICATIONS

None.

K. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

Wednesday, January 29, 2020 - Budget workshop #3

Monday, February 10, 2020 - Highland Park School Improvement Plan
Budget Adoption

Monday, February 24, 2020 - Winter Data Update
Update on Student Behavioral Supports

L. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Thames called for a motion to adjourn.

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

7/0 - Voted in favor.

Adjournment 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christopher Pattacini
Board Secretary