

MANCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION

Regular Meeting February 10, 2020 Lincoln Center

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

A. OPENING

A.1. & 2. Meeting Called to Order

Chairperson Thames called the meeting to order at 7:04 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

ADOPTED – Minutes Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of January 27, 2020. Secretary Pattacini moved and Mr. Scappaticci seconded the motion.

8/0 – Voted in favor.

A.5. Adoption of Minutes of Board of Education Budget Workshop

ADOPTED - Minutes of Board of Education Budget Workshop of January 29, 2020. Secretary Pattacini moved and Mr. Scappaticci seconded the motion.

8/0 - Voted in favor.

B. COMMITTEE REPORTS

B.1. Policy Committee

Mr. Gundersen reviewed the last Policy Committee meeting was held on January 27, 2020 with himself, Mr. Thames and Mr. Geary in attendance. The Committee discussed proposed policy changes were driven by legislative updates. The following policies will be moved to the full Board for consideration:

- 4304 - Reports of Suspected Abuse or Neglect or Child (by Anyone) or Sexual Assault of Students by School Employees

- 4118 - Alcohol, Tobacco, and Drug-Free Workplace
- 4013 - Sex Discrimination and Harassment in the Workplace
- 4114 - Non-Discrimination
- 4000 - Employment and Student Teacher Checks
- 5144 - Student Discipline
- 5118.1 - Homeless Students
- 5005 (new) - Food Allergies and/or Glycogen Storage Disease
- 1501 - Smoking

The Committee reviewed the draft equity policy and will continue to work on the policy before moving it forward to the full Board. The Committee discussed proposed policy changes designed to create high leverage for change and will move forward the revisions to the following policies:

- 5131.1 - Bullying and Safe School Climate Plan
- 6180 - Evaluation of the Instructional Program

The Committee will review the following policies again at its next policy meeting:

- 4235 - Minority Teacher Recruitment
- Board Orientation Process/Onboarding New Members

Mr. Gundersen requested that the Committee review Policy 5131.81 - Electronic Communication Devices. The Superintendent will gather a variety of local policies and bring them to the next meeting.

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.

- Transfer from System-wide Plant Maintenance Capital Repair account to System-wide Plant Maintenance Contracted Services account in the amount of \$14,627.

C.3. Extended Field Trip Request - MHS - Wrestling - Competition in the LL State Wrestling Tournament - 14 Students - 2 Chaperones (Coaches) - Feb. 21-22, 2020 - Trumbull, CT

C.4. Approval of the Manchester High School Graduation Date for FY 19-20 as June 16, 2020 at 6:30 p.m. at the Xfinity Theater, 61 Savitt Way, Hartford, CT

C.5. Permission to apply for FY 19-21, Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Student Organization Grant (CTSO)

C.6. Establish an appropriation for the FY 19-20 for the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Secondary Basic Grant in the amount of \$117,791

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.

8/0 - Voted in favor.

D. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT

None.

E. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Genero Gonzalez, 4 Pearl Street, spoke about the difference he sees between security guards and police officers in our schools and how much money we could possibly save if we replaced officers with more guards, and used some of the savings to offer classes such as self defense. Mr. Gonzalez feels that security guards interact more with the

students than SROs do and do more of the work. When he was young, Mr. Gonzalez noted they had safety patrol in schools, no officers. He suggested possibly arming the security guards. Mr. Gonzalez reviewed that he spent 9½ years in prison and 7 years in penitentiary. He spoke about the danger of pedifiles and how people need to be smart with their kids.

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, noted this is the 64th anniversary of Black History Month. He recommended the book *Barracoon*. He spoke about Abraham Lincoln, indigenous people and the Coronavirus. Mr. Stringfellow feels we need SROs and security guards. He noted we are all working towards a common purpose.

F. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT – PART I

F.1. STEAM Update

Mr. Thames introduced Pari Ghetia, Director of Teaching & Learning - STEAM. Ms. Ghetia introduced Katherine Goodine (5-8 Math Specialist), Carla Johnson (K-4 Math Specialist) and Josh Steffenson (MHS AP, MCA, STEM-D). They reviewed the STEAM department and their presentation is available on the website.

Mr. Pattacini asked how the elementary Science teachers were funded. Ms. Ghetia noted that some of the funding comes from the Alliance Grant and some is from the Board budget. The professional development is partly funded by grants from the Science Center and some PD is done in-house. Most elementary schools have 2 science teachers, while Waddell and Verplanck have 3. The science teachers also do math intervention as well.

Mr. Thames asked about the pre-manufacturing program. Mr. Steffenson noted this is a pre-apprentice program with coursework. CCAT provides the funding and there is a 72 hour digital learning program, which is mastery-based, so can be completed quicker if the student masters the subjects. The student is then eligible for a 72 hour apprenticeship where they would make minimum wage. They are trying to extend this to 80 hours, for a full two-week program. The employer is reimbursed half of this wage from the state. The apprenticeship is like a two week job interview.

Mr. Pattacini commented that MHS's course catalog was the most comprehensive one in the state. He noted there is a lot of great work being done with a focus on student-centered learning. He likes that we help each child find and pursue their passion. Mr. Pattacini is excited about the work being done at MHS and to hear that students are arriving there from Illing better prepared.

G. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

H. NEW BUSINESS

H.1. Policy Recommendations

Mr. Geary reviewed this was a first reading of the following 5 policies. He noted most had minor changes related to legislation. Board members should send any questions to him prior to the next meeting.

- a. Policy 4304 - Reports of Suspected Abuse or Neglect of Children (by Anyone) or Sexual Assault of Students by School Employees** - definitions were updated.
- b. Policy 4118 - Alcohol, Tobacco, and Drug-Free Workplace** - clarified this policy applies to school grounds or leased property.
- c. Policy 4013 - Sex Discrimination and Harassment in the Workplace** - added training language.
- d. Policy 4114 - Non-Discrimination** - added protected status.
- e. Policy 4000 - Employment and Student Teacher Checks** - added a requirement for national and state criminal background checks for student teachers.

H.2. Recommended Board of Education 2020-2021 Budget

Mr. Geary reviewed the recommended budget of \$121,017,593, which represents a 3.85% increase over the current budget. He reviewed that should we receive the anticipated \$1.2 million in ECS funding this budget would be reduced by the same amount.

Mr. Meggers noted he is voting for the budget.

Mr. Thames agreed, he is in favor of the proposed budget. It is a thoughtful collaboration that provided all board members with the opportunity to ask questions and chime in. He feels it is a fiscally responsible budget with an eye on long-term outcomes and growth.

Secretary Pattacini moved that the Board of Education adopt a budget in the amount of \$121,017,593 for the School Year 2020-2021. Mr. Heinrich seconded the motion.

DISCUSSION:

Mr. Pattacini thanked the administration for their work and he plans to support this budget. Every year Mr. Pattacini sees a greater systemic approach to improving student outcomes. He noted that we have more work to do, but the District operates in a cohesive manner with a systemic approach coupled with work happening in classrooms, bringing to life creativity.

Mr. Thames noted that Ms. Patterson was unable to attend this evening's meeting but that based on her previous comments, she also is in favor of this budget, especially the 50 in 5 program.

The vote was called.

7/1 - Voted in favor.

Mr. Gundersen wished to explain why he voted against the budget. He is concerned with the \$100,000 earmarked for staff wellness. He sees the need to help stressed teachers, and hopes we hit the target. He would like to see the teachers surveyed about the underlying issue of their stress and pressure.

As for the 50 in 5 program, Mr. Gundersen thanked other board members for their passionate discussion previously. He is aware of the unconscious bias in an overwhelmingly white system and he supports the intention. However, Mr. Gundersen wants to see more clarity in the terms of the program, such as

addressing drop-outs, capping the program numbers, sub-par academic performance, and what happens if there are no open jobs available to the participant upon graduation. He needs answers and possibly to start the program with less financial impact.

Last, Mr. Gundersen noted that since 2003 our budget has increased by 56%, yet our student body is down 18%. We are at the bottom of the Alliance District and steadily have below average performance. He acknowledged that some scores have improved, but feels we are still below the state average. Mr. Gundersen needs to see a budget address our significantly challenged children. He acknowledged that Mr. Geary is a sharp leader, who has been extremely supportive and shared data with him. He instills a hope that he can lead us forward. Mr. Gundersen stated that we must, as a Board, agree on the problems and redirect a focus to tackle the academic gap.

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

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, supports the Consent Calendar and the new business. School safety is important. Mr. Stringfellow talked about 3-D printing, ghost guns and vapes. He mentioned domestic and sexual abuse in the home. He enjoyed Ms. Ghetia's presentation. Mr. Stringfellow recommended articles in *Astronomy* magazine as well as *National Geographic*. He recommended an article on climate change in *TIME*. Mr. Stringfellow gave his support to the budget and wants all students to learn. He recommended the books *Biased* and *Working Class*. Mr. Stringfellow feels we are doing the best we can with the resources we have. Unlike private schools, we have to accept all students.

Dr. Kanwarpal Singh, 419 West Middle Turnpike, noted he is a local dentist and a reserve officer. He feels Ms. Ghetia is doing a great job and the future looks great. He congratulated the board on the budget and noted that he sees a lot of MPS employees as patients and he wanted us to know we have a good dental plan compared to other districts and he hopes that continues. Dr. Singh knows that education is the backbone of society.

J. COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Thames asked Mr. Geary to review the budget process still pending.

Mr. Geary noted the budget will be given to the General Manager by this Friday. On March 3rd the General Manager will present his budget to the Board of Directors in the morning. On March 4 and March 19 at 5:30 pm the Board of Education budget will be discussed by the Board of Directors. On March 11 there will be a public hearing at 7:00 pm. The Directors will approve a town budget by late March/early April. If the Board of Education budget is reduced, we will have several budget workshops, which are already scheduled. We will also monitor the ECS funding.

K. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

February 24, 2020 - Winter Data Update

Update on School Behavioral Supports

March 9, 2020 - Keeney School Improvement Plan at Keeney Elementary

March 23, 2020 - Illing School Improvement Plan at Illing Middle School

L. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Thames called for a motion to adjourn.

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

8/0 - Voted in favor.

Adjournment 8:27 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christopher Pattacini
Board Secretary