

## **MANCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION**

### **Regular Meeting**

**March 14, 2016**

Bennet Academy - Media Center

**PRESENT:** Hagenow, Jacobsen, Leon, Pattacini, Pazda, Stefanovicz, Thames

**ALSO PRESENT:** Superintendent of Schools Geary, Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Management Brooks, Assistant Superintendent for Pupil Personnel Services Matfess, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum Radikas

**ABSENT:** Scappaticci, Stafford

#### **A. OPENING**

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

**Chairperson Pattacini** called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. All in attendance participated in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, led by Mr. Pattacini. Mr. Pattacini thanked the Bennet String Ensemble for their performance.

##### **A.3. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting**

**APPROVED – Minutes Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of February 22, 2016. Acting Secretary Leon moved and Ms. Hagenow seconded the motion.**

**7/0 – Voted in favor.**

#### **B. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

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

**Ms. Pazda** reviewed the last meeting was held February 22nd. In attendance were Ms. Jacobsen, Mr. Scappaticci, Mr. Stafford, Dr. Radikas, Mr. Boutilier, Ms. Sheehan-Burns, Ms. Holder, Ms. Krieger, Ms. Mazzotta, Dr. Oliver and Mr. Tierini. The Committee discussed that they supported a pilot swimming course for MHS non-swimmers to start in November 2016. This course will accommodate 8-12

students with 2 certified lifeguards. The Algebra I textbook for grades 7-12 was adopted for the 2016-2017 school year. Guaranteed STEM experiences in grades K-6 were reviewed. Currently grades 2-6 have experiences in place, and grades K and 1 will be added next school year. Grade K will visit Foster Farm or another local farm; grade 1 will visit the Lutz; grade 2 will have an outreach from Boston Museum STAR lab; grade 3 will visit CT Science Center; grade 4 has the Audubon field trip; grade 5 will have an outreach experience with the CT Science Center; and grade 6 will visit the CT Science Center. Last, the SAAM update was discussed. Manchester Early Learning Center (MELC) will join Parks & Recreation as a partner in providing enrichment for SAAM. MELC will run the Waddell site and Parks & Rec will run Highland Park and Verplanck.

## **B.2. Policy Committee**

**Ms. Hagenow** reviewed the last meeting was held February 25th with Ms. Hagenow, Ms. Pazda, Mr. Stafford, Mr. Thames and Mr. Geary in attendance. School Enrollment Policy #5118 was reviewed. The policy was unchanged, but they suggested adding language for students who enroll in a school where their class size is already at or beyond the preferred class size (18-20 in K/1; 18-22 in grade 2-5). Those students will be offered enrollment at another school that has class sizes below the preferred numbers in an effort to maintain equitable class sizes across the district. The Committee discussed proposed revisions to Community Use of Facilities Policy #1330 and will send the revised policy to the full Board. The Committee discussed the proposed revision to the External Credit Options for Meeting Manchester High School Graduation Requirements Policy #5127.11. The Superintendent will continue revising the policy and bring a draft back to the Committee at the next meeting. The revision will include options for Physical Education external credit. The Committee discussed the proposed deletion of the Physical Education External Credit Policy #6143 and will send the recommendation to the full Board. The Committee discussed the proposed revisions to the Administration of Medication by School Personnel Policy #5142, developed by Shipman & Goodwin in accordance with new state regulations. This policy will replace the existing policy, that had not been updated since 2011. The Committee discussed proposed revisions to the Wearing of Photo ID Badges

Policy #5121 and will send the revised policy to the full Board. Last, the Committee discussed the proposed revisions to the Budget Policy #3110 and will send the revised policy to the Board. The revised policy will incorporate Policy #3150 so that policy will be sent to the full Board for deletion.

### **B.3. Community Relations Committee**

**Ms. Stefanovicz** reviewed the last meeting was held on February 29th. In attendance were Ms. Jacobsen, Ms. Pazda, Mr. Scappaticci, Ms. Stefanovicz, Mr. Geary, and Dr. Ratchford. The Committee discussed the concept of having a Board of Education liaison for each school. A draft of this will be brought to the full Board. The Committee discussed the upcoming Education Summit to be held on April 29th. The purpose of the summit is to share the work of Manchester Public Schools with the community and take feedback from community members. Last, the Committee discussed proposed parent sessions for parents/guardians of third and fourth graders to gather parent input on the middle school program.

## **C. CONSENT CALENDAR**

**Mr. Geary** presented twelve 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 Systemwide Education Technology Computer Supplies & Materials account to Systemwide Education Technology Equipment Repair account in the amount of \$72
- Transfer from Systemwide Information Services Consultant account to Systemwide Information Services Equipment Repair account in the amount of \$219
- Transfer from Systemwide Social Studies Professional Development account to Systemwide Social Studies Instructional Supplies & Materials account in the amount of \$5,000

- Transfer from Systemwide Language Arts Dues & Fees account to Systemwide Language Arts Professional Development account in the amount of \$1,500
- Transfer from Bennet Admin General Supplies & Materials account to Bennet Admin Professional Development account in the amount of \$2,000
- Transfer from Systemwide Language Arts Dues & Fees account to Systemwide Language Arts Professional Development account in the amount of \$638

**C.3. Request for approval of Algebra I Textbooks for FY 16/17 in the amount of \$41,708.78**

**C.4. Permission to apply for the First Niagara Grant for FY 15/16 in the amount of \$1,500.00**

**C.5. Approval of the MHS Underground Storage Tank Replacement final project plans**

**C.6. Donation to the Manchester High School "Project Graduation" for FY 15/16 in the amount of \$1,000.00**

**C.7. Approval of Manchester High School Graduation date for FY 15/16**

**C.8. Approval of the Manchester Head Start Policy Council By-Laws FY 15/16**

**C.9. Permission to apply for College Career Pathways Grant (formerly Tech Prep) from Manchester Community College for FY 16/17**

**C.10. Permission to apply for Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) 611 Grant for FY 16/18**

**C.11. Permission to apply for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) 619 Grant for FY 16/18**

**C.12. Establish an appropriation for Fy 15/16 for the High Quality Schools & Common Core Implementation grant in the amount of \$137,015.00**

**The Chairman called for a motion.**

**Acting Secretary Leon moved and Ms. Hagenow seconded the recommendation to adopt the Consent Calendar as outlined in Item C of tonight's agenda.**

**7/0 - Voted in favor.**

**D. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE**

None.

**E. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Candy Lopez, 46 Pine Street, spoke about the bullying issue at her son's school. She wants to figure out, with other parents, how to make kids feel safe at school. She has brought the issue to the attention of the Superintendent, who has helped her in the past. Ms. Lopez apologized for bringing this issue to the media, but she feels it helped her. Her 4th grader has been called names such as retarded and stupid, and she wants to see if other parents can come together to make kids feel safe. She needs help to try to eliminate bullying. There is a problem when kids don't feel safe. Ms. Lopez claims she has been contacted by 6-7 other Washington parents regarding the issue. She does realize there is a better way to handle the situation instead of through the media, but she felt hopeless and helpless for her son. She hopes people understand where she was coming from.

Ray Ziminack, 288 Green Road, spoke about his daughter, who graduated two years ago. When she attended Bowers she was called fat and endured bullying. Senior year was her best year. He felt his daughter was brilliant, but dumbbed herself down in order

to be accepted. He feels his youngest has PTSD due to the issue, as she hates school and is sullen in the morning. He grew up here and moved back here for the schools. His family is "good people" and they pay their taxes. He feels 5th graders are mean kids who run the school. His voice needs to be heard and parents need to bring these issues to principals and teachers. There is a policy in place, but Mr. Ziminack feels it is not being implemented. His kids did fine ultimately, but these should be the best times of their lives. He feels we need to address these issues with kids early and live it. There are too many mean people on this planet. We need to live together. Just because you feel bad about yourself doesn't mean you should make others feel worse.

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, is a member of the Class of '74 and attended Bennet. He enjoyed the music tonight. Mr. Stringfellow recommended an article in this weekend's *Journal Inquirer MiniPage* regarding music and math related to learning. In terms of name calling and bullying regarding gender, ethnicity, and disabilities, it is wrong. He suggests Ms. Matfess have a presentation on the issue. We should listen to children. Mr. Stringfellow reminded us last month was Black History Month and he enjoyed the book *Free State of Jones*, which will be made into a movie, as well as the book *To Be A Slave*. Mr. Stringfellow recommended an article on Gandhi. He also reminded us that March is Women's History Month.

Ms. Liliana Polley, 230 Tonica Spring Trail, has a 4th grader at Highland Park School. He has had a great year and she has had a wonderful experience there, but they are scared about the stories they hear about Illing. She would like to see Illing be transformed into something like Bennet. She feels they will probably not stay in public school for middle school, but wondered what happens to those families that cannot afford private school? Ms. Polley feels we need to provide more resources for families at Illing.

Thomas Stomoha, a student, spoke about his personal experience with bullying. He feels the Board does a lousy job on the anti-bullying campaign. Last year he was harassed by a peer and he snapped, crying and causing self-injury. Thomas felt the teacher did nothing about it and students are told to tell teachers or just walk away and that is not effective.

**Mr. Pattacini** noted the Board of Education has a policy on bullying and the Board and administration take reports of bullying seriously. If there is a problem it needs to be reported because the policy cannot be effective if the issue is not reported. He encourages parents to report any problems so they can be addressed.

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

### **F.1. Prudential Spirit of Community Award**

**Mr. Geary** introduced Mr. Richard Mari, Prudential Representative. Mr. Mari was here to recognize Emily Christensen, an 8th grader at Illing Middle School. Emily is one of 2 students being recognized this year in Connecticut (1 middle schooler and 1 high schooler) for her outstanding volunteer service. Emily has raised over \$85,000 with her Crayons for Cancer fundraiser. Mr. Mari presented Emily with a medal and invited her to come to Washington D.C. in May for four days where she will receive \$1,000 and be considered for a \$10,000 reward.

### **F.2. Bennet Academy School Improvement Plan**

**Mr. Geary** introduced Bennet Principal Joseph Chella. Mr. Chella presented a PowerPoint, available on the website. Several Bennet staff members contributed to the presentation, outlining their school improvement plan. After the presentation, several Bennet students shared pieces of writing directly with Board members.

**Ms. Pazda** thanked the staff for sharing their school improvement plan. She thought it was wonderful and helpful for Board members to see how the district improvement plan plays out in schools. Ms. Pazda feels children are the heart and soul of the school. She wondered if staff sees an improvement in student achievement and how often PLCs are held as a department and as a team. Ms. Melesko felt there is a huge impact on student success. Teams meet twice a week and departments meet twice a week.

**Mr. Leon** thought the staff did a great job and he feels the welcoming climate in this building. He realizes press focuses on negative and this is a positive aspect to MPS.

**Mr. Thames** wondered how they track and measure results. Ms. Melesko noted assessments are aligned pre and post lessons and can be measured to see the impact of instructional strategies. Ms. Deb Heneghen noted when students are struggling they tackle whatever aspect the student is stuck on. There is an instruction support period in the morning and also a Tier 3 block. Teachers are also available for extra help after school.

**Ms. Pazda** wondered if the Tier 3 students still receive Tier 1 and 2 instruction. Mr. Chella clarified that all students receive Tier 1 and those requiring Tier 2 and 3 receive that support in addition.

**Ms. Jacobsen** asked about the Cafe results and examples of what Bennet is doing to build and strengthen relationships. Ms. Silagi, who is a teacher and co-chair of the PTSA, has a parent as co-chair. She stated parents come in and get involved with student learning. Mr. Chella stated that they do need to engage parents more. He notes they do get them in the door, but could do more past that.

**Ms. Stefanovicz** was impressed with the passion and professionalism of the staff. She was also impressed with the phenomenal job the students did.

**Mr. Pattacini** liked seeing the videos of the PLCs and how they carry over ideas from one discipline to another. Regarding the coaching model, he would like to have an example of a moment. Ms. Heneghan explained how she would sit with a teacher, set a goal, with a rubric, and then work through the cycle. She might co-teacher or chime in on a lesson. Afterwards, they would look at the rubric and see where they are in the process. This life cycle may be quick or last several weeks. Mr. Pattacini thanked everyone for their great work and is proud of the articulate students that spoke with Board members this evening.



## **G. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

None.

## **H. NEW BUSINESS**

### **H.1. Liaisons to Individual Schools**

**Mr. Geary** discussed the potential for Board liaisons for each building. The Community Relations Subcommittee drafted a potential policy and he is looking for feedback from Board members. If everyone is in favor of this, it will move on to the Policy Committee.

**Ms. Stefanovicz** hopes this will imbed the Board of Education members into each school. They will become familiar with the staff and families, attend events, and nurture a relationship with the PTA. This will increase communication and awareness of Board members and allow the community to feel more comfortable with members of the Board, and be able to inform them of issues more easily. Board members could also work with new families.

### **H.2. Policy Recommendations**

#### **a. Board Policy 1330 - Community Use of School Facilities**

**Mr. Geary** noted that feedback from community organizations caused them to take a look at the policy for when school is in session and custodial staff is already in the building. The nominal fee currently charged will only be for when school is not in session or when additional staff is required.

#### **b. Board Policy 5142 - Administration of Medication by Personnel**

**Mr. Geary** noted this update is around epipens for those students without doctor orders. It is in line with state statute and replaces Policy 5142 as it exists. This policy was reviewed by our attorney and the Coordinator of Nurses.

#### **c. Board Policy 5121 - Wearing of Photo Identification Badges**

**Mr. Geary** noted this is a change for students in grades 6-12. Previously students had to wear their IDs so they were visible. With this change they will have to carry them and produce them when necessary, but will not have to keep them visible.

**Ms. Jacobsen** was confused about how this would be monitored. Mr. Geary explained the students have to produce them to swipe into the building, but beyond that they are only to keep the ID with them.

**Mr. Thames** wondered about students who forget their IDs. Mr. Geary explained a temporary ID sticker can be printed, as they currently do.

**d. Board Policy 3110 - Budget**

**Mr. Geary** reviewed that there were two policies that were regarding the budget and we do not need two. H.3.b. below will ask for the deletion of one of the policies. This revision makes the policy read more like the practice. If there are questions this policy revision may be tabled for a future meeting.

**H.3. Policy Deletions**

**Mr. Pattacini** reviewed the policies below for deletion. Both are available for review on the website.

**a. Board Policy 6143 - Physical Education External Credit**

**b. Board Policy 3150 - Adoption of the Budget**

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

None.

**J. COMMUNICATIONS**

None.

**K. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS**

**Ms. Hagenow** asked for two policies to be reviewed by the Policy Committee: Policy #5141.4 Wellness and Nutrition, and Policy #5119 Bullying Policy. Mr. Pattacini asked for Ms. Hagenow to send specifics on the policies that she would like to see changed or reviewed and it will go to the Policy Committee. Mr. Geary agreed, noting the Policy Committee meets within the next couple of weeks and he would like to know more about what Ms. Hagenow is questioning.

**L. ADJOURNMENT**

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

**Acting Secretary Leon moved and Ms. Hagenow seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting.**

**7/0 - Voted in favor.**

**Adjournment 8:47 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

Neal Leon  
Acting Board Secretary