

MANCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION

Regular Meeting

April 27, 2015

Lincoln

PRESENT: Crockett, Cruz, Hagenow, Leon, Pattacini, Pazda, Scappaticci, Stafford, Thames

ALSO PRESENT: Superintendent of Schools Geary, Assistant Superintendent for Pupil Personnel Services Matfess, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum Radikas

ABSENT: Assistant to the Superintendent for Finance & Management Brooks

A. **OPENING**

A.1. & 2. Meeting Called to Order

Chairperson Pattacini called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. All in attendance participated in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, led by Mr. Pattacini.

A.3. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting

APPROVED – Minutes Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of April 6, 2015. Secretary Scappaticci moved and Mr. Crockett seconded the motion.

9/0 – Voted in favor.

B. **CONSENT CALENDAR**

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

B.1. Personnel Action

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

B.2. Permission to apply for the ED244 Grant, for the FY 15/16 in the amount of \$1,140,176

B.3. Appropriate an additional \$2,618.30, for a total of \$351,388.14, from the designated fund account to pay an additional retroactive salary payment to Paraeducators for FY 13/14 contract settlements

B.4. Transfer of Funds

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

- Transfer from Bentley Alternative Education Dues/Fees account to Bentley Alternative Education Instructional Supplies & Materials account in the amount of \$200
- Transfer from Martin School Admin Repair account (\$100) and Martin School Admin Printing/Advertising account (\$300) to Martin School Admin General Supplies & Materials account in the total amount of \$400
- Transfer from Martin School Admin Computer Supplies & Materials account to Martin School Admin Postage account in the amount of \$400

The Chairman called for a motion.

Secretary Scappaticci moved and Mr. Leon seconded the recommendation to adopt the Consent Calendar as outlined in Section B of tonight's agenda.

9/0 - Voted in favor.

C. COMMITTEE REPORTS

C.1. Buildings & Sites Committee

Mr. Leon reported that the last meeting was held at Washington School on April 8th with himself, Mr. Crockett, Mr. Stafford, Ms. Pazda, Mr. Geary, Principal Gray, and Mrs. Brooks in attendance.

Mrs. Gray shared the building repair needs at Washington. Even though the building is scheduled to close in the Fall of 2020, maintenance is still needed to keep the building in shape to educate students for the next five years. Painting, carpet replacement, and ceiling tile replacements are on the repair list.

Mr. Geary and Mrs. Brooks shared the need to transfer funds within the FY 2014-2015 Board budget to cover the cost of network switches under the security project for a cost of \$232,387.20. Funding for the project was authorized at \$2,400,000, however the project is over budget and the new switches must be installed as part of the project with a June 30, 2015 deadline. Transfers from the balance in the line items for Facilities Director's salary and benefits, as well as transfers from IT contracted services, repairs and telephone and funds from capital projects will cover the balance. The use of these funds will prevent the district from completing end-of-the-year capital projects.

The Committee discussed the need for a playscape for the 5th/6th grade Academy and the consensus was that a playscape is needed and will be installed at the Academy during the project.

Mrs. Brooks informed the Committee that the Robertson Elementary portables need to be replaced. It is not cost effective to repair the 15 year old portables. Mrs. Brooks will issue a Request for Proposals for new or refurbished units.

Interviews for the Facilities Director position will be held April 9th and finalist interviews will be held with the Committee in May.

The next meeting to be held May 7th was postponed in favor of interviews.

C.2. Personnel & Finance Committee

Mr. Crockett reported the last meeting was held April 9th with himself, Ms. Hagenow, Mr. Thames, and Mrs. Brooks in attendance, along with Nick Aldi.

Mr. Aldi shared the State of Connecticut, Department of Education Operational Memorandum #4-15 regarding Paid Lunch Equity: School Year 2015-16 Calculations and Tool. Using the tool provided, in order for the district to be in compliance with the requirements for the 2015-16 school year, paid lunch prices must be increased by \$0.10. This will bring the cost of lunch at the elementary level to \$2.05, at the middle school to \$2.20, and at the high school to \$2.45.

Manchester's paid lunches are still below the cost of the District Reference Group as well as area school districts.

Mrs. Brooks informed the Committee that the Robertson Elementary portables need to be replaced. She will be issuing a Request for Proposals for new or refurbished units. The Committee requested a tour of the portables.

Mrs. Brooks shared the need to transfer funds within the FY 2014-2015 Board budget to cover the cost of network switches (\$232,387.20) under the security project. The project, authorized for \$2,400,000, is over budget and the new switches must be installed as part of the project, which has a June 30, 2015 deadline. Transfers from the balance in the line items for Facilities Director's salary and benefits, as well as transfers from IT contracted services, repairs and telephone and funds from capital projects will cover the balance. The use of these funds will prevent the district from completing end-of-the-year capital projects.

Mrs. Brooks shared with the Committee the document that was posted on the District website in compliance with CT State Statute 10-222o. The statute requires the annual posting of aggregate spending for education, by school, on the school district website. Aggregate spending includes, but is not limited to, funding sources such as the school budget, in-kind services provided by the Town, all Federal and State grants, insurance claims, rentals, donation, and endowment funds. Mrs. Brooks also provided the Committee with the March 31, 2015 financial statement.

The next meeting is May 6 at 6:00 p.m.

D. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, spoke about the 150 year anniversary of the end of the Civil War. He suggested an article in *Smithsonian* magazine regarding the Lincoln assassination. Mr. Stringfellow claims that slavery never ended and still goes on today. He shared articles on the Armenian Genocide. He suggested the magazine *V-Day*, as well as *Military History* magazine. Last, Mr. Stringfellow also suggested two

books, *Young People's History of the U.S.* along with *The Concise Untold History of the United States.*

E.SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT – PART I

E.1. Update on Common Core State Standards and SBAC Testing

Mr. Geary reviewed that the Common Core State Standards were adopted some time ago. SBAC, the Smarter Balanced test, was first piloted last year with the scores not being reported and testing is currently taking place for this year.

Dr. Radikas presented a Powerpoint on the standards and assessment. Her presentation can be seen in full on the website. Dr. Radikas noted the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) testing is now done in lieu of the CMTs and the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) were adopted in 2010.

Ms. Pazda is excited about the assessments which are more in line with real world activity and expectations than what we had in the past. She wonders if we have all the technology in place and if students are comfortable with using that technology. Dr. Radikas notes we do have the technology, pointing out that there are now IPADs in Kindergarten and laptops in 1st grade. Technology is embedded into our curricular units and the students are comfortable with it as technology is part of what they use in the classroom on a daily basis. Ms. Pazda asked about the adaptive artificial intelligence component of the testing. Dr. Radikas noted it is throughout the entire assessment and adjusts the test up to the top of the child's grade level, not beyond.

Mr. Thames noted tests have changed from filling in the bubbles of years past. He is concerned about the computer knowledge aspect, wondering if those students that have computers at home would have an advantage over those that do not. He also wondered if any pilots or dry runs have been done with the tests, and if so what is done when it is revealed a child is having trouble manipulating the computer. Dr. Radikas noted there are practice sessions that teachers have had access to and we did field tests of the program last year.

Teachers can do small group lessons or whole class lessons on the skills required. The technology piece is not worrisome to Dr. Radikas.

Mr. Pattacini asked about the amount of testing for a typical student. Dr. Radikas noted there is a testing window, but that each school adopts a schedule convenient to them and the tests can be paused and restarted. She will send a link with the typical time students test. Mr. Pattacini also wondered if parents will receive a mailing, similar to what they received when their children took CMTs. Dr. Radikas noted the State Department says they will send parents achievement level descriptors, though she is not sure what that will look like. She noted that this year the data collected will be baseline data for the district.

E.2. Update on Alliance Grant 2015-2016 Application

Mr. Geary reviewed the 15-16 Alliance Grant application, which is available on the website. The grant application is broken down into four areas: systems and operations, talent development, academics, and culture and climate. The breakdown of the anticipated \$3,857,041 grant is as follows: talent \$288,391; academic \$2,115,375; culture \$752,775; and systems \$700,500.

Mr. Thames asked about the mini grants. Mr. Geary reviewed this year mini grants accounts for \$75,000 of the Alliance Grant budget. Next year they will account for \$50,000.

Ms. Pazda wondered how the percentage under aligned smart goals is reached. Mr. Geary reviewed some is based on survey data along with setting goals realistically in comparison to the state. Ms. Pazda wondered if these are the same goals as last year. Mr. Geary noted the SMART goals are specific to the Alliance strategies. Priorities move in and out of the grant, based on what the grant is funding.

Mr. Thames was concerned that the goal of increasing minority staff by 2% was not sufficient and wondered how many positions that equated to. Mr. Geary noted that if there are about 650 staff members, that would mean 12 additional staff. Mr. Geary acknowledged that did not sound like a lot, but for one hiring cycle that is enormous. Mr. Thames appreciates the intentional efforts to recruit

and hire minorities and feels it is important as they will understand students culturally and be able to teach effectively.

Mr. Leon wondered how much money is spent on the recreation portion of SAAM. Mr. Geary estimated \$215,000. Mr. Leon wondered if we didn't pay for that, would the town pay? Mr. Geary feels most of the children either wouldn't be in a summer program at all or would be in a full day Parks & Rec program.

Ms. Hagenow questioned money spend on attendance. She wondered if there is an issue with the lower grades attendance. Mr. Geary noted that part of the grant requires money to be spent to reduce chronic absenteeism, which is currently 8-11% system-wide. Mr. Geary feels that absenteeism does not just start in high school, but in the early grades, so the sooner we address that issue, the more likely it will not be an issue in future years.

Mr. Thames reviewed that in the past the recreation program was fee-based and currently participation in SAAM allows those who cannot afford the experience to participate. Mr. Leon clarified he is very supportive of the program, but hopes if we cannot continue to fund this once the Alliance Grant is gone, he hopes the town will support it.

Mr. Pattacini is encouraged by the specificity of targets in the grant and is especially excited about the science specialists.

E.3. Update on School Calendar

Mr. Geary reviewed the last day of school is June 22, 2015, which is a half day. He noted that Friday, June 19, 2015, will also be a half day.

E.4. Update on FY 2015-2016 Board of Education Budget

Mr. Geary reviewed that the Town fully supported the Board of Education budget with no reductions. Therefore, the budget workshops scheduled for May have been cancelled, as there are no reductions to be made. He appreciates the efforts of the Board members, Board of Directors, and Town Manager in moving the budget through.

Mr. Pattacini cannot recall a time in recent years when the education budget was fully funded. He feels this is a testament to the work being done in the school district as well as the joint efforts with the Board of Directors.

F. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

F.1. Policy Revision - Advertising Policy #3542

Mr. Geary reviewed that at the first reading of this policy Mr. Thames had asked about political ads. The policy has been clarified and these ads are now prohibited.

Secretary Scappaticci moved for the Board to adopt the Advertising Policy #3542. Mr. Leon seconded the motion.

9/0 - Voted in favor.

F.2. Policy Revision - Professional Learning Policy #4132

Mr. Geary reviewed reviewed this is the second reading of this proposed policy revision. Essentially, this policy reaffirms the Board's support for professional learning in Manchester, which is critical for all of us.

Secretary Scappaticci moved for the Board to adopt the Professional Learning Policy #4132. Mr. Crockett seconded the motion.

9/0 - Voted in favor.

G. NEW BUSINESS

G.1. School Lunch Pricing

Mr. Geary reviewed the requirement that school lunch prices increase by \$0.10 for the next school year. This is required so the free/reduced lunch reimbursement, which is currently \$2.70, is not being used to supplement the cash-pay lunches. Mr. Nick Aldi recommends the \$0.10 increase across the district.

Mr. Pattacini noted this will increase our revenue and wondered about plans for the increased funding. Mr. Aldi noted the increase would amount to approximately \$80,000. Currently Governor Malloy's budget calls for a proposed cut which may reduce funding by \$80,000, so this will balance that shortfall. Mr. Aldi noted that we are constantly enhancing the program, both nutritionally and esthetically as well.

Secretary Scappaticci moved for the Board to approve an increase in all lunch prices by ten cents (\$0.10) for the 2015-16 School Year. Mr. Crockett seconded the motion.

9/0 - Voted in favor.

G.2. Transfer of Funds

Mr. Geary reviewed that we are in the midst of a \$2.4 million security upgrade. Initially this was to be done with a loan. In December, we received a \$1.2 million grant for the project, but the monies must be expended by June 30th. Because of the time factor the cost has risen and the Board needs to fund network switches at a cost of \$232,387. One of the consequences of this will be that the oil tanks will not be able to be replaced as scheduled this summer and will be put off until next year.

Mr. Leon wondered if the Board of Directors approved \$2.4 million that we would split, and there is now a \$1.2 million grant, are we splitting that? Mr. Geary confirmed we are. Mr. Leon further asked if we are splitting the cost of the network switches. Mr. Geary explained that the Town Building Committee added some items to the project, which the town is funding, which amounts to approximately the same cost as the network switches.

Secretary Scappaticci moved to approve the transfer of the following: Maintenance Salaries (\$70,000); Benefits Health/Major Medical (\$14,987); Info Services Contracted Services (\$37,000); Info Services Repair (\$4,800); Info Services

Telephone (\$5,600); and Maintenance Capital Projects (\$100,000) to School Security Upgrades. A total transfer of \$232,387 is being requested. Mr. Leon seconded the motion.

9/0 - Voted in favor.

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

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, felt Dr. Radikas' presentation was good. He recommended *The Idiot's Guide to Understanding the Common Core*. He hopes the unions get on board even though some states are opting out. Mr. Stringfellow also recommended a science article in the *Journal Inquirer Minipage*. He noted Manchester Community College has excursions in learning over the summer. Regarding the lunch prices, he knows prices are going up, but his hope is that students do not waste food. Mr. Stringfellow recommended a *New York Times* article on Shakespeare and also spoke about female women of color writers. Last, he felt the SAT is important and should still be taken.

I. COMMUNICATIONS

Ms. Pazda questioned some information found in her packet. Mr. Geary clarified that the flyer was recruiting information for staff. Ms. Pazda liked the flyer and pointed out the Better Manchester publication will be adding three educational issues this year.

J. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

Ms. Pazda has heard about a field house being considered by the Board of Directors and she would like more information. Mr. Geary will talk with the town manager about that and come back with information.

K. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Pattacini called for a motion to adjourn.

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

9/0 - Voted in favor.

Manchester Board of Education
Regular Meeting
April 27, 2015

Page 11 of 11

Adjournment 8:54 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Jason Scappaticci
Board Secretary