

## **MANCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION**

### **Regular Meeting**

**May 26, 2015**

Lincoln

**PRESENT:** 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:** Crockett, Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Management Brooks

#### **A. OPENING**

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

**Chairperson Pattacini** called the meeting to order at 7:03 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 May 11, 2015. Secretary Scappaticci moved and Mr. Leon seconded the motion.**

**7/0/1 – Voted in favor.**

**Mr. Pattacini** welcomed the two new Board of Education Student Representatives to this evening's meeting: Shania Stanton and Lori Fogg.

#### **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. Transfer of Funds**

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

- Transfer from Martin Admin General Supplies & Materials account to Martin Art Contracted Services account in the amount of \$100

**B.3. Extended Field Trip Request Form – MHS Activities Planning Board - Stonehill College, Easton, MA - 2015 Student Leadership Conference - 8 - 10 Students - Chaperones and Teachers - July 14, 2015 - July 17, 2015**

**B.4. Extended Field Trip Request Form - MHS Euro Trip - World Language - Paris and Madrid - 30 Students - 3 Teachers - April 7, 2017 - April 16, 2017**

**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.**

**8/0 - Voted in favor.**

**C. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**C.1. Personnel & Finance Committee**

**Mr. Leon** reported the last meeting was held May 6, 2015 with himself, Ms. Hagenow, and Mrs. Brooks in attendance. The Committee went into Executive Session to discuss contract negotiations. The next meeting will be June 17, 2015.

**C.2. Policy Committee**

**Ms. Pazda** reported the last meeting was held May 11, 2015 with Ms. Cruz, Ms. Hagenow, and Mr. Geary in attendance. The Committee reviewed the Promotion and Retention Policy, which will be sent to the full Board for consideration. The next meeting will be June 22, 2015.

#### **D. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Teagan Welch, a senior at MHS, read from an essay she wrote regarding the decision to cut the morning announcement program at the high school. She is upset that this media program, which took approximately 5-7 minutes of the day and informed 1800+ students of important activities, exam schedules, and other news, was taken away. The experience those participating in the news show gained with planning, editing, and producing the show in the TV studio was invaluable. Teagan noted that administration wants kids to get involved, but the sense of community has now been banished. She pointed out that a recent dance was cancelled because only 25 tickets were sold, she **believes because students simply didn't know about it since they didn't hear about it on the announcements.**

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, is a proud member of the MHS class of 1974. He noted the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II is approaching and he offered a book for donation that includes a DVD on the topic. Mr. Stringfellow noted that Memorial Day had just passed and the Monday *New York Times* had an editorial on the subject that was of interest to him. Mr. Stringfellow also spoke about the Korean **border, Gloria Stein's mother, a peace activist**, and Waterloo. He recommended a book *Justice While Black* on how African American families can navigate and survive the criminal justice system. Last, Mr. Stringfellow recommended an article in *Ebony* magazine on phobias and adoption month.

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

##### **E.1. Update on Humanities**

**Mr. Geary** introduced Diane Sheehan-Burns, who has been the Director of Teaching & Learning, Humanities, for two months. Ms. Burns gave a Powerpoint presentation, which is available on the website. She defined Humanities as the delivery of curriculum that is authentic in context, provides student choices in their work, and is an integration of reading and writing for specials, electives, and core classes.

**Ms. Pazda** was glad to see the focus on humanities. She feels when students are more engaged it impacts student learning. Ms. Pazda heard on the radio recently how poorly we did on the NAEP assessment as a nation. She wondered if Manchester participated in that assessment. Ms. Burns believes Bowers grade 4 did participate in the NAEP assessment in the past.

**Mr. Leon** wondered, since Ms. Burns has been in this new role, what has been the biggest challenge and what does she feel we do well. Ms. Burns stated we do a lot of things really well. We have teachers doing an excellent job and who are invested in their work, making units come alive and be very engaging for students. There is a focus on student-centered learning and this work is amazing and getting teachers engaged with vertical teaming and meaningful performance tasks. Challenges include supporting inter-disciplinary units, making them meaningful and deep in terms of content areas.

**Mr. Pattacini** was impressed that our Kindergarten students are writing stories, as opposed to just learning letters as he remembers in Kindergarten. Ms. Burns noted we are using the Lucy Calkins units of study with high expectations and rigorous units. Kindergarten starts in October at a developmentally appropriate level with pictures and words or letters and slowly they transition to less of a picture and more words telling the story.

Mr. Pattacini also saw the Social Studies gallery walk recently and was impressed with the collaboration in the district.

## **E.2. Update on Adult Education**

**Mr. Geary** introduced Dr. Diane Kearney, the Coordinator of Adult Education. He noted we are blessed in Manchester to have a robust Adult Education Program with Dr. Kearney at the helm.

**Dr. Kearney** is a 30 year veteran of Manchester Public Schools and feels we are at a good place. She is excited about the direction Manchester is headed. Dr. Kearney noted that Mr. Geary believes in all students, from Pre-K through Adult Ed. She feels empowered, validated, and heard under his leadership.

Dr. Kearney gave three handouts, which are available on the website. One handout showed that graduation rates have risen 1.7% nationally, but there are still about 7000 students that drop out of high school. Students that drop out of high school have an average earning potential of about \$21,000, while students with a college degree have a mean earning potential of \$70,000.

Dr. Kearney pointed out that our workforce is moving towards requiring some postsecondary education or credentialing. Connecticut ranks 40/50 with **credentialing adults with certificates as in the past Connecticut's focus has been** to get a college degree, but that is not for everyone. In Manchester approximately 9-10% of the workforce are without a high school diploma. Nationally, 41% of students without a diploma are unemployed. In Manchester, 50% of those adults are unemployed.

In the Adult Education Program there are three ways to earn a diploma: GED, National External Diploma Program, and credit diploma.

Of those students who earn a GED, nationally 8/100 go on to college; 12% **attend more than one year of college; 3% earn an Associate's Degree; and 2% earn a Bachelor's Degree.**

Dr. Kearney feels that we have to move from instructor to multidimensional life coach and instead of focusing on making students career and college eligible we need them to be career and college ready.

As part of the Adult Education Program, there are four retired administrators and several retired teachers. There are 21 different programs, in credit diploma there are 32 classes, in continuing education there are over 55 classes. Adult Ed has a strong partnership with MCC for college remediation, which is a \$3.7 billion industry.

Several students shared their experience with the Board. Sayeed was 19 when he came to the United States with his parents and young sisters in December

2013. He found he was too old to attend MHS, so he is now in the CDP program. He finds the teachers helpful and he is able to work while in the program as his classes are from 4-9 p.m. He wants to go on to a community college and become an info tech.

Hope dropped out of high school 23 years ago when she became a teen mother. She tried to get her GED three times and failed. She never felt she could accomplish much. She joined the CDP program, which she can fit into her schedule and still work full time. She is now proud of herself. In the two years she has been in the program she has only missed 2 days. She has had awesome teachers, who are helping her to better herself. She will graduate June 18th and plans to attend Branford Hall in the fall to become a medical assistant.

Enrique came to us from Ecuador in 2000. He is happy to take classes and is passionate about learning. He is learning English and feels the staff are helpful.

Trevaan moved to Manchester in 1994 from Hartford as a sophomore. The following year he was diagnosed with Hodgkin's Disease and though he tried to stay in school, his aggressive treatment prompted him to drop out. He made a full recovery and became a parent in 1998. He wants to lead his children by example and in 2013 he heard about the NEDP program and realized he could work at his own pace and still be able to work full time. He feels the teachers are supportive of his professional responsibilities and challenge him intellectually. He will be graduating alongside one of his children this June.

**Dr. Kearney** pointed out that most students want to continue their education and we need to build relationships with them to help facilitate that.

**Mr. Thames** noted that students in Adult Ed come in all shades and sexes, and all have their own story. He commends the Adult Ed students for reconnecting and making a connection between teacher and student. He wondered how we teach to the test with the new standards. Dr. Kearney notes the teachers make connections, participate in professional development, and the curriculum is aligned with the test.

Mr. Thames thinks it is great that we are looking at credentialing, especially in manufacturing and construction. He notes that Capital Workforce Partners does work in that area and Dr. Kearney confirmed we do partner with them. Dr. Kearney also pointed out that counselors meet with students on Wednesdays to help build their resumes.

**Ms. Pazda** thanked Dr. Kearney and her staff for the life-changing work they are doing. She feels the key is relationship building.

**Mr. Pattacini** thanked the staff and students for bringing to life this program. He appreciates their powerful messages.

## **F. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

### **F.1. Policy Revision**

**Mr. Geary** reviewed this is the second reading of Policy 5131.81 Electronic Communication. The changes to this policy encourage the appropriate use of electronic devices.

**Secretary Scappaticci moved for the Board of Education to approve Policy 5131.81 Electronic Communication. Mr. Leon seconded the motion.**

### **DISCUSSION:**

**Mr. Pattacini** feels this brings us into the modern age and he looks forward to appropriate student use of electronics in the classroom.

**8/0 - Voted in favor.**

## **G. NEW BUSINESS**

### **G.1. Board of Education Meeting Dates**

**Mr. Geary** presented the meeting dates and potential locations for the 2015-2016 School Year. Anticipated topics were also listed.

**Ms. Pazda** expressed her appreciation of holding some meetings at schools to give Board members a chance to see the positive culture and climate and allow them to make connections between district goals and individual building goals.

**Mr. Geary** intends to survey the school communities of those schools the Board has already visited for feedback.

**Mr. Pattacini** pointed out that the dates listed for the second half of the year should reflect 2016. He also noted the locations and topics may change.

**Secretary Scappaticci moved for the Board to adopt the Regular Board of Education Meeting and budget workshop meeting dates for 2015-2016. Ms. Cruz seconded the motion.**

**8/0 - Voted in favor.**

## **G.2. Policy Revisions**

**Mr. Geary** reviewed the Policy Committee's submission of Policy #5120 - Promotion, Retention, Acceleration. This policy, which is available for review on the website, outlines the guidelines for summer school in middle school. The graduation requirements part of this policy was deleted, as this topic is addressed in its own policy. This is the first read of this policy revision, and Mr. Geary feels that once we have a better understanding of how Smarter Balance will impact the policy it will be further revised.

**Mr. Pattacini** felt the last four lines of the first paragraph regarding CAPT testing etc., should be removed until we know what the new changes will be in regards to testing. Mr. Geary agreed.

**Mr. Thames** wondered why students who fail accelerated math would not be required to attend summer school. Mr. Geary explained that those in accelerated

math are a year ahead of their peers. If they fail the class, they would simply be required to rejoin their peers in taking the course the following year. This was the past practice, but now it is in writing.

**Mr. Pattacini** noted this revision will come back at the next meeting for action.

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

Tracy Maio, 57 Horton Road, pointed out that during some of the presentations at schools the teachers speaking use acronyms that many of the parents do not understand. She also feels more parents will attend a meeting if awards are given out to their children. Ms. Maio feels the libraries in schools are too cramped for meetings and gyms could be spruced up a little, like done at Waddell last meeting. She also would like to see a stool at the podium for when the children speak. Last, Ms. Maio advises getting the PTAs involved in the process to help get more families to the meetings.

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, attended the State Board of Education meeting last fall and feels we are on the right path. He notes all students are capable of learning. Mr. Stringfellow feels Adult Education is vital and there should be no stigma attached. He notes not all students go on to college. He pointed out an article in the *Boston Globe* recently on including LGBT students. Mr. Stringfellow suggested more magazines be used in class to supplement textbooks. He reminded us that men of color fought for our rights. He feels it is good to teach kids to think critically and we are on the right path to well rounded students.

#### **I. COMMUNICATIONS**

**Mr. Geary** noted we met one of the new Student Representatives at the last meeting, Lori Fogg. Tonight he introduced Shania Stanton, who will be a junior next year. She is in the Gay-Straight Alliance and attends the Medical Careers Academy. Shania noted this was her first year at MHS and she feels there are incredible opportunities there and she is very excited for the opportunity to serve as a Student Representative.

**Ms. Pazda** showed the Board an ad in the *Journal Inquirer* regarding Manchester's enrichment classes offered for students ages 13-17 during the summer. There are many options and the cost is \$30 per week per class. She feels this is very reasonable.

**J. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS**

None.

**K. ADJOURNMENT**

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

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

**8/0 - Voted in favor.**

**Adjournment 8:32 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

Jason Scappaticci  
Board Secretary