

MANCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION

Regular Meeting

June 8, 2015

Washington Elementary School

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

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.

A.3. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting

APPROVED – Minutes Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of May 26, 2015. Secretary Scappaticci moved and Mr. Crockett seconded the motion.

8/0/1 – Voted in favor.

B. CONSENT CALENDAR

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

B.1. Personnel Information

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

B.2. Donation to the Manchester High School “Project Graduation” for FY 14/15 in the amount of \$1,000.00

B.3. Connecticut State Department of Education Addendum to Agreement for Child Nutrition Program (ED-099) - Healthy Food Certification Statement

B.4. Increase in appropriation for MRA for FY 14/15 in the amount of \$306,700, bringing the total appropriation to \$1,106,700

B.5. Establish an appropriation for FY 14/15 MCC/Adult Education Transitional Strategies REACT II in the amount of \$223,823

B.6. Extended Field Trip Request - MHS - FBLA National Leadership Competition - 8 Students/1 Chaperone - Chicago, Illinois 6/28/2015 through 7/4/2015

The Chairman called for a motion.

Secretary Scappaticci moved and Mr. Crockett 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. Curriculum & Instruction Committee

Ms. Pazda reported that the last meeting was held May 26, 2015 with Ms. Hagenow, Mz. Pazda, Mr. Scappaticci, Mr. Stafford, and Dr. Radikas in attendance. Also present was Mr. Geary, Ms. Sheehan-Burns, Dr. Oliver, Ms. Kreiger, Mr. Berry, Ms., Biondin, Mr. Irizarry, Ms. Jayawickrema, Mr. Maloney, and Mr. Skrzypiec.

An overview of the new Social Studies graduation requirement for 11th and 12th grade called Living and Working in a Global Society was given. The course will

be piloted to juniors and seniors in the Spring of 2016 and the course will be expanded to accommodate the class of 2019 as they reach 11th grade. Students will have the option to earn UCONN credit through the ECE program.

Teachers of world languages shared their desire to provide students with the opportunity to travel abroad in April 2017. Particulars of the trip will be shared with families soon and there will be fundraising in an effort to lower the cost. Attempts will be made to run trips every other year.

Scheduling in grades 6-8 was discussed. Grade 6 will have increased music, art, and PE time as well as an added Tech Ed elective. Grade 7 scheduling will remain the same. Grade 8 students were surveyed to determine the impact of ensembles if students were given an opportunity to select their electives with input from their parents and teachers. Music teachers were asked to consider what other music electives could be offered.

An overview of Accelerated Summer Academic Program (ASAP) was provided. This is a summer offering for Bennet and Illing. Full day sessions will consist of half day accelerated math and half day digital game design for incoming 6th grade students and Contagion (as exploration of epidemic response) for incoming 7th and 8th grade students. There is potential for 100 students to participate.

An overview of the new K-6 program, enVision 2.0 was given. The program is computer-based and hard copy and will support the Connecticut Core Standards and differentiation. Further exploration will be provided at the next meeting.

The next meeting will be June 8, 2015 at Washington School.

D. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Scott Aiken, 92 Laurel Street, is disappointed in the Board. Mr. Aiken feels that the Board appears to listen, but with only 3 minutes allowed per person, how can anyone provide a convincing argument in only 400 words. As a citizen, Mr. Aiken exercises his rights and calls it like he sees it. He has been shown that what he says doesn't matter,

if his research is contrary to what the Board wants. Mr. Aiken feels he is speaking for the staff and parents of Washington School and someone has to stand up for this family. He feels it is ironic about the current community involvement initiative, considering the closings of this and other community schools. He wishes the Board could see past the data and simply not close the school.

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, pointed out Saturday is flag day and there is an article in the *Journal Inquirer's* Minipage regarding 70 years of flags in the United States. Mr. Stringfellow also wants us to remember Memorial Day. He spoke about Juneteenth and the 150th anniversary of the end of the Civil War. He pointed out that some slaves were not told they were free until two and a half years after the war ended. Mr. Stringfellow suggested an article in the magazine *Military Spouse* regarding insurance. He spoke about the Revolutionary War and Connecticut's role, including an article in *Naval History* magazine. Mr. Stringfellow pointed out that black and Native American men fought in that conflict as well. Last, Mr. Stringfellow was glad to see an article in the *Courant* regarding students seeking help with mental health clinics and he noted resources are out there.

E. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT – PART I

E.1. PTO President's Report

Mr. Pattacini introduced Jackie Madore, the outgoing district PTO President. Ms. Madore gave an update of the goings on in the district. The partnership with the Board of Education in the 4th Annual Science Fair and the addition of the Invention Convention was a success. Students went on to the State Invention Convention. Seventy-five students participated in the District Science Fair. Ms. Madore thanked the staff and students, and Christine Cardoso, along with all the families that encouraged their students to participate. Ms. Madore noted that schools are in the midst of hosting end of year events and welcoming incoming Kindergarteners. Ms. Madore introduced Christine Cardoso, who is the new District PTO President. After seven years, Ms. Madore notes it is bittersweet to be leaving her post and she thanked the Board for their support and guidance.

Mr. Pattacini thanked Ms. Madore for her years of service and noted the Board appreciates her hard work.

E.2. Update on School Improvement Plan for Washington Elementary

Mr. Geary and Mr. Pattacini handed out certificates to several Washington Elementary students for excellence in creativity and collaboration. Mrs. Karen Gray, Principal of Washington Elementary, gave a Powerpoint presentation, supplemented by the math and ELA interventionists. The presentation is available on the website. At the end of the presentation, Branna Booth, one of the winners of the invention convention, presented her invention.

Mr. Leon admired the invention. To the interventionists, he asked about the climate survey that was given. Ms. Webster reviewed it was given to staff a few weeks ago regarding only first grade. There was 100% participation but the data has not been fully reviewed.

Ms. Pazda thanked everyone for sharing and noted it is helpful to Board members to see how the district improvement plan plays out in the schools. She noted that students are the heart of Manchester Public Schools.

Mr. Pattacini asked about Dot & Dash, the robots. Mrs. Gray responded that we received them a few months ago and have been exploring technology, programming, and higher order thinking, to tie them in with science.

Mr. Pattacini called a short recess to allow the students and families to leave if desired.

Recess 7:51 p.m. Back in session 8:00 p.m.

E.3. Update on Scheduling at Bennet Academy and Illing Middle School

Mr. Geary reviewed some changes happening at Bennet. Currently Bennet has 7 teams of 3 teachers each. Next year they will have 5 teams of 4 teachers each. He wants every teacher to teach 1 subject, not 2, so they can focus on their strengths. Teachers will teach 4 periods and then have 1 intervention

block. Classes there are now 40 minutes and they will move to 46 minutes for the 15/16 school year. Currently students have specials (music, art, technology) 61 times a year and next year they will have specials 91 times.

At Illing there are currently 9 teams of 5 teachers and they will be moving to 8 teams of 4 teachers. Classes will change from 42 minutes to 45 minutes. Down the road Mr. Geary would like to see world languages start in grade 7.

Mr. Geary presented some research regarding music education in our and surrounding districts, along with a survey of current music students in grade 8. Based on the results, more music options will be offered so that students currently in ensembles (chorus, band, orchestra) can choose a second music class if desired.

Mr. Stafford appreciated the presentation and wondered if the ultimate goal is to move choice of electives to grade 7 as well. Mr. Geary stated we want to see how it goes in grade 8 first.

Mr. Scappaticci wanted to clarify that based on the current schedule, if a student is in an ensemble they cannot take more music, but that next year they will be able to take guitar or another music option. That is correct.

Mr. Crockett wondered, with Illing moving from 9 teams of 5 to 8 teams of 4 if teachers were being laid off. Mr. Geary clarified that there will be no reduction in teachers and some positions will be reallocated. There will be a few retirements where those positions will be changed to science and social studies coaches.

Mr. Pattacini stated that looking at the early survey data seems to indicate guitar will be a popular choice. Mr. Geary agreed and noted that at some point we will need additional staffing. In the future, Mr. Geary feels we may move to an 8 period schedule. Mr. Pattacini likes to hear that staff will be reallocated and there will be no layoffs.

F. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

F.1. Policy Revisions

Mr. Pattacini reminded the Board that Policy 5120 was reviewed at the May 20th meetings and is now up for adoption.

Mr. Geary briefly noted that the first paragraph of the first page was struck out regarding CAPT testing, as requested. He again stated that we will ultimately come back to this policy once the state decides on assessments and their connection to graduation.

Secretary Scappaticci moved for the Board to adopt Policy 5120 - Promotion, Retention, Acceleration. Mr. Leon seconded the motion.

9/0 - Voted in favor.

G. NEW BUSINESS

None.

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

Paula Penna, 517 Hartford Road, is the mother of two students in the district. Her family has had an unbelievably wonderful experience with Manchester Public Schools. She is a music teacher and owner of Music Makers and is excited about the prospect of adding more music classes for 8th graders. She asked for clarification if the two classes would both meet for a full year and Mr. Geary stated they would. Ms. Penna is grateful that the district sees how important music is and noted that Manchester has some of the finest music teachers around. Her concern is that music is called a special. She states there is nothing special about it, but music is an umbrella subject with tendrils that touch every other subject. Executive functioning skills are improved by music and Ms. Penna feels music is the only subject that hits all the other subjects.

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, supports the Consent Calendar, especially FBLA. He pointed out that not all students go to college and he would like a

presentation aimed at non-college bound students, which he claims is about 12% of the students. He feels we do a good job of engaging the students. Mr. Stringfellow recommended the book *It's the Student, Not the College*. He enjoyed the Washington presentation and notes literacy and getting parents involved is important. Mr. Stringfellow recommended an article in *Popular Science* magazine about 100 inventions that can change the world. He feels music is important. He suggested an article in the *Wall Street Journal* on technology in the classroom and in the *Boston Globe* back in March regarding ELL.

Lee Setzler, 23 Newman Street, has a son at St. James currently and is considering Illing. He liked the information he heard. He would like clarification, if a student chose 2 music classes would that be in place of a technology or culinary class? Mr. Geary stated students would be able to choose multiple music classes and it would be in place of a different special.

I. COMMUNICATIONS

Lori Fogg, student representative, gave an update on the end of year happenings at MHS.

- Senior picnic - May 29
- Senior prom - May 30
- Super senior dinner - June 4
- Awards ceremony - June 2
- Scholar's luncheon - June 4
- Sophomore breakfast - June 4 for those with no disciplinary incidents
- SBAC testing for juniors May 18-22
- Field trips to CIA, FDR house
- Finals start tomorrow for seniors and next week for the rest of the students
- Last day of school is June 22

Mr. Leon thanked the Superintendent for volunteering to sit in the dunk tank at Relay for Life to raise money for the cause. He thanked everyone that took part in that event.

J. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

Mr. Thames would like a follow-up on the suspension and expulsion information with detailed numbers, including those with police intervention and arrests and what we are doing to decrease those numbers.

K. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Pattacini called for a motion to adjourn.

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

9/0 - Voted in favor.

Adjournment 8:11 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jason Scappaticci
Board Secretary