

**MANCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**Regular Meeting**

**June 13, 2022**

Lincoln/Virtual

**PRESENT:** Eisenthal, Kohls, Mix, Ntem-mensah, Ott, Pattacini, Patterson

**ALSO PRESENT:** Superintendent of Schools Geary, Deputy Superintendent Curriculum & Special Services Radikas, Director of Finance & Management Clancy, Director of Human Resources Sone-Moyano

**ABSENT:** Meggers, Orsene

**A. OPENING**

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

**Chairperson Pattacini** called the meeting back to order at 7:00 p.m. Mr. Pattacini explained the Board had attended the groundbreaking at Bowers earlier and then went into Executive Session at 6:05 to discuss the superintendent's evaluation. (Mix/Ntem-Mensah 6/0)

Executive session ended at 6:45.

All in attendance participated in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, led by Mr. Pattacini.

**A.3. Action to Fill a Board Member Vacancy**

**Mr. Pattacini** explained that with Ms. Stefanovicz's resignation the Democratic Town Committee put forth a candidate to fill her term until the next local election.

**Mr. Eisenthal** stated that it has been a privilege in his role as a member of the Board of Education to meet so many people in Manchester. One of those people is Dean Ott. Mr. Ott is dedicated to service and has a lot of energy. He is the third generation of his family to reside in Manchester. He is married to his wife Alex and they have four children, three of whom attend Manchester schools. They live in the same house his grandfather did many years ago.

Mr. Ott attended Keeney, Bennet, Illing and MHS, graduating in 2011. He is an Eagle Scout. He graduated from CCSU and works at Travelers on Workers Comp issues. He and his family attend Center Congregational Church and he volunteers with two girl scout troops. Mr. Ott serves on the Planning & Zoning Commission for the Town of Manchester as well! He is earnest and has a youthful energy and Mr. Eisenthal feels Mr. Ott will do great service wherever he goes.

**Mr. Eisenthal nominates Dean Ott to fill the vacancy on the Board of Education. Mr. Ntem-Mensah seconds the motion.**

**6/0 - Voted in favor.**

**Mr. Ott** joined the Board at the table as a member.

**A.4. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting**

**APPROVED – Minutes Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of May 23, 2022. Secretary Patterson moved and Ms. Mix seconded the motion.**

**7/0 – Voted in favor.**

**Chairperson Pattacini made a friendly amendment to the agenda, item F.1. moves to A.5. and item D. moves to A.6. There was no objection.**

**A.5. Manchester Teachers of the Year**

**Mr. Geary** introduced all the Manchester Public School Teachers of the Year, including the District Teacher of the Year. He read a short bit on each teacher and mentioned a more comprehensive write up is available on our website.

Bennet - Kathryn Olesnevich  
Bowers - Lydia Cocchiola  
Highland Park - Sharon Willhelm  
Keeney - Kristin Gianpoala  
MHS - Julie Dumeer  
Waddell - Laurie Gardner

Bentley - Pamela Woodruff  
Buckley - Cherie Seaha  
Illing - Chelsea Constantino  
Martin - Konatsu Sonokawa  
Verplanck - Erin Keser

**MRA - JASON DANIELS - District TOY**

**Ms. Patterson** feels that teaching is the most important profession ever. The impact teachers have on students is huge and she is honored to be in the presence of such great teachers. She congratulated them on a job well done.

**Mr. Pattacini** congratulated all the teachers on behalf of the Board. He noted that this honor was bestowed upon them by their peers, which means so much, and is celebrated by the community. This was achieved during a pandemic, so it is that much more memorable. Teachers impact hundreds, thousands of people in their lifetime. It is important to celebrate this hard work.

**A.6. Student Representative Report**

**Mr. Pattacini** noted that both our student representatives, Leila Affini and Alexandra Hamza are graduating on Wednesday. Leila is an athlete, participating in both tennis and track. She is a student activist and serves on various committees and clubs, including the new Student Equity Advisory Team. She will be attending Boston University to study Biomedical Engineering in the fall. Alexandra is our Salutatorian this year and participates in cross country, the student equity advisory team, interact club and the young women's leadership group. She will attend the University of Chicago to study Chemistry, with a minor in either Math or Spanish (the Superintendent hopes it will be math!!). She hopes to work in environmental science as a chemist!

**Mr. Ntem-Mensah** told the girls it was a job well done! Their teachers must be excited. He hopes they keep up the good work and remember MHS - you are an

inspiration for future graduates. Mr. Ntem-Mensah also appreciates all the work the teachers do as well, as he did not speak after the Teacher of the Year awards.

**Mr. Pattacini** noted that both girls exemplify what we want to see in an MHS graduate. They are good citizens who give back to their community in various ways, including serving as student representatives.

**Chairperson Pattacini** called for a recess to enjoy cake and photos with our wonderful Teachers of the Year. Mr. Geary added his thanks to Cindy Martinez for organizing the event this evening.

**Recess 7:27 p.m. - Back in session 7:48 p.m.**

## **B. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

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

**Ms. Patterson** reported that the last meeting was held on May 23rd and in attendance were: Richard Kohls, Kwasi Ntem-Mensah, Tracy Patterson, Amy Radikas, Beth Hayes, Eric Larson, Monica Oquendo, and three MHS seniors: Stephen Gagnon, Ryan Winther and Daunte Ayala.

Items discussed:

The Committee met in Silk City Cafe, Manchester High School's student run cafe - which is part of culinary courses available at MHS. An overview of Career and Technical Education (CTE) was provided by the Director of CTE, Beth Hayes. Programming within CTE allows students to apply academic learning within exploratory or authentic school-based or external work-based opportunities. These experiences lend themselves to building student competencies demanded by 21st century employers. In addition, students are provided opportunities to earn industry recognized credentials (OSHA, ServSafe, EMT, CNA), earn dual credit, meet industry experts, and potentially be placed in pre-apprenticeships.

Board members were able to engage in a Q&A with three current MHS seniors. Students provided insight into what CTE has provided them and their next steps as graduates.

The meeting wrapped up with a tour of medical career spaces, the school store and credit union, and manufacturing process lab.

### **C. CONSENT CALENDAR**

**Mr. Geary** presented eight 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**

None.

**C.3. Establish an increase in appropriation for the Manchester Head Start Program Operations for the FY 22/23 in the amount of \$650,245 for the final grant award of \$1,300,490**

**C.4. Establish an increase in appropriation for the Manchester Head Start Training and Technical Assistance Grant for the FY 22/23 in the amount of \$7,604 for the final grant award of \$15,208**

**C.5. Establish an increase in the appropriation for the Enfield Head Start Program Operations for the FY 22/23 in the amount of \$480,616 for the final grant award of \$961,231**

**C.6. Establish an increase in the appropriation for the Enfield Head Start Training and Technical Assistance Grant for the FY 22/23 in the amount of \$5,620 for the final grant award of \$11,241**

**C.7. Establish an appropriation for the Manchester Regional Academy (MRA) out-of-town tuition for the FY 21/22 in the amount of \$1,472,999**

**C.8. Permission to apply for the Special Education stipend for the FY 22/23 in the amount of \$15,000**

**The Chairman called for a motion.**

**Secretary Patterson moved and Mr. Eisenthal seconded the recommendation to adopt the Consent Calendar as outlined in the agenda.**

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

**D. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT** \*Please note this update was delivered later in the evening and inserted into the appropriate place.

**Alexandra Hamza** reported that Manchester High School has been filled with many end of the year activities this month!

-On Wednesday, May 25th, students were invited to a career and educational opportunity fair. Students were able to learn about career paths and learn about different industries.

-Last Friday, June 10th, was the last day of school for seniors!

-Seniors were given a red hawk ready event on June 1st. There were inflatables, food trucks and music to celebrate the end of the year. It was a fun time!

-Last Monday there was an Alumni chorus concert hosted at the Bailey Auditorium to celebrate Mr. Tyler's last year at Manchester High School. The music was incredible and many former students came out to honor Mr. Tyler.

-June 9th was the annual art show at Manchester High School featuring paintings, ceramics and drawings from students in kindergarten through 12th grade.

-Manchester High School hosted a multicultural night on June 3rd run by the Student Equity Advisory Team. This event was a successful celebration of the many cultures at Manchester High School.

- Emily Madden, Madelyn Spina, Ty Leget, and Antonio Mascitti took home 3 awards for news stories this month!!

**Mr. Eisenthal** stated it was a pleasure to meet both representatives in person this evening and he wishes them all the best.

**Ms. Patterson** echoed his comments and thanked the girls for their insane dedication and support over the last two years as student representatives. She wishes them both well.

**Mr. Pattacini** thanked Leila and Alexandra for their great updates. He has enjoyed seeing them grow as people through the years. He is proud to have them represent MHS.

#### **E. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Mr. Colin McNamara, 47 Grandview Street, reported that standards are being lowered. The CDC and the Academy of Pediatrics has reduced the number of words a 24 month old should know from 50 to 30. Mr. McNamara feels nothing done in response to COVID has benefited our children. Not masks, vaccines or remote learning. All has had a negative impact on our children. He feels we have done a disservice to kids. They speak later and lack vocabulary. He says adults just pass the buck and feel no responsibility. In a meeting with Mr. Geary and Jeff Katlit (sp) he asked for the metrics on medicating children in public schools. They told him to answer that it would be illegal. Mr. McNamara seemed upset that his four children are not allowed to attend public school in Manchester because he and his wife have chosen not to comply with certain medical procedures required by the State. He feels it is unfair that we allow students to be medicated for ADHD, anxiety and depression when side effects can include hallucinations, as well as homicidal and suicidal ideation. He claims almost all school shootings are done by students on these types of medications, but we blame the guns not the drugs. Last, Mr. McNamara claims his father committed suicide while on such drugs.

Mr. Kip Kolesinskas, 44 Elberta Road, is on the Consulting Committee of the Vernon/Rockville High School AgriScience Program. Manchester sends money to allow some Manchester students to participate in the program and two students graduating from Rockville High in this program are here this evening. The money is well spent on this excellent program. They turn out future mechanics, animal techs, environmental workers as well as other programs that may or may not include further education. They

participate in leadership training as well. Mr. Kolesinskas appreciates the support of the Board.

Student Bridget S. is a graduating senior from Rockville High. She feels it has been the best learning experience in her life. She did not know what to expect but has participated in Animal Science, Leadership training, advanced welding. She has had a great time, being the chapter secretary for 2 years, doing public speaking and Vet science. She has had opportunities to learn about the effect of teamwork and community, animal behavior, animal management (which gives UCONN credit). Bridget noted that even though students in the program may not all live in Rockville/Vernon, they have felt welcomed in the main school - it is a great community. Next year Bridget will attend the University of Hartford to study Radiologic technology.

Student Savannah K. is another of our seniors graduating from Rockville this month. She has lived in Manchester her whole life and this is her 4th year at Rockville High. She has taken leadership classes, animal and plant sciences, and mechanics. There are a lot of different fields to study. She has also participated in UCONN competitions. Mainly Equine Science is her focus and she helps care for the equines at the school. This experience will help when she is applying for jobs in the field. Overall it is a great program that is friendly and welcoming.

Ms. Erika Bahler, who is not a Manchester Resident, but is the Department Head of the Agri-program at Rockville High came to thank the Board for their continued support. This year Manchester has 4 graduates. There are also 2 juniors, 2 sophomores, and 3 freshmen as well as 2 incoming students in the fall. Ms. Bahler extended an invitation to any Board member to come visit and she will arrange a tour.

Mr. Martin Ortega, 261 West Center Street, feels COVID 19 is just getting worse. Now they say the Delta version is more contagious. People are afraid to hug or be close to their family. A lot of people are getting sick worldwide. Not everyone has gotten vaccines and we need to protect ourselves and them. He feels that when in the community we should wear masks, wash hands and protect our children. As for the use of devices by our children, he implores parents to watch their children's time on the device. Children are so smart and they find ways to download or access content that is not appropriate for their age. They figure out ways around safety blocks. Youtube has



many inappropriate videos for our young children and we need to be sure what they are accessing.

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, congratulated all the Teachers of the Year and feels it is long overdue that a person of color won the District Teacher of the Year. He wishes the Rockville graduates the best of luck and is sad there is no media coverage for good things like this. Mr. Stringfellow attended the State Board of Education meeting June 1st and he will pass along some information to Dr. Radikas. He recommended the books *What Was the Harlem Renaissance?* and *100 African Americans Who Shaped History*.

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

### **F.1. Moved to A.5.**

### **F.2. Adult Education Update**

**Mr. Geary** welcomed Dr. Clare-Kearney, Director of Equity & Adult Education. Dr. Clare-Kearney presented a slideshow about the program, which can be viewed on the website. It is important to know that Adult Ed is mandated by law. We offer GED, CDP, NEDP, ESL (4 levels), Citizenship as well as a Business Academy. Pre-pandemic there were about 1188 classes taken compared to 872 this year - which represents a drop in students from about 400-500 down to about 300 this year.

Two CNA students shared their experiences. Two new citizens were present in person with one participating remotely. Two others could not make it. Our new citizens are: Johra Jesmin, Onyinye Obidoa, Rozy Rahman, Lina Alneserat and Salah Ahmed. Congratulations to you all!

Dr. Clare-Kearney added that Adult Ed has never participated in the Teacher of the Year event, however this year Mr. Robert Cooper (a retired Manchester teacher now participating in the program) has won the 2022 CT Association of Adult and Continuing Education Educator of the Year Award! In addition, student Fatima Saidu received the 2022 CT Association of Adult and Continuing Education Learner of the Year Award!! Fatima was gifted with \$500 for her win, along with 6 other students in the state.

**Mr. Eisenthal** thanked Dr. Clare-Kearney and her staff and students for wonderful, incredible part of the education system in Manchester.

**Mr. Ntem-Mensah** welcomed the new citizens to America. He used to work in the Adult Ed Program in Manchester and he is proud of the program.

**Mr. Pattacini** asked about the 3 options to a high school diploma. Dr. Clare-Kearney noted the ABE is the first program on the road to GED where most students are about 26 or older and test about grade 4-6. To participate in GED you must test at a 10th grade level. CDP is the Credit Diploma Program which is like high school for ages 17-21 and all done online. The NEDP - National External Diploma Program has students in their 40's and 50's and older as this is an experience program. There are 8 competency exams and you must have a job in order to participate.

Mr. Pattacini stated tonight reinforces that there is nothing better than hearing about adult ed. These lifelong learners have learned new languages, have goals for future education and contribute to our community. This rich, vibrant, important program is well connected to our work. He thanked the staff and students for their work.

**Chairperson Pattacini called for a recess to take photos with the new citizens. Recess 8:50 p.m. - Back in session at 8:55 p.m.**

## **G. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

### **G.1. Revision to 2022-2023 School Calendar**

**Mr. Geary** walked through the changes on the calendar. He noted that he hopes by the 2024-2025 school year we can go back to starting school before Labor Day as we did prior to the ongoing school renovations in town.

- Revise the week of Spring Vacation Period from April 10 - 14, 2023 to April 17 - 20, 2023 to capture EiD in the week since Good Friday is too early next year to incorporate into our vacation week.

- Revised start date for Integrated Preschool from September 2, 2022 to September 6, 2022
- Bring the total number of school days to 182 (180 is required)

**Secretary Patterson moved for the Board of Education to approve the revised 2022-2023 school calendar. Ms. Mix seconded the motion.**

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

#### **H. NEW BUSINESS**

None.

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

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, supports all the items on the Consent Calendar, especially MRA. He thinks the principal there is doing a good job. He enjoyed Dr. Clare-Kearney's presentation, noting they both attended MHS and he has known her a long time. Once again, Mr. Stringfellow hopes for better press coverage. He recommended the book *The Hidden Toll of Racism*.

#### **J. COMMUNICATIONS**

**Mr. Pattacini** reminded the room that the MHS graduation is slated for this Wednesday at 6:00 p.m. with a rain date of Thursday 6:00 p.m.

#### **K. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS**

Monday, June 27, 2022 - Close of School Update

Monday, July 25, 2022 - Summer Programming Update

Monday, August 29, 2022 - Opening of School Update

#### **L. ADJOURNMENT**

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

**Secretary Patterson moved and Mr. Ntem-Mensah seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting.**

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

**Adjournment 9:07 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

Tracy Patterson  
Board Secretary