

MANCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION

Regular Meeting

June 22, 2020

Lincoln Center/Virtual Meeting

PRESENT: Gundersen, Heinrich, Meggers, Pattacini, Patterson, Scappaticci, Stefanovicz, Thames

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

ABSENT: Hughes

A. OPENING

A.1. & 2. Meeting Called to Order

Chairperson Thames called the meeting back to order at 7:03 p.m. following an executive session that took place at 5:30 p.m. All in attendance participated in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, led by Mr. Thames. Peter Meggers asked us to take a moment to honor the life of a native Manchester son, Michael Dyer. Mr. Dyer was a lifelong resident of Manchester and a product of Manchester Public Schools. He was an active member of the Manchester Scholarship Foundation and many other organizations that benefited Manchester. Mr. Thames called for a moment of silence in his memory.

A.3. Secretary's Welcome

Mr. Pattacini stated that as Secretary of the Board of Education, he wished to welcome the online viewers to this regular meeting of the Board of Education. Mr. Geary and Mr. Thames are present at Lincoln Center, but everyone else is participating from their own residences. This evening public speak will resume and a sign-up document was created prior to the meeting. If nobody signs up today please remember to do so before the next meeting to participate. Mr.

Pattacini thanked the public for their interest in this evening's meeting and the Manchester Public Schools. He is proud of the work happening in Manchester.

A.4. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting

APPROVED – Minutes Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of June 8, 2020. Secretary Pattacini moved and Mr. Scappaticci seconded the motion.

7/0/1 – Voted in favor.

B. COMMITTEE REPORTS

None.

C. CONSENT CALENDAR

Mr. Geary presented three 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. Permission to apply for the Innovation Grant for FY 20-21

C.3. Extended Field Trip Request - 8 MHS Students - 4 Chaperones - Cross Country Meet - Manchester, New Hampshire - September 25-26, 2020

The Chairman called for a motion.

Secretary Pattacini moved and Mr. Scappaticci seconded the recommendation to adopt the Consent Calendar as outlined in the evening's agenda.

8/0 - Voted in favor.

D. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT

None.

E. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

F. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

F.1. Youth Work on Race - More Than a Word presentation

Mr. Geary informed us that about a week ago the "N" word was used online by a group of kids from MPS. Administration and others have worked on how to respond to this and discuss the issue. A group of students, along with several adults, put together an interactive presentation that involved everyone on the Board. The entire interactive presentation is available for viewing on the website. Ashley Okwuazi, the Youth Empowerment Coordinator, stated we need to amplify the voice of the young people with marginalized identities. The students involved in this project were Soraya, Jared, Kyle, Leila, Cassandra, Mia and Stephanie, and they all attend MHS.

Kyle and Leila gave us information on the historical use of the "N" word and Leila and Jared spoke about how it is used today. Stephanie and Soraya talked about how other cultures/groups/races have slurs and some "reclaim" the negative words used against them, but that only those in that group should be using (if at all) that word.

The question being asked was why talking about the "N" word is so hard. Answers from students varied from being told it was taboo by a parent to being nervous to say the wrong thing. Some adults noted it was akin to saying a swear word and the word carries pain for so many. It was the consensus that the word is disrespectful and degrading, whether used by a black or a white person.

The next question was how and when should this subject be taught to children. The general consensus was that it should be taught early and often, possibly along with middle school health class. Some felt that it should be included about

the time students learn about Christopher Columbus (who hopefully is no longer labeled a hero in classrooms). It was also noted parents should be involved in this conversation and teachers need help having this conversation.

F.2. Close of School

Mr. Geary noted that we do not yet have any guidance from the state regarding the fall. Last Monday was the last day of school. Graduations for MRA and MHS have begun and Adult Ed has their graduation tomorrow. Mr. Geary is hoping to hear from the state this week regarding the fall. Surveys have gone out to parents, staff and youth about their feelings on the situation.

G. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

H. NEW BUSINESS

None.

I. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

J. COMMUNICATIONS

None.

K. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

July 13 - Fall Planning Update; Update on Preschool Center

August 31 - Opening of School Update

L. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Thames called for a motion to adjourn.

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

8/0 - Voted in favor.

Adjournment 8:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christopher Pattacini
Board Secretary