PRESENT:  Gundersen, Heinrich, Hughes, Luna, Meggers, Pattacini, Patterson, Stefanovicz, Thames

ALSO PRESENT:  Superintendent of Schools Geary, Deputy Superintendent Curriculum & Special Services Radikas, Director of Finance & Management Clancy

ABSENT:

A. OPENING

A.1. & 2. Meeting Called to Order
Chairperson Thames called the meeting back to order at 7:12 p.m.  He explained the Board had previously been in Executive Session.  All in attendance participated in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, led by Mr. Thames.

A.3. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting

APPROVED – Minutes Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of June 14, 2021.  Secretary Pattacini moved and Ms. Patterson seconded the motion.

9/0 – Voted in favor.

B. COMMITTEE REPORTS

None.

C. CONSENT CALENDAR

Mr. Geary presented seven 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**
- Transfer from System-wide Science Dues and Fees account to System-wide Science Textbooks account in the amount of $2,548

**C.3. Permission to apply for the FY 21/22 Manchester Head Start Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) which is a prorated cost of living adjustment of 1.22% for staff salaries and fringe benefits**

**C.4. Establish an appropriation for the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Secondary Supplemental Enhancement Grant for the FY20/22 in the amount of $49,961**

**C.5. Establish an increase in the appropriation for Manchester Regional Academy for the FY 20/21 by $431,008 bringing the total appropriation to $1,231,008**

**C.6. Establish an appropriation for the COVID-19 Special Education Stipend Grant for the FY 20/22 in the amount of $20,000**

**C.7. Extended Field Trip Request Form for Manchester High School’s World Language/GSA Trip to Spain, Number of students TBD, 2 Chaperones, April 6 - 14, 2023.**

The Chairman called for a motion.

Secretary Pattacini moved and Mr. Heinrich seconded the recommendation to adopt the Consent Calendar as outlined in this evening’s agenda.

**DISCUSSION:**
*Mr. Thames* requested the Superintendent give a background on item #5. Mr. Geary reviewed that the budget for MRA is about $800,000 and in early fall we appropriate some of that money. Tuition comes in and funds about 33% of salaries with 66% being paid by the board. At the end of the year the remainder of the request (in this case $431,008) is appropriated.
The vote was called.

9/0 - Voted in favor.

D. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT
None.

E. PUBLIC COMMENTS
None.

F. Superintendent’s Report

F.1. Close of School Update
Mr. Geary hopes that the fall will be closer to the pre-Covid view of what school looks like. Mr. Geary’s presentation is available for view on the website. He noted we are entering the Recovery portion of the timeline and he expects this to occur over the next 3 years. At the same time we are Reimagining how we operate schools in the future.

Mr. Geary reviewed that the district received $6.8 million in ESSER 2 funding and will be receiving $15.6 million in ESSER 3 funding, also called the American Recovery Act. Monies can be spent over the 21-22, 22-23 and 23-24 school years and possibly the summer of 2024 as well.

The robust summer program being held this summer (at no cost to families, but a cost of $1 million) includes 6 weeks of programming, Monday-Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. There are approximately 2000 students signed up with 1000 from elementary schools, 500 from the middle schools and 500 from MHS. The schools that will house the summer program include Verplanck, Bowers, Waddell, Bennet and MHS. There will be approximately 250 staff, including student employees. Mr. Geary anticipates running similar summer programs for the next several summers. He noted employees will receive 1.2x their normal rate to encourage participation.

Mr. Geary reviewed the projected items being supported by the American Recovery Act:
• 10-15 Tutors to support acceleration in elementary reading and secondary math ($300,000)
• Additional staff (23.0 FTE) to support smaller class sizes at the elementary level and expanded STEAM programming in grades 5-12 ($1,250,000)
• 15 Case Managers to support home visits and engagement efforts for students who are chronically absent ($600,000)
• Contracted Services for Mental Health Supports ($650,000)
• 6-8 Behavior Technicians to support student return to school ($400,000)
• Upgraded technology for students and staff ($1,000,000)
• Directors of Teaching and Learning - Humanities and STEAM - 5-12 to support curriculum development ($300,000)
• Health insurance for new staff employed with grant funds ($750,000)
• Some funds may be used to support air conditioning at MHS, depending on cost estimate

Some important notes about the American Recovery Act:
• The ESSER 2 Application is complete and the ESSER 3 application is in progress.
• Public comment was on the BOE agenda June 14.
• The plan was emailed to all of MPS for feedback on June 15.
• A parent focus group was held June 16.
• ECS funding to Manchester is scheduled to increase by approximately $1.5 million in each of the next 7 years.
• As federal funding fades out, costs that need to remain in place will be shifted to ECS - Alliance, which allows us to avoid a funding cliff.

Mr. Geary reviewed that the Buckley staff have vacated the building and movers are moving all items from Buckley to Robertson. Construction is already underway.

Manchester Middle Academy will move to Washington, and staff have packed their belongings. Minor improvements to Washington, including some painting and cleaning, will be done prior to the start of the school year.

The Ed Specs for Keeney were approved by the Board at the last meeting. The grant application will be submitted to the state for reimbursement prior to July 1st.
The cafeteria and library are being redesigned at Highland Park to create additional teaching spaces to facilitate smaller class sizes. Two additional teaching spaces will be created in the library and the library and cafeteria will be combined. Bennet will also have two classroom spaces in their library.

The gym floor and auditorium lobby at MHS will be redone.

The Welcome Center does not have enough space for the new attendance case managers. We are exploring leasing the former Webster Bank on Middle Turnpike.

Mr. Geary reviewed the vacancies in the district, including Principals at Bowers, Martin and Illing, an Assistant Principal at MHS, Chief Performance Officer and Pupil Services Supervisor for grades 5-12.

Regarding mask use, at this time the current rules, including requiring masks inside and allowing for no masks outside if students are moving around.

Mr. Geary noted that the onsite vaccine clinic held at Illing on June 7th for students ages 12-15 vaccinated about 100 students. MPS will continue to hold vaccine clinics as new age groups are eligible.

Ms. Luna asked what the process would be once the estimates on the cost of air conditioning at MHS are received. Mr. Geary stated that once they have a clue about the cost the Board will have to approve it. The goal would be to have that done by the Spring of 2022, before the heat hits. Ms. Luna was also encouraged by the number of volunteers from MHS.

Ms. Patterson asked about the upgrade to devices. Mr. Geary noted that grades 5-8 did not have their technology updated recently. Devices were sent home over the summer. Most Chromebooks have a 5 year shelf life so any that have less than 4 years use will be passed down to the elementary schools.

Regarding mask use, Ms. Patterson wondered if the same rules will apply to the Curiosity Camp as do during the school year. Mr. Geary stated the same rules apply, masks inside and no masks outside/for breaks.
Ms. Patterson next asked about tracking vaccination data. Mr. Geary noted the last case that was contact traced did ask students if they were vaccinated, and if they were no quarantine was ordered. Mr. Geary stated we will continue to contact trace and take each case individually.

Ms. Stefanovicz gave a shout out to the Buckley teachers for their flexibility and resilience in having to pack up their classrooms at the end of a very difficult year.

Mr. Thames asked about the future trend of the number of students at Highland Park. He wondered if this has changed over the years. Mr. Geary reviewed that when HPS was renovated the student population was projected to be 320 with class sizes about 24-25. That class size is no longer targeted in Manchester, with pre-Covid class sizes aimed closer to 18-22 and currently in the 15-18 range. Even pre-Covid at HPS, music and some art were taught on a cart. With the need for smaller class sizes currently and there being no other options at HPS, the cafeteria will give up some space to accommodate two additional classrooms. Mr. Geary noted that students eating lunch in their class seemed to work well and he anticipates continuing that practice.

Mr. Geary reviewed that Waddell and Verplanck can house about 500-525 students and the new renovations of Buckley, Keeney and Bowers will aim for 390-400 students.

G. UNFINISHED BUSINESS
None.

H. NEW BUSINESS

H.1. Superintendent’s Evaluation

Secretary Pattacini moved for the Board of Education to accept the written evaluation of the Superintendent of Schools for the 2020-21 school year. Ms. Luna seconded the motion.

DISCUSSION:
**Mr. Thames** read highlights of the Board’s letter regarding Mr. Geary’s exemplary performance for the 2020-2021 school year.

**Mr. Pattacini** added his personal thanks for the work Mr. Geary has done. He praised both Mr. Geary and the administration for managing the Covid-19 crisis, reinventing and readjusting curriculum, providing professional development and addressing student needs. On top of all this, the focus on race and equity continued to remain a priority, as it has for a number of years in Manchester.

**Ms. Patterson** had a front seat to MPS as a parent of two students. She has seen the challenges and shouts out to the teachers who stepped up and to Mr. Geary, for his leadership.

**Mr. Thames** felt that Mr. Geary did a great job not only navigating the big picture, but addressing all the small issues that arise with the same intent.

The vote was called.

9/0 - Voted in favor.

**H.2. Superintendent’s Contract**

Secretary Pattacini moved for the Manchester Board of Education to authorize the Board Chair to enter into a contract for July 1, 2021- June 30, 2024 with the Superintendent of Schools. Mr. Heinrich seconded the motion.

**DISCUSSION:**

**Mr. Meggers** clarified that while he will vote in the affirmative on this subject, he had an issue with the contract being for three years and not one. He is used to a one year contract. Mr. Meggers did state he feels that overall, Mr. Geary is a good community leader and in times like this we need strong leadership.

The vote was called.

9/0 voted in favor.
I. **PUBLIC COMMENTS** (Limited to items on tonight’s agenda)

Mr. Geary read some FaceBook comments. One asked if there was a way to address the wasted food from breakfast and lunch. Mr. Geary noted that this is tricky because between the rules about what kids “have” to take and what shelters will take as donations it is difficult. He will look into what we can do.

It was asked how the case managers will address attendance. Mr. Geary noted the list of chronically absent students will be shared with the case managers and they will do outreach in August to see how those families are doing and what they can do to help them overcome barriers for student attendance in school.

A question about the Family Resource Centers space was discussed and Mr. Geary affirmed that they will get their spaces back. Many of the FRC spaces were used as COVID isolation rooms, which will no longer be needed. Visitors will be allowed in schools this year and the FRCs will have their spaces back.

Ms. Sarah Somers, through FaceBook, asked when public visitors will be allowed back in the Lincoln Center. Mr. Geary stated that he will discuss the matter with the Town and in the meantime people are welcome to participate virtually.

J. **COMMUNICATIONS**

None.

K. **ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS**

Monday, July 12 - Spring Data Update

Monday, August 9 - Opening of School (tentative meeting may be cancelled)

Monday, August 30 - Opening of School

L. **ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Thames called for a motion to adjourn.

Secretary Pattacini moved and Ms. Patterson seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting.
9/0 - Voted in favor.

Adjournment 8:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christopher Pattacini
Board Secretary