

MANCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION

Regular Meeting

July 14, 2014

Lincoln Center

PRESENT: Hagenow, Leon, Pattacini, Pazda, Scappaticci, Stafford, Thames

ALSO PRESENT: Superintendent of Schools Geary, Assistant to the Superintendent for Finance & Management Brooks, Assistant Superintendent for Pupil Personnel Services Matfess

ABSENT: Crockett, Cruz, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum Radikas

A. OPENING

A.1.& 2. Meeting Called to Order

Chairperson Pattacini called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. All in attendance participated in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, led by Mr. Pattacini.

Mr. Pattacini asked everyone to observe a moment of silence in memory of Safwaan Dalal. He offered condolences to the family of this recent MHS graduate who lost his life in a car accident recently.

A.3. Adoption of Minutes of Previous Meeting

ADOPTED – Minutes Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of June 23, 2014. Secretary Scappaticci moved and Mr. Leon seconded the motion.

7/0 – Voted in favor.

B. CONSENT CALENDAR

Dr. Kisiel presented five 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. Establish an appropriation in the amount of \$200,000 for the State of Connecticut, Department of Social Services, for the Medicaid Grant for FY 14/15

B.3. Establish an appropriation in the amount of \$40,000 for the Summer School program, funded by tuition payments for FY 14/15

B.4. Establish an appropriation in the amount of \$771,780 for the State Teachers' Retirement Grant for FY 14/15

B.5. State of Connecticut, Authorized Signature Change Form, Authorized Signatures of the ED099 Form Agreement for Child Nutrition Programs

The Chairman called for a motion.

Secretary Scappaticci moved and Mr. Leon seconded the recommendation to approve the Consent Calendar as outlined in tonight's agenda.

7/0 - Voted in favor.

C. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, spoke about the Crimean War of 1854-1856 and suggested a book on the topic. In the Intelligence Report of the Summer of 2014 by the Southern Poverty Law Center, Mr. Stringfellow reports a rise in violence, especially with hate groups and murders. He suggested an article regarding an antisocial network and resulting suicides from *TIME*, July 7-14 issue. Last week Mr. Stringfellow attended the Board of Director's meeting and was pleased with their remarks in support of the Board of Education's plan to close and renovate like-new the various school buildings. He notes, however, that Glastonbury recently backed away from a plan to close two of their schools. Mr. Stringfellow recommended a book, *Belle*, by Paula Burn, of which he had previously recommended the movie. Last, Mr. Stringfellow commented on recent opposition to the Common Core, of which he is in favor.

D. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT – PART I

Mr. Pattacini welcomed Mr. Geary to his first Board meeting as Superintendent of Schools.

D.1. Update on Close of School and Summer Work

Mr. Geary reviewed that over 400 students graduated from MHS on June 19th and an inspiring Adult Education graduation was held on June 18th.

During the last weeks of the school year and first few weeks of the summer there have been teachers in grades K-5 developing curriculum in English Language Arts and Math.

At Illing, renovations are underway to repurpose space in technology education, art, and music areas. The work is on schedule to be completed by August 20th.

Both Buckley and Keeney schools are having electrical work done, which is on schedule, and this should be completed by August 2nd.

D.2. Update on Summer Programs

Mr. Geary reviewed the high school has a program underway, partially modeled after SAAM, in collaboration with the Parks & Rec where 200 students ages 11-15 are taking part in a camp-like session with both academic and enrichment activities. There are the regular remedial summer school classes being held as well, along with enrichment classes in various topics, such as cake decorating, cooking, forensics, and environmental science. Also at MHS is a boot-camp for sophomores signed up for AP World History, along with a prep class for Honors Geometry students for those moving up from College Prep Algebra 1.

Jumpstart is a program for children who do not have a preschool experience and are entering Kindergarten this year. Mr. Geary noted that 40 students are taking part in this program, which will focus on Kindergarten readiness skills.

SAAM is underway at Highland Park and Bennet Academy. At Highland Park there were 222 students signed up and 209 actually have participated. Of that number, approximately 90 students have missed at least one day so far. At Bennet, 210 students were signed up and 196 have attended, with about 82 students missing at least one day. School counselors have been employed at both sites to follow up with families, make daily attendance calls, conduct home visits, and otherwise offer support. Students are working with reader's and writer's workshops, phonics instruction, word study, math, introduction to novels in grade 3, and with online programs Lexia and Math Whiz, among other activities. Mr. Geary acknowledged the work of many in the district, from food services, transportation, and custodians among others that have come together to make this program work.

Mr. Pattacini wondered, with only 209 of 222 accepted students showing up for the program, were children called up from a waiting list to fill any seats? Mr. Geary stated there was no waiting list created. Families have been called and some reasons for lack of attendance were vacations, medical issues, problems with afternoon daycare, or not liking the camp. Mr. Pattacini wonders if a waiting list might be something to consider in the future.

Ms. Pazda gave kudos for an incredible, important, almost year-round program. She notes it is very important to prevent the summer slide. Ms. Pazda liked the addition of counselors to support families and she looks forward to the results. She wondered if the students are tested in the program or only followed up with Fall and Spring testing in their home schools. Mr. Geary noted there is testing in both the SAAM program and in the home schools with NWEA.

Ms. Matfess added that Jumpstart is a six week program for students with no preschool experience entering Kindergarten. The program runs Monday through Thursday for a half day. Forty-two children are participating this summer.

D.3. Superintendent's Entry Plan

Mr. Geary presented a Power Point with his goals for the future of Manchester Public Schools. The full presentation is available on the website.

Enhancing communication and establishing relationships with stakeholders, building trust, and improving the MPS image, including creating a new website and updated logo all play a part in Mr. Geary's start as Superintendent.

Ms. Pazda felt this was a well thought out plan and presents the perfect opportunity to change the perception of Manchester Public Schools. She feels perception often becomes reality. Since receiving updates from Redline she was able to stay more informed on the goings on at MHS, and she has been blown away by the accomplishments of the students. Prior to that, she never heard all the positive things going on at MHS. Ms. Pazda thinks it will take us all to change the perception. Mr. Geary agreed and noted there are things that still need to be fixed, but we can publicize the good stuff. One such example is an MHS student, Katelyn Malone, who recently traveled to Washington D.C. for a women's leadership conference and met Hillary Clinton, which is an exciting honor for a Manchester student to earn. That is one of the many items put on Redline for everyone to see that people might not otherwise know about.

Mr. Thames likes the idea of rebranding Manchester Public Schools. He feels it is important for Mr. Geary to put his personal imprint upon the system. He wondered about the plan for a rollout and what the costs might be. Mr. Geary reviewed the new logo will be tied into the Health & Wellness plan with labels on water bottles. This is covered by a grant already. Other plans are free, such as changing our domain name to msppride. Eventually the uniforms in the district will showcase the new logo.

Mr. Pattacini thinks that it is great to promote the positive and do the work needed to improve what needs improving.

E. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

E.1. Board Bylaws #9000: Section 13 - Committees

Mr. Pattacini reviewed this item had been presented previously to the Board and e was looking for a motion tonight to accept the revisions made to this section of the Bylaws.

Mr. Leon had a question about Section A, Standing Committees and the fact that the Chair shall appoint 2 or 4 members to give equal representation to minority representation. Mr. Leon pointed out there are more than two parties on the Board and appointing 2 or 4 members will not give equal representation. He wondered why not 3 members, one of each party.

Mr. Pattacini noted this simply was designed to prevent the majority party from having majority control of any committee. On a 4 person committee, up to 2 members of the majority party may sit.

Mr. Scappaticci reviewed, as a member of the Policy Committee who revised this section, this part of the Bylaws has not been changed. The way it stands there will be minority party representation on each committee; though possibly not all minority parties would be represented.

Ms. Pazda, as another member of the Policy Committee, was also a bit confused on the topic and it had raised a question in her mind as well.

Mr. Pattacini noted that the state law was written to ensure minority representation and our bylaws are consistent with that. Ms. Pazda agreed, even though she found it problematic, it is in keeping with state statute.

Mr. Leon also wondered about subcommittee chairs/co-chairs being done away with.

Ms. Pazda reviewed that in the past co-chairs have done the bidding of Central Office, such as scheduling meeting dates, etc. That type of work is no longer needed, with updated technology. However, co-chairs may be needed and each committee itself can determine that.

Mr. Leon noted that under the Buildings & Sites Committee section it talks about the Board developing and recommending a maintenance schedule for Buildings and Grounds. He hopes this does not refer to a day to day schedule, as he does not feel that would be appropriate. Mr. Scappaticci noted that refers to major maintenance. Mr. Leon would like that to be clarified, possibly to refer to capital projects instead.

Mr. Pattacini felt "Capital Improvement Plan" would be a good replacement for the words "maintenance schedule".

Mr. Stafford brought the discussion back to the number of members on committees. He felt the even number of committee members originally was to make it even between the Republican and Democratic parties. He noted that if 3 or 5 members were allowed, then it would be easier for the majority party to hold majority on a committee. Mr. Leon pointed out that 5 would not be allowed, as that is a quorum. However, with 3 members there could be 1 from each party, and with 4 members one party will always have a majority on the committee.

Mr. Pattacini asked for a motion to incorporate the change discussed.

Secretary Scappaticci moved that the Board of Education approve the proposed changes in Section 13 – Committees – Board of Education Bylaws #9000 as proposed by the Policy Committee with the amended change under Buildings and Sites bullet 1 of the deletion of "maintenance schedule" replaced with "Capital Improvement Plan". Ms. Pazda seconded the motion.

6/1/0 – Voted in favor, with Mr. Leon opposed.

E.2. Policy 4118: Alcohol, Tobacco, and Drugs in the Workplace

Mr. Pattacini called for a motion, seeing no questions.

Secretary Scappaticci moved that the Board of Education approve the proposed changes in Policy 4118: Alcohol, Tobacco, and Drugs in the Workplace, as proposed by the Policy. Ms. Pazda seconded the motion.

7/0 – Voted in favor.

F. NEW BUSINESS

None.

G. COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Pattacini requested, that with the re-adoption of our policies, written input from Board members regarding what committees they would like to serve on so he can review if any changes should be made. He will be sending out an email and would like a response prior to the next Board meeting.

Mr. Pattacini also noted that the Administrator's Union will be entering into negotiations and any Board member wishing to participate in that negotiation needs to let him know by the close of business on Wednesday.

H. COMMITTEE REPORTS

H.1. Curriculum & Instruction Committee

Ms. Hagenow reviewed the committee last met on June 23, 2014. Present were Ms. Hagenow, Mr. Scappaticci, Mr. Stafford, Dr. Radikas; Mr. Geary; Dr. Olivera and Dr. Ratchford. The topics of branding and the Google Summit Platform were discussed. The Google Platform is typically a 2 day event with educators teaching other educators in a hands-on workshop style.

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

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, congratulated Mr. Geary on his appointment and felt his presentation this evening was great. He thinks the Board made a great choice in hiring him. Mr. Stringfellow hopes the summer programs are successful. He suggested articles in *Esence* magazine, August edition, on the topics of back to school, desegregation, and low cost ways to keep busy. He would like to see more parents of color becoming involved and not just complaining. Mr. Stringfellow pointed out East Hartford's end of year article in the paper. He wondered if the current news topic of teacher tenure would affect Connecticut, as well as the opposition to the Common Core. He spoke with Dr. Nydia Torres, Superintendent of the Technical High School System regarding their mission statement. He pointed out some students do not go on to college and we need to be inclusive of all students. Mr. Stringfellow again expressed how happy he is with Mr. Geary as Superintendent and noted this appointment excites him as Mr. Geary really seems to listen and he hopes for a successful school year.

J. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

None.

K. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Pattacini called for a motion to adjourn.

Secretary Scappaticci moved and Ms. Pazda seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting.

7/0 - Voted in favor.

Adjournment 7:59 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jason Scappaticci
Board Secretary