

MANCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION

Regular Meeting

August 26, 2019

Lincoln Center

PRESENT: Conyers, Hagenow, Hughes, Meggers, Stefanovicz, Thames

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

ABSENT: Maio, Pattacini, Scappaticci

A. OPENING

A.1. & 2. Meeting Called to Order

Chairperson Thames called the meeting back to order at 7:06 p.m. from an Executive Session that was previously called to order at 6:20 and ended at 6:50 p.m. All in attendance participated in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, led by Mr. Thames.

A.3. Secretary's Welcome

Ms. Stefanovicz stated that as Acting Secretary of the Board of Education, she wished to extend a warm welcome to everyone present and to the television viewers. She, along with the Board and the Superintendent, were pleased to be joined in celebrating the achievement, reviewing information, and discussing areas for growth, along with making policy decisions related to the effective operation of the Manchester Public Schools. Ms. Stefanovicz explained that this is a regular meeting of the Board and all items that will be discussed or voted on this evening have been posted, as required by state law.

Ms. Stefanovicz explained that as the Manchester Board of Education, they are here to set goals, listen to reports of the Superintendent, approve budgets, contracts, and personnel appointments, and to create policy for the district. It was explained that meetings of the Board are open to the public, but are not

meetings with individual members of the public. Therefore, comments from the audience will be confined to the time designated for the public to address the Board.

Last, Ms. Stefanovicz stated she appreciates the public's interest in this evening's meeting and the Manchester Public Schools.

A.4. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting

APPROVED – Minutes Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of July 8, 2019. Secretary Pattacini moved and Ms. Hagenow seconded the motion.

6/0 – Voted in favor.

B. COMMITTEE REPORTS

None.

C. CONSENT CALENDAR

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

C.1. Personnel Information

Details were provided to Board Members in their packets.

C.2. Transfer of Funds

- Transfer from System-wide Medical Services Other Purchased Services account to System-wide Medical Services Contracted Substitute Services account in the amount of \$9,000
- Transfer from Verplanck School Administration Computer Supplies and Materials account to Verplanck Communications Related Equipment account in the amount of \$800
- Transfer from Verplanck School Administration General Supplies and Materials account to Verplanck School Administration Professional Development account in the amount of \$2,500

C.3. Establish an appropriation for FY 19-20 for MRA out-of-town tuition to provide services to special needs students ranging in age from 14-21, in the amount of \$800,000

C.4. Establish an appropriation for FY 19-21 for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA 611) grant, in the amount of \$1,789,429

C.5. Establish an appropriation for FY 19-21 for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA 619) grant, in the amount of \$63,946

C.6. Establish an appropriation for FY 19-20 for the Enfield Head Start, State Department of Education Head Start Services Innovation Grant, in the amount of \$100,000

C.7. Establish an appropriation for FY 19-20 for the Manchester Head Start, State Department of Education Services Grant, in the amount of \$145,127

C.8. Establish an appropriation for FY 19-20 for the Manchester Head Start, State Department of Education Services Innovation Enhancement Grant, in the amount of \$30,121

C.9. Permission to apply for FY 19-20 for the Alliance District Grant

C.10. Permission to apply for FY 19-20 for the Priority School District Grant

C.11. Establish an appropriation for FY 19-20 for the School Security Competitive Grant Program, in the amount of \$13,058

C.12. Establish an appropriation for FY 19-20 for Community Use of Schools - Bailey Auditorium, in the amount of \$9,797

C.13. Establish an appropriation for FY 19-22 for the Barr Foundation Grant, in the amount of \$500,000

C.14. Certify resolutions to update signatures on bank accounts for Illing Middle School and Manchester High School with United Bank

C.15. Establish an appropriation for FY 19-20 for the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Secondary Work-Based Learning Enhancement Grant, in the amount of \$25,000

The Chairman called for a motion.

Acting Secretary Stefanovicz moved and Ms. Hagenow seconded the recommendation to adopt the Consent Calendar as outlined in today's agenda.

DISCUSSION:

Mr. Conyers asked about the larger appropriations in the Consent Calendar. Mr. Geary reviewed the MRA appropriation supports $\frac{1}{3}$ of the salary for MRA teachers, while $\frac{2}{3}$ comes from the Board budget. The IDEA grants support programs for students with disabilities. Mr. Geary reminded us that we are the fiscal agent for Head Start Enfield. The permission to apply for the Alliance and Priority District Grants is a yearly item. The School Security Grant is a competitive grant. Item 12 pertains to fund repairs for Bailey Auditorium. The Barr Foundation Grant is used for college and career readiness, specifically internships for our students at MHS. Item 14 is to add the current administrators of MHS and Illing to the accounts to be able to sign checks. Lastly, Mr. Geary noted that the Carl D. Perkins Grant is an enhancement grant to support work based learning on top of the regular amount of the grant.

Mr. Thames wondered when we will know the amounts of the Alliance and Priority District Grants. Mr. Geary stated that each year the time table varies; last year we found out mid-July. We have an idea of the amounts for this year, which totals about \$7 million. Mr. Thames wondered how much time is needed to prepare the grant and how the program plans would be impacted if the amount varies significantly. Mr. Geary stated it takes about 4-6 weeks to prepare the grant but basically we already know some items it will cover, such as

STEM specialists. If the amount is reduced, it will likely impact items such as supplies and materials and technology.

The vote was called.

6/0 - Voted in favor.

D. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT

None.

E. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Rd., welcomed everyone back. He pointed out there is a new Commissioner of Education, Miguel Cardona, and he wishes him well. Mr. Stringfellow recommended an illustrated book about the Boston Tea Party as well as the book *360 Days Walking the Red Road*. Mr. Stringfellow noted that he watched the movie *Dora the Explorer* and stated there were positive Latino characters in the movie. Mr. Stringfellow spoke about the 400th anniversary of Jamestown as well as an article in the *New York Times* about slavery a couple weeks ago. Mr. Stringfellow noted that everyone's background is important and should get into the curriculum. Last, he recommended an article in *Family Circle* about freshman orientation in college.

F. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

F.1. Introduction of New Administrators

Mr. Geary introduced several new administrators, including Ann Johnston, Principal of Keeney; Jennifer Barreto-Tremblay, Pupil Services Supervisor; Amy Beardsworth, Assistant Principal at Illing; and Jessica Pepin, Assistant Principal at Verplanck.

Mr. Thames thanked the administration. He noted that we have to try to bridge the gap between parents and our work so they feel comfortable asking questions. We need to build kids with good character, moral standards and grit.

F.2. Opening of School Update

Mr. Geary reviewed the openings still in the district, including a social worker at Verplanck, a Special Education teacher for the Keeney DLC, classroom teachers

in grades 2 and 3 at Martin and grade 4 at Buckley, Special Education and math teachers at Illing, various tutors and paras throughout the district, two custodians and one electrician. Overall, Mr. Geary thinks we are in good shape, with interviews ongoing.

The bus routes went live today, along with a new Transportation handbook. Mr. Geary reviewed we have added additional staff for the next few weeks to help field calls regarding transportation. In addition, central office administrators will be at each school for arrival and dismissal for the first two weeks of school. Other than adding new students, or for reasons of safety, there will be no changes made to routes for the first two weeks of school to give everything a chance to settle down.

Ms. Stefanovicz asked how bus routes are communicated to parents and new families. Mr. Geary reviewed he has sent email blasts and will again, directing parents to the website. The Welcome Center provides that same message to incoming families.

Ms. Hagenow expressed some concern about the new traffic pattern at Verplanck, wondering if there would be staff helping children in the parking lot. Mr. Geary noted there are several adults, including a security person, at Verplanck to assist with the arrival and dismissal. Maps will also be sent to parents outlining the bus loop and parent pickup area.

Mr. Thames asked about contingency plans regarding the vacancies. Mr. Geary stated that they have a retired educator ready to backup the Keeney DLC position. As for the other classroom teachers, there were demo lessons going on today and substitutes will be utilized in some spots if needed.

Mr. Geary noted that there are several projects finishing up in the district, including Verplanck, the MHS parking lot, the MRA roof, as well as refreshed painting and landscaping for Highland, the Preschool Center, and Bennet.

Mr. Geary reviewed the professional development happening last week and this week, including Administrators August 19-21, new teachers August 22-26, building PD August 27, district-wide teaching and learning August 28, Equity

August 29, and convocation along with meet & greets at the elementary schools
August 30.

Students in grades K-5, 7 and 9 start school September 3rd, while grades 6, 8 and 10-12 start school the next day, September 4th. This gives students new in their buildings a day to acclimate before welcoming the full student body back into the building.

Mr. Geary spoke about the volatile budget lines:

- *Paras are about at budget
- *Overtime is in good shape
- *Other professional services and Special Education services is tracking better than last year
- *Subs - there will be a new approach to days missed this year
- *Transportation - we are at the contracted number of buses so far
- *Tuition, public and private - was over last year and is tracking better this year
- *Heat/electricity/water/gas - all are being closely watched
- *Legal fees - less litigation is expected this year as there will be fewer contract negotiations

He also reminded us that we are still waiting on the figures for the Alliance Grant and Priority Grant.

Ms. Stefanovicz was happy to hear that the elementary schools will have meet & greets so families can peek into classrooms. Unfortunately that cannot happen at Verplanck before Tuesday due to the Temporary Certificate of Occupancy restrictions. Mr. Geary noted Verplanck is on track, though there was an issue with the playscapes so they may not be ready on day one.

Ms. Stefanovicz is happy to hear about the painting and landscaping refreshers, noting that it is easier to maintain than to overhaul.

Ms. Stefanovicz asked if only certified staff participate in PD. Mr. Geary noted that some PD are for teachers and administrators, tutors attend some and the rest of the staff, including paras, secretaries etc., attend the rest. Ms. Stefanovicz asked if bus drivers are able to participate in any. Mr. Geary stated

they do not, but that we are working on bringing the drivers into the schools they service the second week of school to do circle work. We will proactively add bus monitors on buses as needed. We will help the drivers work on building relationships. Ms. Stefanovicz wondered if there is a maximum number of students on a bus before a monitor is needed. Mr. Geary noted the maximum number of kids on a bus is 72 and the routes that are in need will have monitors, regardless of the number of students.

Mr. Thames asked about how the new mascot will be rolled out. Mr. Geary stated that the video seen this evening will be released on the website and social media sites. New apparel and reusable grocery bags will be given to staff and the MHS cafe will be revamped. Each season, as scheduled, uniform replacements will add the mascot. Little by little these things will take place. The previous emblems were removed from the building and there is no plan to add new emblems, though the front of the high school will receive a facelift in the spring. The granite in the back of MHS will also be refurbished.

G. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

H. NEW BUSINESS

None.

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

Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, congratulated the new members of the administration. Mr. Stringfellow recommended an article in the September *Reader's Digest* about teachers who changed lives. He also recommended the book *You, Your Child and School*. Mr. Stringfellow supports the Consent Calendar. He would like to have us look at the average student, not just the above-average student who gets all the press. Lastly, Mr. Stringfellow recommended an article in *Family Circle* about success for back to school.

J. COMMUNICATIONS

Ms. Stefanovicz thanked all the teachers that have had to pack up and unpack and then pack up again over the last couple of years.

Mr. Thames thanked all the people helping to get Verplanck ready, including the custodians and painters, along with the construction workers. Mr. Jones will be having members of the community assist in welcoming students to their new building on the first day of school. Mr. Thames encourages all students to come to school every day and if families need help with this to please partner with us and reach out for help.

K. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

Monday - September 9, 2019 - District Improvement Plan Update; Professional Development Highlights

Monday - September 23, 2019 - Update on Technology; Teacher & Administrator Evaluation Update

Monday - October 7, 2019 - Bowers School Improvement Plan at Bowers

L. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Thames called for a motion to adjourn.

Acting Secretary Stefanovicz moved and Ms. Hagenow seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting.

6/0 - Voted in favor. Adjournment 8:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Melanie Stefanovicz
Acting Board Secretary