

MANCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION

Regular Meeting

August 27, 2018

Lincoln

PRESENT: Conyers, Hagenow, Maio, Pattacini, Patterson, Scappaticci

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

ABSENT: Meggers, Stefanovicz, Thames

A. **OPENING**

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

Chairperson Pattacini called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. All in attendance participated in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, led by Mr. Pattacini.

A.3. **Secretary's Welcome**

Acting Secretary Scappaticci extended a warm welcome to everyone present and to the television viewers. He, 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. Mr. Scappaticci 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.

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

APPROVED – Minutes Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of July 9, 2018. Acting Secretary Scappaticci moved and Ms. Hagenow seconded the motion.

6/0 – Voted in favor.

B. COMMITTEE REPORTS

None.

C. CONSENT CALENDAR

Mr. Geary presented nine 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 Manchester High School Interscholastic Sports Rentals account to Manchester High School Interscholastic Sports Other Purchased Services account in the amount of \$1,925.
- Transfer from Manchester High School Classroom Instruction Rentals account to Manchester High School Administration General Supplies and Materials account in the amount of \$8,820.
- Transfer from Highland Park Elementary School Classroom Instruction Rentals account to Highland Park Elementary School Administration General Supplies and Materials account in the amount of \$360.
- Transfer from Illing Middle School Administration Other Purchased Services account to Illing Middle School Guidance Testing account in the amount of \$200.
- Transfer from System-wide Special Education Non-Certified Salaries account to System-wide Special Education Consultants account in the amount of \$23,000.

C.3. Establish an appropriation for FY 18-20 for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA 611) grant in the amount of \$1,730,235

C.4. Establish an appropriation for FY 18-20 for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA 619) grant in the amount of \$62,049

C.5. Establish an appropriation for the FY 18-19 for the Community Use of Schools - Bailey Auditorium in the amount of \$10,200

C.6. Permission to apply for FY 18-19 Priority School District Grant

C.7. Permission to apply for FY 18-19 Alliance District Grant

C.8. Permission to apply for FY 18-19 Priority School District Extended School Hours Grant

C.9. Permission to apply for FY 18-19 Priority School District Summer School Grant

The Chairman called for a motion.

Acting Secretary Scappaticci moved and Ms. Hagenow seconded the recommendation to adopt the Consent Calendar as outlined in Section C of tonight's agenda.

6/0 - Voted in favor.

D. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT

None as school is not in session at this time.

E. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, recommended a children's book about Nelson Mandela (who would be 100 years old this year). He spoke about the Civil War reconstruction and an article in the *Smithsonian* about Robert Smalls. Mr. Stringfellow shared an article about Doris Miller, Pearl Harbor hero. Last, he shared an article from *Family Circle* magazine about back to school routines.

F. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT – PART I

F.1. Introduction of New Administrators

Mr. Geary introduced 12 new administrators in the district:

Ms. Lisa Young, Mr. Owen Carroll, and Mr. Josh Steffenson will serve as Assistant Principals at Manchester High School.

Ms. Young began her career in Manchester as a teacher at Bennet Academy before working as a Reading Specialist and then Instructional Coach at MHS. She spent 2017-18 as Interim Assistant Principal at Manchester High School. Ms. Young is deeply committed to strengthening teaching and learning by supporting teachers' growth and development first as an instructional coach and now as an Assistant Principal.

Mr. Carroll joined Manchester Public Schools in 2008 as a Social Studies teacher at Illing Middle School before moving to Manchester High School in 2011. Mr. Carroll worked as a Dean of Students at MHS before spending 2017-18 as Interim Assistant Principal. Mr. Carroll works diligently to make strong connections with students, parents, and staff.

Both Ms. Young and Mr. Carroll have done excellent work as part of the high school leadership team this year and we are excited to have them in these positions permanently.

Mr. Josh Steffenson joins us after working as a Physics teacher at Glastonbury High School. He is a former Glastonbury Teacher of the Year and was also a semifinalist for Connecticut Teacher of the Year. Josh served as the president of the Glastonbury Teachers Union meaning he is well equipped to continue our work to partner with the teachers and other bargaining groups. We are pleased to have him as the leader of the Medical Careers Academy and STEM Academy.

Ms. Sarah Walton, Ms. Deryann King, and Mr. Marc DiDominzio will be Assistant Principals at Illing Middle School.

Ms. Walton began her career at the University of Connecticut as a Drug and Alcohol Counselor. She then worked at The Village for Families & Children as Program Coordinator before coming to Manchester in 2013 as a Student Support Coordinator. Ms. Walton has spent the past six months as an Interim Assistant Principal at Illing Middle School. She has strong understanding of both academic and behavioral interventions and builds systems to support both students and

teachers.

Ms. King joined Manchester Public Schools in 2001 as a Grade 2 teacher at Washington Elementary School. Presently Ms. King is teaching 4th grade at Martin Elementary School. She has also worked as a teacher in the Summer Advantage Academy of Manchester. Ms. King has a strong understanding of the workshop model in reading, writing, and math and has built positive relationships with students, parents, and staff throughout her time in Manchester.

Mr. DiDominzio came to Manchester in 2009 to teach Business Education at Manchester High School. He also served as the Head Baseball Coach before becoming a Dean of Students at MHS. Mr. DiDominzio spent 2017-2018 as the Interim Assistant Principal at Keeney Elementary. Mr. DiDominzio is committed to supporting students, parents, and staff through building strong and trusting relationships in order to ensure all students achieve at high levels.

Kathryn Parker will be charged with developing our new Manchester Middle Academy, an offsite alternative program for students in Grades 5-8. Ms. Parker came to Manchester in 2010 as a middle school English/Language Arts Teacher, before serving as lead E-Credit Facilitator. Ms. Parker also spent time as Head Group House Manager at the Transitional Living Center (TLC) Foundation. Ms. Parker worked as Dean of Students at Illing Middle School before becoming Interim Assistant Principal at Illing this year. Ms. Parker is a creative and innovative educator who is committed to building a strong school community by empowering students and staff.

Megan Thompson will be Assistant Principal at Bennet Academy. Ms. Thompson began her career in Manchester as a teacher at Keeney Elementary. She spent 2016-17 as Interim Assistant Principal at Bentley and has spent this year as Interim Assistant Principal at Bennet Academy. Ms. Thompson has a deep understanding of collaborative problem solving and strong knowledge of best instructional practices, which she has applied in her experiences in Manchester Public Schools at the elementary, middle, and high school levels.

Mr. Max Echeverria will be Assistant Principal at Bowers Elementary School. Mr. Echeverria came to Manchester in 2015 as an ESOL Teacher at Robertson. He

has also worked at Illing Middle School and Manchester High School. Mr. Echeverria spent 2017-2018 at Bowers as Interim Assistant Principal. He is a thoughtful, dedicated educator who works diligently to build meaningful relationships with students and colleagues.

Ms. Althea Barnes is the new Assistant Principal at Keeney School. She joins us after serving as a Special Education Supervisor in Torrington. Prior to that she worked as a School Psychologist in Bridgeport Public Schools. Ms. Barnes has deep knowledge of both curriculum and instruction as well as research based interventions. She comes highly recommended from her former employers who noted she excels at working with children and staff and in managing and creating positive learning environments that support the academic, social, and emotional development of young people.

Ms. Aisha Florez joins us from Windham Public Schools where she served as Assistant Principal beginning in 2016. Prior to her work in Windham, she was Dean of Students then Resident Principal at S.A.N.D. School in Hartford. Her experience includes planning, implementation, and ongoing development of instructional programs at both schools, supporting ongoing professional development at all levels in both districts, and working with students and staff to strengthen climate in her previous assignments. Ms. Florez also came highly recommended and we look forward to having her on staff at Waddell.

Ms. Cathy Amadasun joins us from Windsor Public Schools where she taught Social Studies at Windsor High School. In that role Ms. Amadasun spent significant time designing, implementing, and evaluating Social Studies curriculum to meet Social Studies Frameworks and CCSS standards. She also oversaw a Model UN program which included trips to the United Nations office in NYC that included other teachers and parents. That is just one highlight of her work to collaborate with families as she also served as chairperson for family and community partnerships to foster healthy relationships between school and home. We are excited to have Cathy at Bennet.

Mr. Pattacini thanked the administration for their thoughtful and engaging process in hiring these new administrators, many of which were internal candidates. The fact that many were promoted from within Manchester Public Schools is a testament to the quality of educators in our district. He wishes all the new administrators much success.

F.2. Spring Data Update

Mr. Geary presented the Spring data, which is available for viewing on the website. He highlighted both areas of growth and areas needing improvement.

Mr. Conyers wondered if the fact fluency block at Buckley is a pilot program. Mr. Geary noted that both Buckley and Robertson have used the 15 minute fact fluency block for years and it obviously has helped their scores. It was not really a pilot, just something those schools implemented. It will now be mandated at the other elementary schools. This year there is a specific program to be used during that block of time.

Ms. Patterson asked Mr. Geary to expand on the tactics used to engage black and Latino students at the high school. Mr. Geary noted several ways all students, but especially marginalized students, are engaged, including the Imagine College program, which involves students who would be first generation college students; the AP Potential program, which targets students who could be challenged by moving up a level to an Honors or AP level class; along with being thoughtful about who is engaging in enrichment with our students. We are working to increase the graduation rate and increase our relationships with students. In the lower grades, Project Spark is used for students who are not identified for traditional enrichment programs.

Mr. Pattacini focused on the data relative to student attendance and how much the data changes the focus of our work. Mr. Geary noted that data drives the exact needs of our students. It allows us to specifically target needs and show us where to put resources. It took about 3 years to build up a good data dashboard. Mr. Geary noted that with the Priority Grant we were able to focus resources on a supercharged reading program in those schools that needed improvement. The Alliance Grant funded additional Behavior Techs.

Mr. Pattacini feels we are not adequately providing resources and it is evident that when resources are added we can see improvement. If we had more resources, we would see more improvement. Mr. Geary agreed, noting to that end he left support staff in the elementary schools this year (special education teachers, social workers, etc.), instead of cutting them back with the movement of 5th grade, to provide additional resources to the elementary schools.

Mr. Pattacini noted that in the past we looked at data every few years and now we are looking at it in real time. He is encouraged by the college and career readiness data and encouraged to see some of the groups doubling their numbers. He thanked the staff for their hard work, one child at a time. It is not easy and the achievement gap will not go away quickly. He is excited and even though there is still a lot of work to do, he can see significant progress and results that can be duplicated in other buildings.

Mr. Scappaticci was happy to see the graduation rate rise and the data on college and career readiness. He works at MCC in new student advisement and many students do not test into freshman comp. He can attest that he does not see that problem nearly as often from MHS students as those from other towns. He notes that when staff and faculty have the courage to try new things innovation happens and they cannot be afraid to fail. As a leader it is okay to make mistakes as well.

Mr. Scappaticci sees great work happening and he wants to get the word out. Mr. Geary noted that Jim Farrell is working on new strategies in social media to do just that. Mr. Geary also noted that any opportunity to talk about the great things happening in our schools, such as World Language being offered in grade 5 for the first time, should be taken, such as during the Joint Meeting with the Board of Directors.

Mr. Pattacini wondered how to go about updating the data dashboard (removing and adding the items that are reviewed). Mr. Geary noted that will be part of the self-evaluation the Board does during Policy review.

F.3. Update on Opening of Manchester Public Schools

Mr. Geary noted there are still 7 vacancies in the district.

Waddell is undergoing finishing touches and teachers are unpacking. There is a punch list that will be worked on probably all year (typical of new construction).

The Illing parking lot paving is complete and the landscaping is being done. The Illing support suite on the second floor, which will house the 8th grade AP, 2 counselors and a social worker, is almost complete. This was funded through the Alliance Grant and mirrors the 7th grade suite on the 1st floor, making it easier for students to access services in one place. The Illing library carpet was replaced.

At Bowers the playground fencing has been done, which was required due to special programs being relocated to Bowers. Both Martin and Bowers had some minor upgrades to accommodate new special programs in their buildings.

For Safety & Security several professional development opportunities, including "Stop the Bleed Train" and "Active Shooter Training" have been made available.

The Volunteer Policy is being revised to make it more streamlined.

Due to safety and privacy concerns, parents and families will no longer be allowed to join their children in the cafeteria for lunch on an unscheduled basis. The Family Resource Centers will host lunch bunch programs to invite parents in for scheduled visits.

Mr. Geary reviewed the Alliance grant it came in at \$4,317,896 and the Priority grant was \$823,588. They were used to fund two math interventionists (\$123,588) and eight reading interventionists (\$700,000).

Ms. Maio asked if the Illing parents would be getting an email about the new traffic pattern for the parking lot. Mr. Geary affirmed that Ms. Gomero will be reaching out to parents about that and also reminding them that if they choose to drop off their children on Princeton to be good, respectful neighbors.

Mr. Conyers asked about the new Manchester Middle Academy at Assumption School. Mr. Geary noted we have signed a one year lease and students will be welcomed to the building on the first day of school. He expects about 40-50 students, though some parents were not sure if they wanted to accept the invitation for their child to attend there. Mr. Conyers would appreciate a tour of the building in the near future.

G. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

H. NEW BUSINESS

None.

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

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, congratulated the new administrators, noting the diversity in both gender and ethnicity among the well-qualified group. Mr. Stringfellow again asked for a presentation focused on those students who are not college bound, including those headed to the military, trade schools, or the job force. He wants his voice to be heard and notes that the news reporters always leave early. Mr. Stringfellow notes there is a good connection between the police and schools and he was concerned reading about other states talking about arming their teachers. He would like to see a presentation around our SROs, school security and PTA. Mr. Stringfellow recommended articles in *USA Today* on school attire, in *New Republic* magazine on policing, and in the *Journal Inquirer Minipage* on recycling. He would like a presentation from local trade and technical schools in the area and he hopes for a good school year.

J. COMMUNICATIONS

None.

K. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

Ms. Maio asked about the change in the budget process this year. Mr. Geary reviewed that in the spring the Budget subcommittee talked about how we could start the budget process sooner. Ms. Clancy and the Budget subcommittee decided to add a workshop in November to discuss current service needs to get a sense of the need for current services to start a dialogue with the Board of Directors earlier in the budget season.

L. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Pattacini called for a motion to adjourn.

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

6/0 - Voted in favor.

Adjournment 8:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jason Scappaticci
Acting Board Secretary