

MANCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION

Regular Meeting September 9, 2019 Lincoln Center

PRESENT: Conyers, Hughes, Pattacini, Stefanovicz, Thames

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

ABSENT: Hagenow, Maio, Meggers, Scappaticci

A. OPENING

A.1. & 2. Meeting Called to Order

Chairperson Thames 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. Thames.

A.3. Secretary's Welcome

Mr. Pattacini stated that as Secretary of the Board of Education, he wished to extend 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. Pattacini 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.

Mr. Pattacini 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, Mr. Pattacini stated he 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 August 26, 2019. Secretary Pattacini moved and Ms. Hagenow seconded the motion.

5/0 – 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 Information

Details were provided to Board Members in their packets.

C.2. Transfer of Funds

- Transfer from System-wide World Language Contracted Substitutes account to System-wide Language Arts Instructional Supplies and Materials account in the amount of \$2,500
- Transfer from System-wide Social Studies Professional Development account (\$2,000) and from System-wide Social Studies Contracted Substitutes account (\$4,000) for a total transfer in the amount of \$6,000 to System-wide Language Arts Instructional Supplies and Materials account.

C.3. Establish an appropriation for FY 19-20 for the Connecticut State Department of Education Grant for Manchester Adult Education in the amount of \$765,704

The Chairman called for a motion.

Secretary Pattacini moved and Ms. Stefanovicz seconded the recommendation to adopt the Consent Calendar as outlined in this evening's agenda.

DISCUSSION:

Mr. Geary was asked to review the items. He noted that the personnel section outlines many summer hires and we are down to one vacancy (K at Verplanck) that just recently occurred. We are also still undergoing interviews for a social worker. Item #3 is the typical appropriation from the state for Adult Ed.

Ms. Stefanovicz wondered if the Kindergarten class has a substitute. Mr. Geary stated they currently still have the teacher that recently gave her notice. She has been hired by a district at a higher salary that contractually we could not compete with. The position has been posted.

The vote was called.

5/0 - Voted in favor.

D. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT

Tiffany Henry, our new student representative, gave an update on the start of school at MHS. She was modeling the new mascot on her shirt this evening and stated the students have adjusted well to the Red Hawks.

- Assemblies for grades 10-12 were held Friday and reviewed:
 - Vaping - reminders were given about the seriousness of illness in the country
 - Reminders about expectations (phones, leaving campus, dress code)
 - Resume work - ability to tell our personal story about our own strengths when we graduate
- New student parking lot looks great
- Meeting of student leaders to discuss strategies to make sure Homecoming is inclusive and represents all students - mindful of equity - Parade is October 25, Dance is Oct 26

- There were class advisors from grades 10-12, student equity advisory and activities planning board members
 - Freshman First day included Link leader upperclassmen and was successful
 - Senior Sunrise - the seniors started their last first day at sunrise
 - We won all 3 football scrimmages
 - The Involvement Fair will be held September 25th so students can see all the extracurricular offerings
 - Editing software is changing for yearbook, which will make it more affordable for students

Mr. Thames thanked Ms. Henry and looks forward to a successful year.

E. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Angela Bellas, 126 Lakewood Circle North, spoke on behalf of USIC - Uniting for a Safe Inclusive Community - Manchester. She pointed out the CT legislature recently passed legislation to update and strengthen the TRUST Act. This legislation becomes effective on October 1st.

As an organization actively working to ensure a safe an inclusive community for all residents, USIC would like to be sure that the Board of Education members, as well as the Superintendent, are aware of the requirements of this legislation and would like to know how the Board is planning to ensure our school district is in compliance.

For those that may not know, the TRUST Act is a state law that protects undocumented community members by ensuring due process is followed in interactions with law enforcement. The TRUST Act requires that state and local law enforcement officials, including municipal police, school security and resource officers, and campus police, will only cooperate with federal immigration officials when ICE is able to present a warrant signed by a state or federal judge, or a federal magistrate (which is not the same as an immigration judge).

The only exceptions to this requirement are if a person has a Class A or B felony conviction, or appears on a National terrorist database.

That means, without a warrant signed by one of these judicial officers, our Manchester Policeforce, security or resource officers in our school, and campus police at MCC are:

- Prohibited from responding to an ICE request to detain or arrest a community member;
- Prohibited from notifying ICE regarding the custody or release status of an individual;
- Prohibited from allowing ICE to interview an individual in custody; and
- Prohibited from acting as an agent of ICE in any manner.

There are also very specific restrictions on when confidential information about an individual may be disclosed to ICE, as well as specific requirements about the tracking of information relating to ICE access and what types of information must be communicated to anyone that ICE is attempting to interview or detain.

The Office of Policy and Management has been charged with conducting and overseeing this training of local law enforcement but we do not know when our school resource officers will receive this training. Given that the TRUST Act becomes law in less than a month, USIC is asking what steps Manchester is taking to ensure our school resource and security officers receive this training as soon as possible and what processes will be put in place to hold SROs accountable if they violate the requirements of this law.

Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Rd., pointed out an article in several newspapers about a question pertaining to citizen status on a school registration document. He suggested a movie soon to be released about Harriet Tubman, as well as a book for children titled, *Who Was Harriet Tubman*. Mr. Stringfellow reminded us that next month is Indigenous People's Day and he recommended a book by Dunbar Ortiz, *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States*. Mr. Stringfellow recommended a radio show on NPR. He mentioned the passing of Labor Day and the importance of unions and as a member of the American Postal Workers Union he feels the topic should be part of the curriculum.

F. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

F.1. District Improvement Plan

Mr. Geary reviewed the District Improvement Plan, which is available in full on the website. Priorities include:

- Ensuring all students have access to relevant, meaningful, rigorous and culturally responsive curriculum;

- Providing opportunities for all students to consistently engage in learning that promotes inquiry, problem-solving, and higher-order thinking while emphasizing a deep understanding and application of knowledge;
- Building strong, equitable district, school, and classroom communities where students and staff feel connected, valued and respected;
- Developing a variety of methods to invite and engage families as partners to support student growth through regular, two-way communication about what their child should know and be able to do at the end of the school year and how well their child is doing as well as how they can support their child's learning ; and
- Creating opportunities for open and honest conversations about race, gender, social class, culture and beliefs that lead to equity for all families and students.

Ms. Stefanovicz asked what was meant by "who has the power in the room". Mr. Geary explained that refers to how the classroom is run, are kids helping write the rules of the class (ie sharing the power)? Is the lesson teacher directed or does it involve students in the plans?

Ms. Stefanovicz asked about other opportunities to involve students. Mr. Geary reviewed there are several student-led groups such as the Youth Equity Squad and High School Activists. He noted the district is trying to involve students in many other aspects of the district, such as interviewing new teachers, weighing in on curriculum, and he hopes to involve students in grades 5-12 in school improvement planning.

Mr. Pattacini wondered if outcomes related to the DIP will change the information available in the data dashboard, noting some are already present in the dashboard. Mr. Geary noted there are no new data targets. Mr. Pattacini was impressed by how integrated and strategic the plan is. He is excited to see it come together and fit in with larger strategies.

F.2. Professional Development Highlights

Mr. Geary turned the floor over to Dr. Radikas, who reviewed the many offerings of professional development that happened in August. She noted how in-depth the planning is that happens before PD, including items such as

knowing which rooms have air-conditioning and how many chairs will be needed. She expressed gratitude to her team at Central Office for their help in making everything come together. In looking at PD, some items to consider:

- Will it impact student achievement;
- Will it support consistent programming;
- Will it build school capacity; and
- Will it increase collaboration and adult learning.

Dr. Radikas also pointed out we have 10 half days and 1 full day of PD over the school year, with the next being September 18th. Several of the half days will be dedicated to equity work.

Mr. Hughes wondered if the required HR modules can be completed at home. Dr. Radikas stated they could be completed at home, although those that are paid hourly are not paid for their time if it is completed at home, but were allowed time to complete the modules at work during part of their PD days.

Ms. Stefanovicz asked how schools debriefed after the equity seminars by Wise and Harding. Dr. Radikas noted some schools met at as a group while some completed surveys. Mr. Geary added that in the future we need to structure more time to reflect on presentations.

Mr. Pattacini asked about the four half days of equity PD planned this year. Dr. Radikas noted those days are October 2 and 30, February 26 and April 8. Each school will be doing something a little different, though there is some triad work with the elementary schools.

Mr. Thames attended the evening sessions with Harding and Wise as well as the new staff/teacher PD. Ms. Sone-Moyano noted that after surveying teachers the prior two years, this year a day was added to their training (3 days instead of 2) and time was dedicated to classroom setup. Also, student voice was including at the start and conclusion of their PD days.

Mr. Thames thought it was a good opportunity to acclimate and get ready for the year with good, positive, strong energy being felt.

G. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

H. NEW BUSINESS

None.

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

Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, thought it was a good presentation from Mr. Geary on district improvement. He did not attend the equity seminars, but thought there was a good write-up on them by the JI. He feels we are on the right track. Mr. Stringfellow recommended an article on school diversity. He noted the new state treasurer attended Manchester schools, being bused in from Hartford. Mr. Stringfellow noted every family has a different situation, some having housing insecurity (homelessness). He feels we are doing well with student and parent involvement.

J. COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Thames attended the opening day of school at Verplanck. He felt it was a wonderful experience and showed why we do the work we do. He saw excited teachers and students, though some students were apprehensive about starting Kindergarten. He also felt the building looks wonderful.

K. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

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

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

Monday - October 21, 2019 - Update on Human Resources

L. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Thames called for a motion to adjourn.

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

5/0 - Voted in favor. Adjournment 8:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christopher Pattacini
Board Secretary