

MANCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION

Regular Meeting September 23, 2019

Lincoln

PRESENT: Conyers, Hagenow, Heinrich, Hughes, Meggers, Pattacini, Scappaticci, Stefanovicz, Thames

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

ABSENT: Meggers, Stefanovicz

A. OPENING

A.1. Meeting Called to Order

Chairperson Thames called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Mr. Thames announced Board member Tracey Maio has resigned. He thanked her for her dedication and the work she has done on the Board. She was a strong Board member who made an impact on the students and we are sad to see her go. Mr. Thames thanked Ms. Maio for her efforts and diligence.

Secretary Pattacini moved to add items 2 and 3 to the agenda. Item 2 - Action to fill Board member vacancy. Item 3 - Oath of new Board member. Original items A.2 through A.4 to be renumbered to A.3 through A.6. Ms. Hagenow seconded the motion.

6/0 - Voted in favor.

A.2. Action to Fill Board Member Vacancy

Mr. Scappaticci noted it was his pleasure to nominate Campfield Heinrich to the Board of Education. Mr. Heinrich is a lifelong

resident of Manchester, having attended Waddell, and is currently a student at MCC. He hopes to pursue law school in the future and has been active in politics since age 15. He has interned in the CT General Assembly, working on the crumbling foundation issue plaguing Connecticut residents. Mr. Conyers seconded the nomination.

6/0 - Voted in favor.

A.3. Oath of New Board Member

Town Clerk, Joe Camposeo, was present to swear Mr. Heinrich into office. Mr. Heinrich thanked the Board for their support and stated he is excited for the new opportunity and looks forward to all we can accomplish together.

Mr. Thames congratulated Mr. Heinrich and thanked him for stepping up to the plate. Becoming a Board member is the first rung of politics, but possibly the most important as it is an opportunity to impact the future of not only Manchester's children, but the future of our country.

A.4. Pledge of Allegiance

All in attendance participated in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, led by Mr. Thames.

A.5. 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. They are not here to make management decisions or solve the problems of individuals. Members of the public with individual concerns may contact the Superintendent directly. 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 noted he is proud of this school system and appreciates the public for their interest in this evening's meeting and the Manchester Public Schools.

A.6. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting

APPROVED – Minutes Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of September 9, 2019. Secretary Pattacini moved and Ms. Hagenow seconded the motion.

7/0 – Voted in favor.

B. COMMITTEE REPORTS

B.1. Policy Committee

Ms. Hagenow reported the last meeting was held September 9th with the following present: Ms. Stefanovicz, Mr. Hughes, Ms. Hagenow, Mr. Thames and Mr. Geary. The members reviewed the District Improvement Plan with a focus on Academics and Culture and Climate sections.

The members reviewed the draft Equity Policy and will apply it to the policies brought forward at the next policy meeting before determining next steps.

The members reviewed the Staff Attendance Guidelines. No action is needed, as these management guidelines were shared for informational purposes only.

The members reviewed the draft Video Surveillance on Buses Policy and will move the policy forward to the full Board for a first reading.

Last, the members reviewed the legislative updates from the Connecticut State Department of Education and Shipman and Goodwin. These updates will be discussed at the next meeting.

C. CONSENT CALENDAR

Mr. Geary presented four 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 Physical Education Repairs account in the amount of \$1,100 and from Manchester High School Physical Education Dues and Fees account in the amount of \$500 to Manchester High School Physical Education Instructional Supplies & Materials account in the total amount of \$1,600.
- Transfer from Highland Park School Administration General Supplies and Materials account to Highland Park School Administration Professional Development account in the amount of \$1,000.
- Transfer from System-wide Language Arts Contracted Substitutes account to System-wide Language Arts Instructional Supplies account in the amount of \$7,500.

C.3. The Superintendent of Schools recommends that the Manchester Board of Education grant MEA President, Kathryn Dias, 0.50 release time for FY 19-20 School Year; and that the Board of Education request that the Board of Directors establish an appropriation in the amount of \$27,622 to be funded by the Manchester Education Association (MEA)

C.4. Extended Field Trip Request Form - MHS 100 Students - MHS Roundtable Singers, Chamber Orchestra, Percussion - April 23 - April 26, 2020 Competition and Performance Tour - Toronto, Canada

The Chairman called for a motion.

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

DISCUSSION:

Mr. Geary pointed out one of the items in the Personnel Information section is the official appointment of Ann Fuini as Principal of the Preschool Center. Ms. Fuini is a longtime administrator in the district committed to equity and we are pleased to officially appoint her as Principal.

Mr. Geary also noted that item 3 addresses the Teacher's Union president's release time to perform her duties.

7/0 - Voted in favor.

Mr. Thames thanked Ms. Fuini for her service. Ms. Fuini noted she is excited for the opportunity and looks forward to continuing the work she has begun at Manchester Preschool Center. This is the first school experience for many children and the first opportunity to welcome families to Manchester Public Schools.

D. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT

Krista Myrie and Tiffany Henry were present to report the following:

- Involvement Fair coming up this week (Sept. 25th) to make sure that students get a chance to see everything that MHS has to offer.
- Football game - MHS won 51 - 0!
- Changed Homecoming theme (Jungle to New York New York). Jungle was misunderstood as being a threatening environment.
- Open house was Thursday September 19th and families visited classrooms. Mrs. Miner shared an overview of all things MHS and upcoming events.
- Welcome back bash (first big dance) is coming up and there will also be games / Red Hawk swag give-aways . . .
- Flex is starting next Friday and students will meet with mentors.
- On Monday the 16th the MHS Marching Band played a piece of their Star Wars themed show in the Big E parade!

- Planning has started for Pep Rally to promote the new mascot.
- Spirit week planning (Twin Day, College Apparel, Manchester Apparel, Superhero, decades, comfy, vine, and sportswear)
- Academy experiences have begun in EPSA and MCA/Stem (EMT certification program/ info night) Police Explorers. PAC had a field trip to see Seth Meyers. GSA upcoming field trip to Hartford Stage.
- NHS meeting and has started recruiting new members.
- Extended Learning Coordinator. Opportunity for students to earn extended learning credit to develop career readiness skills and earn credit for experiences outside the classroom.

Mr. Scappaticci was curious about the sentiment of the mascot. Krista said that as a whole there has been more promoting of school spirit with the new mascot and there is more incorporation of it into the yearbook planning. Mr. Scappaticci stated it was impressive how the high school students galvanized around the issue and it was well researched. He said by far he was emailed and stopped in public more about this issue than any other so far.

E. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, congratulated the student representatives on their appointment and hopes their year goes well. As to Mr. Heinrich, Mr. Stringfellow stated that he knows his father who is a local activist, and wishes Mr. Heinrich the best of luck. Mr. Stringfellow noted Indigenous People's Day is next month and he recommended articles in Archeology magazine and New African magazine. Mr. Stringfellow found a great deal on a book by Ken Burns, "The Vietnam War" - only \$20 on sale at Barnes & Nobles. He noted that he was not in favor of that war and was glad not to be drafted. Last, Mr. Stringfellow commented on an article in TIME about the hazards of vaping, which was also the topic of an article in today's USA Today.

Mr. Thames agreed that vaping is not a viable alternative to smoking and he cautions people to be careful with their health.

F. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT – PART I

F.1. Update on Technology

Mr. Geary introduced the Instructional Technology Supervisor, Kerri Kearney, to the Board. He noted this update is an annual update that is required as part of the bylaws. Ms. Kearney's presentation is available on the website. She noted one possible exciting change this year will be the addition of a live help desk to quickly solve Tier I issues. The 5 year transition to G-Suite is underway and will be complete by the end of this year, so all users in the district, except for 3 or 4 people, will no longer have access to Microsoft Office. Papercut has been installed on all copiers, providing a safe, confidential way to print. Security has been upgraded with umbrella filtering, which happens before access to the internet and a new end point security is more efficient and provides the same level of protection. There is a new work order system which cost less money to run and makes communication easier. Last, Destiny Resource Manager is a one time fee and that tracks technology and instruments in the district.

Mr. Thames asked about the research on handwriting versus typing. Ms. Kearney will share the resources at a later time, but basically the research shows that as students are learning to write and learning to form sentences and paragraphs, there are important connections in the brain that do not form properly if using a device instead of handwriting.

Mr. Thames asked about the major difference between G-Suite and Office. Ms. Kearney noted it is far easier to collaborate on documents with G-Suite and access to materials also makes the product superior. The document is always live and the most current version is always available. We do need to learn to do some things differently with the new product, but it is worth it.

Mr. Conyers asked if students will have the ability to send to the printers in school from home. Ms. Kearney stated that is in the works and students will use their ID to print once in the building. Mr. Conyers wondered if there was any concern about someone sending a bulk amount to the printer, but Ms. Kearney explained in order to actually print out, the person has to be present and enter their ID number. Adults are always around the printers accessible to students, such as in the library.

Mr. Conyers wondered at what age students receive chromebooks. Ms. Kearney noted that students in grades K - 4 will have access to chromebooks but this

year we are doing things differently. While there is still 1 to 1 access in grades 5-8, sometimes classes will sign out a cart of chromebooks and sometimes they will just use the few they have in their class. In grade 9 students are assigned their own chromebook. Mr. Conyers wondered how many hours a day students are on devices. Ms. Myrie, our student rep, noted she uses her chromebook in each class and it is easier to access teacher materials on "classroom". Mr. Conyers wondered about other problems associated with excessive use of screens. Ms. Kearney noted she did look at research on eyestrain and found as long as you blink every 20 seconds, there is not a concern.

Mr. Conyers asked about gamified PE virtual reality. Ms. Kearney mentioned several options such as virtual reality goggles and Xbox games like Dance Dance Revolution. Students elect this class and look at the impact of movement on their heart rate.

Mr. Geary mentioned the technical services budget line and the cost of a security camera and its upkeep. Ms. Kearney noted a camera alone can cost \$1,500 and the high school has over 200. Typically, there are not cameras in classrooms, but in common areas. This year in three schools about \$14,000 was spent on cameras and the wish list at the high school amounts to about \$100,000. The real cost is the servers that hold the footage, each hard drive is about \$10,000 and we need more and more space to function properly. We could easily spend another \$100,000 a year. Mr. Geary pointed out that right now \$50-100,000 is budgeted. Maintenance needs to be considered in the yearly budget.

F.2. Update on Administrator Evaluation

Mr. Geary gave a presentation, available on the website, about the details in the administrator evaluation.

Mr. Thames wondered how goal setting happens. Mr. Geary reviewed that principals meet with Dr. Radikas, himself, Diane Sheehan-Burns or Pari Ghetia several times and principals meet with their teachers individually and at grade level meetings. Relevant goals are chosen to focus on and how a principal will support the teachers is discussed. These have to be measurable goals. This

system has been in place for several years but has changed a bit over the past three years.

G. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

H. NEW BUSINESS

Policy Recommendation: a first reading of new policy 5131.111(a) Video Surveillance was given to the Board. Mr. Geary noted this outlines current practice around surveillance both in schools and on buses, but legal counsel advised it be put in writing. There were no questions so the policy will be voted on at the next meeting.

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

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, supports the consent calendar. He enjoyed the report on technology. Mr. Stringfellow mentioned the digital divide and the fact that handwriting is important, with cursive writing being yet another issue. He recommended the book Connecticut First and an article in TIME about world climate. He wondered about the impact of technology on students that are ELL, disabled or of mixed ethnicity.

J. COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Thames noted this Saturday at 9:30 is the ribbon cutting for Verplanck.

Mr. Thames would like the IT department to consider making training available for board members around the G-Suite.

As to vaping, Mr. Stringfellow hopes people will be thoughtful about what they put in their bodies. He noted it is okay to say NO!

K. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

Monday, October 7, 2019 - Bowers School Improvement Plan

Monday, October 21, 2019 - Update on Human Resources and Teacher Evaluation

Monday, November 4, 2019 - Buckley School Improvement

Wednesday, November 13, 2019 - Pre-Budget Workshop

Monday, November 18, 2019 - Update on Humanities and Reaffirmation of BOE Bylaws

L. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Thames called for a motion to adjourn.

Secretary Pattacini moved and Mr. Scappaticci seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting.

7/0 - Voted in favor.

Adjournment 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christopher Pattacini
Board Secretary