

MANCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION

Regular Meeting November 24, 2014 Lincoln Center

PRESENT: Crockett, Cruz, Hagenow, Leon, Pattacini, Pazda, Scappaticci, Thames

ALSO PRESENT: Superintendent of Schools Geary, Assistant Superintendent for Pupil Personnel Services Matfess, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum Radikas

ABSENT: Stafford, Assistant to the Superintendent for Finance & Management Brooks

A. OPENING

A.1. & 2. Meeting Called to Order

Chairperson Pattacini called the meeting back to order at 7:08 p.m. He explained the meeting had been called to order earlier in Executive Session at 6:30 p.m. All in attendance participated in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, led by Mr. Pattacini.

A.3. Adoption of Minutes of Previous Meeting

ADOPTED – Minutes Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of November 10, 2014. Secretary Scappaticci moved and Mr. Crockett seconded the motion.

8/0 – Voted in favor.

B. CONSENT CALENDAR

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

B.1. Personnel Action

Details had already been provided to the Board members with their agenda.

B.2. Transfer of Funds

Details had already been provided to the Board members in their agenda folders.

- Transfer from System-wide science Instructional Supplies account to System-wide Science Professional Development account in the amount of \$200
- Transfer from Illing Middle School Admin General Supplies & Materials account to Illing Middle School Admin Dues & Fees account in the amount of \$244
- Transfer from MHS Admin Office Supplies & Materials account to MHS School Admin Dues & Fees account in the amount of \$250
- Transfer from System-wide Medical Supplies & Materials account to System-wide Medical Consultants account in the amount of \$7,000
- Transfer from Illing Middle School Admin Postage account to Illing Middle School Admin Contracted Services account in the amount of \$2,000
- Transfer from MHS Admin Office Supplies & Materials account to MHS School Admin Postage account in the amount of \$2,951

B.3. Revision to Manchester Board of Education meeting on December 22, 2014

The meeting on this date has been cancelled.

B.4. Adjustment in Appropriation for the Manchester Head Start appropriation for FY 14/15 in the amount of \$75,824, bringing the total appropriation to \$1,169,102

The Chairman called for a motion.

Secretary Scappaticci moved and Mr. Crockett seconded the recommendation to adopt the Consent Calendar as outlined in Section B of tonight's agenda.

8/0 - Voted in favor.

C. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, told us about a forum on Iwo Jima he attended recently. He suggested the movie *Fury*, starring Brad Pitt. Mr. Stringfellow told us the 70th anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge is coming up December 16th and suggested a magazine about the battle. In the November 13th issue of *TIME*, Mr. Stringfellow recommended an article regarding teacher tenure. He suggested the book *The Visual Reference Guide to Religions*. Mr. Stringfellow recommended a sticker book on fire safety and the *Mini Page* in the local paper which recently had a story about geography.

D. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT – PART I

D.1. Professional Learning Communities

Mr. Geary gave the board an overview of the district's work around Professional Learning Communities. Over the next few months the policies around professional learning will be updated. Mr. Geary's full presentation is available on the website.

Mr. Geary reviewed he had met with about 30 teachers throughout the district about six weeks ago, reviewing the background of Professional Learning Communities. The goal is we would like teachers in all schools to collaborate twice per week. Teachers gain valuable input through collaboration and creativity. We have run into some issue with allowing for prep time for individual teachers in elementary school as the time used for PLC's uses their individual planning time. This area needs to be address within our budget. Mr. Geary feels we need to be thoughtful to allow for this collaboration and not have the teachers feel rushed.

At the elementary level these meetings are a teacher-led endeavor by grade level and may also possibly include coaches, tutors, reading specialists, special education teachers, pupil services staff, library media staff, building and district administrators. Once a week the topic will be literacy and once a week numeracy. Mr. Geary noted that Manchester is very fortunate to have both a literacy and numeracy coach at each school.

At the secondary level teachers meet by subject area and then by different subject (ie, Math and then by Algebra I). At Bennet and Illing the teaching schedule doesn't allow for meetings by department and the teachers are doing their meetings currently by team, but this is important to fix within the schedule in the near future to allow for teachers to meet by department.

Mr. Geary noted some areas still need work, including specials, electives, and adult ed. Ultimately the goal is a teacher-led endeavor, grounded in best instructional practices related to student outcomes. This is initial guidance for how this should look.

Again, Mr. Geary noted we are very fortunate to have instructional coaches. There is some concern about what these coaches do. They support the implementation of the curriculum, experiment with best instructional practices, and they work with teachers throughout the school, either by teacher self-selection or administrator suggestion. A lot of resources are spent in training coaches and by the end of the school year we expect all teachers will have worked with an instructional coach at least once.

Coaches work with teachers individually over a couple of weeks and work through some areas needing advice, and offer professional development follow-up. Another way they work are to be in the PLCs, where coaches can share strategies they have learned in workshops with the teachers.

The PLC meeting structure is for teachers to meet twice every 6 days during the school day. In the near future the agendas will be in google drive so teachers are prepared for the meeting. The goal is also to record the session in case someone misses one. Sample norms are provided to review. The process is to focus on the discussion. At the end of the meeting a draft agenda for next meeting will be done.

Mr. Geary noted that managing rapid change in any environment is difficult. Fears associated with change include fear of wasting time and energy; losing autonomy; experiencing failure; social isolation; unpleasant surprises; and having one more thing to do.

Ms. Hagenow wonders how this will be done district-wide. Will teachers in every school/grade get together to discuss with other schools or will coaches facilitate this? Mr. Geary noted the instructional coaches meet with Dr. Oliver and Dr. Ratchford on a regular basis and bring back information to the teachers. Also, all teachers in August and again in November were together to work on this by department or grade level. He notes we will discuss a draft school calendar to address this need for next year as well. Last, curriculum is stored in web-based fashion and eventually teachers will be able to communicate in curriculum connector.

Ms. Pazda feels this is powerful work and represents a change in thinking for many. She understands PLC's being a teacher-led group with coaches playing a big part, but if the coaches are not in the meeting Ms. Pazda wonders who monitors the meeting. Mr. Geary noted that principals will be present when they can and there is a certain amount of trust both ways. Mr. Geary noted all administrators, including himself, work with professional coaches. Ms. Pazda also feels curriculum connector will be a great resource to share throughout the district. Mr. Geary agreed and noted this is a process that will take time to develop over the next couple of years. Ms. Pazda wondered if teachers are feeling supported. Mr. Geary stated they are feeling heard and we are working through trying to give them back the time we are asking them to give up for these meetings. He pointed out some districts release early once a week, and while that is not something that we are considering, there are other ways to give back time to teachers to replace planning time being used.

Mr. Leon wondered what qualifications coaches have, if they are certified teachers? Mr. Geary noted they are certified teachers. Mr. Leon wondered if teachers react to coaches as intrusive or a help? Mr. Geary feels there are different levels of

acceptance and building to building it is different. Mr. Leon thinks it is important that the tenure of the coaches is important so they can build relationships long-term. He wonders if there is a strategy to retain the coaches. Mr. Geary noted we are investing in high level training for the coaches and hopes this is what will make people want to stay in Manchester. All of the coaches have significant teaching experience.

Mr. Pattacini heard reference to the budget and wondered what Mr. Geary is asking for. Mr. Geary noted that the teacher's contract allows teachers two times every six days for collaborative planning. This has been inconsistent across the system. Teachers have had to give up individual planning time for collaborative planning time. We need to be thoughtful about giving back individual planning time and one way is through the use of building-based substitute teachers. Another way can be adding a science specialist to teacher science in the elementary schools to free up the teachers during that time. More enrichment experiences also frees up the classroom teacher. These are all things to consider.

Mr. Pattacini wondered how we measure success for this process. Mr. Geary noted there will be adult surveys, walk-throughs in classrooms see strategies implemented in practice, and of course student outcomes. Mr. Geary stated we will need to have a little arrogance to think that we can close the achievement gap and a lot of humbleness to realize we have to do this together.

D.2. NWEA Follow Up Questions

Mr. Geary asked if Board Members have any follow-up questions regarding Dr. Radikas' presentation at the last meeting.

Mr. Leon thanked Dr. Radikas and after having time to review the presentation he felt it was easy to understand.

Ms. Pazda noted Dr. Radikas inherited the SAAM program that is around the summer slide. She still hopes to see that curriculum. She feels it is a dynamite program and the collaboration with the Rec Department, however she wonders if we can consider some targeted intervention, even 20 minutes a day. Mr. Geary pointed out there are several ways to improve student achievement, and work is being done in revamping the 21st Century After-School Program, SAAM, and with the consultants in schools. Dr. Radikas pointed out the SAAM program works with small group instruction in their classrooms, so with two teachers in each class of 20 students, they are providing intervention.

D.3. Revisions to Manchester Board of Education Meeting Calendar for FY 14/15

Mr. Geary reviewed changes to the budget workshops. He proposes cancelling the workshops planned on January 7 and 14. The first presentation of the budget will be at the regular Board of Education meeting January 12th. Budget workshops will be held January 21 and possibly January 28th. The budget can be passed at a regular meeting January 26th or February 9th.

Mr. Scappaticci moved that the Board adopt the budget meetings as revised by the Administration in tonight's Board packet. Mr. Crockett seconded the motion.

8/0 – Voted in favor.

E. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

F. NEW BUSINESS

None.

G. COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Scappaticci revealed that he had recently attended the 60th anniversary of Buckley Elementary School. It was a well-attended party with many former staff members sharing stories and students leading tours. He thanked Mr. Daly and his staff. Mr. Scappaticci also noted the newly renovated Media Center at Buckley with a wonderful mural on the windows that can be seen even at night when the school is closed. He has heard that the same artist will be working on other schools in the future.

Mr. Leon mentioned that the MHS football game this week against East Hartford is being moved to Tuesday night in anticipation of the Wednesday weather.

H. COMMITTEE REPORTS

H.1. Building & Sites Committee

M Crockett reported the last meeting was held November 6th with Mr. Leon, Mr. Crockett, Mr. Scappaticci, Mr. Geary, and Mrs. Brooks in attendance. The Committee discussed the next steps with the successful passing of the referendum. They discussed the posting/advertising of the Facilities Director position. They toured Buckley Elementary School and the renovations to the library. The next meeting will be held at 5:30 p.m. on December 4th in the cafeteria at Keeney Elementary School.

H.2. Community Relations Committee

. **Thames** reported the last meeting was held on November 19th with Mr. Pattacini, Ms. Pazda, Mr. Thames, and Mr. Geary in attendance. Mr. Geary reviewed the work plans that were submitted to the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving as part of our grant application. We expect to hear back from the Foundation in December or January. The committee confirmed that the first Board of Education meeting of each month will be held in a school.

Monday, February 9, 2015 – Bowers

Monday, March 9, 2015 – Robertson

Monday, April 6, 2015 – Verplanck

Monday, May 11, 2015 – Waddell

Monday, June 8, 2015 – Washington

Mr. Thames reported that the principal, staff members, including Family Resource Center Coordinators, parents, including the PTA President, and students will be invited to attend the meeting and give an update under the Superintendent's Report.

The next Community Relations Committee meeting will be held Wednesday, January 21st at 5:00 p.m. due to the Budget Workshop being held that evening.

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

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, felt Mr. Geary's presentation regarding collaboration with teachers was excellent. He thinks it is good to see efforts to close the achievement gap and notes it is important to get parents involved. He again recommended the book *America by the Numbers*. There was an article in the October *Family Circle* magazine "Balancing Act" regarding guiding children and not becoming a helicopter parent. He suggested the flyer recently released by the town entitled *Out of School Time*. Mr. Stringfellow suggested an article in the *New York Times* regarding tips for parents in San Francisco. He would like to know what role PE, art, and music play in the curriculum and feels they are important subjects that should be built in with learning.

J. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

K. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Pattacini called for a motion to adjourn.

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

8/0 - Voted in favor.

Adjournment :9p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jason Scappaticci
Board Secretary