

MANCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION

Regular Meeting November 23, 2015 Lincoln

PRESENT: Hagenow, Jacobsen, Leon, Pattacini, Pazda, Scappaticci, Stafford, Stefanovicz, Thames

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

ABSENT:

A. OPENING

A.1. & 2. Meeting Called to Order

Mr. Geary called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. All in attendance participated in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, led by Mr. Geary.

A.3. Introduction of New Board Members

Mr. Geary introduced new Board members Susan Jacobsen and Melanie Stefanovicz and congratulated returning Board members Mr. Pattacini, Mr. Leon and Ms. Hagenow. Mr. Geary noted that another new Board member, Peter Conyers, will begin his term in one year.

A.4. Election of New Board Chair and Board Secretary

Mr. Geary asked for nominations for Board Chair.

Mr. Thames nominated Chris Pattacini. Mr. Thames enumerated the many great accomplishments the Board has achieved under Mr. Pattacini's leadership, including the implementation of a smooth transition with an interim Superintendent, the passage of an \$84 million school referendum, reworking our Mission Statement, implementing Family Resource Centers in our elementary schools, and obtaining grants from Nellie Mae and the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving.

Mr. Stafford seconded the nomination and noted he has known Mr. Pattacini for many years and he is an able leader.

DISCUSSION:

Ms. Pazda revealed she will not be supporting this nomination. She is looking for a leader who will promote and encourage growth and provide leadership opportunities to other Board members and who values and respects all points of view. She does not want leadership controlled by one party. Ms. Pazda feels the Board of Education should consider aligning our leadership with the Board of Directors, and make the highest vote getter the chair.

Ms. Hagenow also revealed she will not be supporting this nomination. She feels the outcome tonight was divided between party lines. She wants to see decisions in the best interest of children, not parties. Ms. Hagenow hopes that in the future the Board will not vote by party lines. She is not supporting Mr. Pattacini's nomination, not due to his performance, but because she believes there is a better fit for the position.

Mr. Leon was confused about the two other Board members remarks, as no other nominations were made, so no alternatives to Mr. Pattacini's leadership were provided.

6/2/1 - Voted in favor of Mr. Pattacini as Board Chair.

Mr. Pattacini was given the gavel by Mr. Geary and took over the meeting. He stated that he feels the Board operates in a bipartisan fashion and he looks forward to getting to work.

Next, Mr. Pattacini asked for nominations for Board Secretary.

Mr. Leon nominated Jason Scappaticci. He thinks he is doing a great job.

Ms. Stefanovicz seconded the nomination, feeling Mr. Scappaticci is a man of excellence, dedication and passion about education and has done a great job thus far in this position.

DISCUSSION:

Ms. Pazda stated she is not in support of Mr. Scappaticci as Board Secretary. To reiterate her previous statement, she would like to see leadership opportunities for all Board members.

Mr. Leon noted again, Mr. Scappaticci was the sole nomination. To make change someone must throw their hat in the ring.

7/1/1 - Voted in favor of Jason Scappaticci as Board Secretary.

A.5. Reaffirmation of Board of Education Bylaws & Policies

Mr. Pattacini reviewed that each year the bylaws and policies are reaffirmed. This serves to both remind standing members and allow all members to formally adopt the bylaws and policies of the Board of Education.

Secretary Scappaticci moved for the Board of Education to reaffirm the Board of Education bylaws and policies. Mr. Leon seconded the motion.

9/0 - Voted in favor.

A.6. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting

APPROVED – Minutes Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of November 9, 2015. Secretary Scappaticci moved and Mr. Leon seconded the motion.

9/0 – Voted in favor.

B. CONSENT CALENDAR

Mr. Geary presented six 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

- Transfer from MHS Guidance Computer Equipment account to MHS Guidance Instructional Supplies and Materials account in the amount of \$1,340
- Transfer from Verplanck Admin Professional Development account to Verplanck Admin General Supplies and Materials account in the amount of \$3,000
- Transfer from Illing Literacy/Technology Professional Development account to Illing Literacy/Technology Instructional Supplies account in the amount of \$2,000
- Transfer from Illing Science Computer Supplies and Materials account to Illing Administrative Contracted Services account in the amount of \$670
- Transfer from Illing Art Repairs account to Illing Art Instructional Supplies and Materials account in the amount of \$1,325

B.3. Establish an appropriation for FY 15/16 grant provided through the Manchester Community College, College Career Pathways program in the amount of \$1,589

B.4. Establish an appropriation for FY15/16 for the Out-of-District Magnet School Transportation Grant in the amount of \$75,400

B.5. Establish an appropriation for FY 15/16 for the Carl D. Perkins Career & Technical Education, Secondary Basic Grant in the amount of \$104,476

**B.6. Manchester Head Start Federal Grant Budget Justification - FY15
(3/1/2015-2/29/2016)**

The Chairman called for a motion.

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

DISCUSSION:

Mr. Pattacini explained to the new Board members that Consent Calendar items are listed on the agenda for review prior to the meeting. If a Board member would like an item removed prior to approval that can be done, but generally items on the Consent Calendar do not require discussion.

9/0 - Voted in favor.

C. COMMITTEE REPORTS

C.1. Policy Committee

Ms. Hagenow reviewed the last meeting was held November 9, 2015 at Keeney Elementary School with Ms. Cruz, Ms. Hagenow, Ms. Pazda, Mr. Stafford and Mr. Geary in attendance. The proposed revisions to the Parent Family Involvement Policy #1400, the Field Trips Policy #6153, the Evaluation of Programs Policy #6180 were reviewed and will be submitted to the full Board on November 23rd. The Non-Discrimination Policy (Student) #5014 was discussed specifically related to transgender students. The members directed the Superintendent to add a presentation on the rights of transgender students to a future board agenda prior to revision of the policy. Last, the Superintendent gave an update on External Credit Courses Policy #5127-11. The next meeting will be held February 8, 2016.

D. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT

Shania Stanton welcomed the new members of the Board. She is happy to see more women on the Board and feels it is empowering to have such role models.

Lori Fogg also welcomed the new Board members. She informed the Board that there was a pep rally today at MHS. The Turkey Bowl recently took place and everyone is looking forward to a long weekend. She wished everyone a happy Thanksgiving.

E. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms. Tracy Maio, 57 Horton Road, welcomed the new Board members. She was confused about the discussion regarding party lines. Ms. Maio feels the Board of Education is about education, not politics. She has not noticed any party lines. She is confused about how someone can complain about things and not offer options for change. If someone is not happy with how things are, they need to step up and offer an alternative.

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, congratulated the re-elected and new members of the Board. He hopes they all get along. He wants Board members to listen to the public's ideas and follow through with them. He wants the Board to think outside the box and know it is not all academic, but cultural. Diversity is important. He wants us to get back on track and get along. Mr. Stringfield recommended an article in *Architecture* magazine on evolution and in the *Hartford Courant* on World War I. He recommended a book about Frederick Douglas and slavery. Last, Mr. Stringfellow touched on recent religious violence and noted that Muslim and African Americans are good citizens and we are all Americans and need to have respect for one another.

Melissa Pattacini, 49 Timber Trail, is the President of the Foundation for Manchester Public Schools. She wanted to remind teachers in grades K-12 of the grants that are available to them. The application deadline has been extended to December 18th and more information can be found on the website at foundationmps.org.

F. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT – PART I

F.1. Update on Bennet/Cheney Project Design Plan

Mr. Geary reviewed that later this evening there will be a vote about the plans and he introduced Randall Luther, the lead architect from Tai Soo Kim to review the project. Mr. Luther reviewed the Building Committee had approved the documents and they are almost ready to go to bid. The presentation this evening is a bit more detailed, but no substantial changes have been made. The budget was updated and the documents are under review by both Downes Construction and Ready Check, along with Pierce Associates, a code reviewer. Mr. Luther reviewed that the state requires the Board of Education to approve the estimate and drawings before going to the state with the documents. We are on budget at \$17,900,000. There have been no changes to the design. The plan is to go to the state December 18th and if successful to go to bid late December or early January and break ground by early Spring.

Mr. Leon asked for clarity on the heating and cooling system, going from a 4 pipe system to a 2 pipe system to keep us on budget. Mr. Luther explained both systems and noted that we chose a 2 pipe hybrid system, which was not chosen entirely due to the budget, but because it was felt to be a better fit for the construction. If the team had felt the 4 pipe system was necessary there was room in the budget to allow for that.

Ms. Stefanovicz asked for a quick recap on how we arrived here. Mr. Luther reviewed the past 4 years, including the initial study looking at the feasibility of utilizing the Cheney building, the boiler building and possibly the firehouse. He noted the general ed specs for 5th grade were used and they looked at the existing Bennet building to see how much useable space could be shared. Once this was vetted, a more detailed ed spec was used to make more detailed plans to get to referendum. After referendum continued meetings with administration, food services, the Superintendent, Mr. Staye, and the principal have taken place.

Mr. Pattacini asked more about the heating and cooling system. Mr. Luther explained in further detail about the chilled beam system with hot and cold pipes

in the ceilings. With a general 2 pipe system you can either heat or cool the building, not both at the same time. With a 4 pipe system you can heat and cool at the same time. With the 2 pipe hybrid you can heat and cool different areas. The cost savings for this system is approximately \$250,000. There is no difference in the ongoing maintenance of either system.

Mr. Pattacini asked about the glass walkway over School Street. Mr. Luther noted that area will not be cooled, only heated. It will be ventilated and he expects the temperature to be no higher than the upper 70s.

F.2. Update on SAAM

Mr. Geary introduced Dr. Radikas to discuss SAAM. Dr. Radikas presented a powerpoint, which is available for view on the website. She noted that last year 925 students were invited to participate and 433 actually arrived on the first day. By the end of the summer 91 students had been disenrolled. Dr. Radikas presented some test scores from the Spring prior to SAAM and the Fall after the program. She also highlighted some parent survey responses, noting 149 parents had completed the survey, which is triple the number from last year.

Dr. Radikas introduced Calvin Harris from Parks & Rec, who reviewed the Parks & Rec portion of SAAM.

Ms. Jacobsen asked about why some of the budget came from the Board budget and not all from the Alliance Grant. Dr. Radikas reviewed that budgets are an estimate and some of the funds were not budgeted in the Alliance Grant and had to be taken from the Board budget.

Ms. Jacobsen asked about the criteria for being invited to SAAM. Dr. Radikas explained the DRA2 threshold and teacher recommendations. Ms. Jacobsen asked which year was the best and Dr. Radikas stated she could not say, as each year the program shifted. Dr. Radikas noted the first year the program was open to everyone and the second year the criteria was put in place and the program duration was shortened. The goal is to lessen the summer slide and also this past summer acceleration was focused on as well. Ms. Jacobsen felt the

Board should reconsider the enrichment program with STEM and CAST, possibly extending the time at the SAAM site for another hour prior to heading off to Parks & Rec. Dr. Radikas felt it would be difficult to find teachers for that.

Ms. Hagenow asked about the duration of the program and Dr. Radikas clarified the past year was a 6 week program, but only 4 weeks were academic. The first and last week were just for the rec program.

Ms. Hagenow asked about the field trips being tied to the curriculum. Dr. Radikas reviewed some of the trips, including visiting the zoo. She noted that during these trips student participate in activities they may not otherwise be exposed to, which expands vocabulary, allows for practice in taking turns and working with peers, and builds stamina.

Ms. Pazda appreciates Dr. Radikas' expertise in the subject. Summer programs are challenging, but doing nothing is not an option. We want to spark a child to be lifelong learners. Ms. Pazda likes the genius hour concept and wonders how to capitalize on strengthening skills, possibly extending the academic day prior to heading off to the rec program. Dr. Radikas noted the external evaluation will be a plus and we need to consider that the Alliance money will not be available much longer. Dr. Radikas invited Board members to visit the sites this summer to see the program first hand.

Mr. Scappaticci thanked Dr. Radikas and the staff. He also thanked the transportation director for the enormous savings found by reworking the bus routes. He would like to see the data on students who were invited but chose not to attend versus those that did attend. Mr. Scappaticci feels summer school is crucial and that extending the school day during the school year would not provide the same benefits.

Mr. Thames noted the program has evolved each year and he encourages other board members to visit the sites. His grandson attends the program and he feels the parks and rec aspect is phenomenal, with a nurturing staff. He wondered when the results from the outside evaluator would be available. Mr. Geary

reviewed that Collaborative for Education is going to be evaluating SAAM along with the other areas financed by the Alliance Grant. We will have initial feedback by October and by February or March we will have their full recommendations.

Mr. Pattacini wondered why, with about 900 students invited, only about 400 consider the program. Dr. Radikas noted that some families are just not interested. Mr. Geary noted we could try to do a focus group of parents who do not want to participate.

Ms. Pazda wondered how we encourage students to attend. She asked if parents are called by teachers to let them know how important the program is. Dr. Radikas reviewed the teachers do discuss the program at parent-teacher conferences in March. Ms. Pazda feels teachers have clout with families. Dr. Radikas reviewed the RSVP date is just before April vacation, which is after the conferences. Unfortunately, due to hiring needs and bussing there has to be a cutoff date for enrollment.

Mr. Leon wondered where the students are, geographically, that accept the program and maybe not wanting to be bussed plays a role.

Ms. Stefanovicz noted her child was invited to the program and the information sent home was thorough, the teacher spoke to her about it and she received two phone calls and two notices. Unfortunately, a three week family trip prevented her child from attending.

Mr. Pattacini thanked Dr. Radikas and her staff for the program. He is encouraged to see an improvement in literacy and feels the equity of opportunities provides more than academics and is an important component. He thanked the Board members for their thoughtful feedback.

F.3. Update on Elementary Class Sizes

Mr. Geary reviewed our target class size is 17-22 students. He presented the November data for all of the elementary schools, most of which fall in that target size. The full chart is available for view on the website.

Mr. Thames wondered if all pre-K and K teachers have a para in the class. Mr. Geary noted that in Head Start there is a para and teacher. In the special education pre-K classes there may be more paras, depending on the needs of the students, and other professionals push into the class, including social work, OT, speech, etc.

Ms. Pazda is concerned about the kindergarten numbers at Martin being high and the kindergarten at Highland only having 12 students, and at Verplanck 13. Mr. Geary noted the high numbers at Martin necessitated a para in each room. Ms. Pazda wondered why the art room at Martin was not taken to provide for another kindergarten class. Mr. Geary explained Martin is a HOT school and receives a \$25,000 state grant, so taking the art room would impact that program.

Mr. Leon pointed out there is a new housing development in the Waddell district and new construction happening in the Buckland Hills area. He wonders if we communicate with the town regarding construction so we can have a heads up. Mr. Geary noted he has discussed this with Planning & Zoning.

Ms. Jacobsen wondered if every kindergarten class has a para. Mr. Geary stated that is not the practice, though some classes, like those at Martin with high numbers, do have paras, as well as those with students with special needs. Ms. Jacobsen is concerned about kindergarten with 23 students. She wondered how many schools lost their technology, music and art spaces to make way for new classrooms. Mr. Geary noted that Highland and Keeney gave up their computer labs; Verplanck lost art and music, as did Waddell. Those programs run "on a cart" in the classrooms.

Mr. Pattacini noted the smaller schools, like Martin and Highland have a harder time managing an increased number of students because they have fewer classes to absorb the students into. He noted opening Cheney will help, taking grade 5 out of these buildings.

G. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

H. NEW BUSINESS

H.1. Bennet/Cheney Project

Mr. Pattacini asked for a motion.

Secretary Scappaticci moved for the Board of Education to approve the plans and specifications for Additions and Renovations to the Cheney-Bennet Academy, prepared by Tai Soo Kim Partners and dated October 20, 2015, and the associated cost estimate prepared by Downes Construction and dated October 20, 2015, for submission to the Department of Administrative Services, Office of School Construction Grants for Review of Final Plans for Construction Authorization. Mr. Leon seconded the motion.

DISCUSSION:

Mr. Pattacini reviewed this is the next step in moving the project forward.

9/0 - Voted in favor.

H.2. Policy Revisions

Mr. Geary reviewed this is the first reading of the following policy revisions. The full revised drafts are available for review on the website.

a. Board Policy 1400 - Parent/Family/Community Involvement

Mr. Scappaticci pointed out a stray question mark on one of the drafts.

Mr. Pattacini thought it was great to see this connected with our vision statement and work through Nellie Mae and the Foundation for Public Giving.

b. Board Policy 6153 - School Sponsored Field Trips

Mr. Geary reviewed this is a major change to how we make sure students have access to field trips. Our town has moved from 35% free/reduced lunch to 55% and this sets a minimum amount of funding for field trips at 0.1% of the Board budget, which is approximately \$109,000. Currently we spend about \$60,000. Much of the other funding comes through PTAs and grants, in addition to parent payment.

Mr. Leon clarified this is not 1% of the budget, but 0.1%.

Ms. Hagenow asked if the money for athletic field trips was for transportation. It is.

Ms. Stefanovicz wondered how these funds are distributed, if each school will receive the same amount. Mr. Geary noted data on field trips has been collected by grade level across the district. The goal will be to make sure all students are having the same opportunities.

Ms. Pazda wondered if field trips are tied to the curriculum. Mr. Geary stated they are.

Mr. Leon thinks this is a great idea, but that fundraising will still be necessary. Mr. Geary agreed, although it sounds like a lot of money, when divided among the town there is not that much funding to go around.

Mr. Stafford inquired as to how much the 8th grade trip to Washington, D.C. is. That trip costs \$450 per student and about \$26-30,000 is put aside for those students who cannot afford to attend. The Illing PTA works to knock down the amount with fundraising as well.

c. Board Policy 6189 - Evaluation of Instructional Programs

Mr. Pattacini asked for objections to bringing these revisions back for approval at the next meeting. There were no objections so they will be on the next agenda.

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

Tracy Maio, 57 Horton Road, feels SAAM is a fabulous program. Her son was invited, though she did not feel he really needed it. In the end, her son was chosen to participate in the SPARK program instead. Ms. Maio feels that extending the regular school day would be counterproductive and the summer program is a better idea. She notes that she receives a weekly email from the Superintendent and maybe including SAAM information in that email would get the information out to parents easier. She suggested maybe extending the academic day at SAAM for 2 of the school days a week. Ms. Maio pointed out that having such large classes, which then require a para, puts a lot of bodies in a small room. Regarding field trips, she thinks it is great for the Board to contribute and promises the Waddell PTA will continue their fundraising efforts. She finds it alarming that \$113,000 more was spent on sending some kids and less was spent on sending all kids on field trips.

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, supports the Consent Calendar, especially the MCC Pathway Careers. He attended MCC before UCONN. Mr. Stringfellow enjoyed the presentation by Mr. Luther regarding Bennet and felt it was easy to understand. He thinks the SAAM program is vital and the collaboration with parks and rec is good for mind and body. Mr. Stringfellow recommended the book *Opening Doors to Equity* and notes that all students learn differently. He suggested an article in *Ebony* magazine on parenting and child behavior. He suggested yellowbrick.me for online parenting tips. Last, Mr. Stringfellow asks that the Board listen to non-parents, like himself, as well.

J. COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Scappaticci told the administration he was enjoying the "Humans of MPS" which comes in the daily emails.

Mr. Pattacini noted that this past weekend he attended, along with Mr. Thames and Mr. Leon, the CUBE conference, which was excellent.

K. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

None.

L. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Pattacini called for a motion to adjourn.

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

9/0 - Voted in favor.

Adjournment 9:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jason Scappaticci
Board Secretary