

MANCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION

Regular Meeting February 26, 2018 Keeney Elementary

PRESENT: Conyers, Hagenow, Maio, Meggers, Pattacini, Scappaticci, Stefanovicz, Thames

ALSO PRESENT: Superintendent of Schools Geary, Deputy Superintendent Curriculum & Special Services Radikas

ABSENT: Leon

A. **OPENING**

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

Chairperson Pattacini 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. Pattacini.

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

Mr. Thames 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, was 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. Thames 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. Thames reviewed the mission of Manchester Public Schools, which is available for view on the website.

Mr. Thames 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.

Management is the responsibility of the Superintendent. Students, parents, and families who have individual concerns should reach out to the Superintendent, who can help.

Last, Mr. Thames noted he is proud of this school system and thanked the public for their 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 February 12, 2018. Secretary Thames moved and Ms. Hagenow seconded the motion.

8/0 – Voted in favor.

B. COMMITTEE REPORTS

B.1. Personnel & Finance Committee

Ms. Hagenow reviewed that the last meeting was held February 12, 2018. In attendance were herself, Mr. Leon, Mr. Meggers, Mr. Geary, Ms. Clancy and Glen Ellis of Advanced Copier Technologies, Inc.

Ms. Clancy reviewed the status of the 2017-2018 Budget. In summary, there are no significant changes from prior status reports. The budget freeze remains in effect. Approximately \$450K has been encumbered to cover any projected budget shortfall. We have shifted some grant funded salary positions back to the grants and will continue to review positions and move them accordingly. With a budget freeze still in place, we project overall expenditures to remain within budgeted dollars, but will have limited flexibility.

Ms. Clancy provided an update on the current copier contract with Advanced Copier Technologies, Inc. (ACT Group). The contract expires March 31, 2018. ACT Group submitted a 4-year agreement proposal under the CT Consortium for Cooperative Purchasing Contract.

There was discussion relative to changes in transportation for the 2018-2019 school year with the closing of Robertson Elementary, the return of Waddell students to Waddell Elementary, and the movement of all 5th graders to Cheney/Bennet. Dattco is currently looking at the impact of these changes on transportation, as well as our current transportation policy. An update will be provided to this Committee at the next meeting.

Ms. Clancy provided an update on school lunch accounts. Students' negative lunch account balances continues to be an issue. Ms. Clancy and Mr. Aldi are reviewing options to collect outstanding balances. They will continue to look for ways to increase communication with families and reduce negative balances.

Ms. Clancy distributed and reviewed the updated 2018-2019 Budget Development Calendar that reflects the dates of the Town Public Hearing and budget workshops.

There was discussion regarding the use of funds that are provided by Cigna to the district that are designated for wellness events.

The next Personnel & Finance Committee is scheduled for March 26, 2018 at Highland Park School.

C. CONSENT CALENDAR

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

C.1. Personnel Action

None.

C.2. Transfer of Funds

- Transfer from System-wide Computer Technology Computer Supplies & Materials account to System-wide Computer Technology Computer Equipment account in the amount of \$13,489.

C.3. Establish an appropriation for FY 17-18 for General Improvements to Alliance Districts' School Building Grant Program in the amount of \$1,080,000

The Chairman called for a motion.

Secretary Thames moved and Ms. Hagenow seconded the recommendation to approve the Consent Calendar as outlined in Section C of tonight's agenda of February 26, 2018.

8/0 - Voted in favor.

D. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT

Both students were absent.

E. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, noted that in two days Black History Month ends. This is the 92 anniversary of this celebratory month. Mr. Stringfellow talked about the important contributions of African Americans and suggested several movies, books and articles. He noted that April will mark 50 years since Dr. King's death. Mr. Stringfellow recommended an article in *Parents* magazine about children's health. He made note of the allergy issue in the current movie *Peter Rabbit*. Last, Mr. Stringfellow pointed out he is a Keeney alum. He notes we should all watch out for racism. He thinks there is a good climate here.

Keren Prescott, 75D Farm Drive, thanked and commended Principal Martin for her dedication and devotion to our youth. Ms. Prescott feels Ms. Martin is attentive and cares greatly. Ms. Prescott thanked her for hosting focus groups about diversity and inclusion and she hopes this is happening in other schools. Ms. Prescott noted that her child is aware of her surroundings in a school where not many others look like her. They love this community and want to be a part of the next steps of Manchester Public Schools as a whole and to be part of the solution.

F. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT – PART I

F.1. Keeney Elementary School Improvement Plan

Mr. Geary introduced Ms. Julie Martin-Beaulieu, Principal of Keeney. Along with the vice principal and many staff members, Ms. Martin presented their SIP. The presentation is available on the website.

Mr. Thames commended Ms. Martin on moving the needle for student outcomes. He wondered what her goals were by the end of the year. Ms. Martin noted that of course she would like to see 80% at benchmark, but they are looking at individual group data this week. She would like to narrow the goals.

Mr. Thames noted the data was not presented by race or group and wondered what the composition of the school is. Ms. Martin noted the majority at Keeney are white but there is an achievement gap across the grades. Mr. Thames wondered about staff of color. Ms. Martin noted there are few staff members of color.

Mr. Thames wondered about techniques to reduce the achievement gap. Ms. Martin is looking at individual student needs. She also wants to focus on staff, and knows she needs a more diverse staff. Mr. Thames agreed it is important for all races to be represented for all children. Diversity needs to be seen in a good light. He hopes more diverse staff members will be recruited.

Ms. Maio was interested in the Curiosity Fair and wondered if it was only held during the school day. Ms. Martin stated it was the first year they held this event and it was during the school day. Next year they hope to involve parents more and possibly have parents host some booths.

Ms. Maio wondered if the fluency data marks where the child should be at the end of the year and therefore they may not have even seen some of the information yet. That is correct noted Ms. Martin, though she felt more students should be progressing towards fluency by mid-year.

Mr. Pattacini is encouraged by the emotional learning curriculum and shift from SEL to academic. He feels math fluency seems to be an area of concern. Mr. Pattacini wondered what specific actions with students are happening. Ms. Martin pointed out that the STEM specialists are providing targeted support in math. They are also working to strengthen the workshop model in math.

Mr. Pattacini wants to help every child, but there is only so much time in the day. He wondered where Ms. Martin could use more resources. Ms. Martin noted that her intervention system for reading is strong but it is not as good in math.

Mr. Pattacini noted it is clear there is a strong community here and he is grateful for the work going on here.

Mr. Pattacini called a 5 minute recess for the Keeney families to exit. 8:11 p.m.

8:21 p.m. back in session

F.2. Update on Teacher Attendance and Climate

Mr. Geary noted that teacher attendance rates are an indicator of culture and climate. They impact student achievement and require both human and financial resources. Mr. Geary noted some absences are due to professional development. It is noted that teacher absences of 10 days or more impact student achievement. Nationally, chronically absent teacher rates (18+ days) range from 16-20%. Manchester is at about 16%. Mr. Geary's presentation is available on the website. Overall, Mr. Geary noted that teacher attendance is better compared to last year.

Mr. Scappaticci noted we compare well to the National average (MPS at about 16% and the National average 16-20%). He wondered what the state average is. Mr. Geary did not know the state average.

Mr. Scappaticci asked about the religious obligation increase in October. It was noted that the Jewish holidays vary months from year to year.

Mr. Thames asked how many days teachers are given and how many work days there are each year. Mr. Geary noted teachers have 15 sick days per year, which are cumulative, and 4 personal days, which are not. They also have access to 5 bereavement days for immediate family. Teachers work 187 days per year.

Mr. Thames wondered if attendance is part of the teacher's evaluation. Mr. Geary stated it is not directly, but could possibly be noted as part of the professionalism if it is chronic. Mr. Thames underscored that when a teacher is absent 10 or more days it impacts the achievement of students.

Ms. Stefanovicz asked about the military leave absence. Mr. Geary noted that we have an active military reservist who was called to duty.

G. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

G.1. Policy Recommendations

Mr. Pattacini noted that this is the second read for the following policy revisions. There were no questions or suggested changes.

Mr. Thames moved to adopt Policy 4305 - Reports of Suspected Abuse or Neglect of Adults with an Intellectual Disability or Autism Spectrum Disorder. Ms. Hagenow seconded the motion.

8/0 - Voted in favor.

Mr. Thames moved to adopt Policy 4114 - Personnel - Non-Discrimination. Ms. Hagenow seconded the motion.

8/0 - Voted in favor.

Mr. Thames moved to adopt Policy 5014 - Students - Non-Discrimination. Ms. Hagenow seconded the motion.

8/0 - Voted in favor.

Mr. Thames moved to adopt Policy 6174 - Summer Education Program. Ms. Hagenow seconded the motion.

8/0 - Voted in favor.

Mr. Pattacini thanked the administration and Policy Committee for their work in updating policies to support student learning.

H. NEW BUSINESS

None.

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

Rebecca Thoreau, 103 Diane Drive, first pointed out a typographical error in one of the policies presented this evening. Next, noted she is also a proud Keeney parent and commended all the staff. She pointed out the new art teacher represents diversity and is a welcome addition. She even hosted a weekend event for Keeney families recently. Regarding reading assessments, she has concerns about the difficulty some children have in progressing out of intervention yet not being identified as special education. She noted that Fountas & Pinnell reading assessments are heavy teacher work, as it takes 20-30 minutes to assess one child. RTI (Response to Intervention) is supposed to be a 6 week program and then students are supposed to move on and they are not moving on or being identified as special ed.

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, supports Item 3 of the Consent Calendar and hopes the money is put to good use. He enjoyed the Keeney presentation and noted that diversity is important for staff. Mr. Stringfellow recommended the movie *Black Panther*. He feels it is important to know about other cultures and contributions. He recommended the book *Tears We Cannot Stop* about pain with the issue of racism. He recommended an article about tolerance and noted he attended the recent State Department of Education meeting about teacher leadership and fellowship program with CCSU.

J. COMMUNICATIONS

None.

K. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

None.

L. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Pattacini noted that typically the meeting would be adjourned at this time. However, instead of having an executive session prior to the meeting, the Board was moving into executive session at the end of the meeting. The public part of the meeting is now over and the meeting will officially end at the end of the Executive session.

Ms. Hagenow moved and Mr. Scappaticci seconded the motion to move into Executive Session.

8/0 - Voted in favor.

Moved to Executive Session 8:51 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Daryll Thames, Snr.
Board Secretary