

MANCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION

Regular Meeting

March 26, 2018

Highland Park Elementary School

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

ALSO PRESENT: Superintendent of Schools Geary, Deputy Superintendent Curriculum & Special Services Radikas, Director of Finance & Management Clancy

ABSENT: Hagenow, Leon, Scappaticci

A. **OPENING**

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

Chairperson Pattacini called the meeting to order at 7:02 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, 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. 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.

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. 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 March 12, 2018. Secretary Thames moved and Mr. Conyers seconded the motion.

Friendly amendment by Ms. Stefanovicz to strike her name as an attendee at the last meeting.

6/0 – Voted in favor.

B. COMMITTEE REPORTS

B.1. Buildings & Sites Committee

Mr. Meggers reviewed the last meeting of the Committee was held March 12, 2018 with the following in attendance: Lindsey Boutilier, Karen Clancy, Peter Conyers, Matthew Geary, Neal Leon, Tracy Maio, Peter Meggers and Peter Staye.

Mr. Boutilier presented a proposal to install an out building next to the synthetic field for storing mats used by the track & field teams. The track & field team has raised enough money to pay for the shed, which will be just under \$7,000. Parks & Rec will assist in preparing the stone surface for the shed to sit on and the Track coach is pursuing approval from the Zoning Department. The Committee approved the purchase and location of the shed.

The Athletic Department would like to start renting out the synthetic field to outside groups and organizations as a pilot program. Currently the field is often used by the public without permission. As part of the program, the High School Athletics Department would schedule use, issue permits, and collect payment of \$100/hour plus fees for lighting. Groups would be expected to provide insurance and as part of the pilot Buildings & Grounds would maintain records of insurance, though this is expected to be part of the Athletics permitting function should the pilot be extended. Fees would be used for replacement of field equipment. This pilot was approved and a report will be given in the Fall.

The Illing parking lot replacement was reviewed and approved.

The plans and specifications for the replacement of the roof at MRA were reviewed. The new roof will have a 30 year warranty and is expected to be completed in the Summer of 2018. Plans, specs and cost estimate were approved.

The status of the projects included in the 2017 Alliance Capital Grant were reviewed. All funds have been received and the state will allow invoices on approved projects that were completed before the funds were received to be applied to the grant, including the Bennet walk-in cooler, freezer replacement, installation of Waddell burner on Illing boiler No. 1, and high school parking lot lighting. The A/C in the library at Bowers is out to bid and the replacement of the HVAC unit for the kitchen at MRA has been contracted. All work remains on schedule to be completed by October 31, 2018.

Last, efforts to improve and streamline the recycling process continue to be discussed. Recent changes in what is and is not considered recyclable were reviewed. Receptacles that are in use are to be reevaluated to determine if they discourage recycling. PTA involvement would most likely require storage, which may be problematic.

C. CONSENT CALENDAR

Mr. Geary presented two 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. Approval to donate \$1,000 to Manchester High School, "Project Graduation" for the 2017-2018 School Year

The Chairman called for a motion.

Secretary Thames moved and Ms. Maio seconded the recommendation to adopt the Consent Calendar as outlined in Section C of the agenda of 3/26/18.

6/0 - Voted in favor.

D. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT

Patrick Doherty reported that last week students from the Broadcast Journalism program took part in the Student Television Network Convention in Nashville. Over the course of the week the student journalists took part in multiple competitions along with workshops presented by the industries best. The competition was great to take part in and the experience was unforgettable.

The MHS Student Staff Basketball game will be taking place this Thursday, March 29th in the main gym. Admission to the event is free but non-perishable food donations are being accepted to help our local MACC food pantry.

Last weekend was History Day Saturday at the high school. Multiple MHS students won awards for their history day projects this winter, along with seeing some of the best projects in our state. Mr. Jones, the coordinator of the event, said that 25 projects were submitted from MHS students and 3 of those groups qualified for the state competition. About 500 people filled our cafeteria to witness these projects.

Last weekend included 3 productions of "You're a good man Charlie Brown," which was put on by the MHS Musical staff. The show was a hit and over 1250 tickets were sold between the three shows.

All Juniors will be attending College Fair this Thursday, March 29th. Students were already provided with a map including all 300 colleges that will be at the event.

Guidance counselors will serve as chaperones for our students and will provide them with a helping hand when looking at schools that interest them.

Last, Mr. Doherty noted that senior events mailings were sent home to all seniors last week. The mailings included packets about graduation, Senior Picnic, Senior Prom and Project Graduation. This gave all seniors an opportunity to prepare themselves for the events to come.

E. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, noted that this is Women's History Month and he recommended a book, *The Anthology of Amazing Women*. On April 4th it will be 50 years since Dr. King was assassinated. Mr. Stringfellow noted he believes in free speech and not a police state. Last, Mr. Stringfellow suggested articles in *American History* magazine on segregation in the armed forces and Robert E. Lee.

F. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT – PART I

F.1. Highland Park Elementary School Improvement Plan

Mr. Geary introduced Principal Hassan Robinson. Mr. Robinson is in his first year as principal at HPS, having previously been an assistant principal at Bennet for three years. Prior to that he works as an elementary school teacher for 8 years. Mr. Robinson, along with many staff members and parents, gave a presentation which is available on the website.

Mr. Thames liked that the data is reviewed and used to help meet the needs of the students. He wondered what an SSAT is. Mr. Robinson explained that is a Student Assistance Team comprised of a teacher, administrator, special education teacher, social worker and psychologist. A child is referred who has already been receiving tiered intervention. Ideas and strategies for helping the child succeed are discussed. In 4-6 weeks the team reconvenes and if the child is making sufficient progress they are dismissed from the program. If there is not sufficient progress new strategies or a referral to special education is discussed.

Mr. Thames wondered how restorative practice is rolled out to parents. Mr. Robinson noted that staff has had training on restorative circles. Parents are told

a little about the practice at conferences. They will work on expanding this communication with parents.

Mr. Thames appreciated hearing about the school-wide incentive program and hearing that children who are doing the right things receive some attention.

Ms. Maio thanked the PTA representatives, noting she understands what it is like to be an involved parent. It is a lot of work but is very rewarding.

Regarding the 001 program, she thinks that label is cold. It was explained that the program was previously MHS 101 and now it is simply the room number where the class is held at Highland and the name is only used when referring to the program in a situation like this evening. Otherwise it is simply another classroom in the building. Ms. Maio wondered how students are identified for the program and if parents need to approve and for how long do the students typically stay in the program. Mr. Robinson explained it is a K-2 program where regular education students with behavior issues are referred from their home schools. Currently there are 4 students in the class (from Keeney, Buckley and HPS). Earlier this year 2 other students transitioned back into a regular classroom. Even after the student "graduates" to a regular class full time, they are welcome to stay at HPS until they move to Bennet and are not asked to return to their home school. This is the first year the program has been held at HPS.

Ms. Stefanovicz wondered about referral data. Mr. Robinson explained that teachers enter referrals directly into Eschool and he gets notifications. If the incident requires his input he adds it and it notifies the teacher.

Mr. Pattacini thanked Mr. Robinson for the great work going on at Highland Park and the progress and community support centered around student excellence.

8:27 - a short recess was held - Back in session at 8:31

G. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

G.1. Policy Recommendations

Mr. Pattacini reviewed these recommendations are presented for a second reading tonight and barring objection will be voted on.

a. Policy 4000 - Employment Checks

Mr. Geary reviewed this item adds a new form that defines the amount of time a former employer needs to go back (20 years). This change was due to new legislation.

Secretary Thames moved for the Board of Education to adopt Item G.1.a. Policy 4000 - Employment Checks. Mr. Conyers seconded the motion.

6/0 - Voted in favor.

b. Policy 1401 - School Volunteers

Mr. Geary reviewed this policy revision is simply to add a form to standardize the policy throughout the district.

Ms. Stefanovicz asked for the words "but not limited to the following groups" be added to Item 2 in relations to groups that may be solicited for volunteers. A friendly amendment was made.

Secretary Thames moved for the Board of Education to adopt Item G.1.b. Policy 1401 - School Volunteers, with the revision suggested by Ms. Stefanovicz. Ms. Stefanovicz seconded the motion.

6/0 - Voted in favor.

c. Policy 6214 - Animals in Schools

Mr. Geary reviewed this is in regard to non-therapeutic animals in schools.

Ms. Stefanovicz asked for clarification on whether it was the superintendent or principal that needs to give permission. Mr. Geary

noted the principal is the first “approver” and if the principal is in agreement, then the superintendent, or his designee, then must approve the animal. The principal cannot be “skipped”.

Secretary Thames moved for the Board of Education to adopt Item G.1.c. Policy 6214 - Animals in Schools. Mr. Meggers seconded the motion.

6/0 - Voted in favor.

Mr. Pattacini thanked the Board, Policy Committee and administration for their work on these policies.

H. NEW BUSINESS

H.1. School Calendar

Mr. Geary noted he had sifted through many potential options for making up the multiple snow days this year. The state still has not replied about the feasibility of the blizzard bags. He has decided to hold minimal school days on June 25 and 26 (2 ½ hour days) to get to the 180 required school days. We will have a full April break and no school on Good Friday.

Ms. Stefanovicz thanked Mr. Geary for his creative, out of the box thinking and for keeping parents apprised of the possibilities.

Ms. Maio wondered if the topic of blizzard bags will be pursued for future snow days. Mr. Geary noted the Board Attorney has reached out to the CSDE for an answer. The blizzard bags, along with possible 3 hour delays, shortened days and other options are in the works for next year.

Secretary Thames moved for the Board of Education to approve item H.1. Amended 2017-2018 School Calendar. Ms. Stefanovicz seconded the motion.

6/0 - Voted in favor.

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

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, supports the Consent Calendar and the change to the school calendar. He noted it has been a strange winter. Mr. Stringfellow liked the report from Highland Park and is impressed by how they reach out to parents and he is glad to see a principal of color. He recommended the book *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria*. He also recommended an article in *YES* magazine on indigenous tribes and the movie *A Wrinkle in Time*. Last, Mr. Stringfellow recommended the book *Getting Grit*, noting there was an article in *Family Circle* magazine about it.

J. COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Pattacini announced that the CT PTA has named Mr. Geary as Administrator of the Year. There will be an event on April 25th and all are encouraged to attend.

K. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

None.

L. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Pattacini called for a motion to adjourn.

Secretary Thames moved and Mr. Conyers seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting.

6/0 - Voted in favor.

Adjournment 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Darryl Thames, Snr.
Board Secretary