

## **MANCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION**

### **Regular Meeting September 11, 2017**

Lincoln

**PRESENT:** Caldwell, Conyers, Hagenow, Leon, Pattacini, Stefanovicz, Thames

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

**ABSENT:** Scappaticci

#### **A. OPENING**

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

**Chairperson Pattacini** called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. All in attendance participated in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, led by Mr. Pattacini.

##### **A.3. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting**

**APPROVED – Minutes Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of August 28, 2017. Acting Secretary Thames moved and Ms. Hagenow seconded the motion.**

**6/0/1 – Voted in favor.**

#### **B. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

None.

#### **C. CONSENT CALENDAR**

**Mr. Geary** presented seven 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. Establish an appropriation for FY 17-18 for the Heisman Scholars in the amount of \$24,000**

**C.3. Establish an appropriation for FY 17-18 for the Manchester Head Start, State Department of Education Services Grant, in the amount of \$145,198**

**C.4. Establish an appropriation for FY 17-18 for the Enfield Head Start, State Department of Education Services Grant, in the amount of \$2,891**

**C.5. Establish an appropriation for the FY 17-18 for the Manchester Head Start, State Department of Education Link Grant, in the amount of \$16,847**

**C.6. Establish an appropriation for the FY 17-18 for the Enfield Head Start, State Department of Education Link Grant, in the amount of \$20,378**

**C.7. Establish an appropriation for FY 17-18 for the Enfield Head Start, State Department of Education Enhancement Grant, in the amount of \$92,527**

**The Chairman called for a motion.**

**Acting Secretary Thames moved and Mr. Caldwell seconded the recommendation to adopt the Consent Calendar as outlined in the agenda.**

**7/0 - Voted in favor.**

**D. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT**

**Patrick Doherty** reported that September 6th was the first day for the class of 2021. The upperclassmen led activities and showed the freshman around. That evening the seniors enjoyed 183 Night with pizza and prizes to mark the start of their last year at

MHS. On September 17 there will be the involvement fair showcasing the extra-curricular activities at the high school. Fundraisers are also in the works.

Patrick noted that Flex Time will begin next week. Mr. Pattacini reminded Patrick and Nabila that they are welcome to weigh in on the Flex Time presentation that will occur this evening.

### **E. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, noted today is the 16th anniversary of 9/11. We should be aware of terrorism, both domestic and international. He feels some statutes should remain standing and some should be taken down. He wants to give credit to blacks and native Americans that contributed to our country. Mr. Stringfellow recommended a book by James McPherson, *Wars that Forced a Nation*. He enjoyed the movie *The Last Viceroy*. He noted that state Board of Education is working on expulsion data.

### **F. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT – PART I**

#### **F.1. Introduction of Highland Park Principal, Hassan Robinson**

**Mr. Geary** introduced Hassan Robinson as the new principal of Highland Park Elementary. Mr. Robinson was previously an Assistant Principal at Bennet. Mr. Robinson noted he is excited about this new opportunity and bringing together the staff, students, and community. He has been in education for 19 years. Mr. Robinson enjoys collaborating with parents and the community.

**Mr. Leon** welcomed Mr. Robinson to his new position and wondered what the biggest challenge was this first week. Mr. Robinson noted that bringing the staff together was challenging.

**Mr. Thames** congratulated Mr. Robinson, noting he was on the hiring committee and was impressed with Mr. Robinson's credentials and personal attributes. He likes that Mr. Robinson talks about communication and building relationships.

**Mr. Pattacini** looks forward to a successful year for Mr. Robinson.

**F.2. Update on the Opening of School**

**Mr. Geary** noted the buildings are in good shape, with the Family Resource Center at Martin still in the finishing stages. There are just a couple of vacancies currently, including a 5th grade position at Highland Park due to a teacher moving into a 6th grade position at Bennet. Even though they only had weeks to prepare, Dattco has overall had a smooth start. They have been extremely responsive to any issues that have arisen.

There is just one elementary class above 22 students, which is at Buckley. Overflow kindergarteners from Robertson were welcomed at Keeney and some Bowers students were welcomed at Martin.

Mr. Geary noted we are still waiting on the state to finalize a budget.

Friday night the high school field dedication in memory of Barry Mitchell will take place before the football game and after the back to school party.

**Mr. Leon** wondered if the overflow Kindergarten students that were moved will be allowed to stay in their new schools or if it is just one year. Mr. Geary noted they can stay if they would like.

**Ms. Stefanovicz** asked about enrollment, wondering if there were any bumper crops in certain grades. Mr. Geary noted enrollment is on target. He also noted that late September Milone & McBroom will be looking at demographics to start working on the redistricting required next year and the year after, as buildings open and close.

Ms. Stefanovicz wondered about the start of Pre-K. Mr. Geary noted that Head Start has not begun yet this year, but the preschool classes in the elementary schools for disabled youngsters are up and running. Head Start is still doing their home visits and will start classes soon.

**Mr. Pattacini** noted that the field dedication for Barry Mitchell will be Friday at 6:00 p.m.

### **F.3. Update on Manchester High School Flex Block**

**Ms. Katelyn Miner**, Interim Principal of MHS, gave a presentation on the new Flex Block. She was joined by many staff members, including teachers James Tierinni, Ashley Bell and Sarah Rohrbach, and Assistant Principal Mark Ruede. The presentation is available online.

Basically, Flex Block is a 33 minute period in each student's day. Mondays students will meet with a staff mentor to look at where they need assistance or what they would like to accomplish over the week. A schedule for Tuesday through Friday is created and those days the student follows the set schedule for their Flex Block. Each staff member has about 8-11 students that they mentor, some chosen by the staff and some assigned. Attendance is taken during Flex Block. Staff were given training on the software at PD.

**Ms. Hagenow** wondered if all grades will be participating in the Flex Block. They are, confirmed Ms. Miner. Ms. Hagenow asked if a student can meet with the same teacher all week for help. Ms. Miner stated that is unlikely and twice a week would be more likely. Last, Ms. Hagenow wondered if students, teacher, and parents all have access to the program. Ms. Miner noted teachers have full access and students are emailed their schedule for the week. The parent piece has not yet been explored. Ms. Hagenow noted it sounds like a good program and hopefully will avoid some after school and summer programming.

**Mr. Conyers** wondered how many students per mentor there will be. Ms. Miner noted each staff will have 8-10 students and they tried to keep academies together. They also took teacher requests if they had a relationship with a student already.

Mr. Conyers wondered how the teachers reacted to this new program. Ms. Miner noted that she has had a largely positive reaction with lots of questions. There is confidence about the mentoring piece. Mr. Ruede noted he has had nothing but positive feedback and teachers see it as a more functional version of Power Hour.

Mr. Conyers wondered what happens if a staff member is absent on a Monday. Ms. Miner noted that staff are buddied up in the same classroom on Mondays, so

if one is absent the other can take paper schedule requests from the students to be entered.

**Mr. Caldwell** thinks this is a great program and he looks forward to implementation. He wondered who has the final say over the schedule, the student or the staff mentor. Ms. Miner noted there will be a relationship formed between the student and staff member, so a discussion will take place. Mr. Caldwell wondered if the staff/student ratio was similar in other districts using this program. Mr. Tierini noted that many schools they looked at staff had 12/13 students for the same time period.

**Mr. Thames** likes the concept and thinks it will be more effective than Power Hour. Smaller learning communities are better for children. He wonders if there are additional resources besides the software. Ms. Miner noted she is confident in the plan so far, though space may be challenging. They have found some spaces for silent reading/working but could use more. The attendance in the software notes not only present or absent, but active or inactive.

**Mr. Leon** wondered if all the students in the class hear about the other student's grades and needs on Mondays. Ms. Miner noted conversations will be private and one on one with each student.

Mr. Leon asked Patrick and Nabila how they felt about the new program. Patrick thinks it is the right idea that will be more structured than Power Hour and will help kids get more things done. Nabila is glad for the one on one opportunity to have someone help students.

Mr. Leon wondered if this will help make lunch waves easier. Ms. Miner says they look good so far.

**Ms. Stefanovicz** felt this was a thoughtful presentation and she feels a mentor relationship makes a difference in the quality of education children receive. The idea of checking and adjusting is a life skill that we are helping students learn. She wondered if Tuesday through Friday there would be an opportunity for mental health/drug counseling. Ms. Miner noted all counselors and social

workers expect to hold some small groups during those times, along with individual counseling.

**Ms. Miner** thanked all the staff and committees that worked hard on this new program.

**G. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

None.

**H. NEW BUSINESS**

**H.1. Adoption of Revised Board of Education Priorities 2017-2020**

**Acting Secretary Thames moved to adopt the revised Board of Education Priorities for 2017-2020. Mr. Caldwell seconded the motion.**

**DISCUSSION:**

**Mr. Pattacini** thanked the administration and board members for their work on this. We have made great progress over the last few years.

**7/0 - Voted in favor.**

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

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, supports the Consent Calendar, especially the Head Start funding. He thought that the back to school report from Mr. Geary was good, along with the Board priorities. They are thorough and understandable. Mr. Stringfellow congratulated Mr. Robinson and thinks the diversity of the employees reflects the diversity of the town. This makes Manchester a better place to be. Mr. Stringfellow thinks the Flex Time idea is great. He suggested an article on student organization and a book, *The Color Complex - The Politics of Skin Color*. In *Popular Science* an article on how to fix our schools was interesting to him. He mentioned Excursions in Learning at MCC. Mr. Stringfellow pointed out that racism, prejudice and sexism is all learned behavior. We should all get along.

**J. COMMUNICATIONS**

None.

**K. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS**

None.

**L. ADJOURNMENT**

**Mr. Pattacini called for a motion to adjourn.**

**Mr. Leon moved and Mr. Thames seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting.**

**7/0 - Voted in favor.**

**Adjournment 8:17 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

Daryl Thames  
Acting Board Secretary