

MANCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION

Regular Meeting October 23, 2017 Lincoln

PRESENT: Caldwell, Conyers, Hagenow, Hughes, Leon, Pattacini, Scappaticci, Stefanovicz, Thames

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

ABSENT:

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 October 10, 2017. Secretary Scappaticci moved and Mr. Leon seconded the motion.

9/0 – Voted in favor.

B. **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

B.1. **Curriculum & Instruction Committee**

Ms. Stefanovicz reviewed the last meeting was held October 10th with the following in attendance: Peter Conyers, Scott Hughes, Melanie Stefanovicz, Amy

Radikas, Diane Sheehan-Burns, Pari Ghetia, Tom Stringfellow (resident), and Elsie Torres-Brown (intern).

Ms. Sheehan-Burns gave an update on Humanities, including an overview of the newly structured coaching model in place for grades K-5 for the 2017-18 school year. Coaches are now working in a triad model, with an English Language Arts and Math Coach assigned to three schools.

State Representative Mark Tweedie has invited Ms. Sheehan-Burns to discuss the district's authentic unit of instruction regarding the American Flag to see how other districts may learn from Manchester.

Last Ms. Sheehan-Burns spoke about new teacher modules. They hope to offer four modules over the year to support best practices in Humanities and STEAM.

Ms. Ghetia discussed implementation of Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) in curriculum. Curriculum writing will begin shortly and will take about 18 months to complete. Learning through discovery and inquiry is a highlight of the new standards.

Dr. Radikas gave an overview of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) accreditation process occurring at the preschool sites located at MHS, Buckley and Keeney. The process will provide the district feedback regarding preschool programming and next steps.

Dr. Radikas also gave an overview of another accreditation process occurring at MHS. This two-year process begins this year with self-reflection and the writing of a goal plan. MHS will then have 18 months to implement its goal plan and final accreditation should occur in March 2020.

C. CONSENT CALENDAR

Mr. Geary presented eight 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. Transfer of Funds

- Transfer from Bennet School Administration Periodicals account to Bennet Library/Media Software Licenses/Fees account in the amount of \$900
- Transfer from Illing School Administration General Supplies & Materials account to Illing School Administration Travel/Lodging account in the amount of \$300

C.3. Establish an appropriation for FY 17-19 in the amount of \$300,000 for the Barr Foundation Grant

C.4. Approval of donation to Manchester High School for "general use and purposes" from the Estate of Ms. Virginia Ryan in the amount of \$97,446

C.5. Establish an appropriation for FY 17-18 in the amount of \$15,000 for the Garrett Lee Smith Grant

C.6. Establish an appropriation for FY 17-18 in the amount of \$95,622 for the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Secondary Basic Grant provided through the State of CT

C.7. Permission to apply for FY 17-19, for the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving Grant for Family and Community Partnership, in the amount of \$610,000

C.8. Extended Field Trip Request Form - MHS Broadcast Journalism Class - 36 Students - 4 Teacher Chaperones - Nashville, TN - STN Convention - 4 School Days Missed

The Chairman called for a motion.

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

DISCUSSION:

Mr. Pattacini asked the administration to comment on C.3. Mr. Geary noted that the Barr Foundation Grant is earmarked for the pursuit of personalized learning at MHS, including job shadowing and apprentice opportunities. Mr. Geary also noted that C.7. is for permission to apply to the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving for a grant.

Mr. Thames thanked the Estate of Virginia Ryan for their gift of \$97,446. He asked about the plans for the funds. Mr. Geary noted the donation is to be used for student activities. The funds will be used over time to assist with personalized learning, extended field trips, and other student focused activities.

Mr. Pattacini thanked the administration for their work in getting private grants to supplement our budget.

The question was called.

9/0 - Voted in favor.

D. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT

Nabila Hoor Un Ein and Patrick Doherty reported that the community Halloween Party will be held this Saturday, October 28th at MHS. Miss MHS was held October 20th and Taylor Keyt was the winner. The senior friends picnic was held last week. College Financial Aid Night is October 26th at 6:30 in the auditorium. Homecoming tickets went on sale today and can be purchased through game day. The parade is being held on a Thursday this year. The themes will be released soon. Red Ribbon Week provides awareness related to drug abuse and dependency. Last, the Discovery Center Equity Informed School Assessment was done last week.

E. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Dan Higgins, 161 Brookfield Street, works for Fuel Cell America, formerly UTC. He spoke about providing the district with a savings of approximately \$50,000 a year over the next 20 years by going with his company. He noted both Middletown and Naugatuck have recently started. Mr. Higgins is an MHS graduate of the class of 2013.

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, recommended the book "1521" about Chinese exploration of the new world. He feels we should give credit where credit is

due, not just to Columbus, but to all explorers. Mr. Stringfellow recommended the book *White Rage* by Carol Anderson. He also suggested an article about Dick Gregory, who recently passed away. Last, he again suggested the "Who Was..." series of books.

F. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT – PART I

F.1. Professional Development Highlights

Mr. Geary introduced Dr. Radikas, who acknowledged the hard work of her staff, including Jane Morano, Kerry Kearney and Cheri Gabriel. Several staff members gave highlights of their professional development workshops, including Rhonda Philbert (Race, Culture & Equity), Tracy Pietkevich and Heather Garcia (Cookie Fiasco), and Brian & Chelsea Gordon (Classroom Management). Their presentations can be viewed on the website.

Mr. Hughes wondered if we could offer Ms. Philbert's presentation to the families and community. Ms. Philbert agreed we could.

Mr. Thames felt Ms. Philbert's presentation was informative and agreed that children tend to do better with teachers who are reflective of the community. He wondered how we are doing with actively recruiting, interviewing, and hiring diverse staff. Ms. Philbert clarified that when she said "reflective of the community" she was referring to staff making an effort to be open-minded, non-judgemental, and aware of their student's backgrounds, not necessarily of the same race. Ms. Philbert noted it is morally imperative to make sure all children are successful. Mr. Thames appreciates the work Ms. Philbert is doing and the efforts to make staff more culturally competent.

Mr. Thames thanked Ms. Pietkevich and Ms. Garcia for their presentation and wondered, as we roll out strategies to staff, how do we impact the families. The teachers pointed out the Remind App, letters sent home to parents, and APTT nights help to include parents.

Dr. Radikas thanked the staff for coming out this evening. We are increasing our use of teachers as resources. Mr. Pattacini thanked them for their great work in the district and noted we have a high caliber staff.

F.2. Equity Informed School Climate Assessment

Mr. Geary introduced staff from The Discovery Center, whose presentation is available on the website. They spoke about the difference between equity and equality. The Equity-Informed School Climate Assessment (EISCA) is used to understand school climate, focusing on the experiences of students, staff, and families with marginalized identities to help ensure equity for each student in Manchester Public Schools. Their data collection included focus groups, surveys of students, parents and staff, record review and site visits.

Mr. Hughes wondered how long the assessment took. The Discovery Center staff was at Washington and Keeney for 2 days and at MHS for 4 days. The data will be ready in late March to present to the Board.

Mr. Leon appreciates looking through the lense of someone else. He wondered if Manchester was the only district doing EISCA. Yes, EISCA is a pilot program only in Manchester. There was a version used in Hartford. Mr. Leon wondered about the feedback thus far from parents and students. So far the feedback has been amazing and welcoming.

Mr. Thames wondered about the Discovery Center Camp. Although previously 4th graders took a day trip, currently the center is for grades 5 and 6 for overnight trips. Verplanck, Keeney, Washington and Bennet currently participate. Mr. Geary noted that once the 5th graders are together at Cheney we will work to open that opportunity for all to participate. The program is funded by Paul Newman's foundation and although it costs \$480 a week per child, generally families are asked to pay what they can (maybe \$75), but some families pay more than the cost so that other families can benefit.

Mr. Conyers asked how schools are chosen to participate. The schools participating have participated for many years, so it is unknown exactly why those schools were chosen, but the demographics of the district and free/reduced lunch status surely played a role.

Mr. Conyers wondered about the next steps after the information is compiled. Once the report is given to the administration and rolled out to parents, the

community and teachers, recommendations and commendations for the district will also be included.

Mr. Pattacini noted the Discovery Center mission statement says it all. He is glad Manchester is a leading in supporting the Discovery Center in their mission.

G. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

G.1. Policy Recommendation

Mr. Pattacini noted this is the second reading of this policy revision submitted by the Policy Committee. There were no questions.

Secretary Scappaticci moved for the Board to adopt Policy 5127.1 - Requirements for Graduation from Manchester High School. Mr. Leon seconded the motion.

9/0 - Voted in favor.

G.2. Policy Deletion

Mr. Pattacini noted this is the second read of this policy recommended for deletion. There were no questions.

Secretary Scappaticci moved for the Board to delete Policy 6176 - Applied Education. Mr. Leon seconded the motion.

9/0 - Voted in favor.

Mr. Pattacini thanked the administration and Policy Committee for their work.

H. NEW BUSINESS

H.1. Policy Revision

Mr. Geary reviewed that he would like to make the last two school days at Robertson, Waddell and Verplanck staff-only days. These schools are all relocating over the summer and it will allow the teachers and staff time to pack up. The district will work with MELC throughout the elementary schools to

provide time for 5th grade teachers at the other schools to have time to pack as well.

Mr. Conyers wondered with 2 less academic days, what the minimum number of days allowed is. Mr. Geary reviewed 180 days is the minimum and we currently have 182, so the children at those schools will still meet the requirements.

Mr. Leon wondered if thought was given to closing the whole district early. Mr. Geary stated we are trying to minimize the chaos and impact to families.

Mr. Thames would like a synopsis of the moving plans to be emailed to Board members as a reminder of what will be happening.

Ms. Stefanovicz wondered why we have 183 days when the minimum is 180. Mr. Geary reviewed that we currently have 182 days and 187 teacher days, which gives some flexibility.

Secretary Scappaticci moved for the Board to revise the 2017-18 School Calendar to make the last two days of school staff-only days at Robertson, Waddell and Verplanck, for the purposes of packing classrooms, which is necessary due to the closing and relocation of schools. Mr. Leon seconded the motion.

9/0 - Voted in favor.

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

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, supports the Consent Calendar. He felt the two presentations were well done. He suggested the book *Overcoming Racism* by Kobl. He is glad to hear a presentation by Ms. Philbert before the full board. Mr. Stringfellow recommended the show *Speechless* on TV about a disabled student. He noted we all come from different countries and we should be multi-lingual. Mr. Stringfellow pointed out that UCONN has "Skype a Scientist" and he suggested *American History* magazine as a good reference source.

J. COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Conyers noted the recent passing of Carl Bujaucius, a former basketball and soccer coach and teacher in Manchester. He was a caring and compassionate teacher who will be missed.

Mr. Pattacini shared that Sue Jacobson believes she was misquoted in the 8/28/17 minutes and she would like to see the slide at Waddell as a future agenda item.

K. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

Mr. Leon noted there is a shortage of trades people and he would like to hear about guidance counselors or career development at MHS for those students not interested in college.

Mr. Hughes noted this past Friday the National Administration rescinded 63 policies (guidance documents) and he would like an update on how it may affect us. Mr. Pattacini wondered if an update of Special Education Services would suffice. Mr. Hughes was interested in how any of the policies being rescinded may impact us. Mr. Geary noted that those federal policies rarely affect Connecticut and he would like a more specific question about a specific policy to research. Ms. Stefanovicz wondered how we would be informed if any of the policies rescinded impact us.

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 9:21 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jason Scappaticci
Board Secretary