

# MANCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION

## Regular Meeting

**Monday, July 9, 2012**

[6:00 p.m. Executive Session]

7:00 p.m.

Lincoln Center

**PRESENT:** Crockett, Cruz, Hagenow, Kidd, Luxenberg, Pattacini, Scappaticci, Walton

**ALSO PRESENT:** Interim Superintendent of Schools Dr. Kisiel, Assistant to the Superintendent for Finance & Management Brooks, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, Dr. Richardson, Assistant Superintendent for Pupil Personnel Services Matfess

**ABSENT:** Leon

### **A. OPENING**

#### **A.1. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m. by Chairperson Pattacini.

**Acting Secretary Cruz made a motion to move into Executive Session. Ms. Kidd seconded the motion.**

**8/0 – Voted in favor.**

#### **A.2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The meeting was reconvened in public session at 7:00 p.m. All in attendance participated in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, led by Chairperson Pattacini.

#### **A.3 ADOPTION OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

**ADOPTED** – Minutes Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of June 25, 2012.

**Acting Secretary Cruz moved and Mr. Crockett seconded the motion.**

**8/0 – Voted in favor.**

**B. SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT – PART I**

None.

**C. CONSENT CALENDAR**

Dr. Kisiel presented four items on the Consent Calendar for Board approval.

**C.1. Personnel Action**

Details had already been provided to the Board members in their agenda folders.

**C.2. Appropriation to increase MRA out-of-town tuition to provide services to special needs students ranging in age from 14 to 21 in the amount of \$2,186, bringing the total appropriation to \$827,317 for FY 2011-2012**

**C.3. Extended Field Trip Request – Bennet Academy – Discovery Center, Woodstock, CT/Group Building Peer Relations, Diversity, Education, and Discovery Center Education Program – November 7-9, 2012**

**C.4. Appointment of Keeney Street School Principal**

Ms. Julie Martin-Beaulieu was appointed Principal of Keeney effective July 16, 2012.

**The Chairman called for a motion.**

**Acting Secretary Cruz moved and Mr. Crockett seconded the recommendation to adopt the Consent Calendar, as outlined by Dr. Kisiel.**

**8/0 - Voted in favor.**

**D. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, spoke about a follow-up to the Revolutionary War documentary seen last week on CPTV. He also spoke about the Forgotten Patriots, POWs and a War of 1812 article in USA Today last month.

Mr. Stringfellow touched on Memorial Day and Gay Pride Awareness Month (June) and spoke about gays in the military. He suggested an article in *Family Circle* magazine regarding identity theft involving children. The May *Education Digest* had an article on preparing for school that Mr. Stringfellow felt was interesting.

Last, Mr. Stringfellow spoke about valuing diversity and that he hopes to hear from students of color that are achieving against the odds – including alumni, etc.

## **E. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT – PART II**

### **E.1. Improving MHS Attendance with Technology**

Dr. Kisiel discussed the requirements under the law to record and report all issues related to school truancy. He discussed how grades are impacted by attendance and how the accuracy of attendance records are important. Mr. Matthew Geary, Mr. James Farrell, and Dr. Bob Pease introduced an improved attendance system being implemented at the high school. Mr. Geary stated that there were several reasons for moving to this new system, including student's frustration with the current ID system, including cost of replacement IDs and no temporary IDs being available. The new system is called SWIPE and the goal is a 20% decrease in disciplinary problems due to attendance and a 20% decrease in cutting classes or truancy. It is also important to know, with seniors having an open campus, who is on campus at any given point if an emergency occurs.

The students will be given an ID badge that they will swipe as they enter the building in the morning. SWIPE stations will be set up at the three main entrances and will be monitored by security and administrators greeting students as they swipe. Alert messages will be printed for any student that requires one, such as a reminder for an appointment with Guidance, or a notice that they were marked skipping a class the prior day. Such alerts will be addressed immediately by administrators if required. Parents will be able to opt in for text alerts when their child swipes into the building if desired. If the student enters the nurses office, guidance, or the library they swipe in and teachers will then know where they are if they are not in class. The SWIPE machines can also print visitor passes as well as temporary picture IDs.

The SWIPE system is in use at schools in Springfield and Maryland in buildings housing up to 2300 students and has been shown to decrease discipline problems related to attendance. The initial cost is \$47,355 for six full stations, 12 mini stations, a full service ID printer, IDs and lanyards for all students, and technical support. The system is expected to increase ID compliance, allow for better dress code enforcement as all entrances will be

monitored by administrators, track upper classmen's location on campus, and improve communications with parents.

**Ms. Hagenow** inquired as to how the teacher would see if a student absent from class was in another part of the building (i.e., nurse's office). It was explained that teachers would have access to their class lists on the computer. Ms. Hagenow also inquired if all ID badges would have to be redone. It was explained that every year new IDs are given to students, with current pictures. Last, Ms. Hagenow asked if there would be any long-term savings associated with the program. It was noted that eventually the attendance callers, who call home when a child is absent from a class, would not be needed, though that is not an immediate goal. Primarily, if attendance improves, so will student achievement, meaning students will be more likely to graduate in four years. This program also gives the opportunity to use support staff more efficiently.

**Mr. Scappaticci** asked about the alerts that are printed and wondered if this was a way teachers could leave messages for students. Thought that may be a possibility in the future, that currently will not be done. The alerts will be reminders about appointments with guidance/administrators, alerts due to skipping classes, alerts of bills due, etc. It was also noted that some schools also institute lavatory swipers, which dramatically cut down on vandalism, but MHS will not have those at this point. Mr. Scappaticci also inquired if students will swipe out at the end of the day. It was noted that end of day swiping is not necessary, however any senior leaving campus mid-day would be required to swipe out.

**Ms. Walton** thanked Dr. Pease for bringing the district this exciting program. She inquired of any benefits during lockdowns or fire safety drills. Mr. Geary stated that students could be located in real time (i.e., if a teacher is missing a student from her class during an emergency, it can easily be seen if that student is in Guidance/nurses office, etc). Also, communication with parents during a lockdown will be improved. Ms. Walton wondered about the impact on security staff spending time dealing with attendance issues. Mr. Geary stated the impact would also be on Assistant Principals and is a proactive approach. Last, Ms. Walton wondered about confidentiality with visits to guidance or social work. Mr. Geary stated that swiping in to those locations was an improvement on confidentiality versus signing in to those offices, which can be seen by anyone looking at the sign-in book.

**Mr. Crockett** wondered if there were any other systems competing with SWIPE that had been looked at. Dr. Pease stated there were other systems, but they were more expensive and the SWIPE program was the only system that also interfaces with our student management system, ESCHOOL PLUS,

which was extremely important. Mr. Crockett wondered if there were yearly fees associated with the program. Dr. Pease stated the yearly fee is \$6,000.

**Mr. Pattacini** thought it was great to be taking advantage of technology. He inquired if the costs for this program were already included in the high school budget and Mr. Geary and Dr. Pease assured the Board the system was already paid for. Mr. Pattacini inquired about the possibility of a "friend" swiping another student's badge. It was noted that in that case, the student would be marked absent/cutting for all classes and therefore in more trouble than if s/he had simply been absent for the day, so there would be no advantage to a child doing that.

**The Chairperson called for a motion.**

**Acting Secretary Cruz made a motion to move Item G.1. on the agenda to Item E.2., moving Item E.2. to E.3. Mr. Crockett seconded the motion.**

**8/0 – Voted in favor.**

### **E.2. Anthology Textbook**

**Dr. Richardson** and Ms. Marsha Testa presented a new text in a quest to provide the most updated material to students. Ms. Testa noted the text is aligned to the new Common Core State Standards. Ms. Leah Lourie, who is the liaison for the Common Core roll-out, had suggested the text. While eventually 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade will be requested, tonight they are asking for approval for grade 10 only. Grade 10 is the first because there is not currently a 10<sup>th</sup> grade world literature text, which is necessary for the Common Core. This text guides teachers in Common Core techniques.

**Mr. Scappaticci** was impressed with the presentation and inquired if the text would be used in conjunction with novels. Ms. Testa noted that it would, using classic films and texts. One benefit is that struggling readers will not have to read the entire novel with this program, but will still be able to use the same novels that other classes are reading. Mr. Scappaticci was pleased with that, noting that the MHS English Department made him one of the best readers in his college class.

Ms. Testa outlined the cost of the text, noting for 10<sup>th</sup> grade it is approximately \$26,000, 9<sup>th</sup> grade is \$27,000, and MCC is \$8,000 – though this \$8,000 is paid by MCC through the College Access Challenge Grant.

**Mr. Crockett** asked for clarification on which books are being requested and Dr. Richardson noted the money is available for 10<sup>th</sup> grade texts at this point, and the next in line will be 9<sup>th</sup> grade.

**Acting Secretary Cruz moved for adoption of the 10<sup>th</sup> grade Anthology textbook as presented by Ms. Testa. Mr. Crockett seconded the motion.**

**8/0 – Voted in favor.**

### **E.3. Preliminary Alliance Grant Initiatives**

Dr. Kisiel showed a Power Point outlining what will be included in the Alliance Grant proposal due to the State this summer. If Board members have suggestions for other items, Dr. Kisiel asked that they notify him as soon as possible, as the grant draft is due by the end of the week. The key emphasis is on K-3 literacy and talent development related to additional learning time. Some items include:

- 5-6 week summer Kindergarten readiness program to give students a head start.
- Expanded school communication partnership.
- Professional development with private Pre-K providers.
- Six weeks of full day summer school for grades K-5 (approximately 700 students) who are not at goal in reading. This will be in conjunction with a Parks & Rec program.
- Web-based assessments tied to the Common Core.
- Laptops in each elementary classroom (minimum of six).
- Wireless networking.
- Title I tutors and some in other schools as well.
- ELL program providing additional support for new students.
- Redesign of the extended day program offered to K-6 currently in place, including:
  - ❖ Teacher direction
  - ❖ Literacy
  - ❖ Enrichment
  - ❖ Recreation
  - ❖ High school mentors (students - possibly paid)
- Talent development, including professional development for curriculum coaches, with permanent substitutes in each elementary school to allow for PD.
- Principals as instructional leaders.
- Possible scholarship incentives for teacher retention, particularly in shortage areas.
- Provide opportunities for teachers to demonstrate leadership.

**Ms. Walton** loved the idea of permanent subs in the schools to allow time for coaches to meet with teachers. She inquired which web-based assessments would be given. Dr. Kisiel stated the NW Evaluation Association web-based assessment tools would be implemented.

Ms. Walton wondered about who will be doing the executive coaching, and Dr. Kisiel stated it has not yet been decided, but one possibility is Lesley College, though they are looking at their options, including Columbia.

Ms. Walton asked about the data analysis facilitators. Dr. Kisiel stated that initially this would help teachers with data, though within a few years they would be able to handle it on their own.

**Mr. Pattacini** had questions about the six week full day summer school program. He noted the capacity would be 700 students and wondered how many students in the district were currently not at goal. Dr. Kisiel stated the number was approximately 700 at this time. It was noted that the locations being looked at for this program would be grades K-3 being housed at Highland Park and grades 4-6 at Bennet. They will be looking for teachers who desire a leadership role to help get this program off the ground.

Mr. Pattacini inquired about funding for the operational costs. The first year will be funding just for planning with full implementation funded by the grant in years 2-5. Dr. Kisiel feels the extended school year is the most important strategy to achieving goal status for our students.

Mr. Pattacini noted the after school program is not a new program, but is currently in existence at three schools, and parents currently pay to participate. Dr. Kisiel affirmed that and stated the program will be restructured and financial assistance will be given to some families.

Next Dr. Kisiel spoke about the state looking for districts to be half way to target by 2018, which equates to 88% achieving goal in testing in math, reading, writing, and science. In 2009-2011 Manchester schools ranged from 70-85% at goal. Dr. Kisiel noted that there will be a School Performance Index (SPI) in place assigning one point for goal or advanced goal, 0.67 points for proficient, 0.33 points for basic, and 0 for below basic scores. As stated, 88% is the goal to be reached by 2018.

**Ms. Walton** questioned the stats in certain categories and why some schools did not have figures for some categories. Dr. Kisiel noted that if a

category had fewer than 20 students it was excluded from the presentation as too small a sample.

**Ms. Cruz** asked for clarification on the SPI 88 numbers overall and in subgroups. It was explained that 88 was the goal for the total school, but by raising each sub-group's numbers the overall number would also rise.

**Ms. Walton** questioned the benefit of using this tool to address the achievement gap. Dr. Kisiel stated you cannot ignore the numbers – the SPI is a "report card" for schools.

**Mr. Pattacini** asked if 88 (1/2 way to goal) was a number just for Manchester. Dr. Kisiel stated that is a statewide goal. The ultimate goal will of course be 100%. The current average in the state is 70.

## **F. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

### **F.1. Update and Action on Superintendent Search**

Chairperson Pattacini reviewed the steps taken by the Search Committee in finding a new Superintendent, including focus groups, advertisements, and interviews. He noted there were 30 inquiries for the position, with 17 actual applicants. The Board had selected six candidates to interview and brought back two of those for a second round of interviews.

Currently, with the District undergoing so many changes, including the above-outlined Alliance Grant, the SMARTR Committee work, and other changes in the District, and with Dr. Kisiel being so instrumental in leading the District in moving forward, the Board was not prepared to select a candidate for Superintendent at this point. The Board has instead elected to extend Dr. Kisiel's contract as Interim Superintendent for up to two years, with the goal to find a new Superintendent as soon as possible. Mr. Pattacini noted that the District is at a critical juncture and the Board wants to ensure continuity. It was also noted that Dr. Kisiel had already achieved many of his initial goals that were set out last Fall. Mr. Pattacini noted that the two final candidates would be invited back when the search continues in the Fall.

**The Chairperson called for a motion.**

**Acting Secretary Cruz moved for the Board of Education to enter into agreement with Dr. Kisiel to extend his contract as Interim Superintendent for up to two additional years or until a replacement is appointed and further authorize the Board Chair to enter into the agreement. Mr. Crockett seconded the motion.**

**DISCUSSION:**

**Ms. Walton** stated that while she appreciates the dedication, vision, and commitment Dr. Kisiel has shown to the District, she, along with Mr. Scappaticci, would not support renewing his contract. Ms. Walton read from a prepared statement (reflecting Mr. Scappaticci's feelings as well) that stated they feel the Board failed to fulfill its obligation and that focus groups show the District wants a permanent Superintendent. They believe missteps were taken in the process and that the public has not been given notice of this decision, nor time to object. They also believe the appointment of Dr. Kisiel for another two year demonstrates the Board's lack of urgency and desire to fulfill its obligation, which has been entrusted by the public.

**Ms. Luxenberg** then read a statement from absent Secretary Neal Leon, stating his endorsement of Dr. Kisiel for up to two more years, though Mr. Pattacini noted that Mr. Leon could not vote at tonight's meeting in absentia.

**Mr. Crockett** stated he respected Ms. Walton for her opinion, but felt the Board did not fail. He stated that hiring the wrong person would be a failure. Mr. Crockett feels this is a conservative right step to finding a candidate that is acceptable to everyone. He went on to say that Dr. Kisiel is not simply a seat-warmer and has taken the bull by the horns and is doing "good stuff" for the District and to bring in a new Superintendent at this point would delay the current goings on. Mr. Crockett noted that Dr. Kisiel is willing to lead and work hard at a time that we need him and a new person might take a sit back and observe approach for the early part of their tenure, which would be detrimental at this time. He noted if there was clear consensus on a candidate, one would have been hired. He stated that we will find a Superintendent, but that we cannot afford to make the wrong choice, and the search is still ongoing.

**Mr. Pattacini** stated we are at a critical point in education in our community and in the nation and reform efforts are critical. Continuity is needed in the District to ensure the current reforms are implemented and successful. Mr. Pattacini feels we need to provide students as good a qualify education as we can, including stability, and he supports extending Dr. Kisiel's contract for up to two years with the caveat that the Board continues the search for a permanent Superintendent.

**The Chairperson called the question.**

**6/2/0 – Voted in favor. Walton and Scappaticci opposed.**

## **G. NEW BUSINESS**

None.

## **H. COMMUNICATIONS**

None.

## **I. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **I.1. Building & Sites Committee**

**Mr. Crockett** stated the last meeting was July 5<sup>th</sup> at Highland Park School, with a tour of the facility. Attendees were Mr. Crockett, Mr. Leon, and Mr. Ziegler. He stated the school is on schedule to open on time.

Mr. Ziegler discussed requests from two groups to construct a cricket field at Martin. Details will be presented at a future meeting.

Mr. Ziegler informed the committee of reimbursements received on oil tank replacement project funds for Washington, Verplanck, and Central Office.

The next Building & Sites Committee meeting will be held on July 26 at 4:30 p.m. at Highland Park.

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

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, gave his support to the Consent Calendar. He stated that he enjoyed Mr. Geary's presentation and had recently recommended a book to Mr. Geary on school culture. Mr. Stringfellow noted that the *New York Times* reported that 26 state received waivers for No Child Left Behind, Connecticut being one of them. He would like to hear from the union regarding this.

Mr. Stringfellow suggested articles from several publications, including a *Boston Globe* article on summer schools, and several *Education Digest* articles on support for teachers.

Once again, Mr. Stringfellow expressed his distaste of the term "sub-group". He also expressed his desire for all students to do well, even "poor white students".

## **K. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS**

**Mr. Pattacini** thanked Dr. Kisiel for his work in the District thus far and his willingness and flexibility to work with the Board. As Dr. Kisiel has achieved many of his original goals, Mr. Pattacini would like Dr. Kisiel to present a revised list of his accomplishments and his future goals and objectives list for the upcoming year.

**L. ADJOURNMENT**

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

**Mr. Crockett moved and Ms. Cruz seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting.**

**8/0 - Voted in favor.**

**Adjournment 8:58 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

Maria Cruz  
Acting Board Secretary