

MANCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION

Regular Meeting February 25, 2013

7:00 p.m.
Lincoln Center

PRESENT: Atwater, Crockett, Hagenow, Leon, Pattacini, Scappaticci,
Walton

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

ABSENT: Cruz, Luxenberg, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum
and Instruction, Dr. Richardson,

A. OPENING

A.1&2. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 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
February 13, 2013.

Secretary Leon moved and Mr. Crockett seconded the motion.

7/0 – Voted in favor.

B. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT – PART I

B.1. VFW Awards

The presenter from the VFW was ill and unable to present tonight.

B.2. PTA President's Report

Dr. Kisiel introduced Jackie Madore, President of the District PTA. Mrs. Madore reviewed many of the PTA events and fundraisers that have happened throughout the district in the previous months, including Buckley's holiday shop, dine-out nights, and book fair; Martin's movie night, variety show, and bowling night; Washington's two dances, movie night, and McTeacher Night; Highland Park's holiday drop-off, beach party, variety show, and take your family to school day; and Bennet's stuff a truck food drive to

benefit MACC, hat days, and family fun night. Mrs. Madore reviewed that the Townwide PTA had a science fair in December for grades 4-8, which was held at Illing.

C. CONSENT CALENDAR

Dr. Kisiel presented five 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. Manchester High School Extended Field Trip Request – Student Leadership Conference

Wesleyan University – 15-25 students – March 15-March 16, 2013.

C.3. Education Specifications – Bowers Elementary School Roof Replacement

C.4. Education Specifications – Verplanck Elementary School Roof Replacement

C.5. Education Specifications – Waddell Elementary School Roof Replacement

The Chairman called for a motion.

Secretary Leon moved and Mr. Crockett seconded the recommendation to adopt the Consent Calendar, as outlined in the agenda Part C.

7/0 - Voted in favor.

D. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Scott Aiken, 92 Laurel Street, spoke about the Board's plan to turn Nathan Hale over to the town. Mr. Aiken feels the Board is "punting" the problem to the town and he expressed disappointment over Nathan Hale's closure. Mr. Aiken feels we need neighborhood schools. He states the East Side needs a school to be proud of. He has heard positive comments about where the Nathan Hale kids ended up, and he has had a wonderful time with the kids that landed at Washington, but each neighborhood needs a school, especially the East and West Side, which are core neighborhoods for young families. While Mr. Aiken says he understands unfunded mandates and thinks it was convenient that maintenance was let go on a low performing school, closing a school and punting the problem to the town is not a good choice. He notes that our elementary schools are at 95% capacity and we need another school. He feels instead of

putting money towards a 5th grade academy at Bennet we should improve Nathan Hale instead.

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, noted African-American History Month is coming to an end, and reminds us that ShopRite had a Black History Month Calendar. He suggested a documentary with Whitney Young and noted that this is an important month but should be celebrated every day of the year. Mr. Stringfellow recommended articles in *Military History* magazine, March 2013; *Education Digest*, February 2013; and *Apostrophe*, Spring 2013. He also suggested the Lincoln movie with Daniel Day Lewis, who won his 3rd Oscar. Mr. Stringfellow noted that postage stamps honoring Rosa Parks and John E. Johnson, Sr. (founder of *Ebony* magazine) have recently been released.

Ms. Jennifer West, 164 Pearl Street, had come tonight to listen about the Nathan Hale building. She was a Nathan Hale parent for three years, and now her son attends Washington. She notes that they have had a positive experience with the change and that at Nathan Hale her child struggled with reading. At Washington her son has made great strides and has raised his reading level almost two grades since September. Ms. West feels that although she has had a positive experience, we do need neighborhood schools to enhance the familiarity and feeling of community. She notes that not all of the relocated children have had positive experiences. Although she likes her son's current school, she doesn't think Nathan Hale should be turned over to the town. If Nathan Hale reopens in the future she would like it to open as a new building and she would like to see it with new standards so families can expect the same equal level of education whether they attend there, Washington, or Highland Park.

E. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT – PART II

E.1. Manchester Community College Contributions to College Readiness

Dr. Kisiel introduced Dr. Gena Glickman, President of MCC. Dr. Glickman noted the recent changes to the Governing Board at Great Path Academy and presented a Power Point regarding the college readiness program. The full presentation can be found on the website.

Dr. Kisiel wondered about Dr. Glickman's comments on REACT, and thoughts on expanding that program for the adult learners. Dr. Glickman stated there are increased levels of academic readiness from that program for students that wouldn't have had that opportunity otherwise. This is funded as a pilot, one of only three in the state. This is an expensive, intensive, daily program, but it is clearly making a difference in the lives of the students that are in the program.

Mr. Crockett noted that the presentation showed that MHS seems to be lagging in math. He notes his own son's experience was that 90% of his class failed math in college. He wonders if our area schools are all aware of the college standards. Dr. Glickman stated it is not unusual and students may not be taking the right courses. Overall, 53% are ready for college level math, and 41% of MHS students went into the highest developmental level, which is good and not as difficult to raise those students into the college level.

Mr. Crockett wondered what a community college does to help get a student into a 4 year school. Dr. Glickman noted MCC has state-guaranteed transfer articulation so a student can start with a path if they know the school they want to transfer to and transfer as a junior with ease. MCC works in partner with senior institutions.

Mr. Pattacini noted that Dr. Glickman showed in the fall of 2012 there were 54 students from 10 high schools who earned credit at MCC. He wondered how many were from MHS. Dr. Glickman was unsure and can find out that information. She also reviewed that Manchester, East Hartford, and Hartford are sending districts and we are the largest of those. She reviewed that they only count new, first time, full-time students, so the numbers can be off.

Mr. Pattacini was interested in the idea of MCC classes being taught at the high school and wondered how Dr. Glickman envisioned this happening. Dr. Glickman noted there were several alliances in the country that did this and either high school or college faculty could teach 093 English to satisfy both high school and developmental college level credits to allow students to skip assessments and pre-requisites.

Mr. Pattacini asked about the partnership with East Hartford Middle School and GEAR UP. Dr. Glickman noted this is a grant for low-performing schools in certain grades providing \$12 million over five years for coaching middle school students after school; engaging parents and students in the program and students who stay in the program are eligible for scholarships for their first year in college. Mr. Pattacini was interested in possibly involving the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving to provide a grant for that.

E.2. School Facilities Referendum Projects Update

Christopher Till reviewed the goals and prioritized efforts regarding accomplishing the referendum projects that were approved last November.

- The architect has been chosen for the roofs at Bowers, Verplanck, and Waddell. Currently they are submitting a waiver for roof pitch to the state. If that waiver is denied it will push the timing off.

- The architects are in the process of being selected for the work required by the SMARTR Committee for the feasibility studies on Robertson, Washington, and Cheney.
- The electrical service updates at Buckley, Keeney, Robertson, and Washington are in process to get fee proposals, though the Robertson and Washington work may be held off dependant on the feasibility studies.
- The asbestos abatement and carpet replacement at Washington is scheduled for the summer.
- The brick repointing at Central Office, Waddell, and Washington is on the schedule, with Washington's work being subject to the feasibility study.
- MHS elevator repair or replacement and science room renovation scope is in progress.
- Illing Middle School portables are scheduled to be demolished at the end of summer between the end of summer school and the start of the New Year. Currently it is being investigated if those classrooms can be relocated inside the building.

Ms. Hagenow was confused about the roof issue, noting that our roofs are flat. Mr. Till explained that while they are flat, there is a slight amount of pitch (approximately 1/8"/foot) with drains. The minimum code requirement currently is 1/4"/foot and the new state regulations say 1/2"/foot. Mr. Till explained the reasons why we are asking for a waiver and that there are efforts to revoke the new requirements being made.

Mr. Leon asked about the issue at Illing with the square foot versus capacity in building new classrooms. Mr. Till noted there is a maximum allowable square footage per pupil formula and if the existing building exceeds the allowable square footage the state won't pay for reimbursement without a waiver.

Mr. Scappaticci asked about the condition of the Cheney Building, after being asked by a reporter from the MHS TV news. Mr. Till noted that building has been vacant for 6-7 years. The town maintains minimal heat and a new steam boiler was installed in 2008, to prevent deterioration. The roof condition is poor with some minor leaks. The building is empty.

Mr. Crockett wondered if we knew the building requirements when putting the roof question on the referendum. Mr. Till stated we did. Mr. Crockett didn't understand why we didn't factor in the additional cost for complying with the 1/2" pitch. Mr. Till noted he was not involved in the budgets for the projects and could not answer that question.

Dr. Kisiel spoke about the portables at Illing, noting he had had a conversation with General Manager Shanley earlier about engaging the services of Silver & Petracelli, the town architects, to possibly convert inefficient spaces within Illing for classroom use. Dr. Kisiel sought to engage this firm to do a feasibility study. He feels that although we have \$1.2 million available, we may be able to spend less to complete this project without adding exterior classrooms.

Mr. Pattacini asked if we had received pitch waivers in the past. Mr. Till notes Martin was the last roof done and we did receive a waiver. Prior to that was Buckley and that school had a pitched roof placed over the existing roof to comply with regulations.

Mr. Pattacini asked about the timing of the roofs. Mr. Till noted the waiver application would be complete by the end of March and the state acts within 2-3 weeks, so we will know then if the waiver is accepted. Mr. Till reviewed the two bills currently in progress to either repeal the requirement of 1/2"/foot pitch or study the issue.

Mr. Pattacini wonders, if we are able to save funds at Illing, can we redeploy those funds to another project, or do we lose it? Mr. Till thinks the Board can ask the Board of Directors to redistribute those funds, but we need to ask.

F. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

F.1. Violence in the Workplace – Policy 4302

Dr. Kisiel presented this new policy which was reviewed at the last meeting and can be read in full on the website.

Secretary Leon moved for the Board of Education to adopt Violence in the Workplace, Policy 4302. Mr. Crockett seconded the motion.

7/0 - Voted in favor.

F.2. Professional Responsibility – Conflict of Interest – Policy 4303

Ms. Walton thanked Dr. Kisiel for crafting this policy from scratch, as it could not be found elsewhere in the state. Her intention was to address therapeutic relationship guidelines for those working in private practice. She feels the current suggested policy is too broad and asks that the policy go back to the committee. One of her issues is the policy refers to all certified staff. Paragraph 4, sections A, C, and E, the focus is on tutoring and instruction and she feels that tutoring, mentoring, and private music lessons shouldn't be included and the therapeutic relationship is what should be addressed.

Mr. Leon also expressed concern with Section 2, non-school related volunteer activities. He wonders if Relay for Life and other such activities would still be permitted. He also notes that we can give a list of professional recommendations to a family, but how is that list vetted? If we cannot give specific recommendations, how do we get a family/student to the right person to help?

Ms. Walton agreed that it can be helpful to consult with private practice clinicians or staff for input. Our social workers, psychologists, and counselors are there to help our students and to say they cannot make a recommendation hurts.

Mr. Scappaticci is a member of the Policy Committee and is fine with reworking the policy to make it a better fit to its original intent.

Dr. Kisiel agrees with Ms. Walton. The policy extended beyond its original intention. He notes there were no complaints prompting this policy, it is just being used as a guide.

Mr. Crockett again brought up the subject of coaches running clinics or camps for profit or referring students to the AAU program – he doesn't want to limit them.

Dr. Kisiel states there is nothing wrong with a teacher running a summer program, but not using the school as a vehicle to do so during the school day.

Mr. Pattacini thanked the administration for their work on this new policy and agreed with the recommendation to send it back to the committee for further work.

F.3. Fingerprinting/Criminal History/Reference Checks/D.C.F. Background Checks – Policy 4000

Dr. Kisiel presented this revised policy, which can be read in full on the website. He notes one sentence was added to comply with current laws.

Secretary Leon moved for the Board of Education to adopt Policy 4000, as outlined. Mr. Crockett seconded the motion.

7/0 - Voted in favor.

F.4. Nathan Hale Elementary School Closing

Dr. Kisiel reviewed that Nathan Hale is closed. The issue before the board tonight is who should maintain this building. Dr. Kisiel noted that no costs for

Nathan Hale were included in our budget, yet we are still paying to maintain heat, electrical, and plowing, along with minimal custodial staff, because we had materials stored in the building. We have now removed all of our materials. The cost to keep this building open is approximately \$154,000 a year. The board simply does not have that money. Currently, the building is being used by the town. Dr. Kisiel had a discussion with the town manager about the suggestion that the town be billed for services. Mr. Shanley did not think the Board of Directors would accept that scenario. It seems if the town is using the facility for rec purposes, we should return the building to the town so they can provide for the costs of heat and other maintenance. We will still plow the driveway, as we use that as a bus stop. Dr. Kisiel notes there have been discussions of the site as a possible magnet school, but for now it is simply a matter of cost.

Mr. Crockett wanted to know what the town wanted and he feels there is no doubt we should give it back to the town. The town uses the building, they should pay for it, and if Mr. Shanley thinks the Board of Directors won't want to pay rent, then we shouldn't be paying for it.

Mr. Scappaticci thinks it is important for the public to be aware, even if we give the building back to the town we can still take the building back in the future. He notes both Highland Park being previously closed and then reopened and Cheney being considered for the same currently.

Ms. Walton feels that the Board of Education is in the business of operating schools and the Nathan Hale building is no longer a school. The tax payers are paying for its upkeep no matter where, so she does not feel this is "passing the buck". It makes sense for the town to maintain the building, as they use it. Ms. Walton notes that it costs more to open a school than we close and if we continue to not invest in our school buildings we will continue to have to close schools.

Mr. Leon wondered when this would go into effect. Dr. Kisiel stated March 1st.

Mr. Pattacini stated that the town and Board of Education are all responsible for work, including maintenance, of buildings. Currently, we do not need this building and could scale back to just a minimal level of heat to maintain. Dr. Kisiel noted if we don't allow the town to use the building, we could scale back even further, but he is inclined to return the building to the town. It helps us prioritize as a community what we need to do. If the tables were turned, the Board of Education would expect to pay for use of a building.

Secretary Leon moved for the Board of Education to turn the Nathan Hale Elementary School building over to the town, effective March 1, 2013. Mr. Atwater seconded the motion.

7/0 - Voted in favor.

G. NEW BUSINESS

None.

H. COMMUNICATIONS

H.1. Ms. Walton sits on the Capital Region Education Council for Manchester. She reviewed updates on magnets in the region and school choice and the impact of the Sheff case on the region. The state fell short of its goals.

Manchester is in an interesting place in the Sheff region mandate. The state is required to offer an integrated education for Hartford students. There are 22 districts in the region that are provided a financial incentive to allow Hartford students to attend, but Manchester is not eligible for that, along with Bloomfield, East Hartford, and Windsor. Those other towns that do not receive choice students have the benefit of having magnet schools, and we are the only one that doesn't host a magnet and also does not receive choice student funding. Ms. Walton feels the timing is crucial to meet with the state to discuss this. Home districts in the Sheff district are required to fund this state mandate.

Ms. Walton reported that Bruce Douglas, the Executive Director of CREC, stated this year there were 17,000 applications received and 20,000 will attend CREC, Hartford Public, and other magnet schools in the Hartford area next year. The costs to sending school districts are becoming prohibitive. He notes that in the future settlement agreements will be unable to sustain these schools and the state must determine a long-term strategy to address this challenge. Ms. Walton notes that we will have to pay for 3 and 4 year old magnet pre-school after next year. Ms. Walton further reported that CREC will not support more magnets in the Sheff region and the state window is closing for magnet development in Manchester.

Mr. Pattacini asked for the administration's guidance on how to proceed.

Dr. Kisiel reported that he had met with Kathy Demsey from the State two weeks ago and it is clear we should apply for the planning grant to become a host magnet. The forms are on their way to us and the grant is \$75,000. While Mr. Douglas commented that 18 magnets is enough for CREC, Dr. Kisiel

is not convinced that door is completely closed, and he feels that the state understands Manchester's position.

H.2. Dr. Kisiel reviewed the current school calendar, noting we have had 7 no-school days due to weather. In January the Board agreed to extend the school year to June 25th, which is a Tuesday. April 5th (Friday) is now a school day. Any further days will be taken from April vacation as well. Dr. Kisiel notes the need to start school after Labor Day this year complicated things.

I. COMMITTEE REPORTS

None.

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

Scott Aiken, 92 Laurel Street, recommended a book by Dr. Joseph Tainter – *The Collapse of Complex Societies*. A professor of media studies at NYU, Clay Shirky, summed up a portion of this, noting it is easier to make things more complex than simpler and to create a new burden than to kill an old one. Mr. Aiken feels that in 20 years magnet schools will be exposed for what they are – a media ploy. Washington Elementary was previously a magnet and there was no difference that what the school is today. It is just about money and keeping kids in Manchester. Mr. Aiken feels his children need a basic education, learning how to look for an answer, not just memorize one. He is 37 and is just starting to figure out what he wants to be. He feels it does not make sense to ask a 5-12 year old to narrow their field of interest. Mr. Aiken thinks we need to make our schools the best they can be, not looking for the latest fad to attract dollars or students.

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, thought Dr. Glickman gave an excellent presentation. He was a 1976 graduate of MCC himself, then moving on to UCONN and then grad school. Mr. Stringfellow feels community college plays a vital role in secondary education. Regarding school safety, Mr. Stringfellow recommended an article in *Education Digest*, November 2012; an article on anti-violence in the New Haven Register 12/31/12; and an article in the December *Reminder* in East Hartford. Mr. Stringfellow also noted a CPTV special on Newtown and gun control recently.

Ms. Jennifer West, 164 Pearl Street, understands the Professional Responsibility policy is going back to the committee, but she had some comments about it. Her son, who is 9, has had mainly female role models as she is a single parent. She feels he needs more male role models. She is concerned about the subject and how it will be looked at. She has not been completely pleased with previous recommendations given by school staff, but she knows sometimes a professional that might be helpful to a family will work in the school system.

K. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

Mr. Pattacini asked the administration to develop a list of potential budget reductions to consider to the 5.5% proposed budget increase. Indications are that the increase may only be in the 3.5% range.

L. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Pattacini called for a motion to adjourn.

Secretary Leon moved and Mr. Crockett seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting.

7/0 - Voted in favor.

Adjournment 9:19 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Neal Leon
Board Secretary