

# **MANCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION**

## **Regular Meeting November 13, 2013**

7:00 p.m.  
Lincoln Center

**PRESENT:** Crockett, Cruz, Hagenow, Leon, Luxenberg, Pattacini,  
Scappaticci, Thames

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

**ABSENT:** Atwater

### **A. OPENING**

#### **A.1&2. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 6:59 p.m. by Chairperson Pattacini. All in attendance participated in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, led by Mr. Pattacini.

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

**ADOPTED – Minutes Regular Meeting of the Board of  
Education of October 28, 2013.**

**Secretary Leon moved and Mr. Crockett seconded the  
motion.**

**8/0 – Voted in favor.**

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

#### **B.1. S.A.A.M. Update**

**Dr. Kisiel** welcomed Linda Cavanaugh to review the six week summer program for grades K-5. Ms. Cavanaugh gave a Power Point presentation, which is available on the website.

Ms. Cavanaugh reviewed that the goal of S.A.A.M. was to decrease the impact of the "summer slide". The program took place at three sites, with Martin hosting Kindergarteners four days a week for a reading and math morning program. Highland Park housed grades 1 and 2 and Bennet housed grades 3-5, both for a five day, full day program with reading and math in the morning and enrichment in the afternoon.

The total cost of the program was \$778,867.94, which was financed by the Alliance Grant. In Kindergarten the pupil/teacher ratio was 10/1. In grades 1-5 the ratio was 20/2.

Ms. Cavanaugh reviewed that 709 students were enrolled, however due to no-shows and disenrollments, 209 students did not complete the program. Disenrollments occurred due to parent choice and due to the 3 day rule, which stipulated if a student missed 3 days without a doctor's note they were disenrolled.

Ms. Cavanaugh noted that students in Kindergarten received 20 days of instruction and those in grades 1-5 received 25 days of instruction. Data collected last Spring and again this Fall show a success in decreasing the summer slide.

As year two of the program is planned, it is clear that communication with parents needs to be more detailed and timelier. For the 2014 the program will partner with Parks & Rec and will take place at Bennet and Highland Park for grades K-3.

**Ms. Cruz** wondered if the parents of the children that were signed up but did not show up for the program were called to find out why they didn't participate. They were not. Ms. Cruz wondered about a slight dip in math in one of the slides. Ms Cavanaugh noted there were slight dips, but overall the typical "slide" was decreased.

**Mr. Scappaticci** was pleased to see the students held strong and even increased in some areas and considers the program a success. He wondered about data on the students that did not participate in S.A.A.M. Ms. Radikas noted that next year they will look at the criteria for those that qualify for the program that did and did not participate in S.A.A.M. and compare the data.

Mr. Scappaticci felt it was impressive to hold their scores over the summer. He wondered why the reduction from three sites to two next summer. Ms. Cavanaugh stated the program will only be offered to grades K-3 (those students entering grades 1-4 in the Fall) this summer. Part of the reason for offering the program to fewer grades was the fact that there is no air conditioning in the third site so using the two air conditioned sites is a desire.

Another reason is there were fewer students enrolled in grade 5 and research says to catch the students as early as possible, so all resources will be aimed at the lower grades.

Mr. Scappaticci wondered about the partnering the Parks & Rec. Ms. Cavanaugh stated they are in the planning stages currently. He wondered how many other districts have summer programs. Ms. Radikas noted that 15 of the Alliance Districts have a summer program, and most are for grades K-3. Mr. Scappaticci looks forward to next year's data.

**Mr. Thames** is proud that the program prevented summer, but expressed concern over the 209 students that were disenrolled. He feels that is not a good ratio and he would like to see, via ethnic bands, who was disenrolled. Mr. Thames wonders if the parents of those disenrolled were surveyed. Ms. Cavanaugh stated they were not. Mr. Thames would like them to be. He wondered if the three day rule, requiring a doctor's note, impacts the poorer parents and most vulnerable children. While he feels the rule had good intentions, he would like it reexamined. Ms. Cavanaugh stated they may make adjustments to the rule.

Mr. Thames wondered if services for special needs children were provided. Ms. Cavanaugh stated they were not, as recommended by the staff. Ms. Matfess added that her department does host a special education summer program for those students in Pre-K through age 21 that require it per their IEP.

**Mr. Leon** noted that the three day rule was in place because the program was not intended to be daycare for those families that planned vacation regardless of their commitment. Ms. Cavanaugh reviewed that parents were asked to sign commitments regarding attendance and in order to have valid data it was important to require attendance.

**Mr. Crockett** asked if there had been a waiting list last year. Ms. Cavanaugh stated 1202 initial applications were made, but only 709 families made the 6 week commitment. That was about the space capacity at the three locations. For this coming year at risk students will be looked at initially. Mr. Crockett wondered if the 209 disenrolled students would be invited back this year. Ms. Cavanaugh was unsure of that decision.

**Ms. Cruz** was concerned about eliminating any grades from the program. Ms. Cavanaugh stated there are limited resources and they will be aimed at Grades K-3. Ms. Cruz asked for this to be reconsidered. Dr. Kisiel added that our first concern will be students at risk. By mid-year if we have data that shows grade 5 has a great need the decision will be reconsidered.

**Mr. Leon** wondered if the program stayed within budget. Ms. Brooks stated it did. She notes we may save next year by partnering with Parks & Rec. Mr. Leon notes that with only one more year of Alliance Funds, it will be even more important to show the benefits of this program next year. Ms. Cavanaugh stated that next year's data will be even more specific.

**Mr. Pattacini** stated the benefit of the program is clear. He also would like to understand the disenrolled students by category. As the program is restructured he notes we insure the new budget aligns with the program. Mr. Pattacini wonders if the funding will be the same next year. Mrs. Brooks states the Alliance Budget will be reviewed in the spring.

**Mr. Crockett** wondered if the Alliance funds had been received yet. Mrs. Brooks stated they have been notified that the funds are on the way.

**Mr. Pattacini** would like to see data of at risk students that were disenrolled or did not participate to see the slide.

### **C. CONSENT CALENDAR**

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

#### **C.1. Transfer of Funds**

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

- Transfer from Martin Elementary School Textbooks to Martin Elementary School Kelly Substitutes account in the amount of \$1,000
- Transfer from Illing Middle School Instructional Supplies and Materials to Illing Middle School Dues and Fees account in the amount of \$390
- Transfer from Bowers Elementary School Printing & Advertising to Bowers Elementary School Contracted Services account in the amount of \$380

#### **C.2. Establish an appropriation in the amount of \$3,759.00 for a grant provided through the Manchester Community College, College Career Pathways program for FY13-14**

#### **C.3. Establish an appropriation for \$100,000 awarded for the Adult Education College Transition Pilot Grant for FY 13-14**

#### **C.4. Extended Field Trip Request – Manchester High School – Percussion Ensemble & Chamber Orchestra – Philadelphia, PA – Performance Adjudication, Festival Competition – 47 students – Teacher and parent chaperones – 4/24/14-4/27/14**

**C.5. Extended Field Trip Request – Manchester High School – Roundtable Singers – Toronto, Canada – Concert Tour – 30 students – Teacher and parent chaperones – 5/22/14-5/25/14**

**The Chairman called for a motion.**

**Secretary Leon moved and Mr. Crockett seconded the recommendation for the Board of Education to adopt Item C, the Consent Calendar, in our agenda.**

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

**D. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Leslie Mentlik, 279 Dennison Ridge Drive, was upset after being told by the Purchasing Department of the town that the Board of Education does not have competitive bidding on contracts. Mr. Mentlik has been an accountant for over 50 years and he knows the importance of competitive bidding. In 9 days he will be a graduate of Manchester Government 101 class and he has a feel for where the money is being spent. Mrs. Brooks sent him a copy of the Kelly Services contract. Kelly Services is a publicly held company that files a 10K with the SEC. Kelly Services has been a defendant in numerous employment actions regarding overtime and other violations of state law. In 2011 they paid \$1.2 million and \$1.9 million in settlements. He wonders if this is the type of company we want in Manchester.

**Mr. Pattacini** notes that we do have competitive bidding, other than for Kelly Services, as there were no competitors.

Mrs. Schootz, 12 Conway Road, noted that two days after the election an article on the schools regarding Waddell and Verplanck, was in the JI. She wonders why this was not discussed prior to the election. Mrs. Schootz liked the summer school program as we need education and she feels the money should be spent on the children, but not foolishly. She states Manchester used to be known for education, but not lately. Her grandson attends school in East Hartford and wears uniforms. She notes the whole town has uniforms and she does not agree with Manchester's decision to have uniforms for only some schools, stating it does not make sense, either do it for all or none. She wants board members to think about the people's needs, as lately all she hears is "wants" from this board. Mrs. Schootz stated that her daughter, who was in the class of 2002, played in the band and if her grades went down there was no music. Mrs. Schootz pointed out that other towns charge students to participate in extracurricular activities. She is a 58 year old taxpayer with no kids in the school system currently.

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, attended a ceremony on Veteran's Day at the hospital with good speakers. He pointed out one of his classmates from the class of 74, Mark Tweedie, was a Navy vet who spent six years in the Navy. Mr. Stringfellow spoke about many wars, including 1813, 1853 and the Mexican American War and noted they shouldn't be forgotten. He recommended the movie *Twelve Years a Slave* and the books *Life of a Slave Girl* and *Raising Financially Fit Kids*. Mr. Stringfellow notes November 22 will mark 50 years since JFK's assassination and there are many documentaries about him on TV currently. He also congratulated the Red Sox on their win of the World Series for bringing joy to Boston.

Scott Aiken, 92 Laurel Street, congratulated those reelected recently, and Mr. Thames on winning his seat. He looks forward to the day when education statistics are not broken down by racial lines. Mr. Aiken stated he chose to live in the Washington district. He notes that young children do not care about race and they only learn to care because of adults. He feels student ability to learn is not based on ethnicity. As for S.A.A.M., his family decided not to participate because they had summer plans and could not make the commitment, however they did read 30 minutes a day with their children. He is concerned that when the Alliance Grant funds run out, Manchester's taxpayers will have to pay because parents can't be responsible and spend 30 minutes a day reading with their kids. As for the recent graffiti at Washington, he notes that has been a longstanding problem only recently in the news. He wishes the TV news crews would cover positive aspects of Washington, such as the success of their after-school program or the success of the students there.

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

### **E.1. School Design Options and Redistricting**

**Dr. Kisiel** reviewed that back in May we heard a report from Mr. Murphy, of SMARTR, about their recommendation to renovate Cheney for 5<sup>th</sup> grade. That project would allow at least one elementary school to close. In addition, making larger schools of approximately 530 students, to maximize state reimbursement, offer the possibility of closing another school. Dr. Kisiel was asked to hire a demographer to research the feasibility of the plan in regards to racial balance and how attendance zones would be impacted. Dr. Kisiel noted that SMARTR had met with local and state historic societies more recently and it is evident they will block the demolition of Washington, so alternatives are necessary. He introduced Michael Zuba from Milone & MacBroom.

Mr. Zuba's report is available on the website. He offered three potential options. One option is renovating both Robertson and Washington into 530 pupil schools, closing Waddell and Verplanck; option 2 is making Robertson and Verplanck into 530 pupil schools, closing Waddell and Washington; and

the third option is having only Robertson become a 530 pupil school, closing Waddell.

**Mr. Leon** wondered which of these plans SMARTR endorsed. Dr. Kisiel reviewed that SMARTR will present their recommendation to a joint meeting of the Board of Education and Board of Directors shortly. Mr. Leon felt hearing the opinion of SMARTR is extremely important.

**Dr. Kisiel** felt it was important to note that this redistricting is the basis of a presentation being planned for the State Board of Education next month regarding Manchester's plan for racial balance requirements.

**Ms. Cruz** wondered about sharing this with the state, as it is not a final plan, just a presentation. Dr. Kisiel explained that it just shows we are exploring options regarding racial balance.

**Mr. Leon** wondered if one of these plans will be on the Spring ballot along with the Cheney project. Dr. Kisiel stated that subject has not come up and currently only Cheney is planned for referendum.

Mr. Leon felt that after nearly two years of SMARTR working on the issues of over \$20 million in needed critical repairs, Nathan Hale closing, Washington in dire need of repair, \$4.9 million in repairs being approved, and decay happening at a greater rate and with a solution at best five years out, SMARTR is a failure.

**Mr. Pattacini** asked for clarity on the percent utilization in slides 9 and 16. Mr. Zuba noted the numbers to strive for for long-term planning and for subsequent years the birth data will be used.

Mr. Pattacini stated the next step is to hold a joint meeting with the Board of Directors to hear SMARTR's recommendation. Ms. Cruz would like this to happen within 30 days.

Mr. Pattacini wondered if the Board wants to reprioritize any work for Buildings & Sites in the meantime. Mr. Leon felt that would be difficult to do not knowing the recommendation at this point. Mr. Pattacini agreed, noting the list can be reprioritized after SMARTR's recommendation, and possibly add some funds to the Spring referendum on Cheney.

#### **F. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**Dr. Kisiel** presented several policies at previous meetings. As he has received no feedback on these policies, he is asking for the Board to adopt the revisions and new policies, and delete one old policy tonight. All policies can be reviewed in full on the website.

The two new policies were dealt with first, together.

**Secretary Leon moved for the Board of Education to adopt #5 and #6, Non-Discrimination (Personnel) and Non-Discrimination (Students). Mr. Crockett seconded the motion.**

**8/0 – Voted in favor.**

**F.1. Policy 4150 – Evaluation, Termination and Non-Renewal of Athletic Coaches**

**Secretary Leon moved for the Board of Education to adopt Policy 4150 – Evaluation, Termination and Non-Renewal of Athletic coaches. Mr. Crockett seconded the motion.**

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

**F.2. Policy 1300 – Visitors**

**Secretary Leon moved for the Board of Education to adopt Policy 1300 - Visitors. Mr. Crockett seconded the motion.**

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

**F.3. Policy 5141.4 – School Wellness Policy**

**Secretary Leon moved for the Board of Education to adopt Policy 5141.4 – School Wellness Policy. Mr. Crockett seconded the motion.**

**6/2 - Voted in favor, Mr. Thames and Mr. Leon voted against.**

**F.4. Policy 5119 – Transfer and Non-Resident Students**

**Secretary Leon moved for the Board of Education to adopt Policy 5119 – Transfer and Non-Resident Students. Mr. Crockett seconded the motion.**

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

**F.5. Policy – Non-Discrimination (Personnel)**

**F.6. Policy – Non-Discrimination (Students)**

**F.7. Policy 5141.2 – Reports of Suspected Abuse and/or Neglect of Children**

**Secretary Leon moved for the Board of Education to adopt Policy 5141.2 – Reports of Suspected Abuse and/or Neglect of Children. Mr. Crockett seconded the motion.**

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

**F.8. Policy 4013 – Sexual Harassment and Sex Discrimination in the Workplace**

**Secretary Leon moved for the Board of Education to adopt Policy 4013 – Sexual Harassment and Sex Discrimination in the Workplace. Mr. Crockett seconded the motion.**

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

**F.9. Policy 4011 – Prohibition of Sex Discrimination**

**Secretary Leon moved for the Board of Education to delete Policy 4011 – Prohibition of Sex Discrimination. Mr. Crockett seconded the motion.**

**8/0 – Voted in favor.**

**G. NEW BUSINESS**

None.

**H. COMMUNICATIONS**

**Mr. Leon** thanked Mr. Atwater for his service on the Board, noting Mr. Atwater was not able to be here this evening.

Mr. Leon then told Ms. Luxenberg how much he has appreciated her over the past three years of her board service. He noted she has offered a great deal to the board and he will miss her, though he has gained her as a friend.

**Mr. Scappaticci** echoed Mr. Leon, stating he was sad Mr. Atwater was not present tonight to wish him well. To Ms. Luxenberg he told her it was a pleasure to work with her and is looking forward to hearing about Kelly through her mother, whom he works with.

**Ms. Cruz** told Ms. Luxenberg that it was an honor serving with her and she will be missed. She stated Ms. Luxenberg brought a sense of harmony to her position, was a role model, a mediator, and provided positive guidance. Ms. Cruz wishes her the best.

**Ms. Hagenow** wishes Ms. Luxenberg luck and noted she has enjoyed her company and stated she was an asset to the board and will be missed.

**Mr. Thames** wished Ms. Luxenberg well, noting she exemplified how she was not willing to compromise her belief in the best interests of students.

**Mr. Pattacini** told Ms. Luxenberg she was an energetic, passionate, and thoughtful Board member who was able to convey enthusiasm and support for public education. He thanked her for her service on the Board and noted he appreciates her support for the community.

**Ms. Luxenberg** noted the last three years were quite a journey. She recalled her first Board meeting had about 75 people in attendance fighting for in-door track. She feels we have a committed board with tremendous dedication and she was fortunate to have such a great team. She looks forward to seeing Mr. Geary's work in the future. She also took the opportunity to wish Dr. Kisiel well and note he was tremendously valued. She encouraged the Board to continue making tough decisions. Ms. Luxenberg referred to the uniform decision for grades 6-8, stating we should go all the way or nothing. She noted she has learned so much from each board member and she went around the table saying her good-byes.

**Mr. Pattacini** presented Ms. Luxenberg with a plaque in recognition of her 3 years of dedicated service 2010-2013.

Mr. Pattacini also extended his well wishes to Mr. Atwater, noting Mr. Atwater was unable to be present this evening because he was ill.

## **I. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **I.1. Personnel & Finance Committee Minutes**

**Mr. Crockett** reviewed the last meeting was October 23, 2013. Mrs. Brooks had reviewed the first 13/14 quarterly report, noting at this time there is a small positive balance. The committee requested an update on the cut to MHS club stipends. They also asked for an update on DCF and out-of-district placements and their associated costs to the district. The committee would like this information prior to budget workshops. Mrs. Brooks reviewed the timeline for the budget and noted the MHS principal position will be advertised in December. The next meeting will be held November 20, 2013.

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

Mrs. Schootz, 12 Conway Road, thought the presentation on the schools was confusing. She agrees with Mr. Leon's assessment of SMARTR and thinks they have not gotten taxpayer or parents views and are useless. Mrs. Schootz feels that the joint meeting on the subject should be open to the public to be able to ask questions to the SMARTR Committee.

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, offered his support of the Consent Calendar, especially Adult Education, which is important, along with MCC Career Pathways. Mr. Stringfellow recommended the book *How Children Succeed*. He recommended an article on extended school days in *The Hartford Courant*. Mr. Stringfellow mentioned Goodwin College's graduation and the East Hartford Synergy Program. In this week's *Reminder* there was an article on a community leadership program at the Manchester Neighborhood Academy with Chris Silver at the old firehouse. Mr. Stringfellow wished Ms. Luxenberg the best of luck. He welcomed Mr. Thames officially to the board. He notes he is going to be holding board members accountable.

Mr. Scott Aiken, 92 Laurel Street, respects Mr. Leon's assessment of unemotional data on the school report, but notes you cannot completely separate emotion from a decision. These decisions will impact neighborhoods. We are a community of neighborhoods and meeting other parents at schools is where community starts. Mr. Aiken feels race is not important when it comes to learning and he believes Sheff vs. O'Neil is fundamentally flawed. He does not believe that government can control where people decide to live. He thinks income level will be the divide, not race. He thinks we should look at the free/reduced lunch children, noting how much money you make determines how well your kids do in the future. Mr. Aiken stated that he will not allow board members to completely wash their hands of this decision as they are the elected members and he feels SMARTR has been a complete failure. He does not feel they have asked parents what they want. He notes it comes down to where parents choose to live and have their children attend school and make friends.

**K. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS**

**Mr. Leon** passed along a request that was given to him, to inquire why we do not have lacrosse in the district, and for a cost analysis on this.

**L. ADJOURNMENT**

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

**Secretary Leon moved and Ms. Luxenberg seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting.**

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

**Adjournment 8:59 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

Neal Leon  
Board Secretary