

MANCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION

Regular Meeting September 28, 2015 Lincoln

PRESENT: Crockett, Cruz, Hagenow, Leon, Pattacini, Pazda, Scappaticci, Stafford, Thames

ALSO PRESENT: Superintendent of Schools Geary, Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Management Brooks, Assistant Superintendent for Pupil Personnel Services Matfess, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum Radikas

ABSENT:

A. OPENING

A.1. & 2. Meeting Called to Order

Chairperson Pattacini called the meeting to order at 7:01 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

ADOPTED – Minutes Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of September 14, 2015. Secretary Scappaticci moved and Mr. Crockett seconded the motion.

7/0/2 – Voted in favor.

B. CONSENT CALENDAR

Mr. Geary presented five items on the Consent Calendar for Board approval.

B.1. Personnel Action

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

B.2. Transfer of Funds

- Transfer from System-wide Science Instructional Supplies & Materials account to System-wide Science Professional Development account in the amount of \$150
- Transfer from MHS Art Equipment Replacement account to MHS Art Instructional Supplies account in the amount of \$1,280
- Transfer from System-wide Math Textbooks account to the System-wide Math Professional Development account in the amount of \$9,800
- Transfer from Martin School Admin General Supplies & Materials account to Martin School Admin Postage account in the amount of \$300

B.3. Permission to apply for FY 15/16 Adult Education, REACT I, College Transition Pilot Grant in the amount of \$98,972

B.4. Permission to apply for FY 15/16 MCC/Adult Education, REACT II, College Transition Pilot Grant in the amount of \$231,660

B.5. Establish an appropriation for FY 15/16 Manchester Head Start, State Department of Education Services Grant in the amount of \$105,652

The Chairman called for a motion.

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

9/0 - Voted in favor.

C. COMMITTEE REPORTS

None.

D. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, suggested an article in *World War II Quarterly* regarding the importance of that war. He spoke about the traveling Vietnam

Veterans' wall that will be in town this month. He noted that about a dozen Manchester men lost their lives in that conflict. Mr. Stringfellow spoke about Columbus Day, which is October 12th. He suggested an article in the *New York Times* on Catalonia's independence from Spain and a children's book, *Who Was Christopher Columbus*. In *Teaching Tolerance* magazine an article on teaching Native American curriculum and diversity and equity was suggested. Last, Mr. Stringfellow recommended the book *Reclaiming Conversations*.

E. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT – PART I

E.1. State Assessment Results

Mr. Geary introduced Dr. Amy Radikas, who gave a presentation on the Smarter Balance test results, along with CMT and CAPT. Mr. Geary pointed out that the Smarter Balance is only one of many assessments and this was the first year. The Board will be seeing a data dashboard in the future to review other data points. While we have work to do, we have much work going on in our schools with STEM and many other initiatives, including the academies at the high school. Mr. Geary feels we have the right plan and faculty in place to head in the right direction. Dr. Radikas noted that the Smarter Balance test was given to grades 3-8 and 11. The full presentation is available on the website.

Mr. Leon was disappointed to see the results. He wondered how much the transient population contributes to the difficulty in raising scores. Dr. Radikas agreed that can cause considerable variation in scores. Mr. Leon wondered if the class sizes at Buckley were similar to the other schools, as those scores were higher. Mr. Geary and Dr. Radikas felt the class sizes were similar throughout the district. He also wondered what the free/reduced lunch population was at Buckley. Dr. Radikas noted that the highest population of free/reduced lunch is at Washington and Verplanck and Buckley has the lowest ELL population. Mr. Leon doesn't want people to think this problem is because of the teachers, pointing out there are a variety of issues.

Mr. Thames is concerned about how the district performed on the Smarter Balance test. He notes it is clear there is a lot of good work going on that is not

reflected by the test, however there is room for improvement and tests are important. The CT State Department of Education and Connecticut Core Standards set the learning expectations of what students should learn and be able to do at each grade level. Mr. Thames wondered what the outcome of this data is and what future outcomes should be anticipated. He wanted to know the next goal for principals, teachers, and students. Mr. Thames also realized that the state did not do an educational reference group, but he wondered how we ranked among like districts. Dr. Radikas noted that we were 19/30 among the Alliance Districts in reading and 14/30 in math. Dr. Radikas reviewed that in all schools administrators and teachers are working hard to teach our children, but Mr. Thames wanted a concrete percentage increase goal.

Mr. Geary noted that the Board will set district goals for the Superintendent in November and he cautions around teachers setting goals as it depends on the students before them. He noted that it did not take one year to get in this situation and it won't take one year to get out of it. Mr. Geary feels there is a testing craze in this country. This hasn't resulted in better outcomes for any students, but has put blame on teachers for test results. We understand there should be better test results and goals, but setting the goal is not where the work lies.

Mr. Thames felt that without goals it is abstract and he wants it to be concrete. He notes we live in a test-oriented society.

Ms. Pazda was surprised at how low the scores were. While SBAC is only one measure, it is a very public measure of how we are doing and parents look at that in determining whether their students attend our schools. She didn't see the state average noted. Dr. Radikas reviewed the state average was 55.4 in Literacy and 39.1 in Math for all students in Connecticut. Dr. Radikas pointed out math was a big disappointment for the state.

Ms. Pazda noted that in Manchester students have so many wonderful opportunities and in 3-5 years she feels we will have turned this around. She was curious about the push last year made in Tier 1. Dr. Radikas agreed there

was a major thrust in Tier 1. Tier 1 is what goes on in the classroom, every day with every kid. The curriculum was aligned throughout the district so each building was doing the same work. Resources have been shifted, including moving ELL tutors and interventionists to where the need is. More outreach has been done to parents, including math night two weeks ago. Resource reviews are currently going on and we need to look at who provides intervention, whether a teacher, para, tutor or special education teacher.

Ms. Pazda asked about Tier 2 and Tier 3 support. Ms. Pazda wondered if the most highly qualified people are servicing Tier 2 and 3 students. Dr. Radikas reviewed the difficulty in hiring Language Arts consultants, as there is a shortage in that area. We are working hard to fill gaps where we do not have them. Some staff, including math interventionists, split time between school as needed so the most highly qualified people are servicing Tier 3 students. She is looking forward to hearing about the dashboard throughout the year and that we are meeting the needs of all students. She also wondered how MELC and SAAM have played into this and if children performed better because of their participation. Dr. Radikas noted that an outside consultant will be looking at that programming and that some programs may morph. Spark provides support throughout the year. We can expect a report on SAAM in November.

Ms. Cruz wondered if we can use this data as a baseline and track academic progress more frequently, maybe quarterly. Dr. Radikas reviewed most testing happens three times a year (September, mid-year, end-of-year). Smarter Balance is once a year. Performance Plus is where we track data.

Mr. Stafford would also like to see data throughout the year showing progress on all the various data points. Dr. Radikas stated that is possible through the data dashboard.

Mr. Pattacini supports the other Board member's comments. He cautions the board that we certainly want to work with a sense of urgency on addressing the results of this test, but also as we have talked about getting to a data dashboard that looks at not just results of one year but multiple years. We have been on

this journey where we established goals and objectives last year and started developing the data dashboard, which will lead to us to be able to view and track improvement throughout the year. We have made a lot of progress on implementing mechanisms to be able to measure the results and improve outcomes in the classrooms. Mr. Pattacini is looking forward to that work with the data dashboard.

F. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

G. NEW BUSINESS

None.

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

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, felt it was a good presentation by Dr. Radikas. He noted there is still an achievement gap and pointed out that there are also Asians and whites struggling. He wonders how mixed race students fit into the data. Mr. Stringfellow noted that some students are visual or auditory learners as well. In *Attitude* magazine he suggested an article on ADHD and sensory perception, autism, and bipolar disorder. Mr. Stringfellow again asked for a report by Ms. Philbert regarding culture and staff. He noted the importance of voting. In *Better Manchester* he pointed out an article including Dr. Ratchford and Mr. Silver. Mr. Stringfield stated that we are doing a wonderful job and noted that East Hartford is also struggling. He also suggested *Education Next* magazine.

Shauna Brown, 116 Ambassador Drive, is a 1995 MHS graduate and parent of a 4th grader who previously attended a Catholic school. She is devastated about the Smarter Balance results at the high school. She does not want to feel like she doesn't want her son in this school. As a parent she begged the Board to please do everything in their power to fix this.

I. COMMUNICATIONS

Shania Stanton, Student Representative, thanked the Board for help with transportation so she could attend the meeting. She spoke about the Apples program. She has a

mentor who is an English teacher and she will be doing an acupuncture project. She has also rebooted the Pan-African club and hopes to share more at a future meeting. She noted that the presentation tonight made her want to see what she can do to help the test scores rise and impress upon her peers how important this testing can be. She noted most kids don't realize the impact of the test and also spoke about how different it was to take a test on the computer versus paper.

Lori Fogg, Student Representative, noted that college planning is stressful. Last Thursday was College Planning night with guidance counselors at MHS. She found it helpful to find out how to use Naviance more effectively. The Guidance counselors in English classes were talking about the SATs. October 22nd is Financial Planning night.

Mr. Pattacini encouraged both girls to feel free to ask questions throughout the meeting.

Ms. Cruz felt it was very helpful to hear from the student representatives and learn their perspective. She notes that the Board represents the student body.

Mr. Scappaticci wondered where Ms. Fogg has applied for college. She noted she has applied to University of Hartford, CCSU, Eastern, and Southern. She wants to study Art History and become a conservator.

Ms. Fogg talked about how the students had heard for years about the CMTs and the impact they had on a state level, but haven't heard much of the big picture of the new tests other than a demo in English class.

Ms. Stanton noted that she will share with her friends the impact of the testing and that they should focus on representing our town and our state.

J. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

None.

K. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Pattacini called for a motion to adjourn.

Mr. Leon moved and Ms. Pazda seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting.

9/0 - Voted in favor.

Adjournment 8:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jason Scappaticci
Board Secretary