

# MANCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION

## Regular Meeting

**Monday, February 13, 2012**

7:00 p.m.

Lincoln Center

**PRESENT:** Crockett, Cruz, Hagenow, Kidd, Leon, Luxenberg, Pattacini, 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, Director of Pupil Personnel Services Matfess

**ABSENT:** Scappaticci

### **A. OPENING**

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

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 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 MEETINGS**

**ADOPTED** – Minutes Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of January 23, 2012.

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

**8/0 – Voted in favor.**

**ADOPTED** – Minutes Special Meeting of the Board of Education of February 1, 2012.

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

**8/0 – Voted in favor.**

#### **A.4 ADOPTION OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS BUDGET WORKSHOPS**

**APPROVED** – Minutes Budget Workshop of the Board of Education of January 25, 2012.

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

**8/0 – Voted in favor.**

**APPROVED** – Minutes Budget Workshop of the Board of Education of February 1, 2012.

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

**8/0 – Voted in favor.**

Mr. Pattacini informed the Board that Mr. Scappaticci was absent tonight due to a death in the family. Our thoughts are with him and his family.

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

##### **B.1. Student Recognition for Budget Cover**

Dr. Kisiel informed us that tomorrow morning the Board of Education would submit their proposed budget to the General Manager, Scott Shanley. It has been a tradition each year for children in the District to draw a picture of their school and submit their entry to Central Office for a chance to have their drawing chosen as the cover of the Board of Education Budget Book. Mrs. Brooks introduced Faryal Taseer, a fifth grade student from Verplanck Elementary School, whose drawing was chosen this year. Miss Taseer was awarded a certificate of appreciation and a gift certificate to Barnes & Noble for her drawing of her school.

##### **B.2. Recognition of 5 year Town/School Mentoring Program Participants**

**Dr. Richardson** and Sharon Kozey, Mentor Coordinator, outlined the Manchester Mentor Program, which was established in 2007. This program, which is only open to Town of Manchester municipal employees, pairs children in the District with a mentor, who is released from work one hour a week to spend time with their mentee during the school day. The mentors commit to the program for a minimum of one year, but most continue with the same child from year to year, establishing a strong bond. This program is currently active at Nathan Hale, Robertson, Verplanck, Washington, Waddell, Bennet, Illing and Manchester High School. There are 25 Town employees participating, and 13 of those mentors received recognition tonight for

marking five years in the program: Susan Alaimo, Heather Boudreaux, Pam Cowan, Laurie Dunlop, Julian Freund, Karen Freund, Sharon Kozey, Dede Moore, Marilyn Smith, and Joan Ward.

**Ms. Felicina Petito**, a Guidance Counselor at Illing, stated that the relationship benefits both the students and the mentors. The students are excited to meet with their mentor and all children involved in the program are there voluntarily. We are fortunate to have this program to provide positive relationships with adults for children who have been identified as in need of extra support.

**Chairperson Pattacini** thanked the mentors on behalf of the Board.

**Ms. Walton** also expressed her thanks and said it was a pleasure to hear about a project that benefits our students and engages our Town employees to invest in our community.

### **B.3 Robertson Elementary School Highlight**

**Mr. Stuart Wolf**, Principal of Robertson Elementary School, shared with the Board information about a project the fifth graders are doing regarding the cultural diversity present in Robertson. Mr. Wolf shared with us that the population at the school is comprised of 43% black students, 32% white, 23% Asian, and 2% American Indian, with 23% of the students of Hispanic heritage. The families come from many different counties, including India, Saudi Arabia, Jamaica, Peru, and Indonesia. There are approximately 12 languages spoken by the families in the school, including Spanish, Arabic, and Indonesian to name but a few. The diversity present at Robertson Elementary gives the school and richness and strength while normalizing the differences and highlighting those things that are the same in each culture.

Teachers, Ms. Coleen Thomas-DeBari and Ms. Regina Gatmaitan, presented a power point presentation done with 5<sup>th</sup> grade students on how Robertson recognizes and celebrates the diversity of their cultures. Some of the 5<sup>th</sup> graders were present at the meeting and shared some of their family traditions that represent their culture. It was interesting to listen to the different foods, celebrations, and activities that each child felt represented their family. In fact, Mr. Crockett requested next time, they should bring samples of the delicious dishes they spoke about to share with the Board!!

**Mr. Pattacini** thanked the staff and students for their presentation on behalf of the Board.

### **C. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, was glad to see the diversity being celebrated at Robertson Elementary. He hopes the children will pass along

what they learn to the adults to help cut down on racism and prejudices in our society that still exist.

Mr. Stringfellow shared that he had attended a forum regarding choosing a new Superintendent of Schools at Illing.

Mr. Stringfellow spoke about Presidents history month and told us that Barnes & Nobel had some great flash charts about presidents from Obama back to Washington, as well as other items regarding the Presidents through the years. He also pointed out that February is African American History month and told us about an article on the 93<sup>rd</sup> birthday of Nelson Mandela in *New African* magazine. *World War II* magazine also had an article about Marines in North Carolina that fought against the Japanese.

Mr. Stringfellow also congratulated the Board for selecting a new principal for the high school.

#### **D. CONSENT CALENDAR**

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

##### **D.1. Personnel Action – Resignations/Appointments/Leave of Absence/Tenure**

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

##### **D.2. Appropriation increase for Manchester Head Start State Day Care Program – FY 11/12 anticipated revenue by \$50,000 bringing the total appropriation to \$450,000**

##### **D.3. Transfer of Funds**

##### **D.4. Extended Field Trip Request – Manchester High School – Wrestling Tournament Trumbull High School – February 17, 2012- February 18, 2012**

##### **D.5. Extended Field Trip Request – Manchester High School – State Leadership Conference Wesleyan University – March 16, 2012- March 17, 2012**

##### **D.6 Approval of Phase 4 Design – Highland Park Elementary School**

**The Chairman called for a motion.**

**Secretary Leon moved and Mr. Crockett seconded the recommendation to adopt the Consent Calendar, Items D1-D5, as outlined by Dr. Kisiel. (Item D6 will be held for a later meeting.)**

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

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

**E.1. Update on Highland Park School Construction Project**

Christopher Till and Marcus Brennan, Project Manager from Gilbane, presented a power point slideshow on the current progress of the Highland Park Renovation. Each month the schedule is updated, and as of January 25, 2012 the school is scheduled for a final certificate of occupancy for August 31, 2012. The furniture will start arriving at the end of July and the teachers should be able to start setting up their classrooms approximately mid-August.

**Mr. Leon** thanked the men for the update and the tour of the site last week and said it was great to see the progress taking place and finally see the "light at the end of the tunnel". He appreciates their efforts.

**Dr. Kisiel** asked if Mr. Till felt it was now safe to assume the August 31<sup>st</sup> date would hold, so the school calendar could be made for next year. Mr. Till said he was confident by June most of the systems would be complete and that in June and July an independent 3<sup>rd</sup> party would be verifying operation of the systems. He foresees nothing major that would effect occupancy.

**Mr. Pattacini** inquired about the status of the contingency funds. Mr. Till said the account is very low, but that Phase 2 and 3 were within budget. Next for approval will be the playgrounds. Mr. Pattacini asked that if there comes a time that work needs to be prioritized because of funding running low, that the Board be given as much notice as possible to make those decisions.

**E.2. Iling Middle School Uniform Dress Pilot Policy – Interim Report**

**Dr. Troy Monroe**, Principal of Iling Middle School, gave a power point presentation regarding the school uniform pilot currently in effect at the school. Though he said there have been challenges, they currently have 100% compliance at the school with the uniform policy. Dr. Monroe pointed out 66 families have received some sort of support in outfitting their children. He sees a positive climate and tone in the school and says the students look ready to learn.

Dr. Monroe ended his presentation with recommendations for next year, including possibly requiring only tan khaki "uniform" pants, instead of the 3 current color choices of various materials, as well as adding a female styled top to the available choices with the current vendor. A full copy of the report will be available on the Board of Education website.

**Ms. Cruz** inquired as to what percentage of the student body the 66 families represented and what type of assistance was provided. Dr. Monroe was unsure of the overall percentage of families, but stated that generally one to three shirts was provided for each family, depending upon the need. Ms. Cruz also would like to see the data presented regarding assistance, achievement increases, and referral trends to be broken down into 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students. Ms. Cruz also expressed concern about only having one color choice for pants and inquired as to the consequences currently in place for those in violation of the dress code. Dr. Monroe reviewed the current policy, which includes giving the child the opportunity to access a uniform in their locker or borrow one from the office, as well as calling a parent to bring in the proper attire. Ultimately, with major violations, in-school suspension could be given. Ms. Cruz was not in favor of that harsh of a punishment. Ms. Cruz expressed her support of the uniforms for next year and hopes to carry them into other schools in the District.

**Ms. Walton** pointed out that in a District where 55% of the population receives free or reduced lunch, 66 families receiving support seems low. She also asked about plans to reach out to 6<sup>th</sup> grade families who will be attending Illing next year. Dr. Monroe stated that they will better address the support issue for next year and that there are no current plans to speak with the Bennet families, but that will be done in the coming months.

A discussion about possibly allowing school sports apparel next year and about the first "dress casual" day during spirit week this week ensued.

**Mr. Leon** asked about the "repeat offenders" with the dress code policy and whether they had other behavioral problems. Dr. Monroe will examine the data to fully answer that at a later date. Mr. Leon inquired if the Board had authorized a one or two year pilot of the uniforms? It was clarified that they had authorized one year and hopefully a decision on year 2 could be made soon to prepare for earlier pre-ordering and other decisions that need to be made. Mr. Leon was pleased with the suggestion of a "female-cut" top, and also expressed that he was not in favor of one type or color pant, nor the restriction to one vendor.

**Mr. Crockett** stated that it is a bit premature, six months into the pilot, to draw any conclusions. Mr. Crockett did state the subject of Year 2 should be put on the agenda and a decision made as soon as possible. He inquired

about the staff dress code and was informed that staff adhere to the District-wide staff dress code policy, which includes no jeans, though some Illing staff members have opted to wear the uniform polo shirts as well.

**Mr. Pattacini** suggested that a survey be done, possibly the same one given to parents last year, to gauge support for continuing the policy next year. Data on violations is requested. He also inquired about Dr. Monroe's thoughts on somehow reclaiming gently used uniforms from the exiting 8<sup>th</sup> graders and Dr. Monroe discussed a possible end of year "dress down" day for 8<sup>th</sup> graders who brought in clean, gently used items.

**Ms. Walton** requested the administration to come up with a plan to better support families, especially those with more than one child requiring uniforms.

**At this point, Secretary Leon made a motion to recess for caucus.**

**7/1 Voted in favor, with Ms. Kidd objecting.**

**Meeting in recess 8:49**

**Manchester Board of Education Meeting back in session 9:27**

**F. OLD BUSINESS**

**F.1. Composition of the School Modernization and Reinvestment Team Revisited (SMRTR)**

**Secretary Leon moved for Item F.1 to be tabled to a future agenda. Ms. Cruz seconded the motion.**

**The Chairman called a roll-call vote:**

**Walton – Aye**

**Kidd – Aye**

**Cruz – Aye**

**Crockett – Nay**

**Leon - Aye**

**Luxenberg - Aye**

**Hagenow - Nay**

**Pattacini - Aye**

**6/2 - Voted in favor. The item was tabled to a future agenda.**

## **G. NEW BUSINESS**

### **G.1. Board of Education Policy Changes and Revisions**

Dr. Kisiel discussed the recommended policy revisions and new policies being presented.

#### **A. Recommended Policy Revisions:**

**Board Policy #51412.4 – Wellness:** Changes were recommended by the Health & Wellness Committee based on changes in the Public Law 108-265.

#### **B. Recommended New Policies:**

**Board Policy #6212(a) – Adult/Continuing Education** – Dr. Kisiel initiated a policy, with the help of Dianne Kearney, regarding Adult Education since Manchester oversees and has full responsibility for its adult education program.

**Board Policy #5141.6 – Crisis Response** – Providing for the formation of crisis response teams to determine what actions and follow-up will occur in response to a crisis.

**Board Policy #6114 – Emergencies and Disaster Preparedness** – Regarding specific regulations and procedures for fire, bomb threats, civil defense, and other emergencies.

**Board Policy #3516 – Safety** – This policy stipulates that the administration in our schools will comply with all safety requirements established by state and local government.

These policies will be voted on at a future Board meeting.

## **H. COMMUNICATIONS**

None.

## **I. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **I.1. Curriculum & Instruction Committee**

Ms. Kidd informed us that the last meeting was cancelled and has been rescheduled for March.

### **I.2. Buildings & Sites Committee**

The committee report was left out of the Board members packets and will be presented at the next meeting.

### **I.3. Policy Committee**

Ms. Hagenow reported that the Policy Committee, including Ms. Cruz, Ms. Hagenow, Mr. Scappaticci, Ms. Kidd, and Dr. Kisiel, met on January 26, 2012. As reported above, Dr. Kisiel highlighted the policies currently being

considered for revisions and the new policies to be added. The next Policy Committee meeting is scheduled for February 23, 2012.

**J. PUBLIC COMMENTS** (Limited to items on tonight's agenda)  
None.

**K. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS**

Ms. Kidd viewed the bullying video on the Board of Education website and would like the public to see it. Mr. Pattacini previously forwarded that request on to the Administration for a future presentation.

**L. ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Pattacini called for a motion to adjourn.

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

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

**Adjournment 9:41 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

Neal Leon  
Board Secretary