

MANCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION

Regular Meeting

Monday, March 12, 2012

7:00 p.m.

Lincoln Center

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

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 27, 2012.

Secretary Leon moved and Mr. Crockett seconded the motion.

8/0/1 – Voted in favor. Ms. Kidd abstained.

Secretary Leon moved to add A4. to the agenda, Dr. Jacoby – Update to Superintendant Search. Ms. Cruz seconded the motion.

9/0 – Voted in favor.

A.4. UPDATE ON SUPERINTENDANT SEARCH

Dr. Jacoby thanked the Board for the opportunity to facilitate the Superintendent search in Manchester. She reported that CAGE had completed the focus groups and surveys and thanked all who have participated. She commended the Board's desire to include representation from many constituent groups. Approximately 350 people participated in the

search from late January, with 114 on-line surveys being taken and 32 paper surveys, as well as 200 people attending some 20 focus groups. Dr. Jacoby was especially impressed with the sophomores, juniors, and seniors she encountered at the high school who were articulate, thoughtful, ready to identify challenges and proposed solutions and she noted we should be proud of our students.

Dr. Jacoby reported that the following were listed as strengths of the Manchester Public Schools:

- Comfort with teaching staff who are quality and caring
- Quality administrators
- Pride in diversity and richness to population
- Supports early childhood education with full-day Kindergarten
- Parents feel they are an integral part of the schools
- After school programs give children opportunities to be involved in meaningful activities
- Comprehensive academic programs
- Wonderful music programs, especially at the high school
- Dynamic teaching and leadership

Dr. Jacoby reported that the following were listed as challenges of the Manchester Public Schools:

- Facilities need upgrading, as well as upgrades to technology and communications
- Student achievement needs improvement
- We have a poor public image and there is a flight to alternative schools
- Need to raise standards, IEPs and differentiation of instruction, stronger curriculum
- More effective communication is needed between town/administration/staff/families/community/schools
- We need a unity of purpose
- Difficult atmosphere between the town and school, need to rebuild trust/cooperation/shared goal of quality schools

Dr. Jacoby next listed the qualities desired in our next leader:

- Strong
- Success and experience as a leader
- Collaborative
- Listens, approachable
- Knows instruction
- Thoughtful and decisive problem solver
- Systemic thinker
- Values staff input and helps to prioritize needs
- Respect for and experience with diversity
- Connection with the community

- High expectations
- Proactive in planning and implementing policy
- Strong communication skills, visible, accessible, outreaching in schools
- Honest/integrity, courageous
- Competent

Dr. Jacoby stated that they will take all this information and develop a profile to use as a scale to help them determine who among the applicants is qualified for this position. This information will be available on our website. Also scheduled is a training session with the Board of Education members regarding interviewing and how to develop meaningful questions.

Dr. Jacoby thanked Dr. Kisiel and Mrs. Brooks, as well as Lori Grigely and Bonnie Chemerka from the Superintendent's office, for all their hard work during this process.

B. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT – PART I

B.1. Illing Middle School Highlight

Dr. Kisiel welcomed Dr. Troy Monroe, Principal of Illing, to share a "Taste of Illing" with the Board. Dr. Monroe stated it was a pleasure to share Illing's creative approach to promoting literacy through the enrichment program and connecting that program with a cross-curricular experience with the Jazz Band. Dr. Monroe introduced David Lee, Illing's enrichment teacher, and Georgios Giannios, the band director.

Mr. Lee discussed the Celebration of Reading and Music. Illing welcomed two authors to the school, in November Michaela McColl, who writes middle-school level historical fiction, and in February P.W. Catanese, who writes fantasy fiction. The authors gave presentations and workshops at the school and the evening of their presentations there was an "Illing Night" at Barnes & Noble, which were fundraisers, book signings, and community outreach. At those Barnes & Noble events, Mr. Giannios brought members of his Jazz bands to perform for the community. Two students shared their experience with P.W. Catanese, who in addition to holding workshops for the students, participated in a round table lunch discussion with a select few who had read the entire trilogy. Both students shared how inspiring it was to actually meet the author of books they really enjoyed, and how it allowed them to explore some questions they had regarding the books.

Next, Mr. Giannios spoke about the Jazz Band and the dedication and hard work the students commit to in joining the band. Mr. Giannios spoke about a recent performance at the Manchester High School Jazz Festival in February, and about an upcoming Jazz Festival performance April 26th at Western Connecticut State University. Mr. Giannios stated it was a privilege and an

honor to work with such talented children and committed parents, and to work in a District that truly values the arts as much as Manchester does. Two students shared their experiences with Jazz Band. It was clear that the students enjoy their experiences and that the commitment they put forth is worth it. The performers present from the Jazz Band next played "Watermelon Man" for us and it was wonderful to experience such talent from our middle school students!

After the performance Mr. Scappaticci, Ms. Cruz, and Mr. Pattacini all praised the students for their talents and commitment and stated that Manchester has something to be proud of!

Recess at 7:31 to allow the Illing students to remove their instruments.

Manchester Board of Education back in session at 7:35 p.m.

C. CONSENT CALENDAR

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

C.1. Personnel Action –Appointments/Tenure

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

C.2. Permission to apply for the Connecticut Coordinated School Health Leadership Special Project in the amount of \$1,000

C.3. Appropriation to establish for FY 2011/2012 the College Access Challenge Grant in the amount of \$46,602

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.

9/0 - Voted in favor.

D. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Kim Gorman, 71 Strickland Street, stated that her son will be in Kindergarten in the Fall at Waddell and she had heard that there would be redistricting at Waddell and Verplanck and she wanted to know when we would know for sure where the children would be going next year. She also wanted to be sure there would be no shifting of students after the school year starts.

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, congratulated the Illing students on the musical performance this evening and Mr. Lee for his work with the literacy enrichment program.

Mr. Stringfellow stated that he had attended one of the forums Dr. Jakoby had spoken about and it went well. He wishes the Board the best of luck in finding a new Superintendent.

Mr. Stringfellow spoke about a civil war reenactment he attended at the Manchester Historical Society the day prior and stated that Manchester had 249 enlisted men in the war. He also recommended the book Civil War Day by Day, and the magazine *North and South*, which had a good article about the army and the civil war in the March issue. He reminded us there were many men of color who gave their lives. He also recognized Gideon Wells, from Glastonbury, who really opened up the door as an equal opportunity employer.

In the most recent edition of *TIME* magazine, Mr. Stringfellow suggested an article on bullying. He also talked about Lady Gaga and her Bravery Bus featured in the *Boston Globe* last week.

For those applying to college, Mr. Stringfellow mentioned that there are several books at Barnes & Noble regarding the application process that might be useful.

E. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT – PART II

E.1. Phase 4 Design - Highland Park Elementary School

Dr. Kisiel introduced Christopher Till and Hugh Pearson to share a power point presentation regarding Phase 4 of the Highland Park Elementary School construction plan, which is regarding the playgrounds. The base model plans for both the upper and lower playgrounds, as well as three alternate options for each, were reviewed. Once approved by the Board of Education, the plans go to the State for approval and then eventually will come back to the Board for a final plan regarding which, if any, alternates will be chosen. The full power point is available on the Board of Education website.

Ms. Hagenow inquired if the footprint for the various alternates was the same as for the base design, and it is. She also inquired if there will be a blacktop area for basketball and it was clarified that the existing blacktop area will remain, being cleaned up with basketball hoops reinstalled.

Mr. Leon inquired to Mr. Ziegler, our Facilities Manager, if we decided to stick with the base plan would it be possible for our own maintenance staff be able to reinstall some of the original structures that were removed from

the playgrounds prior to construction to save money. Mr. Ziegler felt that was possible.

Next, Mr. Leon asked Ms. Kate England, who will be Principal at Highland Park next year, her thoughts. Ms. England, who had only recently been brought up to date on the renovation, stated that while safety was the major concern, she did like the idea that the playscapes could be expanded at a later date if they were not approved for an upgrade immediately.

Ms. Walton inquired, since the base plan is right on target with the budget, what would be the rationale to go with higher costs? The rationale would be to lower maintenance costs, enhance the area, and provide more usable play area so more children could use the area at once.

Mr. Leon remarked that the additional cost of \$69,000 beyond the budgeted base plan to add all 3 alternates is the cost before the state reimbursement of 65%, so the actual increase in cost is closer to \$20,000.

Mr. Scappaticci pointed out the expanded play areas would mean the structures are not as crowded, which equates to being safer.

Ms. Luxenberg inquired if we did not put the alternates in place immediately would we still be eligible for the state reimbursement? Mr. Till stated there would be a small window of opportunity for that reimbursement, but once the grant is closed, approximately 1-2 years after construction is complete, there would be no further opportunity for reimbursement.

Ms. Luxenberg then asked which plan was the most beneficial to the students. Dr. Kisiel pointed out that there are 40-50 students per grade in grades 1-5. He asked Mr. Pearson, for the base apparatus, would that be a reasonable number of children to be playing at once? Mr. Pearson stated that it would not and there would have to be children on the fields and the asphalt, taking turns with the playground equipment.

Mr. Pattacini inquired if there was any available contingency money for these additional costs. While no money is available currently, as the smaller projects are completed or bid out, more money should free up so as we move along it will become more clear as to how much is left in the contingency account. It was also clarified that the actual plans did not have to be chosen tonight, just approval from the Board to move along to the State for their approval of all the plans, at which point the Board would then decide how to proceed.

Dr. Kisiel asked for the timeline and Mr. Pearson stated that bids could be done in early June.

At this time Chairperson Pattacini called for a motion.

Secretary Leon moved for the Board of Education to approve Phase 4 of 4 - Highland Park School Project, as approved by the Town Building Committee. Mr. Crockett seconded the motion.

9/0 - Voted in favor.

F.2. Relocation plan for Nathan Hale Students

Dr. Kisiel introduced Michael Zuba, from Milone & MacBroom, who presented a power point on the Nathan Hale students' relocation plans. In addition, the plans include meeting the State's racial balance requirements by shifting some students between Verplanck, Waddell, Robertson, and Buckley schools. The full power point presentation is available on the District website. The Nathan Hale students will be relocated to four schools: Highland Park, Washington, Martin, and Keeney. Also, a neighborhood currently districted for Verplanck will be redistricted to Waddell and several streets currently in the Robertson District will be sent to Buckley to achieve racial balance.

Dr. Kisiel talked about the transition plans for the Nathan Hale Students to include a bus orientation, an information session regarding bus stop locations and transportation guidelines (as most of these children have been walkers), and a bus ride safety program. There will also be bus monitors on the buses and a student drop-off located at the Youth Center on Spruce street for those requesting it. Crossing guards will be located at cluster stops and at the Youth Center. Because of the concern that many parents in the Nathan Hale neighborhood do not have vehicles, bus transportation will be provided for parents to the first open house so they can be sure to have the opportunity to visit their child's new school and meet the teachers. Lastly, the school social worker and psychologist will initiate a transition program to help the children adjust.

Chairperson Pattacini announced that the Board intends to hold a hearing, Thursday, March 29th, at 7:00 p.m. at the MHS Bailey Auditorium to give the public the opportunity to express their views about the proposed plans.

Board members had some questions regarding facilities planning and racial balance. Mr. Zuba explained how birth data was used to forecast future enrollment and talked about how he had arrived at the plan.

Ms. Kidd inquired what the maximum number of children per class was per Board policy and Dr. Kisiel pointed out slide 28, which showed the Board of

Education guidelines of 20 per class in Kindergarten, and 25 per class in grades 1-5.

Some discussion centered around the data that the number of births did not translate to the exact number of children entering Kindergarten, but was somewhere around 68/% currently. It was explained that while some children are going to private schools or choosing out of district/magnet schools, there was a certain amount of transient housing in the number of apartments we have in town, where a family might move in there only for a few years and therefore move out of town by the time their child, born in Manchester, is ready to register for Kindergarten.

Ms. Cruz pointed out that the Curriculum and Instruction Committee had begun doing exit surveys for families leaving the District to gather data to help understand the situation. Dr. Richardson pointed out that 350 students left the district between June and September 2011. Of those, only 63 responded to the surveys after two rounds of contact.

Ms. Walton inquired if we could gather data from families leaving before their children are enrolled, but Dr. Kisiel stated we cannot access that information.

Mr. Pattacini reminded the audience that the power point will be on the District website and about the forum being held at Bailey Auditorium at MHS on Thursday, March 29th at 7:00 p.m. for anyone wishing to attend.

F. OLD BUSINESS

F.1. New and Revised Policies

Dr. Kisiel presented nine policies for revision and one for deletion. They include:

Board Policy #3000 – No change.

Board Policy #3150 – Adoption of the Budget: Wording was edited, no substantial change to policy.

Board Policy #3240 – Tuition Fees: Wording was edited, no substantial change to policy.

Board Policy #3260 – Sale and Disposal of Obsolete Books, Equipment, and Supplies Sales, and Rentals of Property:

The portion of the policy dealing with Obsolete Books was removed, as it is covered in another policy.

Board Policy #3260.1 – Disposition of Obsolete Books: The policy for disposing of obsolete books was streamlined.

Board Policy #3280 – Gifts, Grants and Requests: Clarifications were made to the policy as well as adjustments to the dollar amounts the Superintendent or the Principals can accept as gifts to the District/Schools to reflect the current standards.

Board Policy #3541 - Transportation: Changes were recommended by Dr. Kisiel and the Policy Committee outlining Bennet as an elementary school for purposes of walking distance. Other wording was edited for grammar and to remove outdated information, including not being required to send bus complaints to the DMV.

Board Policy #4234 – Injury: Clarification of procedure regarding employee injuries. Such injuries will be reported to the Benefits Specialist at Central Office.

Board Policy #8001 – Authorization to Sign Contracts and Written Documents: This change allows the Superintendent to designate a signer (which would be the Assistant to the Superintendent) to sign certain contracts through the Business Office.

Board Policy #4147 – Credit on Teacher Salary Schedule for Paraprofessional Experience: This policy is recommended for deletion because it is a contract negotiation matter, not a matter of policy.

Secretary Leon moved for the Board of Education to adopt the new and revised policies, # 3000, #3150, #3240, #3260, #3260.1, #3280, #3541, #4234, and #8001. Ms. Cruz seconded the motion.

9/0 - Voted in favor.

Secretary Leon moved for the Board of Education to delete policy # 4147. Ms. Cruz seconded the motion.

9/0 - Voted in favor.

F.2. Manchester Public Schools Calendar 2012-2012

Dr. Kisiel presented the proposed 2012-2013 school calendar. There was a discussion about the dates for April vacation, and it was recommended by Dr. Kisiel that the first week of April was the best week for the children, after not having a break the prior 13 weeks.

Mr. Pattacini noticed that the draft in front of the Board tonight was Draft 4 and the last draft was #3. He inquired what had changed. Minor verbiage changes and a change on marking period dates were made, as pointed out by Mrs. Brooks.

A discussion then ensued about snow days and if there are more than 4 and they need to be taken from April break, should it come from the Monday or the Friday first. Since the April break technically starts the Friday prior, which is Good Friday, it was decided that the calendar would be revised to take any needed snow days from Friday, April 5th and work back.

Secretary Leon moved for the Board of Education to adopt the Manchester Public Schools Calendar 2012-2013, 4th draft dated 2/27/12, with the edit of starting snow days taken from April vacation rather than Monday, April 1st, but Friday, April 5th, 2013. Mr. Crockett seconded the motion.

9/0 - Voted in favor.

G. NEW BUSINESS

None.

H. COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Leon pointed out that the Bennet Academy PTSA is offering an Internet Safety program Thursday, March 15th from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. in the Bennet Cafeteria. Mr. Scott Driscoll, an internet safety special, will be speaking. You must be 18 years old to attend. For more information you can contact the Bennet PTSA via the website or call Sara Cleveland, PTSA VP, for more information.

Mr. Pattacini invited the Board and the public to the Foundation for Manchester Public School's dinner on Wednesday at 7:00 p.m. and gave his phone number as a contact, since the notice was short.

I. COMMITTEE REPORTS

I.1. Building and Sites Committee

Mr. Leon reported that the Building and Sites Committee met on March 1st. The only item for discussion was the Nathan Hale relocation, which was outlined tonight.

I.2. Curriculum & Instruction Committee

Ms. Cruz gave the report, first announcing that the minutes did not reflect Mr. Crockett as a member of the Committee as they should have.

Dr. Bob Pease and Ms. Erin Ortega presented Odysseyware, to move students to a more efficient method for on-line learning. This platform is aligned to the new common core and offers a multi-language translator. The committee recommended Dr. Pease present this new approach to the Board.

Mr. Eric Larson presented a new course description on "Sports Broadcasting". This course encourages internship experienced for MHS students. The committee reviewed the packets and units of instruction. The course will be one half credit per semester. The Manchester High School Professional Learning Committee also reviewed the proposal.

Mr. David Maloney presented a new textbook for review for AP/Grade 10 World History. This text offers an on-line opportunity with an AP study guide as well as a higher reading level, which aligns with the increased text complexity requirements of the new common core.

Dr. Richardson had reported that a second exit survey was sent to parents/guardians of children who left the district between June 2011 and September 2011. This cycle provided a stamped return envelope to make it easier to return the information. Between the first and second cycles, 63 responses were returned. The C&I Committee requested to maintain the promotion and transition survey for the end of this year to examine information further from our parent and student community.

The next meeting will be held April 16, 2012.

I.3. SMARTR Team

Mr. Crockett stated that the majority and minority leaders met last Saturday to look at potential candidates for the four spots open to the public. There were none. A news brief was put out and interested people can apply by contacting Scott Shanley's office at Town Hall: sshanley@manchesterct.gov. His phone is 860-647-3123. Applications are due Friday at 5:00 p.m. They will meet next weekend to look at the names.

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

Latasha Turnquest, 171 Birch Street, was here tonight to hear about the relocation plans for Nathan Hale, both as a parent and as an employee at Washington Elementary. She is the site coordinator for the Family Resource Center. She had heard that with the influx of Nathan Hale students, many classrooms at Washington would be repurposed and she inquired if her program would be losing their space there. She wondered when the plan would be finalized so she would know the future of her program. Dr. Kisiel replied that her program would not be impacted by the relocation.

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, stated that he supports the Consent Calendar, especially the item regarding health. He pointed out an article in the *Boston Globe* last month regarding health courses in Summerville, Massachusetts and Arlington, Virginia. The First Lady spoke in Massachusetts last week regarding health. Mr. Stringfellow believes health and fitness is good to help student learning.

Regarding the Nathan Hale plan for moving the students, Mr. Stringfellow emphasized that all students need to be made to feel welcomed and how important diversity is. He stated that the *New York Times* March 8th edition had an article about the number of U.S. hate groups on the rise. We are a nation of many, he stated, and he wants all students to learn. Even Catholic schools are looking at changing their guidelines, as noted in this morning's *Boston Globe*.

Mr. Stringfellow spoke about a teacher morale survey and how some teachers are dissatisfied twenty years later, which was in a *New York Times* article March 8th. He also felt Virtual Cues That Help Writers Blossom was an article in *Education Digest* that was interesting. Lastly, Mr. Stringfellow recommended The Case Against Grades, which was an article he also found interesting.

K. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

Ms. Luxenberg asked for a technology update specifically in regards to the District's use of Facebook and other social media, as well as ways to notify parents of activities, situations, etc. She also inquired about the implementation of a master calendar being made available for all school events for both Board members and members of the public. Finally, Ms. Luxenberg asked for the Curriculum & Instruction Committee to give a presentation on the "Conn Academy" to the Board. She is intrigued by the process and thinks it is a neat way to have an innovation and cost effective program to raise student achievement. She is hoping to pilot this program at one school next year.

Ms. Walton added to Ms. Luxenberg's technology request, by asking how technology is being utilized for instruction now and how we might better implement that in the future.

L. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Pattacini called for a motion to adjourn.

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

9/0 – Voted in favor.

Adjournment 9:54 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Neal Leon
Board Secretary