

MANCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION

Regular Meeting

Monday, March 26, 2012

7:00 p.m.

Lincoln Center

PRESENT: Crockett, Cruz, Hagenow, Kidd, Leon, 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

ABSENT: Luxenberg

A. OPENING

A.1&2 MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

Mr. Pattacini opened the meeting at 6:10.

Mr. Crockett moved for the Board to go into Executive Session to discuss a matter related to contract negotiations. Ms. Cruz seconded the motion.

8/0 – Voted in favor.

No action was taken.

Mr. Crockett moved for the Board to come out of Executive Session at 6:28. Ms. Cruz seconded the motion.

8/0 – Voted in favor.

Ms. Cruz moved for the Board to enter back into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing a contract. Mr. Crockett seconded the motion.

8/0 – Voted in favor.

No action was taken.

Mr. Leon moved for the Board to come out of Executive Session at 6:57 p.m. Ms. Cruz seconded the motion.

8/0 – Voted in favor.

The meeting was called to order at 7:06 p.m. in public session. 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 March 12, 2012.

Secretary Leon moved and Mr. Crockett seconded the motion.

8/0 – Voted in favor.

B. SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT – PART I

B.1. Washington Elementary School Highlight

Dr. Kisiel announced that the Washington School Highlight would have to be postponed until next school year, as Principal Karen Gray gave birth to a baby boy last Friday! Congratulations to the Gray family on the arrival of little Ethan!

B.2. Student Representative

Dr. Kisiel introduced Ashley Mills, the student representative from Manchester High School. Ms. Mills informed us that the class of 2013 had hosted a Murder Mystery Dinner/Silent Auction on February 28th with 190 attendees that raised just under \$2,000. This is one of the largest fundraiser amounts over the past years.

On March 23rd, Alan Pearl was crowned Mr. MHS! There were over 300 attendees at this 17th annual Mr. MHS Pageant! Other winners included Mr. Congeniality – Herb Resto, Crowd Pleaser – John Wick Nathan, 2nd Runner Up – Joe Maggiore, and 1st Runner Up – Paul Maloney.

The Project Graduation “Phone”-Raiser is ending this week. Unwanted cell phones and PDAs are being collected to both protect the environment and support Project Graduation at the same time.

The Jazz & Percussion Concert is scheduled for Wednesday, March 28th at 7:30. This free concert features a unique perspective as some audience members are seated on stage with the performers!

Town of Manchester Registrar of Voters will have a table outside of the cafeteria on Tuesday, March 27th.

In sports news, the Girl's Basketball won over Glastonbury, but lost to Mercy. Boy's Basketball lost to Hill House.

Mr. Scappaticci expressed his congratulations to Alan Pearl and informed the audience that he too was Mr. MHS, back in 1999!

B.3. Relay for Life

Dr. Kisiel commented that it is remarkable the amount of time Manchester students spend in service of others. Tonight we are recognizing that extra effort. Ms. Grace DeAngelis and Ms. Cheryl White are co-chairs for the Relay for Life this year. Ms. White is a two-time cancer survivor. She informed us that this year's Relay will be held June 16 and 17th on a Saturday and Sunday, as opposed to the traditional Friday/Saturday timeframe we have had in the past.

Ms. DeAngelis reminded everyone that our students must have two community service projects in order to graduate, and the Relay is the perfect opportunity for achieving one of those! Tonight we are all recognizing the top 3 fundraising schools for last year's Relay for Life with the Youth Community Spirit Award. Martin Elementary raised \$3,782.60 last year, coming in 3rd place, helped by former Principal Donna Fitzgerald taking her turn in the dunk tank! In second place last year was Bennet Academy, raising \$6,928.63! Last year's first place fundraiser school was Highland Park Elementary – raising \$9,498.74!!! These three teams raised 17% of the entire Relay for Life amount! Ms. DeAngelis and Ms. White presented trophies to all three teams, who had students from last year there to accept the awards on their behalf and say a few words about what participating in the Relay means to them. The students stated that participation made them feel powerful, gave them the opportunity to be one of those millions of people who help save lives, and raises their spirits.

Mr. Leon nominated Dr. Kisiel to take his turn in the dunk tank this year!!

Mr. Pattacini thanked the children for sharing how much the Relay for Life impacts their lives. Manchester is not just about focusing on test scores, but is also about giving back to the community, and that was clearly evident tonight!

B.4. Student Recognition – MHS Video Awards

Dr. Kisiel spoke about how impressed he has been with the number of learning opportunities students have in Manchester. Tonight he introduced Eric Larson who, with Charlie Vousden who was unable to be here this

evening, enable our students to have hands-on training in the broadcasting field, both on the technical side and the journalism side. The Board presented certificates of merit and accomplishment to twenty-four students who are enrolled in the high school's broadcast/journalism program.

Ms. Walton expressed what a pleasure it was to hear about amazing programs like this in our District and thanked the amazing staff.

Mr. Pattacini thanked Mr. Larson for his dedication and commitment to our students and families.

B.5. CABE – Board of Education Member Appreciation Month

Dr. Kisiel stated that January is School Board Recognition Month. We should respect and admire the work of school board members, who voluntarily represent the education interests of our children and our community. These members of our community are dedicated and display civic responsibility to ensure the needs of our children are being met and represent the culture, values, and traditions of the Manchester community. We thank the Board members and on behalf of the entire community and the administration presented our Board members with bookmarks as a small token of our appreciation.

Chairperson Pattacini called for a motion for a brief recess at 7:34 p.m. Mr. Leon moved, Mr. Crockett seconded the motion.

Manchester Board of Education back in session 7:37 p.m.

C. CONSENT CALENDAR

Dr. Kisiel presented seven 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. Appropriation to Establish for FY 2011-2012 in the amount of \$9,000 for (SPDG) State Personnel Development Grant

C.3. Appropriation to Establish for FY 2011-2012 in the amount of \$1,000 for (CHS) Coordinated School Health Leadership Project

C.4. Transfer of Funds

Details were provided in the agenda packet.

C.5. Buildings & Grounds Supervisors Contract – AFSCME Council 4, Local 818-49

C.6. Board of Education Meeting Schedule 2012-2013

C.7. Request Board of Directors to waive bid process to implement IEP Direct

The Chairman called for a motion.

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

8/0 - Voted in favor.

D. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms. Terry Eliason, 100 Porter Street, spoke about Manchester's long history of educational segregation by having neighborhood schools. She stated it is considered appropriate at public meetings to stand up and state that "these kids" will ruin our school. She reminded us that the State Board of Ed severely admonished Manchester for its failure to address racial issues in our town. She talked about the proposed closure of Nathan Hale two years back, that was going to close until parents "from a population that mattered to the Board" complained about the movement of their children, but she never believed it would actually stay open. Ms. Eliason feels it was wrong to invest such money in renovating Highland Park School while Nathan Hale is being closed due to years of neglect by the Town. She claims that there is no coincidence that the newest and best schools are all in white, upper class neighborhoods. This disheartens her. She is also bothered by the lack of effort to inform Nathan Hale parents about the plan or the meeting tonight, stating that listing it on the website is not a sufficient way to inform that population, who mostly do not have access to the internet. As she reviewed the relocation plan, she was struck by the language on instructing the children in acceptable bus behavior and the plan to place monitors on the buses, while no other school has bus monitors. She feels we should be helping the students in their transition instead of spending time and effort to assure other populations that these children will not impact their school.

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, congratulated the students representing the Relay for Life and the MHS technical students receiving recognition tonight. He has watched the MHS students on Channel 16 and thinks they do a good job and it is a well-produced program. Mr. Stringfellow also pointed out MHS alum from 1972 that has worked as a TV sports announcer for Channel 3, Michael Adams.

Mr. Stringfellow reminded us that this year is the 70th anniversary of World War II. He spoke about the Doolittle's Raid over Tokyo, the Guadalcanal Campaign, and Operation Torch.

Mr. Stringfellow next spoke about the 3/8 edition of the *East Hartford Reminder*, which featured an article on Connecticut IB Academy being named a top magnet school. He recommended two movies currently out, including *The Lorax* and *Hunger Games*, as well as *Bully*, a documentary.

Fires of the Mind by Kathleen Cushman is a book Mr. Stringfellow recommends, about learning through motivation. Last, he spoke about the Southern Poverty Law Center Intelligence Report, Spring 2012 Issue 145, *The Year in Hate & Extremism*.

Mr. Pattacini briefly responded to Ms. Eliason's comments regarding Nathan Hale. He reminded the public that there is a special forum scheduled for this Thursday at 7:00 p.m. at Manchester High School's Bailey Auditorium regarding the relocation plan for Nathan Hale. Mr. Pattacini informed us that a reminder is going out tomorrow to all of the schools about that, and Nathan Hale parents were initially notified via letter sent to all parents when the plan to take the school off-line was being considered.

E. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT – PART II

E.1. Illing Middle School Pilot Dress Policy

Dr. Troy Monroe, Principal of Illing Middle School, made a Power Point presentation recommending the Dress Code Pilot be continued for a second year. This presentation can be accessed on the District website. Dr. Monroe feels that the dress code affects a positive tone and climate in the school.

The discussion focused on the 129 in-school suspensions that have been given to students who are repeat or blatant offenders of the dress code. A discussion surrounding this ensued, with both **Ms. Walton** and **Ms. Cruz** expressing concern about taking children out of class as a punishment. Dr. Monroe explained that while ISS may be given, if a parent brings the proper attire to school the child may not spend much time in ISS. **Ms. Kidd** wondered what percentage of the 129 infractions in fact did have a parent that brought in their child's uniform.

Another concern raised by Ms. Walton was the small percentage of families who received financial assistance. Ms. Walton feels more families should be receiving some sort of aide.

Mr. Leon expressed his appreciation of the process Dr. Monroe has gone through in this initiative, but is surprised that other principals are not lining

up to lobby for their schools to institute uniforms. He expressed a concern about approving a second year of the pilot at this time.

Mr. Crockett, while initially not a fan of the dress code, offered his support for a second year of the pilot.

Mr. Pattacini reminded the Board that a decision on the pilot has to be made either tonight or as soon as possible.

Dr. Kisiel recommended that the Board table any decision on the second year of the dress code pilot to provide Dr. Monroe with the time to respond to the Board member questions and requests for additional information. Mr. Pattacini agreed with Dr. Kisiel to postpone the vote on this topic until April.

E.2. Efficiency/Effectiveness Study Report Update

Dr. Kisiel gave an update regarding the sixty-three recommendations given by Evergreen Solutions in their November 2011 Efficiency Study. Dr. Kisiel reported that the district administration focused its attention on responding to each of the recommendations. Seventeen of the recommendations are completed, forty-five are in the process of being completed, and eleven of the recommendations were rejected. He shared with the Board a progress report that identifies the status of each of the recommendations and each recommendation includes an explanatory comment to assist the Board of Education in understanding the current status of each recommendation. A full copy of his report will be on the district website.

Mr. Leon thanked Dr. Kisiel and the administration for their hard work in such a short time.

Mr. Pattacini also thanked Dr. Kisiel and asked, as it relates to the budget, about some items on the list that have a financial impact, if the completed items were included in the budget proposal for this coming year. Dr. Kisiel affirmed that they have been included. Mr. Pattacini clarified if any other changes are made that have a financial impact, they would be addressed on a case by case basis at the time or in subsequent budget years.

F. NEW BUSINESS

F.1. Bus Contract

Mrs. Patricia Brooks detailed for the Board the current bus contract negotiations. Mrs. Brooks obtained bids both as an individual town, as well as in joining with a Regional Inter-District Collaborative (RIC) with Somers, Ellington, and Vernon in an effort to receive better pricing on busing. The bids were much higher than anticipated, with an approximate increase of approximately 20% over the current contract, instead of the anticipated 5%

increase. Mrs. Brooks detailed the reasons for this increase, including: the bus drivers having unionized since our last contract in 2007; the Public Act 11-52 going into effect this January, which allows for 1 hour of sick leave for every 40 hours worked after completing 680 hours of work; the addition of AYP student transfers, which were not in effect in 2007; the initiation of school breakfast, which has increased route hours and downtime between routes; and Hartford instituting a living wage, which has increased wages in surrounding towns. Mrs. Brooks detailed the bids and explained the most competitive bids received were from First Student for both contracting as an individual town and as part of the RIC. As part of RIC, the cost increase from the current contract is \$538,378, which is approximately \$275,000 more than was budgeted. If the other schools in the collaborative choose not to participate, the individual town pricing jumps another \$36,966 to \$575,341.

Board members inquired about the timeline for entering into the Collaborative and Mrs. Brooks stated that the other towns were asking for approval from their Boards at their next meetings, so a decision could be reached as soon as possible, to allow time for the bus company to purchase additional vehicles to serve the Districts. It was also discussed that the vote tonight should include a caveat giving Mrs. Brooks approval to sign an individual agreement, should one or more of the RIC schools choose not to participate, as First Student had the most competitive bid in both individual and collaborative pricing.

Chairperson Pattacini called for a motion.

Secretary Leon moved for the Board of Education to approve the proposal for the Regional Inter-District Collaborative Transportation, granting First Student the award for transportation. Mr. Crockett seconded the motion.

Mr. Crockett pointed out that when we enter into this we will have the find the addition \$275,000 out of our budget or from the town, but we have no choice but to transport the children.

Ms. Cruz asked for clarification of the bidding quotes.

Mrs. Brooks reminded the Board that she is asking, as part of the motion, to authorize her to accept the individual bid, if one of the other towns drops out of the RIC.

Mr. Pattacini reiterated Mrs. Brooks's request. He then asked Mr. Leon to amend the motion or make a new motion.

Mr. Crockett withdrew his second and the original motion was withdrawn.

Secretary Leon moved for the Board of Education to approve the proposal for the Regional Inter-District Collaborative Transportation, for First Student transportation, with the caveat that if the collaborative does not continue, that Mrs. Brooks can enter into an agreement directly with First Student. Mr. Crockett seconded the motion.

Ms. Cruz asked, if the current motion is approved, does that mean that if one district withdraws from the collaborative we revert to the individual town pricing. Mrs. Brooks clarified that is the plan and she would confirm that all four towns need to be on board or the collaborative pricing would be dropped. If it is at all possible to continue with the collaborative pricing with three towns that would be achieved.

8/0 - Voted in favor.

G. COMMUNICATIONS

G.1. Superintendent Search

Mr. Pattacini reminded us that Dr. Jacoby from CABE will be meeting with the Board members on Thursday to train them on interviewing for the new Superintendent and identifying the key characteristics and qualities desired in a new Superintendent, based on the focus groups and surveys that were taken. The deadline for applications is April 3rd, at which time there should be a list of candidates to consider. Updates on the search will be posted on the Board's website.

G.2. Public Hearing Relocation Plan

Mr. Pattacini again reminded us of the Public Hearing regarding the Nathan Hale Relocation Plan scheduled for 7:00 p.m., Thursday, March 29th at Bailey Auditorium at Manchester High School. There will be a repeat of the presentation that was given to the Board previously, as well as ample time for public comments. Mr. Pattacini encouraged members of the public to come out and express their views on the proposed plan.

History Day

Mr. Pattacini spoke about History Day at MHS last weekend, in which more than 300 students attended and Illing and MHS were among award winners in this multi-town program. He thanked the staff and administration for putting that program on.

Board of Education Awards

Mr. Pattacini spoke about the Board of Education awards ceremony that occurred last week for elementary school students, which was attended by himself, Ms. Walton, and Mr. Crockett.

H. COMMITTEE REPORTS

H.1. Personnel & Finance Committee

Mr. Crockett reported that the last meeting was held March 21st and was attended by himself, Mr. Leon, Ms. Hagenow, Mrs. Brooks, Nilsa Reyes-Dorsey, and Terri Smith.

Mrs. Brooks had presented a proposed vendor cost analysis regarding custodial services for the District. The committee declined this analysis at this time.

Mrs. Brooks informed the committee that it has been very difficult to make purchases for the District without a District credit card and the committee gave approval for Mrs. Brooks to obtain one.

The committee reviewed PA 10-248A, unexpended Education Funds Account. As it was determined there were no extra funds available, the discussion was tabled.

Mrs. Brooks presented a proposal from Redflex Student Guardian regarding a 90 day pilot program to put cameras on school buses to capture information of vehicles that do not stop for the buses. There is no cost to the District for this pilot program. The committee authorized Mrs. Brooks to continue the conversation with Redflex regarding the pilot.

There was a report regarding Kelly Education Staffing regarding substitutes. The committee would like them to come before the Board this summer to give an update.

The transportation bids were reviewed as reported in section F.1. above.

Mrs. Brooks stated there had been a favorable end of the year auditor report on school year grants that are reported to the State Department of Education.

The next meeting will be held April 11th at 5:30 p.m. at Central Office.

H.2. CREC Report

Ms. Walton attended the March 21st meeting. The CREC budget of approximately \$270 million was reviewed at the meeting, including

approximately \$70 million approved for capital works/new construction. The school budgets across the state were reviewed, and there has been between a zero and 6% increase in school budgets this year, as reported by CAPS. Ms. Walton reported that for some reason Manchester's data was missing, and asked that we look into getting that updated with CAPS.

Ms. Walton reported that the National School Board Association Conference is in Boston this year, April 21-23. Ms. Walton felt it would be beneficial for Manchester to attend this conference and should be discussed.

Senate bill 24 was reviewed. There is a lot of change about how Districts operate across the state, including accountability and opportunities for growth.

CREC selected two schools to pilot the International Student Assessment. They had stated that the U.S. is not even in the top 50% for industrialized countries.

The CREC book club is reading Pedro Noguera's *Closing the Achievement Gap* and Ms. Walton recommended it to everyone.

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

Ms. Mary Angeli, 65 White Street, was very upset at the thought of Illing students being suspended and having instructional time taken away due to the dress code. She feels it is totally inappropriate. The first thing that should be done is to come up with positive and negative consequences for adhering to the dress code, would be the good things that happen for students who comply and she feels the negative consequences should involve the parents and not suspensions. Ms. Angeli feels the dress code should be in effect Monday through Thursday, with Friday being a dress down day. She suggested that if the uniform dress was not complied with on Monday then that child, along with one of his/her parents would have to report to a Saturday detention from 8:00-9:00. If two days of violations occurred, then the parent/child detention would be two hours on Saturday, and so on. Ms. Angeli stated we should not deny education because they are not "wearing the threads that you choose". She went on to state that when this pilot began, the Board members should also be wearing all the same color blazers, ties, and pants/skirts. Ms. Angeli informed us that she had taught in Hartford and even the preschoolers wore uniforms, and she learned about the Saturday detention idea from when her children attended Glastonbury schools. Ms. Angeli ended by stating that if you don't inconvenience the parents the kids will do what they want.

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, offered his support to Dr. Monroe on the uniform issue, hoping that the Board will give him another year. He stated Dr. Monroe is doing the best he can and he needs broader support.

Mr. Stringfellow recommended several books and articles: *Transforming School Culture* by Anthony Mohammed, which deals with students of color and how they learn; *Let Them In* is regarding illegal immigration by Jason Reilly in 2008; the *Christian Science Monitor* had an article on mentoring for children with incarcerated parents in their March 26th edition as well as an article entitled *Teachers Crave Evaluation*.

Mr. Stringfellow stated that it's time for parents and students to step up. Money can't do it all. He also pointed out that Illing has a nice brochure out regarding its policy, he was impressed.

Once again Mr. Stringfellow implored the Board to listen to the public and reminded them he is not going away.

J. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

None.

K. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Pattacini called for a motion to adjourn.

Mr. Crockett moved and Ms. Cruz seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting.

8/0 - Voted in favor.

Adjournment 9:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Neal Leon
Board Secretary