

MANCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION

Regular Meeting

Monday, April 23, 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

ABSENT: None

A. OPENING

A.1&2. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 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 April 9, 2012.

Secretary Leon moved and Mr. Crockett seconded the motion.

9/0 – Voted in favor.

B. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT – PART I

B.1. Verplanck Elementary School Highlights

Mr. Michael Saimond, Principal of Verplanck Elementary School, presented a Power Point highlighting the 5th grade's endangered species project. The project, which integrates with the art curriculum, is a tradition in its 9th year at Verplanck and the children look forward to their chance to participate in 5th grade. They learn good research skills and have fun creating realistic versions of their chosen endangered species out of papier-mâché. The projects looked terrific and were on display at the school for a day and showcased at a Family Night at the school, which also included a book fair and ice-cream social. Live endangered animals are also presented that

evening, provided by the Children's Museum of West Hartford through an SBM Charitable Foundation Grant. At the event this year, the children also sold Crayons for Cancer in animal shapes and raised over \$100 for the cause, which is a nationwide project that was spearheaded by a Manchester student from Bowers.

B.2. Recognize Student Representative Ashley Mills

B.3. Introduce New Student Representative – Anna Manser

Secretary Leon moved and Mr. Crockett seconded the motion to table items B.2. and B.3. to a subsequent meeting.

9/0 – Voted in favor.

C. CONSENT CALENDAR

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

C.1. Personnel Action

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

C.2. Transfer of Funds

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

1. Transfer from Illing Middle School Administrative Postage to Illing Middle School Administrative General Supplies/Materials, \$3,000.
2. Transfer from Bowers School Administration Professional Development to Bowers Contracted Kelly Substitute Professional Development account, \$1,500.
3. Transfer from Manchester School Library/Media Equipment Repair to Manchester High School Library/Media Audio Visual Supplies/Materials account, \$1,000.

C.3. Appropriation for FY 2012/2013 to provide operating funds for its delegate, the Enfield Head Start, in the amount of \$802,662

C.4. Appropriation for FY 2012/2013 to provide operating funds for its delegate, the Enfield Board of Education's Head Start Training & Technical Assistance activities in the amount of \$11,137

C.5. Appropriation for FY 2012/2013 to provide operating funds for the Manchester Head Start Program in the amount of \$1,138,349

C.6. Appropriation for FY 2012/2013 to provide operating funds for the Manchester Head Start Program's Training & Technical Assistance activities in the amount of \$15,150

C.7. Manchester High School Graduation Date

C.8 Bennet Academy – Extended Field Trip Request – University of Indiana – Future Problem Solving – June 7, 2012-June 10, 2012

Six students participating in Future Problem Solving earned the right to participate in the International Competition.

C.9. Illing Middle School – Extended Field Trip Request – Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa – Odyssey of the Mind World Finals – May 21, 2012-May 28, 2012

Twenty-one students participating in Odyssey of the Mind earned the right to participate in the World Competition.

The Chairman called for a motion.

Secretary Leon moved and Mr. Crockett seconded the motion for the Board of Education to adopt Item C., the Consent Calendar, as outlined by in the agenda.

9/0 - Voted in favor.

D. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Stephanie Knybel, 138 Bobby Lane, is interested in the graduation rates and adult education information. She is a former member of the committee that looked at the high school dropout rate and she wondered if we are still doing a student exit survey and reaching out to dropout students to help them transition into the Adult Ed/GED program.

Diane Maloney, 185 Henry Street, has a child involved in the Future Problem Solving group headed to Indiana for the International Competition and she is disappointed that the Board of Education is not supporting the cost for this group from Bennet, or for the Odyssey of the Mind children from Illing and MHS, who also earned the right to compete in a World Competition, held in Iowa. All of these students have worked hard and advanced and Manchester should be proud that these children have succeeded with this hard and challenging work. Isn't this the goal? Ms. Maloney talked about the look of excitement in their faces when the children received their awards. FPS needs to raise \$6,000 to finance the trip, which they are doing through raffles, dinners, and car washes. They are not giving up. Ms. Maloney is upset that the \$450/student registration fee for the event, which is \$2,700, is not being paid for by the Board. These are hard economic times, and she understands

having to contribute to the cost of the trip, but she feels it is unbelievable that the conference fees are not being paid for by the Board.

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, informed us that Sunday was the 42nd anniversary of Earth Day. There was a program recently at the Lutz on endangered species. Shop Rite put out an Earth Day bulletin on the subject. Shop Rite also put out a flying on protecting our children, Code Adam, recently.

Mr. Stringfellow also informed us about the Walk for Hunger occurring in Hartford on May 6th to benefit Food Share. He shared that he had recently seen the movie *Bully*, which was featured in *People* magazine's April 9th issue. It was a powerful film. Mr. Stringfellow warned us about a new drug called "spice" that has been in the news.

Cathy Mazzotta, Braeside Crescent, shared that her son also participates in Future Problem Solvers and has had an amazing experience. She understands the hard budgetary times, both home budgets and educational budgets. She states the students involved in FPS and Odyssey of the Mind, along with their coaches, have worked hard and whatever the Board can do to help the groups move on to their international competitions will be much appreciated.

E. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT – PART II

E.1. Adult Education Update

Dr. Kisiel stated that the Board had taken full oversight and responsibility for the Adult Education and Continuing Education Program approximately a year ago and he welcomed Diane Kearney, Directory of the Manchester Adult/Continuing Education Program, to present an update on the program to the Board. Ms. Kearney spoke about her experience as an educator over the last 30 years and that the K-12 system has to have a conversation with career and workforce to help transition the children from the K-12 school into the workforce. The demand for skilled workers is rising and she feels there is a partnership missing. Adult Ed is considered a bridge to help students transition successfully to a post secondary experience. Ms. Kearney gave a Power Point presentation regarding who the Adult Ed program serves and their classes and scheduling blocks. The full presentation is available on the Board of Education website.

Ms. Kidd thanked Ms. Kearney for her hard work. She asked for clarification of the grants listed and Ms. Kearney explained that the \$95,000 College Transition grant and the ED244 grant of \$444,353 were current grants, and the others listed were grants that are being applied for.

Ms. Walton thanked Ms. Kearney for her presentation and stated it gives the Board the purpose, process, and payoff they look for in presentations. Ms. Walton felt we should be seeing a drop in enrollment in Adult Ed with the raising of the participation age to 17, but we are not. Ms. Walton also questioned the per-pupil cost, which was \$1700 last year. Ms. Walton wondered how many adults participating in the program also had children attending school in the District and if we do have a need there for family literacy, are we missing an opportunity for engagement? She also wondered if we need more support for the ELL community. Ms. Kearney agreed more support is needed, but the funds are simply not there. They did hire an ELL counselor to help address the need. Ms. Walton also inquired if the Continuing Ed classes, which are a part of the Adult Ed program, are self-sufficient and Ms. Kearney confirmed they are.

Mr. Pattacini asked for clarification on funding and Ms. Kearney explained that the funding they receive is not per pupil, but a set amount, which is why they apply for as many grants as they can. It was noted that because of the lack of funding, some of the class sizes had approximately 50 students in ELL, which lowers the effectiveness of the class. Mr. Pattacini wondered if the Continuing Ed aspect could help fund the Adult Ed program, but Ms. Kearney stated they are brand new and just breaking even, so that is not a current possibility, though is a hope for the future. The increase in participation in the program was discussed, and the location, marketing, and counseling were all noted as reasons for the increased enrollment.

Mr. Leon thanked Ms. Kearney for doing a great job and inquired about the location of the classes, which are scattered all over town where space is available. He asked Ms. Kearney to provide a list of the space requirements for the program to give to the SMARTR Committee so they can include Adult Ed in future planning. Ms. Kearney thought that was a great idea, because any time they cannot locate classes in a Manchester Public School building, they have to pay to use the facilities, which is money that can be put to better use elsewhere.

E.2. High School Graduation Rates

Dr. Kisiel stated that the Board had requested information on high school graduation rates and David Stetson, head of the Guidance Department, was here to present his findings, along with Matt Geary, principal of MHS. Unfortunately, as the State was unwilling to run cohort data, the figures Mr. Stetson presented were from taking the 9th grade stats from one year and following that to graduation year (i.e., 9th graders in 2003 graduated in June 2007). This is a general idea of the graduation rates, but does not account for students who have moved in or out of the District during that time. Currently the graduation total rate is approximately 71%, with the Black

population at about 56% and the Hispanic students at approximately 62%. Mr. Stetson's information can be found on the website.

Ms. Cruz questioned the reason for so many withdrawals and the use of the exit survey. Mr. Stetson pointed out his access to reasons was based on State required coding in the computer, not the detailed exit survey that Dr. Richardson heads.

Mr. Leon wondered how we compare to the state in terms of graduation rates. Mr. Stetson said currently that is not information he has access to.

Mr. Scappaticci stated student engagement is an issue and wondered what we do to remedy that? Mr. Stetson spoke about career ed programs, Student Education Plan, which looks at student strengths and weaknesses, and a new state mandated the Student Success Plan, in which students must have a goal in an academic, a career, and a social/emotional/physical health domain. The students will meet individually with their counselors to develop their goals.

Ms. Walton asked for clarification on the exit survey being done by Curriculum and Instruction versus the survey that the school has in the computer. It was determined that the computer information was simply state mandated information and not the detail that the Board really wants and needs, which the exit survey provides.

Ms. Walton next asked for data on graduation rates for those that repeated 9th grade. Mr. Stetson did not have that information at hand and will provide it in the future. Ms. Walton noted she was having a hard time following the information presented and that having it charted would make it easier to read. Ms. Walton wants to know which students we are losing so we can start to figure out why.

Mr. Pattacini asked for clarification on why the State would not run cohort data and it was clarified that there is an issue with SASID ID numbers and that hopefully at some point in the near future they would be able to access that information. Some clarification on why the adult CDP number was decreasing, and it was noted that it was due to the change in age from 16 to 17 for participation in the program.

Ms. Walton again asked for the information to be charted for better understanding, and for the 9th grader repeater information to be included. She also would like to know how many students are coming from the alternative ed program. She also pointed out the disparity in graduation rates between the white and black students.

F. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

F.1. Textbook Adoption – Social Studies (MHS) – *The Earth and Its Peoples*

Dr. Richardson and David Maloney requested approval for the purchase of 10th grade AP Social Studies texts that were presented at the last meeting.

Secretary Leon moved for the Board of Education to adopt the Social Studies textbook for Manchester High School, "*The Earth and Its Peoples*". Mr. Crockett seconded the motion.

9/0 - Voted in favor.

Chairperson Pattacini asked for a motion to add an item to the agenda, requiring a 2/3 vote by the Board.

Secretary Leon moved for the Board of Education to add Item F.2. to Unfinished Business – Motion to Approve the appointment of a 5th community representative to the SMARTR Team Committee. The motion to add Item F.2. to the agenda was seconded by Mr. Crockett.

9/0 – Voted in favor.

F.2. Amendment of SMARTR Committee Membership

Secretary Leon moved to amend the membership of the SMARTR Committee to be comprised of 4 members of the Board of Education, selected by the Board of Education; 4 members of the Board of Directors, selected by the Board of Directors; 1 member of the Building Committee recommended by the Committee to the Board of Directors for approval; and 4 members of the public, and 1 alternate member of the public to have voting privileges in absence of a regular member, to be approved by the majority and minority leaders of both Boards. Mr. Crockett seconded the motion.

DISCUSSION:

Mr. Leon explained that the original composition of the SMARTR Committee was to include four members of the public. Upon reviewing the potential candidates, five members were deemed to be favorable and it was informally decided to have four official members of the committee, with a fifth member serving as an alternate, but that this had to go before both the Board of Education and the Board of Directors for approval.

Mr. Leon expressed that he is not in favor of this motion as it gives the alternate public member voting rights in the absence of any regular member.

Mr. Crockett stated that the wording of the motion was not discussed with him, as Chair of the SMARTR Committee, prior to it being provided to Mr. Leon and if Mr. Leon is uncomfortable with the motion it should be amended to take away the voting privileges.

Further discussion on the issue clarified that this is an advisory committee, and most likely the final recommendation is the only major item that will be voted on, however many Board members were uncomfortable with the idea of the alternate public member being able to take the vote of a member of either Board who happened to be absent from a meeting at any given time. The thoughts were that the alternate should either have no voting rights, voting rights only in replacement of an absent public member, or voting rights only if a public member were to resign or leave the Committee.

Ms. Luxenberg pointed out that the change of the original makeup of the Committee, which was to be 3 members of each Board, to 4 members, was to give equal representation to both political parties. With giving the public an alternate member, the equal representation is skewed, as the Boards will not have an alternate to step in if one of their members is no longer serving on the Committee.

Mr. Pattacini clarified that of the eight public applicants, there were five with impeccable credentials, and the Boards could not agree on which four of the five to choose, so felt it would be appropriate to add the fifth member, given the backgrounds of the individuals.

Mr. Crockett stated that at the time, nobody thought adding a fifth member of the public would not be a big deal, but it was and he apologizes for that. The Committee will not be voting on much, until the end, so he does not see the voting as much of a concern. However, Mr. Crockett did state that if he is an alternate for the public, that is who he should represent if a public member is not there, and it is not fair the way it is written that the alternate could take a Board of Education member's vote if absent.

Ms. Luxenberg wondered if we could remove the part of the motion addressing voting, or is that a critical piece of the motion?

Ms. Walton suggested, in addition to restricting the alternate member's voting privilege, that it be clarified that if a member of either Board is removed/resigns from the Committee, that the Board effected have the right to replace that member on the Committee.

Ms. Cruz asked for clarification of the motion on the table. Mr. Leon restated the motion. Ms. Cruz restated she will not support the motion at this point. She is not in favor of altering the make-up of the Committee.

The vote was called:

4/5/0 – Voted Against. The motion fails.

Chairperson Pattacini called for a new motion.

Ms. Walton moved for the members of the SMARTR Committee to be comprised of 4 members of the Board of Education, selected by the Board of Education; 4 members of the Board of Directors, selected by the Board of Directors; 1 member of the Building Committee, recommended by the Committee to the Board of Directors for approval; and 4 members of the public and 1 alternate member of the public, to serve as an alternate for the public, to have voting privileges in the absence of a public member of this Committee, to be approved by the majority and minority leaders of both Boards; and for each Board be allowed to replace its member if the member resigns or can no longer participate on this Board. Mr. Crockett seconded the motion.

DISCUSSION:

A further discussion about the motion was had, with Ms. Walton clarifying that the alternate's vote would only replace a member of the public who is absent, not if a member of either Board were absent.

Ms. Cruz, although currently agreeable to having an alternate serve on the Committee, was opposed to giving the alternate any voting privileges.

Ms. Luxenberg wondered what the hang-up on voting was, as it seems the only major vote will be the end recommendation.

Ms. Luxenberg made a motion to amend the motion on the floor to remove the clause "voting" from the overall motion, and that voting privileges will only be allowed if a member of the public resigns from the Committee, and it would be within either Board's discretion to appoint a new member to the Committee if a member of their Board resigns from the Committee. Walton seconded the amendment.

Mr. Crockett asked for clarification of the voting privilege, and it was stated that the privilege would only be given to the alternate if a member of the public was no longer on the Committee, not simply absent from a meeting.

Ms. Walton cautioned if the motion is passed, we may only have three public votes, if a public member is absent, but has not resigned from the Committee.

Mr. Leon stated that if a Board Member from either Board were absent, the same would occur, he is in favor of the amendment.

Ms. Cruz was still opposed to allowing the voting privilege at all, even as amended.

The question to amend the motion was called.

9/0 – Voted in favor.

The motion as amended:

Ms. Luxenberg moved for the Board of Education to amend the membership of the SMARTR Committee to be comprised of 4 members of the Board of Education, selected by the Board of Education; 4 members of the Board of Directors, selected by the Board of Directors; 1 member of the Building Committee, recommended by the Committee to the Board of Directors for approval; and 4 members of the public and 1 alternate member of the public, to have voting privileges when another regular member of the public is no longer serving on the committee, to be approved by the majority and minority leaders of both Boards; and further that each Board has the right to appoint a replacement member for any member of its Board who is no longer serving on the committee. Ms. Walton seconded the motion.

8/1/0 – Voted in Favor. Cruz opposed.

G. NEW BUSINESS

G.1. Personnel Actions

Mrs. Brooks informed the Board that by law, non-tenured teachers whose contracts will not be renewed for next year must be notified by May 1st each year. As the budget has not yet been finalized, and there are cuts due to the loss of the Education Jobs Fund money and the closing of Nathan Hale

School, 13 staff members were notified of their non-renewal status. A list of those employees was provided to the Board.

Ms. Luxenberg inquired how this will effect student/teacher ratios. Mrs. Brooks stated it should not have any impact on that, these spots represent an excess number of positions and are the last to be hired and are being bumped by more senior teachers.

Ms. Walton inquired how many of these positions being eliminated were due to the Education Jobs Fund versus Nathan Hale closing. Mrs. Brooks stated there was a mix and that in addition the number of anticipated retirements were not received to place all 20 certified staff from Nathan Hale.

Ms. Walton wondered if there was more money in the budget, would the guidance counselor and social worker being eliminated be kept and Mrs. Brooks felt they would be.

Dr. Kisiel reminded the Board that the budget has not yet been adopted and there are \$550,000 in reductions that must be made. In order to protect the Board of Education's interest, these teachers had to be notified of the non-renewal status by May 1st by law.

Mr. Leon inquired what would happen if, during the budget meetings, more positions needed to be cut, past the 5/1 notification date. Mrs. Brooks assured him that issue was already covered, and it was a possibility that not all of the employees notified would ultimately be cut.

Secretary Leon moved that the contract of the employment of the names submitted by the Superintendent of Schools, listed in Exhibit A, not be renewed for the following year upon its expiration at the end of the 2011-2012 school year, and that the Superintendent of Schools is directed to advise such person/persons in writing of this action. Mr. Crockett seconded the motion.

9/0 – Voted in favor.

H. COMMUNICATIONS

None.

I. COMMITTEE REPORTS

I.1. Building & Sites Committee

Ms. Luxenberg reported that the last meeting occurred on April 12, 2012 at Central Office. Mr. Crockett, Ms. Hagenow, Mr. Leon, Ms. Luxenberg, and Mr.

Ziegler were in attendance. Guests included Catherine Colavecchio, and PTA members Sue Skoog and Shirley Kociu.

A memorial garden in honor of Lisa Hoagland, a Martin parent who passed away last Fall, was approved. The garden will include a birch tree and perennial flowers with a bench and memorial plaque. This is scheduled for completion prior to summer vacation.

A project update regarding the construction and storm cleanup at Highland Park was discussed. The windows are installed and the roof installation, interior ceiling grid, and flooring are in progress. The completion date estimate remains the same currently. There was extensive tree damage from Storm Alfred and cleanup must be completed prior to exterior tasks. The estimated cost is approximately \$14,000-\$18,000.

The date that the Board of Education will turn over the Nathan Hale building to the town was discussed. It was agreed that this should not occur until after Highland Park School opens, in case swing space is needed to accommodate a late opening. It was understood that the only costs associated with this while the building is empty will be for electricity.

The Verplanck carpet removal project was updated. As soon as approval from the state comes in the work will go out to bid and begin on June 18th and will be completed before school starts in the Fall.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 3, 2012 at 5:30 p.m. at Central Office.

I.2. Curriculum & Instruction Committee

Ms. Cruz reported that the 4/9/12 meeting has been rescheduled to May.

I.3. CREC Report

Ms. Walton gave an update on the 4/18/12 meeting of CREC. Senate Bill 24 had been discussed. Public works projects were reviewed. Programs were highlighted that our students and families can take advantage of. A letter from a parent of a child in the Regio Emilio Magnet was passed around. A credit recovery summer program costing \$350 per credit was noted.

I.4. SMARTR Committee

Mr. Crockett, chair of the Committee, stated the first meeting was held last week. The next meeting is Wednesday night and Saturday will start the site visits.

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

Stephanie Knybel, 138 Bobby Lane, spoke about her passion for education and she is concerned about the dropout rate. She is also concerned about the "Super Seniors" who are students that will not be graduating in 4 years. Ms. Knybel feels it is imperative to offer help to these students. She referred to Ms. Kearney's presentation earlier, that if a student is 0.5-1.0 credit short for graduation requirements, they can enroll in Adult Ed to earn that credit simultaneously while finishing their senior year at MHS. She wasn't sure this fact was widely known. In fact, she had called the high school recently and spoke with a guidance counselor who did not even know the phone number for the Adult Ed program. Ms. Knybel also pointed out the CREC credit recovery program for \$350 was simply unattainable by many families.

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, was impressed with Ms. Kearney's efforts and would like to see a presentation in the future separated for those college bound and those not bound for college, as many students opt for trade schools, military, or other ventures. Mr. Stringfellow recommended the book, *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Recruiting Volunteers*, John Lipp, 2009. Mr. Stringfellow talked about Texas' dropout rate in an *Education Digest* article in the April edition. He also spoke about the Bully Busters program on Channel 15, Cox, and getting parents involved. Last, Mr. Stringfellow alerted us to Mr. Scappaticci's advice column!

K. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

None.

L. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Pattacini called for a motion to adjourn.

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

9/0 - Voted in favor.

Adjournment 10:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Neal Leon
Board Secretary