

MANCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION

Regular Meeting

Monday, June 25, 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 7:09 p.m. All in attendance participated in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, led by Chairperson Pattacini.

Secretary Leon moved for the Board of Education to move into Executive Session regarding a personnel matter. Ms. Cruz seconded the motion.

9/0 – Voted in favor. 7:11 – Executive Session.

7:26 – Meeting called back to order.

A.3 ADOPTION OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

ADOPTED – Minutes Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of June 11, 2012.

Secretary Leon moved and Mr. Crockett seconded the motion.

6/0/3 – Voted in favor. Ms. Luxenberg, Ms. Cruz, and Ms. Kidd abstained.

Secretary Leon made a motion to add item 5 to Item C. of the agenda, Consent Calendar. Item 5 being – Extension of the Interim Superintendent’s Contract for an Additional 90 days. Mr. Crockett seconded the motion.

DISCUSSION:

Chairperson Pattacini noted that State Law requires a Superintendent be in place past July 1st and this is a procedural decision by the Board to continue to use Dr. Kisiel in that capacity as the Board continues to deliberate regarding the Superintendent search.

9/0 – Voted in favor.

B. SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT – PART I

B.1. Transitional Living Center Foundation, Inc.

Dr. Kisiel introduced Liama Holmes, LCSW, Executive Director of the Transitional Living Center Foundation Group Home in Manchester. The Foundation is supported with Town as well as Board of Education funding and provides a safe, secure environment for many adolescents who, for various reasons, cannot live at home. Ms. Holmes shared that currently the program has six teens in the house. Many of the students were failing upon entering the program, and now all of them are passing their classes. The group uses Title I grants to allow the children to attend plays, museums, and experience things they otherwise would not ordinarily be exposed to. The goal of TLC is to transition the child back into the home, but until that point they live at the TLC house which is run like a family environment.

Ms. Ashley Porter, the house mother, explained some of the skills that are taught to the kids, including organizational skills, help finding jobs, budgeting, opening a checking account, and making appointments. They also assist the children with tutoring, sports participation, SAT prep and all the students are in therapy, most with family therapy as well.

Mr. Scappaticci commented that TLC was a dynamic program and he wondered how success is measured, is it grades or transitioning back home? Ms. Holmes expressed that each student has their own goals listed and they do 30 and 90 day evaluations to track that progress. In some instances returning home is not an option. One goal is to ensure all of the children are in therapy. Weekly check-ins are done with the family.

Ms. Luxenberg thanked the ladies for their presentation and commitment to making a difference in the lives of children through TLC, noting that her father was one of the original founders of the program.

Ms. Walton echoed Ms. Luxenberg's gratitude and was impressed with the amazing program and staff.

Mr. Pattacini noted he has been to the home and that it was rewarding to see students in a safe home.

C. CONSENT CALENDAR

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

C.1. Personnel Actions

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

C.2. Appropriation to be established in the amount of \$27,400 for the Community Development Block Grant for FY 2011/2012

C.3. Appropriation to increase for FY 2011/2012 anticipated revenue by \$60,000 for the Washington Media Arts Magnet School After School Program, bringing the total appropriation to \$431,800

C.4. Updated Board of Education Meeting Schedule

C.5. Extension of Interim Superintendent's Contract for an Additional 90 days

The Chairman called for a motion.

Secretary Leon moved and Mr. Crockett seconded the recommendation to adopt the Consent Calendar, Item C, with the approved Item 5, as outlined by Dr. Kisiel.

9/0 - Voted in favor.

Secretary Leon made a motion to move Item G. New Business – Social Studies Textbooks for 7th and 8th Grade to Item E.1. in the Superintendent's Report – Part II, and renumber Item 1 to 2 and 2 to 3. Ms. Luxenberg seconded the motion.

9/0 – Voted in favor.

Secretary Leon made a motion to add I.2. – CREC Committee Report to the agenda. Ms. Cruz seconded the motion.

9/0 – Voted in favor.

D. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms. Tracy Shultz-Davis, 56 Alexander Street, noted she has been a volunteer assisting parents with Special Education issues for ten years and she feels Manchester has lost its focus in the last 4-5 years. The last of her four children graduated from high school this year. Her children attended different high schools, with the last attending both MHS and the Greater Hartford Academy of the Arts. Ms. Shultz-Davis feels her son received less than satisfactory support during his split enrollment this year. Thankfully the Guidance Department and a few teachers were willing to work with the family. Her daughter attended MHS 8 years ago and she feels the same issues that they had back then still exist today. She stated teachers failed to notify her of problems in a timely manner, lack of concern for each student, and the successes that her son experienced from outside the school system were ignored and overlooked. She hopes to see improvements and feels it is time for Manchester to refocus their energy on each child and start a plan for each child no later than middle school. She notes the state is calling for this as well.

Ms. Shultz-Davis wants Manchester to stop talking about the “brain drain” issue and focus on the needs of the child. Manchester needs to take a lead in the region and start sharing resources. We should embrace the charters, magnets, and technical schools. We should focus on what we can do best and share. If we have a great business program then we should offer it to surrounding districts. If the Arts Academy or any other school has a great music or jazz program we should send our student there or at least tell the parents about it. She has seen too many students lose their way because they were not allowed to get into the high school they were interested in. Many of these students would be in a different place if they were allowed to go where they wanted to be.

It bothers Ms. Shultz-Davis that the school spent so much time on Student ID issues instead of getting to know each student. She feels each student’s graduation needs to be the goal. She implores the Board to help the new Superintendent, embrace his/her new ideas.

In the past Ms. Shultz-Davis has asked for such items as the Career Counseling Session be open on off-hours, developing a different shift for teachers so students can partake in extra-curricular activities and have a teacher and have a teacher on-board from 3:00-8:00 p.m. She knows a

couple teachers that said they would be willing to work a split day or come in later each day to try to do something different. She feels each teacher should have a list of tutors available for parents if their child needs help. On multiple occasions she has had to contact the Department head to try to find a tutor for her child. Ms. Shultz-Davis feels Seniors should not need a pass to go to the library. She feels we should embrace technology instead of punishing it. We should let students use laptops if they are at home so they can become part of the class if they are able to. She says they need to be able to use their cell phones. Last, there needs to be a change of attitude. Her son was told he had to be off-campus when he did not have a class at MHS. He should have been encouraged to stay and get help. Students need to feel welcome in their school.

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, spoke about the War of 1812 and Dolly Madison. He pointed out the June 17th edition of *The Sunday Republican* talked about Connecticut's involvement in that conflict. He noted Westtown Pharmacy carries the *Patriots of the American Revolution* series, which is timely for the 4th of July. Mr. Stringfellow suggested an article in *TIME* magazine's June 23rd issue on immigrants. Mr. Stringfellow offered his congratulations to the TLC Program. He also implored the Board to listen to citizen recommendations and think outside the box. He also feels all students should be welcomed.

E. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT – PART II

E.1. Social Studies Textbooks for 7th and 8th Grade

Dr. Richardson recommended two texts to replace books from 2003: *Holt McDougal World Geography* and *Holt McDougal United States History*. Dr. Richardson welcomed the co-Chairs of the Social Studies Department at Illing - Seanna Francouer and Dan Bebin from Illing to answer any questions the Board may have about the textbooks. The total cost of the textbooks is \$80,647.32. These books align with the Common Core and the text complexity component, offering a rich and full text opportunity. Both Ms. Francouer and Mr. Bebin have piloted the texts with students and parents this year and have found that these texts have "21st Century skills" and a rich academic vocabulary. Survey feedback from the students was positive, with in-depth observations, including the benefits of having essential questions in the text to focus their attention. Basically, these are new and improved versions of the current texts.

Ms. Luxenberg observed that so much has changed in the 8 years since the last text book was purchased, she is excited about the new books.

Mr. Leon stated that typically textbooks are presented in one meeting and then called back under unfinished business at the following meeting for

approval, but with it being already the end of June, he questioned if that would be enough time to order and receive the books for September. Dr. Kisiel stated that typically textbooks are brought to a Curriculum & Instruction meeting first, then a board meeting, and the C&I meeting was skipped to expedite the approval. Mr. Leon recommended that the texts be approved tonight to give that much more time for delivery to ensure arrival prior to school.

Mr. Pattacini thanked Dr. Richardson for bringing the texts forward and questioned the 6 year on-line aspect of support. Ms. Francouer stated they had discussions with the publisher about that, and that date can be extended if the texts remain in use after six years. She also noted one copy of the text will be sent home with students, and one left in the classrooms, which extends the life of the books.

Secretary Leon made a motion for the Board of Education to adopt the Social Studies text books for 7th and 8th grade as outlined in this presentation. Ms. Kidd seconded the motion.

9/0 – Voted in favor.

E.2. Reassignment/Reorganization of District Administrative Personnel

Dr. Kisiel presented his plan for reorganization of the middle school and some high school personnel. Dr. Kisiel feels the changes that are being made will bring new energy and new excitement to all of the schools and that this is an important step to bring new revitalized energy to the District.

| Name | Current Assignment | New Assignment |
|---------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Dr. Troy Monroe | Principal, Illing Middle School | Assoc. Director Teaching & Learning |
| Diane Sheehan-Burns | Assoc. Director of T&L | Principal, Highland Park David |
| Welch | Principal, Bennet Academy | Principal, Illing Middle School |
| Ann Fuini | Assist. Principal, Bennet | Assist. Principal, Illing |
| Keith Martin | Assist. Principal, MHS | Assist. Principal, Illing |
| Cathy Robinson | Assist. Principal, Illing | Assist. Principal, Bennet |
| Iris Gomero | Assist. Principal, Illing | Assist. Principal, MHS |

Dr. Kisiel also noted the current vacancies in administrative personnel include: Principal, Keeney; Principal, Bennet; Assistant Principal, MHS; Dean of Students, MHS; 0.4 FTE Assistant Principal, Washington. He anticipated filling these vacancies in the next month.

Ms. Luxenberg questioned, with a new principal at Illing, would the uniform pilot continue? Dr. Kisiel assured her the 2nd year of the pilot would carry on as scheduled.

Mr. Leon thanked Dr. Kisiel for his efforts in moving the District forward and he is looking forward to the changes. He appreciates Dr. Kisiel thinking outside the box.

Ms. Walton felt the changes reflected a thoughtful response to what the stakeholders have told us they want. She feels this is a positive direction for the District.

Dr. Kisiel outlined the certified support personnel changes throughout the district, which included various titles and duties, including Literacy Facilitator Curriculum Specialist, Reading Consultant, Reading Teacher, Math Consultant, Language Arts Coach, and School Literacy Trainer. These 18 positions were eliminated and 18 new positions were recreated with new titles and job descriptions, including Curriculum Coach for Literacy and Curriculum Coach for Numeracy, and the primary function of these positions will be to provide job-embedded professional development in each school. The individuals who previously held the various positions will have to apply for the new positions. Dr. Kisiel appreciates the full support of the principals in these personnel changes.

Ms. Walton stated it is difficult to get excited about change of this magnitude, but the transparency of the plan is commendable. She is cautiously optimistic about this thoughtful plan that meets the needs of the district.

Mr. Pattacini thanked Dr. Kisiel for the well thought out, transparent changes that align with the best interests of the students and teachers. He is quite excited about the changes and looks forward to improved student achievement as a result.

E.3. ECS Conditional Grant for Alliance School Districts

Dr. Kisiel gave a PowerPoint presentation regarding this state grant in the amount of \$1,343,579, that may be renewed for five years. His full presentation is available on the website for viewing. The required plan must be submitted by July 13th with a final plan submitted to the state by August 15th and approval will be given to Districts by August 30th. Dr. Kisiel noted it is not necessary for the Board to approve the plan by the deadline and it can be approved at the August meeting, which falls after the submission to the state.

Ms. Kidd stated the whole plan is very exciting and she thanked Dr. Kisiel for his hard work.

Ms. Luxenberg thanked Dr. Kisiel for doing a wonderful job and commented there is a lot to get excited about, especially the anticipated expansion of the summer school program. She is proud to see Manchester take these initiatives.

Ms. Walton questioned if Dr. Kisiel would have time to wrap this up during his 90-day extension. Dr. Kisiel noted the timeline was much tighter than that, with the required initial plan to the state being due in July and the final plan by mid-August. Dr. Kisiel encouraged the Board to provide feedback on the plan with him as soon as possible, and he will share that with the team working on the grant proposal. Ms. Walton was especially happy with the Early Childhood services and additional learning time proposed.

Mr. Pattacini suggested Bennet as a location for the expanded summer school program, as it is air-conditioned and has sufficient space. He also noted partnering with Adult Ed, helping parents because better parents will ultimately help the students. Mr. Pattacini questioned how the state would measure success in the K-3 literacy intervention and additional learning time. Dr. Kisiel noted our goals would be well-defined and very clear in the proposal and that would be what success would be measured against.

Mr. Pattacini noted it is important for the community to understand that this money is to be used for the specifics in the grant proposal and cannot be used just to make up budget shortfalls.

Ms. Walton questioned where racial balance falls in this proposal. Dr. Kisiel stated that is a separate issue, though ultimately the monies may eventually be used to balance the District in later years if necessary.

Mr. Pattacini noted the Board can present the proposal at the August 23rd meeting, providing an opportunity for public review and feedback, with approval in September. Dr. Kisiel noted that what is submitted to the state mid-August is the plan and input from the public August 23rd is possible, but will not likely change the plan much, if at all.

F. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

F.1. New Policy Recommendations

a. Code of Conduct for Board Members

Secretary Leon moved for the Board of Education to adopt Item A) Code of Conduct for Board Members. Mr. Crockett seconded the motion.

9/0 - Voted in favor.

b. Internet Safety Policy

Secretary Leon moved for the Board of Education to adopt Item B) Internet Safety Policy. Mr. Crockett seconded the motion.

9/0 – Voted in favor.

G. NEW BUSINESS

None.

H. COMMUNICATIONS

Ms. Cruz offered the Board's congratulations to Michael Hartfield, a 2008 graduate of MHS, and his family. Mr. Hartfield is currently at the Olympic trials and we are all rooting for him and are very proud of his accomplishments.

I. COMMITTEE REPORTS

I.1. Personnel & Finance Committee Report

Mr. Crockett noted the last meeting was held on June 7, 2012 with himself, Mr. Leon, Mr. Pattacini, Ms. Hagenow, Dr. Kisiel, Mrs. Brooks, and Mr. Ziegler in attendance.

Dr. Kisiel had reviewed the administrative reorganization plan with the Committee.

Mrs. Brooks reviewed the projected end-of-year financial report and recommended the purchase of vehicles, if possible, with any anticipated savings at the end of the year as those were previously removed from the FY 2012-2013 budget. Mrs. Brooks reviewed the process and schedule for contract negotiations with the Manchester Education Association.

Mr. Ziegler reviewed the recommended critical facilities project items to be recommended to the Board of Directors for the Fall referendum.

The next meeting will be held Wednesday, September 12, 2012 at 5:30 p.m. at Central Office.

I.2. CREC Committee Report

Ms Walton noted with much excitement that the Greater Hartford Academy of the Arts Jazz Orchestra will be performing at the 2012 Olympics this year!

At the last CREC Council the Commissioner discussed the status of the Sheff case. They reviewed regional magnets and noted that approximately 36% of applications are currently for the early childhood Pre-K3/4 programs. There are currently three new Hartford magnets underway, including one using the STEM program. There are three expansions of magnets in the area, including the Hartford Academy of the Arts moving from a grade 9-12 program to a Pre-K3-grade 12 program; RJ Consella Performing Arts moving from a Pre-K3-grade 8 to include up through grade 12; and Two Rivers Middle Magnet becoming a 6-12 school next year, instead of just 6-8.

Ms. Walton noted that the Board of Education in Simsbury will be piloting a Pre-K3/4 program to counter the financial drain of students exiting for other Pre-K options.

Regarding Sheff, the desegregation of education in Connecticut evaluation year is coming. The goal of 41% of Hartford students attending an integrated environment has not been met and is currently about ___%.

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

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, offered his support of the Consent Calendar. He pointed out a recent program on internet safety that was on Fox. Mr. Stringfellow supports Dr. Kisiel's presentation, especially the extra tutoring at Title I schools. Mr. Stringfellow recommended the books: *Knowledge Deficit* by E. Hirsch; *Excellent Schools* by M. Chen; and *Good Schools* by P. Tyre. Mr. Stringfellow complimented Ms. Walton's presentation regarding CREC and noted the 5 year anniversary of the Supreme Court ruling is this year. Mr. Stringfellow also noted a cyber bullying article in the *Boston Globe* June 22nd. Mr. Stringfellow offered his support to the Adult Ed program and Ms. Kearney. Last, Mr. Stringfellow informed the Board that Mark Walberg, noted actor, is taking on-line courses in Boston to earn his high school diploma.

K. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

Mr. Pattacini, upon reflecting on Ms. Walton's CREC update, wonders if we are taking the steps necessary to provide programming that satisfies the Manchester community.

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 9:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Neal Leon
Board Secretary