

MANCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION

Regular Meeting

Monday, August 27, 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, Assistant Superintendent for Pupil Personnel Services Matfess

ABSENT:

A. OPENING

A.1&2 MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 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 July 9, 2012.

Secretary Leon moved and Mr. Crockett seconded the motion.

8/0 – Voted in favor. Mr. Scappaticci was not yet present.

B. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT – PART I

B.1. Kelly Educational Staffing Services Update

Mrs. Brooks informed the Board that Kelly Educational Staffing has provided the District with subs since the 2008/2009 school year. Prior to using their service, the District had a fill rate of approximately 75%. Kelly aims for a fill rate over 90%. Eileen Candels, Vice President, Hartford District, and Anita Morrell, Branch Manager, were present to update the Board. They reported their goal is to help us reduce our costs in terms of labor, hiring and management of that labor, as well as Worker's Compensation costs, unemployment costs, and the processing time. They also reported that this

past school year their fill rate for substitutes of certified staff in Manchester was 97%.

Mrs. Brooks also noted that the District is given the opportunity, when Kelly places a long-term substitute, to observe a teacher and decide if we want to hire that person for a permanent position.

Mr. Leon inquired how the 9107 opportunities for certified substitutes Manchester had last school year compared to other school districts. He also inquired if long-term substitutes were eligible for health benefits. It was unknown how our rates compared to other like districts, but it was revealed that all Kelly substitutes, not just long-term subs, have access to a 401K plan as well as medical and dental benefits, in addition to a year-end service bonus ranging from \$100-\$500.

Ms. Hagenow inquired what happens when absences cannot be covered by a substitute. Mrs. Brooks explained that in those rare cases we find internal coverage, paying existing teachers extra to use their off time to cover a class, or combine smaller classes together.

Mr. Pattacini wondered if the fill rate of 97% was typical. It was noted that the average fill rate is 96-99%, so we are right in target range. It was again noted that prior to utilizing Kelly, the fill rate was in the 70-80% range, so 97% is a great improvement.

B.2. Opening of the 2012-2013 School Year - Update

Dr. Kisiel reported that the teachers start the school year this Thursday, with School Climate training, followed by convocation on Friday morning. Dr. Kisiel then asked the district administrators to share the work they have been doing to start off the school year.

Mrs. Brooks reported that the transportation department is all set. Bus routes are posted on the website. She implored parents and students to be patient with the buses, especially the first couple of weeks. Times listed are approximate. Mrs. Brooks also noted that monitors have been hired for some buses.

Mrs. Brooks noted that the buildings are all ready for opening, with some final cleaning being done, especially in locations that hosted summer programs that just vacated the buildings today. She noted that the work at Verplanck was complete, with new floor tile having been installed this summer. Highland Park is ready to open on time.

This summer 35 new teachers were hired. Today started new teacher orientation, in which approximately 80 new teachers (any teacher hired after

orientation last August) learned about such topics as mandated reporting, sexual harassment, culturally responsive teaching, and understanding paycheck deductions.

Mrs. Brooks reported that as of today there was a slight decrease in enrollment district-wide, though registrations do continue to come in through the first day of school. We are down approximately 98 middle and high school students, and down approximately 100 elementary school students from last year. Mrs. Brooks noted we have an increase of approximately 37 students in Kindergarten, and an increase of 42 students in grade 4. There was a slight decline in grades 1 and 5.

Dr. Kisiel noted that there was a last minute resignation resulting in the need to hire a part-time Spanish teacher at the high school, but otherwise all positions were filled to date.

Mr. Leon noted the rise in Kindergarten and 4th grade and wondered if any additional teachers or staff were required. Mrs. Brooks does not anticipate any additional staff being required, noting that we are still down 6 teaching positions from last year. She did note some grade 1 and 4 numbers were concerning, and also noted that a 5th Kindergarten class was added at Robertson. They are watching space at Robertson and Washington Schools closely. They may have to hire another two teachers, but that has been budgeted for.

Ms. Walton wondered if there was any one school seeing a dramatic increase? Mrs. Brooks noted Robertson and Washington were showing the most increase. Martin's 4th grade is a concern. Bowers 4th and 5th grades are right where they want them. Robertson grade 4 has 25 students per class and they have 111 students in Kindergarten this year. Waddell Kindergarten and 1st grades are high. Washington has 22 students in each of three grade 3 classes.

Ms. Matfess shared her update for Pupil Personnel Services. Ms. Matfess noted she had hired six new special education teachers at the high school and 2 others within the district. Two new speech & language pathologists were hired, including our first male pathologist. Two new psychologists were hired, including one with a background in working with children with autism. Internally, we filled the position of a Board Certified Behavior Analyst. Ms. Matfess also reported that the preschools are back at Buckley, after being relocated last year due to the closing of Highland Park. There are also other programs at Waddell, Bennet, and Keeney. They are all hosting meet and greets with parents and students so the youngsters and their families feel more comfortable on the first day of school.

Dr. Richardson gave an update on the relocation of the Nathan Hale students. She passed out the flyers that were distributed to all Nathan Hale families informing them of the open house being hosted at each of the four receiving schools (Highland Park, Washington, Martin, and Keeney) this Thursday, August 30th. The flyers included information about buses that will be picking up parents and students for the orientation.

Dr. Richardson spoke about new teacher orientation, which began today. The second phase, which is a half day, is tomorrow. That will be focused on the new initiatives, data-driven instruction, curriculum and instruction, common core, and classroom management roles.

Dr. Richardson also gave an update on the mobile RV registration run by Sharon Kozey. This year 114 students were registered through the mobile RV. From April to August approximately 356 new students were registered so far, with more expected this week at each school.

Dr. Kisiel noted that while the District starts school on Tuesday, the 4th, the upperclassmen at the high school (grades 10-12) do not begin classes until Wednesday the 5th.

Ms. Walton asked Dr. Richardson if the orientation for Nathan Hale families would be different than the orientation that Highland Park families had last year when they were being relocated. She wondered if efforts would be made to introduce the Nathan Hale parents to other parents in their new school community. Dr. Kisiel introduced Mrs. Julie Martin-Beaulieu, the new Principal of Keeney, to address that topic. Mrs. Martin shared that she knows "this is where I'm supposed to be" and is very excited about the Nathan Hale Families open house. She stated she wants to find out who these new families are and how they can impact the Keeney community. She wants to know what gifts these families are bringing to Keeney and what traditions they may be able to incorporate into the school. She noted it is important to honor, respect, and value the new people joining the school.

Ms. Kidd asked what if parents of Nathan Hale students did not drive and had no way to get to the open houses? It was pointed out that buses were being provided for all four open houses for both parents and students, and that information was present on the flyer that was sent to all the relocating families.

Mr. Pattacini thanked the administration for the updates, noting that these updates had not been done in the past and it was helpful for Board members to understand the preparations that have been undergone over the summer to get ready for the new year.

C. CONSENT CALENDAR

Mr. Leon moved to add Item C11 – Request to purchase 9th grade anthology for \$12,978.23. Mr. Crockett seconded the motion.

Mr. Pattacini reminded the Board that this proposal had been presented at a prior meeting.

9/0 – Voted in favor.

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

C.1. Personnel Actions

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

C.2. Establishment of the Board of Education 457 Plan

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

C.3. Appointment of Dr. Richard Kisiel as interim superintendent of schools for the Manchester Public Schools for up to two years beginning July 1, 2012

C.4. Appropriation to be established in FY2012-2013 in the amount of \$417,404, funded by the Connecticut State Department of Education Grant for Manchester Adult Education

C.5. Appropriation to be established in FY2012-2013 in the amount of \$10,892.38, to be placed in the Community Use of Schools account, and made available to cover repair and maintenance costs to Bailey Auditorium

C.6. Appropriation to be established for FY2012-2014 the preliminary grant award in the amount of \$1,680,960 under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) 611 to be funded by the U.S. Department of Education

C.7. Appropriation to be established for FY2012-2014 for the preliminary grant award in the amount of \$67,954 under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) 619 to be funded by the U.S. Department of Education

C.8. Appropriation to approve for FY2012-2013 \$95,000 awarded for the Adult Education College Transition Pilot Grant (REACT)

C.9. Transfer of Funds

- End of Year Closeout – requesting transfer from Salaries, Purchased Services, and Dues & Fees in the amount of \$806,048 to Employee Benefits, Professional Fees, Property Services, Supplies and Materials, and Equipment and Capital.
- Transfer from Illing Middle School Professional Development to Illing Middle School General Supplies in the amount of \$8,000.
- Transfer from Manchester High School Information Services Account Contracted Services to Manchester High School Sports Dues and Fees Account in the amount of \$1,153.

C.10. Illing Middle School – Extended Field Trip Request – 8th Grade trip to Washington D.C., May 8, 2013 through May 10, 2013

C.11. Request to purchase 9th grade anthology for \$12,978.23

The Chairman called for a motion.

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

9/0 - Voted in favor.

D. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, enjoyed the Kelly Educational update. He noted respect goes both ways between teachers and students. Mr. Stringfellow recommended a book called *Talking Back to Facebook* by Atty. James P. Star., and a book on teaching history with museums by UCONN School of Education history professors. He also recommended several articles: an article on wireless gadgets in *TIME*, August 27th edition; a bus safety article in the September *Parents* magazine; and an article on lesson plans and helping prepare for school in the August 10th *USA Today*.

E. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT – PART II

E.1. Five-Year Student Achievement Goals

Dr. Kisiel presented a Power Point outlining the Teaching & Learning long term improvement plan for 2012-2016. The full plan can be read on the website. Student Achievement Goals include: mastery (goal) in literacy and numeracy; value and demonstrate personal responsibility, character, cultural understanding, and ethical behavior; and demonstrate skills and

competencies required for success in learning and work beyond school.

Dr. Kisiel's Theory of Action states, if we: provide a safe and respectful school climate; involve students in rigorous and engaging learning; build instructional and leadership capacity of teachers; improve allocation of resources to promote effective instruction; then student achievement and commitment to and engagement in learning will increase.

Dr. Kisiel pointed out that the Alliance Grant is giving us the opportunity to develop a comprehensive District Improvement Plan and initiative to carry over the next several years. The initiatives are in line with the District's request for the approval of the Alliance Grant, specifically focusing on early intervention strategies to close the achievement gap. Dr. Kisiel noted that 30% of Manchester students have no Pre-K experience, and part of the plan includes providing a summer Pre-K experience to make Kindergarten a success. Dr. Kisiel reviewed the curriculum coaches that were hired last year to provide teachers with job-embedded professional development related to improving their instructional capacity related to literacy and numeracy. Dr. Kisiel reviewed the summer K-6 extended school year proposal, and he states that the Parks & Recreation Department has agreed to work with the District for this program during the summer, incorporating a recreation aspect into summer learning. Talent development strategies to improve teacher-administrator effectiveness and the rewriting of the teacher job description was also reviewed. Now 45% of a teacher's evaluation, starting with the 2013-2014 school year, will be based on student performance. This is a major level of accountability that has never been seen in the state. This will require the development of an effective teacher evaluation program based upon the guidelines established by the Department of Education. We also need to expand our relationship with many community agencies, as the work of teaching our children is not done alone and we need the support of our community programs to make a difference.

Ms. Walton stated she was in awe of the amount of work that the administration has put into the planning for the first day of school, opening of Highland Park, transfer of Nathan Hale students, and the grant proposal. She stated that 45% is unheard of in terms of teacher evaluation and noted that figure was attributable to the growth a student makes while in their class. It provides a level of accountability.

Mr. Leon thanked the Superintendent for his presentation and stated that this was the first time in his three years on the Board that the administration has been proactive and not reactive. He appreciates that.

Mr. Pattacini also appreciates the vision that was developed with Dr. Kisiel and the administration.

Dr. Kisiel noted that the principals and the administration worked together, this plan was not just from the Superintendent's office.

Secretary Leon moved for the Board of Education to adopt the Superintendent's Five-Year Student Achievement Goals Plan. Mr. Crockett seconded the motion.

9/0 – Voted in Favor.

F. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

G. NEW BUSINESS

G.1. Presentation of Bid Waiver request regarding Northeast Family Federal Credit Union

Mrs. Brooks reviewed that in November 2007 the District wanted to open a banking branch at Manchester High School to afford students the opportunity to learn banking positions and to incorporate a banking internship into the business department. The only proposal that was submitted was from Northeast Family Federal Credit Union. The District signed a 3 year contract with them and has extended that twice with additional 1 year contracts. The credit union provided a vault, furniture, fixtures, equipment, and a teller station for the high school. They have also hired students for employment at their branches after school and during the summer. The location in the high school is available for both students and staff. This has been a successful partnership that the Manchester Board of Education would like to continue. To require this contract go out to bid is impractical and interruptive of the current services, especially given the investment that the credit union has made at the school in regards to furniture, vault, etc. Mrs. Brooks is asking the Board to provide a waiver of competitive bidding to continue the branch at Manchester High School with Northeast Family Federal Credit Union.

Mr. Pattacini noted that if this waiver is granted, there is a bid waiver form that will need to be signed by the majority of the Board members after the meeting. Mr. Pattacini asked what time frame was needed for approval. Mrs. Brooks noted that the current contract runs until January, so she would need a couple of months prior to that to bid the job if the bidding is not waived. If this is approved tonight, Mrs. Brooks will not even have to start the bidding process. Mr. Pattacini inquired as to what period of time Mrs. Brooks wanted to continue this relationship. Mrs. Brooks stated it would not be for a specified period of time, but until either party wished to dissolve the relationship.

Mr. Leon asked if there was a penalty if the contract with the credit union was broken at any time? Mrs. Brooks stated there is no penalty.

Secretary Leon moved for the Board of Education to approve the bid waiver request regarding Northeast Family Federal Credit Union as outlined by Mrs. Brooks. Mr. Crockett seconded the motion.

9/0 – Voted in Favor.

G.2. Approval of the Alliance Grant Application

Dr. Kisiel stated that the State Board of Education and the Commissioner of Education have requested that the Board of Education approve the grant proposal that was submitted to the Department of Education by the Superintendent on August 15, 2012. The district improvement plan and grant proposal was previously presented by Dr. Kisiel. The grant is in the amount of \$1,346,579 and is renewable for five years. Dr. Kisiel reviewed the key highlights of the grant proposal.

Ms. Walton stated that under Dr. Kisiel's leadership, Manchester responded to this Alliance Grant in the spirit in which it was intended. She feels Dr. Kisiel and the administration have worked to create a vision that allows for new and innovative possibilities for our district improvement and that this is an exciting period of growth for Manchester Schools.

Mr. Pattacini thanked the administration for the plan. He stated it was clear that the District Improvement Plan is integrated into the grant proposal. Mr. Pattacini wanted to underscore the percentage of students eligible for free or reduced lunch was 35% in 2006-2007 and in 2010-2011 that number jumped to more than 50%. He is grateful to the State for the opportunity of the grant, though he feels it comes at a price. Mr. Pattacini stated that Manchester saw significant change in the last five years with State funding remaining flat. Now this is the opportunity to right that wrong. The State has talked about the importance of Pre-K, but provided no help to Manchester, so now we are forced to use some money from this grant to help those without any Pre-K experience. While Mr. Pattacini is grateful we are able to do that, he is frustrated that the State can't get its act together with regard to education funding. Mr. Pattacini supports the well thought out grant application and looks forward to the State funding this grant so we can move forward with righting the wrongs that have been made.

Secretary Leon moved for the Board of Education to approve the Alliance Grant application. Mr. Crockett seconded the motion.

9/0 – Voted in Favor.

G.3. Action regarding Nathan Hale School

Mr. Pattacini stated it has been brought to his attention that it is important for the community and students for the Board to clarify the intent for Nathan Hale School. Previously the Board had voted to suspend the use of Nathan Hale due to facilities issues and the students were relocated to four other schools. There have been discussions regarding the long-term use of Nathan Hale and the various options. In order to provide clarity to the public and also to guide the SMARTR Committee, in terms of the Board's expectations for the use of that school.

Mr. Leon noted that last Spring it became obvious that Nathan Hale had many mechanical problems and there was no funding available to keep the school open this year. The Board voted to take the school off-line to give them time to figure out what to do, but in his opinion the Board should now term the school closed. He sees no immediate funds available to fix the building in the near future. Mr. Leon also feels that closing the school gives finality to the parents, teachers, and students, so they can realize they are now a part of the new school communities they have joined. He feels closure is needed and this is not just a 1-2 year move.

Ms. Kidd stated she has a problem closing any school, especially due to negligence, but she agrees with Mr. Leon about closing this school. She would like to hear from the SMARTR Committee about the direction they are headed. Ms. Kidd stated that now the priority is to fix the schools that are on-line currently and discuss the future of Nathan Hale with the Board of Directors in the future.

Mr. Scappaticci was curious about the Board of Directors inquiring about Nathan Hale. Mr. Pattacini replied that one or two Directors had questioned the subject during the bond request meeting and had publically requested the Board of Education to decide what they wanted to do with Nathan Hale. Mr. Scappaticci noted we didn't ask for money for Nathan Hale in the bond request, and wondered if the Board of Directors wants the building for something. Mr. Pattacini stated they were just inquiring for community information and had no plans for the building.

Mr. Scappaticci wondered who was responsible for the building while it remained off-line? Mr. Pattacini recommended that the administration work with the Board of Directors and Town to determine how to turn over the

building. He stated he believes it will be a school facility in the future. Mr. Pattacini does not want the community to think that the Board of Education is just giving the building to the town for them to deal with, but rather that we are working in partnership with town for both short-term and long-term planning.

Mr. Scappaticci wondered if we could share responsibility for maintenance with the town without terming the school closed, at least until the SMARTR Committee has given their recommendation, and simply keep the school off-line until that time? Mr. Pattacini stated it was a preemptive Board move to close the school as a "neighborhood" school at this time and provide some guidance to the SMARTR Committee.

Mr. Crockett stated that as a member of the SMARTR Committee, the committee is not going to make any decisions, they are just going to give recommendations. They plan to report to the Board at the end of September. No further steps will be made without the support of both Boards so everyone is on the same page. It is the Board of Education's job to decide on closing a school, not the SMARTR Committee. Mr. Crockett thinks the community has a right to know that this school is closed as a neighborhood school. He noted that in the future it could re-open as a magnet school, adult education building, or administrative offices. Mr. Crockett also noted that since the school was taken off-line, he has not heard of any complaints about closing it down.

Mr. Scappaticci noted that he didn't think the SMARTR Committee would close a school, he meant that based on their recommendations the Board may act on closing it. He wondered if we are jumping the gun by not waiting for those recommendations?

Ms. Kidd stated that when the SMARTR Committee was created it was to make recommendations to the Board. While she is all for neighborhood schools, she does not think that we should label kids by school. She feels we should term them all "Manchester children". We should be doing what is in the best interests of Manchester children.

Ms. Walton stated that at this time we know more than we did during budget season. At that time we did not want to rush to close the school, but wanted time to give the subject more thought, trying to salvage something from Nathan Hale. She states it is the responsibility of both Boards to ensure that the building does not sit empty for long. In terms of closing the school she supports that. She would like the parents and students to know they are now in a new school district and provide that closure for them. While no Board member wants to close Nathan Hale School, the reality is that we can't open it. We asked for funding last year to address the issues that forced us

to close Nathan Hale School, and the town did not have it. Because there was no political will to fix Nathan Hale School, this Board can no longer continue to try to keep it open and do a disservice to the parents of that community.

Secretary Leon moved for the Board of Education to officially close Nathan Hale School. Ms. Cruz seconded the motion.

DISCUSSION:

Mr. Crockett wondered if we should put in a caveat that future Boards have the right do what they want, and we can bring the building back as something else?

Dr. Kisiel stated that based on the theme he has heard tonight, the Board would be supporting the closing of Nathan Hale School as a neighborhood school, but allowing the community to make recommendation to this Board for future educational use. This is to give families the impression that they now have a new, permanent "home school". This allows the community to make some decisions as to what the best use of Nathan Hale School is in the future. This seems to be the essence of the discussion tonight.

In order to revise the motion, the motion on the table was withdrawn by Secretary Leon. The second was withdrawn by Ms. Cruz.

Secretary Leon moved for the Board of Education to close Nathan Hale School as a neighborhood school. Ms. Cruz seconded the motion.

DISCUSSION:

Mr. Leon stated this is not about politics, it is about kids and how they fit into their new schools. The future of Nathan Hale is unknown. Right now there is no plan to reopen the school soon and we need to provide closure to these families.

Ms. Luxenberg stated she will vote in favor of closing Nathan Hale with a heavy heart. She hopes the traditions of Nathan Hale families are carried on in the other elementary schools. Ms. Luxenberg also stated that she was disappointed in the ambiguity of the agenda tonight, and asked that in the future the Board be transparent in their agenda items for the benefit of the public.

Mr. Pattacini stated this is about students and he is hopeful for a plan in the future, but now he recognizes that plan would be at least a five year endeavor and he would hate to leave that question open for how long the

students will be located at their current schools. Those student connections are important and he does not want those students kept in flux during this time. He feels this is the right thing to do and he supports the motion.

The Chairperson called the question.

8/1/0 – Voted in Favor. Mr. Scappaticci was opposed.

H. COMMUNICATIONS

Ms. Kidd wanted to point out that in her daily adventures, she has run into a lot of families whose children are coming back to MHS from East Catholic and magnet schools. She thanks the parents for entrusting us with their children.

Mr. Pattacini noted that Highland Park is reopening and that it is customary to have an open house for the community on an evening in September. He suggested possibly having this open house on a Saturday in the morning for those that could not make an evening and asked for Board feedback. Mr. Scappaticci felt a Saturday morning was a great idea. Ms. Kidd noted that on Saturday mornings there are often sports activities and to look at the calendar. Ms. Luxenberg wondered if two open houses could be held, one in the evening and one a Saturday morning? Mr. Pattacini noted that the open house would also include a ribbon cutting, so just one would be held. Ms. Luxenberg asked that whatever is decided, that it be well publicized.

Mr. Leon noted that students and parents of Highland Park have their own open house on Thursday the 30th.

I. COMMITTEE REPORTS

None.

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

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, offered his support of the Consent Calendar, especially for Individuals With Disabilities Improvement Act and adult education. He feels the grant funding and investing in education is important. Mr. Stringfellow recommended an article on special education in the Fall edition of *Attitude* magazine, as well as an article on ADD success at school, dealing with autism in the September edition of *Autism* magazine. He also noted CTN had talked about student achievement and teaching learning in a video on Channel 13 on Cox. Mr. Stringfellow recommended three books: *When Push Comes to Shove*, *Achieving the Goal*, and *Transforming School*.

K. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

Ms. Hagenow mentioned that during the tour of Highland Park she noted updated technology and would like to see what exactly a smart board does and wondered if we could have a presentation about that.

Ms. Walton would like a formal update from the SMARTR Committee.

L. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Pattacini called for a motion to adjourn.

Ms. Walton moved and Ms. Cruz seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting.

9/0 - Voted in favor.

Adjournment 9:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Neal Leon
Board Secretary
