

# MANCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION

## Regular Meeting

**Monday, October 10, 2012**

7:00 p.m.

Lincoln Center

**PRESENT:** Crockett, Cruz, Hagenow, Kidd, 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

**ABSENT:** Leon, Luxenberg, Assistant Superintendent for Pupil Personnel Services Matfess

### **A. OPENING**

#### **A.1&2 MEETING CALLED TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 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 September 24, 2012.

**Acting Secretary Scappaticci moved and Mr. Crockett seconded the motion.**

**6/0/1 – Voted in favor. Ms. Kidd abstained.**

### **B. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT – PART I**

#### **B.1. Student Representative Report**

Ms. Anna Manser reported on the Fall goings on at MHS:

- Freshman First Day was September 4<sup>th</sup>, with over 50 lift leaders helping the Freshman feel welcome to their new school.
- The first day of school for the rest of the students was September 5<sup>th</sup>.
- The football season started September 14<sup>th</sup> with a win against Hall. The winning streak continued until last week's game against Glastonbury, which was televised as the game of the week.

- The Welcome Back Dance was held on September 26<sup>th</sup> with 151 tickets sold.
- Senior girls competed for Miss MHS on September 29<sup>th</sup> with over 200 tickets sold. Kiera Cecchini was the winner with 1<sup>st</sup> runner up going to Tielar Brown and 2<sup>nd</sup> runner up to Claudia Adomah.
- Homecoming is this week! The theme this year is Fairytales and Fables. Spirit week is this week at MHS with a comfy day, neon day, spirit day and twin day. The Homecoming football game is this Friday against Hartford Public followed by the Homecoming Dance on Saturday.
- Sports: Girls soccer is currently 5:4; Boys soccer is 4:3:2; Swimming is 2:4; B/G cross-country is doing well in the invitational's; volleyball had a rocky start but there was a game today; football is 3:1.

**Mr. Scappaticci** wanted to hear more about Comfy Day and thought that might be a nice change for a Board meeting! As for neon day, he has lots of clothes he could have shared for that day! He asked who sponsors spirit week and Anna explained that APB – The Activities Planning Board – sponsors events like this and it is a fun board to be on.

**Dr. Kisiel** noted that Anna mentioned kids are excited about the new changes and wondered what they were excited about? Anna spoke about the new principal, Mr. Geary, and how great he is and that the students really like him. The big focus is his new Imagine idea, and the new SWIPE system which provides an actual use for the IDs.

## **B.2. PTA President's Report**

Ms. Jackie Madore noted this year several elementary schools hosted back to school barbeques, including Robertson, Buckley, Highland Park, and Verplanck. Verplanck had over 500 people in attendance at theirs!

Last night the PTA elections were held at Washington School. Washington School will be continuing their community service program, most notably they collect food for MACC and can tabs for Shriner's Hospital. Last year Washington was in jeopardy of losing their PTA, but we are wishing them a successful year in their PTA involvement this year.

The Townwide PTA-sponsored Science Fair will be December 15<sup>th</sup>. This fair is for grades 4-8 and Ms. Madore thanked the Board for their support in the past.

Ms. Madore noted the town-wide council doesn't generally participate in fundraising, but last year they helped several causes, such as Odyssey of the Mind, Future Problem Solvers, and the Nutmeg Readers program. To plan for more success this year they decided to host a town-wide golf tournament this

Spring. The Board of Education and Board of Directors are all invited to participate in this great cause.

**Ms. Hagenow** had the opportunity to enjoy Verplanck barbeques when her children were younger and she thought it was a nice way to get to know the other parents and students and get to know the school community.

**Ms. Walton** thanked Ms. Madore for all her time and resources, as well as all the other PTA parents.

**Mr. Pattacini** inquired about the golf tournament and Ms. Madore noted the date will be June 8<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Pattacini challenged Mr. Crockett to a foursome!

### **B.3. Overview of High School Improvement Plan**

**Dr. Kisiel** noted last month the Board of Education approved three long-term student achievement goals which focused on improving student literacy and numeracy skills, improving school climate, and increasing the rigor of instruction within our classrooms. Dr. Kisiel will be inviting principals throughout the year to come before the Board of Education to share their own school improvement plan. Dr. Kisiel emphasized the importance of aligning the District goals across the district, therefore individual school improvement plans should be developed around trying to achieve those goals.

Tonight Mr. Geary is here to share his School Improvement Plan which aligns with the District's long-term goals.

Mr. Geary noted that there is a different culture present at MHS than in previous years. However there is a persistent achievement gap and lower overall achievement than we want. Mr. Geary feels that if we improve class grades then standardized testing scores will rise as well. Mr. Geary has met with approximately  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the student body, the staff, and student government for feedback. With Mr. Geary tonight were many of the other MHS administrators, including Jim Farrell, Jim Fromme, Beth Hayes, Dave Stetson, and Vonetta Romeo-Rivers.

Mr. Geary gave a PREZI, which is available on our website. The goals are:

- All students will achieve mastery in literacy, numeracy, and all core content areas as measured by their performance on local, state, and national assessments.
- All students will master and demonstrate the skills and competencies required for success in learning and work beyond school as measured by their performance on local assessments of the school-wide academic expectations.

- All students will value and demonstrate personal responsibility, character, cultural understanding, and ethical behavior.

Mr. Geary talked about the planning collaboration that takes place between the teachers, allowing the teams to gather several times weekly.

Mr. Geary noted that our Senior English classes, even in our lowest academic level, are now aligned to the highest remedial class at MCC, so that every child that leaves MHS can start at a college level class at MCC, which wasn't happening in the past. There is now a 7% decline in the number of students needing a remedial course when they get to MCC.

Mr. Geary talked about the administration reorganization and how that helps students who are struggling, by aligning the teachers/counselors/administrators on a team working with and talking about the same group of students. Mr. Geary outlined the intervention pyramid that is now followed with a struggling student, to streamline the process and make it more effective and efficient.

Mr. Geary outlined Naviance, which houses the Student Success Plans. He touched on discipline changes at MHS. Mr. Geary can already see the success of the SWIPE system, noting last year's average attendance rate was 86% and this year so far we are at 93%. The goal is 97% and we did hit 95% last week for the first time.

Mr. Geary also noted the new website for MHS, Redline, that has up to date information to improve communication. He notes the old website will be disabled shortly. There is also a Twitter and Facebook account associated with the school. He noted that after the first quarter report cards will no longer be mailed, unless requested, and parents can access them online. This will save the school approximately \$800 each time a progress note/report card is issued. In the same technology vein, he brought up BYOD "Bring Your Own Device" for engaging students in learning.

Mr. Geary noted in April the SAT will be available to Juniors and Seniors to take during the school day, to improve participation, at a reduced rate of \$35. Next year it will be given in October and April going forward.

Mr. Geary touched on the pilot academy theme that he had talked about with the SMARTR Committee, hoping to roll out these pilots in the next year or so. This will make the large high school feel like there are smaller schools within.

Mr. Geary's full presentation can be access on the website.

**Ms. Walton** said, "WOW!" She stated the presentation was refreshing and amazing and she was happy Mr. Geary set the bar so high for other school administrators to present to the Board. Ms. Walton stated his presentation was innovative with honesty, which is refreshing. She was happy to hear MHS has a Facebook account. One question she had was whether the report cards are emailed to parents or if they have to log-in for them. Mr. Geary stated currently they have to log-in and he would like to use the alert system to remind parents when report cards are available.

Ms. Walton wanted to hear more about the after school academy, and if there was a certified teacher running that. Mr. Geary explained that the after school academy was for students to earn back credit on classes that they had previously passed, but lost credit due to attendance. Because of that, this was not an academic class and therefore no certified teacher was involved, but merely for a student to make up "seat time" and gain back credits that they did not receive on classes they had previously passed. Mr. Geary noted that 11 out of 12 students were successful in gaining back 19 credits so far.

Ms. Walton liked the idea of BYOD – Bring Your Own Device. She felt the Board may need to revisit it's policies regarding this issue and wanted to know how the Board could continue to support this innovation. Dr. Kisiel agreed guidelines need to be established and a policy will be in the works.

**Mr. Scappaticci** stated that clearly Mr. Geary has a vision and he is enacting it! He noted that, "A man of words and not of deeds is like a garden full of weed." Clearly Mr. Geary is a man of words and of deeds! He is excited about the changes and grateful that Mr. Geary plans to come back with data. He also likes that Mr. Geary is experimenting, and while not all the experiments will be successful, but what's important is that he is experimenting. Mr. Scappaticci, who sits on the College Access Challenge Grant Committee for Manchester Community College, he noted that he was thrilled to see Kelly Cecchini on the news recently. He notes we are proud of her and all of the staff with the enormous work that has been going on at the high school. He also notes he has had much positive feedback from MHS students that he encounters throughout town.

**Ms. Cruz** congratulated Mr. Geary on an outstanding job, well done. Change is difficult and this was a phenomenal presentation. Ms. Cruz inquired about how students are selected for the mentoring lab. Mr. Geary outlined that school counselors are involved in choosing a mix of students as mentors to represent the entire school community. Next year there will probably be an application for mentors. Mentees are younger grades, 9<sup>th</sup> grade repeaters or those in danger of having to repeat 10<sup>th</sup> or 11<sup>th</sup> grade. These struggling students are offered participation in STARS or mentoring lab and must chose to participate in one or the other. Ms. Cruz felt it was exciting to have

students working as coaches and wondered how many students are involved. Mr. Geary estimated there are about 45 mentees and 25 mentors currently. Each of the five blocks is overseen by a counselor.

**Mr. Crockett** thought Mr. Geary did a great job presenting. He wishes him the best of luck on this aggressive plan.

**Mr. Pattacini** thanked the MHS staff and administration for coming together. We always had the ingredients of an amazing staff, and with the vision and direction the school is coming together. He feels the students are excited, happy, and comfortable.

As for the home access center, Mr. Pattacini wonders if the administration is able to track parent access and if there will be interventions for those parents not accessing the site? Mr. Geary states they are able to track that and parent engagement is the next level that will be addressed.

Mr. Pattacini questioned what the student success plans look like. Mr. Geary stated they are web-based plans for students in grades 6-12. There are multiple career interest inventories in there. PSAT and SAT scores are housed there. College applications can be done right online, as well as recommendations, SAT scores and the like all uploaded to colleges. Parents can log on and see the status of college applications. There will be parent access workshops to help parents navigate the program. The program, Naviance, will be accessible to students even after graduation and is a genius, cost-effective program and Mr. Geary would like to come back and present on that program in the future. Mr. Geary also noted that of the five jobs he has held, so far this is his favorite one!

### **C. CONSENT CALENDAR**

**Dr. Kisiel** presented four 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. Appropriation to create the USDA Head Start, breakfast and lunch grant appropriation, in the amount of \$98,933**

#### **C.3. Establish an appropriation for FY2012-2014 in the amount of \$195,175 under the 2012-2014 Title II – Part A grant, to be funded by the Connecticut State Department of Education**

**C.4. Establish an appropriation for FY2012-2014 in the amount of \$1,425,780 under the Title I Improving Basic Program grant, to be funded by the Connecticut State Department of Education**

**Acting Secretary Scappaticci made a motion to amend Item 2 to read "Establish an appropriation for FY2012-2013 in the amount of \$98,933 for a grant to be funded by the USDA Head Start breakfast and lunch program. Mr. Crockett seconded the motion.**

**7/0 – Voted in favor.**

**The Chairman called for a motion.**

**Acting Secretary Scappaticci moved and Mr. Crockett seconded the recommendation to adopt the Consent Calendar as amended.**

**7/0 - Voted in favor.**

**D. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Phil Madore, 45 Northfield Street, implored Ms. Kidd to stop sending disturbing emails at 2:00 a.m. He finds it hard to believe the Board cannot do anything about her behavior.

**Chairman Pattacini** gaveled Mr. Madore for an inappropriate topic, but Mr. Madore refused to stop speaking.

**Acting Secretary Scappaticci made a motion to recess. Ms. Cruz seconded the motion.**

**5/2 – Voted in favor. Board in recess 8:08 p.m.**

**Back in session 8:18 p.m.**

**Chairperson Pattacini** addressed the public and reviewed that his expectation as Board Chair was for everyone, Board members and members of the public, to conduct themselves in a respectful manner and that includes not publically attacking any one individual.

Scott Aiken, 92 Laurel Street, echoed the board's comments about Mr. Geary's presentation – WOW! He was impressed with the PREZIE and wants to hear more about him and what he is accomplishing at the school in the media and less about drama. As for the BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) idea, he wonders

how he can help, being in the IT IS world. This needs to happen faster, so he urges that policy changes get done. As for how to involve parents more, again he would like to know how to help and is asking the same questions as part of the PTA at Washington. Mr. Aiken has two children attending Washington in Kindergarten and 5<sup>th</sup> grade and he hopes that Mr. Geary is still at MHS when his children get there, if not the Board will have to answer to him. Mr. Aiken would like to see a more in-depth study on the achievement gap. The Coleman Study in the 60's was a landmark study about a complete view of student learning, more than just in school – the neighborhood, the parents, the town. It seems like we are trying to reinvent the wheel when this study was done back in the 60's.

Mr. Aiken is very upset that the old music room at Washington has been repurposed for the MELC program and music classes are now held on the stage in the gym. He is curious as to who determines programming space and he disagrees with this decision. He notes we lost our music teacher from last year because of this decision. The old music room sits empty all day, with a pool table in the middle of the room. He would like to see music moved back in there. He does realize there are competing after school programs at Washington and he cannot speak highly enough of Ms. Clarke's after school program that is an extension of what the school does at Washington.

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, pointed out we just celebrated Columbus Day this week. He suggested the book *Columbus, The Four Voyages* by Laurence Bergreen. Mr. Stringfellow noted an editorial in the *Journal Inquirer* on Monday about Samuel Champlain, who was a French explorer just after Columbus' time, given recognition. He suggested an article in *New African* magazine regarding Africa's lost tribe in Mexico that dealt with discovery and he would like to see all discoverers celebrated, not just Columbus. Mr. Stringfellow noted that the *Boston Globe* had an article on the hidden costs of school. He pointed out that the Cuban Missile Crisis was 50 years ago and was dealt with in *Naval History* magazine, October edition. The Falklands War was 30 years ago, Great Britain against Argentina, and we shouldn't forget that either. Mr. Stringfellow also recommended an article in last week's *Hartford Advocate* about undocumented immigrants in Connecticut; an article in this week's *Newsweek*, about parenting a "wired" kid about electronic devices; and *last an article in Parade* magazine about whooping cough and the importance of vaccinations this weekend.

James Quinlan, 47 Clinton Street, stated that busing is an issue in the Spruce Street area. He has complained but was told by the Director of Transportation that bus routes cannot be changed because of policy. He is here to ask the Board to allow for some flexibility in re-routing the buses to allow for easier pick-ups in that neighborhood. Many of the parents have to walk or drive to Nathan Hale School to utilize the bus loop for pick-ups and drop-offs when it would be

safer and easier to make stops closer to homes. He notes the area has become quite chaotic down there. He notes there are some parents that have health issues or are disabled and have a difficult time getting down there. He suggests the bus that was recently allocated to go up Oak Street then turn down Clinton Street and turn up School Street as a safer route, making it safer and easier for students and parents.

Mr. Pattacini suggested that Mr. Quinlan contact the Superintendent and the Transportation Department. Mr. Quinlan stated he did and was directed here with his complaints. Dr. Kisiel stated he will look into the route suggestions.

## **E. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT – PART II**

### **E.1. CMT Report Highlights**

**Dr. Kisiel** pointed out the student achievement goals that have been adopted by the district, including students achieving mastery in literacy and numeracy; students demonstrating personal responsibility, character, cultural understanding, and ethical behavior; and students demonstrating skills and competencies required for success in learning in school and work beyond school. Dr. Kisiel stated that when developing these goals, they were struck by the achievement gap that exists in our District, across all schools and all groups of students. Dr. Kisiel pointed out that he had spoken recently with faculty at Martin School regarding the achievement gap and that no school has been left untouched.

**Dr. Richardson** gave a Power Point presentation regarding a comparison of our CMT scores from 2006 and 2012. This presentation can be accessed on our website. Dr. Richardson pointed out that we made stronger strides than many other towns in our area.

**Ms. Walton** thanked Dr. Richardson for her excellent presentation that gives a picture of growth over the last six years. She points out that for the Board it is helpful to look at trending and wonders what the annual trends look like. While we have made some growth, Ms. Walton finds it sobering and disappointing that we only made a total of 2.6 points of growth in closing the achievement gap over six years, which averages 0.4% per year. This doesn't seem adequate and is disheartening and disappointing to her.

At the last meeting Ms. Walton had asked what the most notable gaps were, and she sees tonight that there is a 26% gap in Science with the black population and a 27% gap with the Hispanic population. This gap has increased over the six years. She sees a widening of the gap in writing with the Hispanic population as well. In Math she sees progress in closing the gap with a 7 point gain in the black population. Ms. Walton notes the ELL population is seeing a significant widening of the gap and perhaps more

serious intervention is required, including extending the school year to address this.

Ms. Walton notes a climate of accountability will allow us to have a greater impact.

**Mr. Pattacini** noted that throughout the years we have made improvements in closing the gap, but we still need to address this as a community. He states the administration does have a plan in place with literacy and numeracy. He asked the administration to comment on the expanding achievement gap with the ELL subgroup. Mr. Pattacini felt it was interesting to see the trend over the last five years. He notes that last year there were 42 languages spoken by MHS families. There is a growing need to build support for these families.

**Dr. Richardson** stated the rate at which the ELL community is growing is tremendous. This year the number of languages spoken has risen to 56. She points out that two years ago there had been a 50 point gain in the ELL population on testing, but those students then exited the program and there are new students that enter. When these students gain success they leave ELL, so the students that are currently in this subgroup are early arrivals to our country that are new to a complex test in a new language. Some of the administrations efforts in this area include hiring an additional teacher, gaining support with the Alliance Grant, coordinating with ELL to run intensive professional development for regular education teachers to help cultural understanding, having the Equity Department talk about cultural pedagogy and literacy approaches, and having opportunities for students to take on grade level reading to accelerate their reading comprehension and have vocabulary acquisition.

**Dr. Kisiel** pointed out there is a minimum amount of time allocated for ELL intervention in the budget and one-to-one intervention is critical.

**Mr. Pattacini** is encouraged by that and states it helps the Board frame a theory of action and also to communicate to the Board of Directors that we have identified opportunities and needs in our district and to the extent we can identify the causal issues that are contributing to that and then the initiatives we then plan to take, it will make for a much more fruitful budget discussion regarding creating some improvements. He suggested that the administration identify initiatives that maybe are not being fully funded or that need to be changed so that we can bring those forward in our next budget cycle, to ensure that we are aligning the spending in the appropriate areas.

## **E.2. CAPT Report Highlights**

Mr. Geary gave a PREZI on the MHS scores, which overall remained fairly flat over recent years, and expressed his hope for all students to close the achievement gap. His presentation is available on the website.

**Ms. Walton** noted at the high school level we are making more progress with the socioeconomically disadvantaged students than with the race subgroups and wondered why. Mr. Geary wasn't sure why, however he suggested one possibility was that as the economy worsens more families are qualifying for free or reduced lunch that previously were not in that subgroup.

Ms. Walton was happy that Mr. Geary ended his presentation with the School Performance Index to put that into perspective. However, she felt that these numbers suck and were not as great as she would have hoped. Ms. Walton did feel that we are starting to get traction and she does see a light at the end of the tunnel and is hopeful for Mr. Geary's ambitious plan.

**Mr. Pattacini** asked how the Board can support the administration as they take initiatives with great staff and a focused vision? There will be a point when they have done all they can with the current funding and they will come back to the Board for help with finances. Over the last 6-8 years with No Child Left Behind there was confusion and punitive penalties that didn't allow for further district improvement. Mr. Pattacini wants people to understand and appreciate that there is not only an achievement gap in Manchester, but in Connecticut – the “King” of the achievement gap, and across the country as a whole. The issue is what are we going to do about it. Mr. Pattacini is confident, with the administration we have in place, we will identify initiatives and start to develop a plan to identify those areas where improvements need to be made which will then allow us to improve some groups, such as Hispanic students, which will be the way we close the gap.

**Ms. Walton** felt both presentations were excellent in helping the Board to see overall achievement and target opportunities for improvement. She suggested having a universal format for these presentations from year to year so that the information can be presented in a consistent manner. Mr. Pattacini thought that was a great suggestion.

## **F. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

### **F.1. Curriculum and Instructional considerations as requested by the SMARTR Committee**

**Dr. Kisiel** asked the Board members if there were any comments at last night's public forum that they wished added tonight? Dr. Kisiel also felt it would be important to be sure the response addresses the five questions asked by SMARTR.

**Mr. Crockett** concurred with Dr. Kisiel and noted it was a nice discussion last night and a lot of information was exchanged. He feels the current list hits most of the items and concerns that were raised and is in favor of moving it along to the SMARTR Committee.

**Mr. Pattacini** read the questions:

1. What curriculum and instructional considerations should SMARTR be aware of moving forward?
2. Are there facilities considerations of which the SMARTR Committee should be aware of moving forward?
3. Are there topics the Board of Education would like the SMARTR Committee to investigate?
4. Are there options that the Board of Education would not support?
5. Timeline to respond.

Next, Dr. Kisiel's response list of 21 points was reviewed, which is available on the website. It was agreed that the 21 points addressed the five questions presented by SMARTR.

**Acting Secretary Scappaticci moved for the Board of Education to submit the list of 21 points in response to the questions of the SMARTR Committee. Mr. Crockett seconded the motion.**

#### **DISCUSSION:**

**Mr. Pattacini** noted it is great that the Board took the time to vet the list, add a few additional items, and also gave the community and opportunity to provide their input as well.

**The question was called:  
7/0 - Voted in favor.**

**Mr. Pattacini** noted this is just one of many steps to be taken in drafting a final plan. Mr. Pattacini expects that SMARTR will take these findings, along with the work they have done, and start to develop some plans and options. Those will then be reviewed before the public prior to the next step. Ultimately, the goal is to reach a November 2013 referendum.

### **G. NEW BUSINESS**

#### **G.1. Proposed Policies**

##### **1) Use of Social Networking – Media**

**Dr. Kisiel** reviewed that the Social Networking Policy was a revision of one presented last March that had been opposed by the ACLU at that time. After

consultation with the Board Attorney who worked with the ACLU to be sure the policy was consistent with First Amendment rights, this new policy was presented. The full policy can be found on the website.

**Ms. Cruz** inquired if we were the first school district to approve this policy? Dr. Kisiel was unsure if we were the first, but noted the policy does meet the protection of individual rights under the First Amendment and is importance guidance for teachers. Ms. Cruz was excited to be among the first to have a policy such as this. While she was opposed to the original policy in the Spring, she will be supporting this one.

**Mr. Pattacini** noted that in using Googledocs, a Gmail account is required and wondered if that would be acceptable? Dr. Kisiel noted that with permission, that is acceptable.

Mr. Pattacini noted this policy will come before the Board for adoption at the next meeting. Dr. Kisiel stated the policy will be shared with teachers prior to the next meeting as well.

## **2) Attendance Policy**

**Dr. Kisiel** that the State Board of Education, on June 27<sup>th</sup>, defined excused and unexcused absences. This policy reflects those definitions, allowing a parent to define the first nine absences as excused.

**Ms. Walton** wondered if it would be helpful to have someone talk with the State Board of Education to understand the spirit of this law? Dr. Kisiel wasn't sure that would be helpful as we have no choice but to follow the decision of the State Board, regardless of the spirit of the law. He stated he can ask the Commissioner and report back before the vote if there is additional information to share.

**Mr. Pattacini** noted confusion with section 2A, which lists "Absences one through nine" and thought clarifying that with "The first nine absences" would be helpful. He noted the policy will come back for adoption at the next meeting.

## **H. COMMUNICATIONS**

None.

## **I. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **Buildings & Sites Committee:**

**Mr. Crockett** noted the last meeting was October 4<sup>th</sup> at Verplanck. In attendance were himself, Mr. Leon, Ms. Hagenow, Mr. Saimond, and Mr. Ziegler. A tour was taken of the new carpet and tile that was completed this summer. It was noted five coats of wax was able to be applied prior to the start of school.

Mr. Ziegler noted a Facilities Improvement Progress Report is in progress and will be submitted at the next meeting. Mr. Ziegler updated the committee on the ongoing project of energy conservation within the district. Mr. Ziegler discussed the state of Nathan Hale School, noting moving should be complete in a couple of weeks and plans for an auction are being developed. Last, the Highland Park punch list items are in progress and most are expected to be completed with the next several weeks. The lighting control system is now operational and all lighting is being controlled by the schedules and lighting sensors. The standing water problem near the bus loop should be corrected in the next few weeks. The next meeting will be November 1<sup>st</sup> at Buckley at 6:00 p.m.

**Policy Committee:**

**Ms. Cruz** noted the last meeting was held October 6<sup>th</sup> with all members present. The topic of discussion was the policies that had been presented tonight.

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

Scott Aiken, 92 Laurel Street, felt that in discussing the achievement gap we are missing the opportunity to ask what about the parents? He told the Board that publically flogging themselves will only last so long. His question is now what? He is curious about the socioeconomically disadvantaged subgroup, what does that mean? He noted as a Navy "brat" in Groton it was thought the Navy kids and city kids were lowing test scores, yet he turned out just fine. Mr. Aiken feels that 50% of what happens to students has to fall upon the parents. He pointed out there is a division of labor...as a parent he has to go to work, pay the mortgage, buy the clothes, and pay for the food. We outsource the children's education to your system. He is holding up his end of the bargain, and of course anybody can improve on their end of the bargain, but he is curious how much more money the Board wants to throw at this. Say all the money you want is there, all the programs are in place, all Title I schools are closed, students are shifted around, you try all the latest fads, but you still have an achievement gap. Then what? When will you hold parents accountable, as well as yourselves and your system? He ended with one of his favorite quotes by Albert Einstein, "Everybody is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree it will live its whole life thinking it is stupid." He feels there has to be more than this one dimension to judge achievement of a student. When parents look at this, what do you expect them to think? It's not their responsibility, it must be the schools fault? Maybe if I move my kid to another school...What is the achievement gap at Simsbury, Avon, and other schools that can afford to throw money at their schools?

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, thought the CMT and CAPT reports were good, though again he would like to see new phrases in place of "subgroups". He would also like to see a comparison of our scores to East Hartford or Vernon. He is impressed with Mr. Geary, but disappointed in the

achievement gap and hopefully the ELL coordinator and diversity equity person can present on what is going on behind the scenes.

This is Mr. Stringfellow's second request for a presentation from the MEA on the July conference.

Mr. Stringfellow recommended an article on military kids. He also recommended articles from Boston on school assignments and busing. Mr. Stringfellow also pointed out the MCC Excursions in Learning fall program for grades K-8.

**K. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS**

**Ms. Cruz** requests Head Start come in to present next month.

**L. EXECUTIVE SESSION: COLLECTIVE BARGAINING**

**Mr. Pattacini** noted that the main part of the meeting was over, but that the Board would be going into Executive Session and would be coming back into public session tonight, likely with some action tonight.

**Acting Secretary Scappaticci moved to go into Executive Session for a matter related to collective bargaining. Ms. Walton seconded the motion.**

**7/0 – Voted in favor.**

**Executive Session: 9:50 p.m. – 10:08 p.m.**

It is noted that when the Board came back to public session the live feed was no longer available. The meeting recording was continued and in addition to Recording Secretary Carla Trovato Landon, Mr. Woody Caine was present in the audience.

**Acting Secretary Scappaticci moved for the Board to ratify the agreement with the Manchester School Administrator's Association. Mr. Crockett seconded the motion.**

**7/0 – Voted in favor.**

**M. ADJOURNMENT**

**Mr. Pattacini called for a motion to adjourn.**

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

**7/0 - Voted in favor.**

**Adjournment 10:09 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

Jason Scappaticci  
Acting Board Secretary