

MANCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION

Regular Meeting

Monday, October 22, 2012

6:30 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: None.

A. OPENING

A.1. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:31 p.m.

Secretary Leon made a motion to move into Executive Session to discuss a matter related to Collective Bargaining. Mr. Crockett seconded the motion.

5/0 – Voted in favor. (Present: Leon, Scappaticci, Cruz, Pattacini, Crockett.)

Executive Session 6:31 p.m. – 7:01 p.m.

A.2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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 October 10, 2012.

Secretary Leon moved and Mr. Crockett seconded the motion.

DISCUSSION:

Mr. Crockett noted that during the public comment session of the October 10th meeting, when a motion was made to recess, the minutes reflect a unanimous vote, but in fact he did not vote, and would have voted against going into recess.

Ms. Walton stated she also did not vote to recess.

Mr. Pattacini amended the October 10, 2012 minutes to reflect a vote of 5/2/0 to move into recess during the Public Comment segment of the meeting.

8/0/1 – Voted in favor of the minutes, as amended. Ms. Luxenberg abstained.

A.5. ADOPTION OF MINUTES OF WORKSHOP/FORUM

ADOPTED – Minutes Board of Education Workshop/Forum of October 9, 2012.

Secretary Leon moved and Mr. Crockett seconded the motion.

6/0/2 – Voted in favor. Mr. Leon and Ms. Kidd abstained, Ms. Cruz had left the room during the vote.

B. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT – PART I

B.1. Pre-School Center Report

Dr. Jerry Reisman spoke about the Head Start program in the Pre-School Center. He thanked Dr. Kisiel and Ms. Cruz for their involvement in the policy council and especially Mrs. Shelly Matfess, whom he called a champion of early childhood.

Dr. Reisman stated every three years the federal government does a thorough review of the program, using approximately 1700 performance standards. Most programs will have some items on that list that need correcting. Manchester has come up completely clean, with zero non-compliance issues, for the last two 3-year cycles.

SRBI (Scientific Research Based Interventions) began being implemented last year in preschool, addressing social and emotional development and language and literacy. The goal is to get kids ready for Kindergarten. This includes giving "homework" to families, including reading to children for at least 15 minutes every day. Last year Head Start spent \$2,000 on a lending

library so parents have plenty of books to choose from to bring home and read to their youngsters.

Dr. Reisman talked about data and that it is collected in 30 different performance standards across 4 domains, including personal/social, physical, cognitive, and creative. Children are assessed in November, February and June. The goal by the third benchmark is to have the child prepared for Kindergarten. Dr. Reisman shared that the two hardest skills to master for preschoolers are expressing emotions and problem solving.

The preschool's school-wide expectations are: Be Kind, Be Safe, Do Your Best. There are expectation books for each area to teach child the behaviors that are expected (i.e., in the block area, in the kitchen area). Dr. Reisman points out that we cannot expect children to have these skills, we must teach them the skills.

READ tutors are working with students to help them achieve success in skill development. There has been a shift from "incidental" learning in which students play and learn things incidentally, to a more intentional learning environment, in how to teach skills from sharing, how to stand in line, and other specific skills. Instructional strategies can be altered as needed. Academic rigor is the main focus with three instructional supports as the goal for this year, including three components: concept development - how do you teach concepts, how do you develop higher order thinking in young children - what is the quality of your feedback to young kids and what does that look like, and language modeling. If you approach all three of those together, instructional strategies and instruction will improve.

School climate is also an area targeted for improvement. Knowing the stakeholders, knowing who benefits from the services you provide, and recognizing that that means kids, families, and staff, and recognizing what it means to be responsive to all three of those constituents. The school-wide expectations are not just for kids, but for parents and staff as well.

Dr. Reisman now tracks the children who graduated from Head Start through their 3rd grade CMT scores. Two years ago the Head Start students by 3rd grade scored approximately 77% at or above proficiency in math, compared to 78% average district scores and 67% in the free/reduced lunch population (noting that all Head Start kids qualify for free/reduced lunch). In reading, Head Start scores were 72%, just under the district-wide scores, and free/reduce were at 58%. The same for writing. Last year the numbers were not as promising, but with only two data points that only means we need to keep collecting data.

Ms. Walton thought this was a fantastic presentation. She appreciates the new social/emotional curriculum – which Dr. Reisman points out can be seen at CSEFEL website, and the Be Safe, Be Kind, Do Your Best expectations. Ms. Walton wondered how long we need to collect data until we can look at trends. Dr. Reisman notes that with Dr. Richardson we can look at formal assessments at Kindergarten, 1st, 2nd and 3rd grade. Then we can see if they are not doing better than their peers at 3rd grade, where exactly is it falling apart?

Ms. Kidd appreciated the “homework” of 15 minutes of reading to their children and wondered how involved parents are in the classroom. Dr. Reisman stated that it is not required to volunteer, but there is an inviting environment at the preschool and they do hold volunteer training for those interested. There are also family advocates for each classroom, who are the glue that hold the family to the classroom.

Mr. Leon wondered what the percentage was of students we lose between Head Start and 3rd grade. Dr. Reisman stated that approximately 50% of the children that started in our Head Start are no longer in our system by 3rd grade.

Mr. Pattacini asked how many students were in the program this year. Dr. Reisman stated this year there are 162 Head Start students and he noted that two years ago there was national competition for expansion in the Head Start program and only one location in Connecticut won – an extra 30 seats – and it was Manchester. Right now there are approximately 30-40 students on the waiting list, which is approximately the same size waiting list that there has always been. Dr. Reisman notes that registrations are coming in earlier in April and May instead of July and August now. The preschool has nine classes, seven of which offer a 4 hour day and the other 2 offer a full day from 8:00 – 3:00. It is thought that we lose many families that are working poor families who require a 7:30 – 5:30 program, but we cannot accommodate that at this point.

Conversation centered around the approximate 53% retention rate of Head Start students between Pre-K and 3rd grade and Mr. Pattacini pointed out the retention rate between 3rd and 8th is similar. Twenty years ago families tended to stay put, but now there is an influx and outflow of families in our community. Dr. Reisman pointed out that in the last few years there has been a huge influx of families from the Middle East and Africa and we may be the first stop for those families looking for a better life. He feels that we do not offer much support in various languages and that may be one reason they do not stay long in our district.

C. CONSENT CALENDAR

Dr. Kisiel presented eleven 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. Establish an appropriation for FY 2012-2014 for the final grant award amount of \$1,688,872 Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA), to be funded by the U.S. Department of Education

C.3. Establish an appropriation for FY 2012-2014 for the final grant award amount of \$67,598 Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA), to be funded by the U.S. Department of Education

C.4. Manchester High School – Extended Field Trip Request – Roundtable Singers/Handbell Choir – Lancaster/Hershey Park/Gettsburg, PA – Competition and Performance – May 2, 2013- May 5, 2013

C.5. Manchester High School – Extended Field Trip Request – Performamce Adjudication, Festival Competition – April 25, 2013 – April 28, 2013

C.6. The Board of Education accepts the Washington Elementary School Underground Oil Tank Replacement Project as complete, designated by State Project #077-0227 as complete with a total cost of \$80,000 and an estimated reimbursement from the State Bureau of School Facilities to the Town of Manchester of \$51,432

C.7. The Board of Education accepts the Verplanck Elementary School Underground Oil Tank Replacement Project as complete, designated by State Project #077-0228 as complete with a total cost of \$80,000 and an estimated reimbursement from the State Bureau of School Facilities to the Town of Manchester of \$51,432

C.8. The Board of Education accepts the Central Administration School Underground Oil Tank Replacement Project as complete, designated by State Project #077-0229 as complete with a total cost of \$80,000 and an estimated reimbursement from the State Bureau of School Facilities to the Town of Manchester of \$25,716

C.9. Transfer of Funds

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

- Transfer from Keeney Language Arts Instructional Supply/Material to Keeney Contract Kelly Substitute Professional Development account in the amount of \$1,000.00.

C.10. Establish an appropriation for FY 2012-2013 for the Carl D. Perkins and Technical Education Secondary Basic Grant in the amount of \$98,001, to be funded by the State of Connecticut

C.11. Establish an appropriation for FY 2012-2013 for a grant in the amount of \$2801.00 for the development of career and technical education opportunities that combine secondary and post-secondary programs that lead to related career and technical fields, to be funded by Manchester Community collect, College Career Pathways program

The Chairman called for a motion.

Secretary Leon moved to add two items to the Consent Calendar, Items 12 and 13. Item 12: Request that the Board of Directors establish an appropriation for FY2012-2013 for the District's Alliance Grant in the amount of \$1,343,579; Item 13: Ratify the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Manchester Association of Educational Secretaries and Information Technologies Employees, Local 991 of Council #4. Mr. Crockett seconded the motion.

DISCUSSION:

Dr. Kisiel stated that the Board received notification last Friday that the State Department of Education approved the District's Alliance Grant in the amount of \$1,343,579. This will enable us to move ahead to work on the District's improvement plan that was discussed several weeks ago. The work has already begun in anticipation of the revenue, as some of the employees that needed to be hired and some of the training that needed to take place earlier in the school year began. Dr. Kisiel is excited about this opportunity. This will be a benefit to our school district as we move ahead to meet the challenges in meeting the District's achievement gap and to focus on improvement of our literacy and numeracy skills across the District.

9/0 – Voted in favor.

Secretary Leon moved and Mr. Crockett seconded the recommendation to adopt the Consent Calendar, with Items 12 and 13 added, as in the agenda.

9/0 - Voted in favor.

D. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, supports the Consent Calendar, especially items 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 10, and 11. He especially supports the technical education grant. Mr. Stringfellow pointed out that MCC hosted an open house this past Friday. He would like to see a presentation from the principal at Great Path Academy at MCC. Mr. Stringfellow reminds us that Columbus Day recently passed and suggested an article in *National Geographic* on Native Americans. He noted that we are celebrating 225 years of the U.S. Constitution. He suggested an article for parents regarding drugs in *Your Teen*.

E. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT – PART II

E.1. Superintendent's Performance Goals for 2012-2013

Dr. Kisiel proposed five goals for consideration and approval. The first two goals are related directly to the student achievement goals. Dr. Kisiel has been meeting with principals regarding their school improvement goals. He notes the achievement gap needs to be the focus of our attention.

The Goals Related to the District's Achievement Goals:

1. All schools will achieve the State targeted school performance index based on the 2013 CMT and CAPT assessments in reading and mathematics.
2. The district performance index will reflect a minimum of 20% reduction in the achievement gap of all tested groups of students based on the 2013 CMT and CAPT assessments in reading and mathematics.
3. The district will successfully implement the 2012-2013 District Improvement Plan as specified in the Alliance Improvement Plan.

Management Goals:

1. The district will complete and implement the identified achievable components and recommendations of the Organizational, Efficiency, and Effectiveness Study.
2. The district will complete a revision of the teacher and administrator evaluation systems for full implementation beginning the 2013-2014 school year.

Mr. Crockett offered his support of these very ambitious goals.

Ms. Walton agrees this is an ambitious list and exactly what our town and district needs. She wonders how the Board can support the administration in achieving these goals? She would like to see a process put in place for the Superintendent to work with the Board in making the goals measurable by the Board for the next school year. Dr. Kisiel stated he will ask for additional support if it is required and will keep the Board informed through the year as to the progress. He is beginning to identify an indices to measure these goals by. He noted it is critical for school improvement plans to align with the district goals.

Ms. Walton noted this is all very encouraging. She points out that historically we have had individual schools do presentations at Board meetings. She wondered if we can now expect the presentations to show the school improvement plans aligned with these goals. Dr. Kisiel agreed that from this point on more presentations will be like this evening's presentation by each principal.

Mr. Pattacini thought these were clear, concise targets for the Board to understand and evaluate and the community to understand. We are all working in one direction and he looks forward to administrator updates. He wonders if Dr. Kisiel is looking for adoption of these goals at the next meeting? Dr. Kisiel stated he is requesting endorsement of these goals, which were already discussed at length at the Board workshop in October.

The chairman called for a motion.

Secretary Leon moved and Mr. Crockett seconded the motion for the Board of Education to adopt the proposed Superintendent's Performance Goals as outlined by Dr. Kisiel for 2012-2013.

9/0 - Voted in favor.

F. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

F.1. Use of Social Networking – Media

The proposed policy was previously distributed to all district employees. No comments were received from the staff. This policy was developed in consultation with the district attorneys and the ACLU and meets the requirements and safeguards of the First Amendment rights. This policy encourages the use of social media, but in a constructive way within certain limits. The full policy can be read on the Board website.

F.2. Attendance Policy

This policy resulted in a change in the definition of excused and unexcused absences by the State Board of Education. The first nine absences are left to the parent to determine if they are excused. The State Board of Education felt this provides the parents with flexibility in determining their family's needs. If this doesn't work, we will certainly provide feedback to the State Board of Education. The full policy can be read on the Board website.

Secretary Leon moved for the Board of Education to adopt Policy 4025, Use of Social Networking – Media. Ms. Cruz seconded the motion.

9/0 - Voted in favor.

Secretary Leon moved for the Board of Education to adopt Policy 5110, School Attendance. Mr. Crockett seconded the motion.

9/0 - Voted in favor.

G. NEW BUSINESS

None.

H. COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Pattacini announced that the MHS Marching Band won first place at the Rockville High School band competition recently. Dr. Kisiel stated it was obvious by watching their performance during Homecoming how good they were.

I. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Policy Committee

Ms. Cruz reported that the last policy meeting was held October 6th and was reported on at the October 10th meeting. However, at that meeting, there was no attachment in the agenda packet, so it was again put on tonight's agenda. The discussion at the October 6th Policy Committee meeting centered around the two policies presented tonight.

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

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, commended Dr. Reisman and his work with Head Start. He pointed out Head Start began in 1966 under the Johnson Administration and is still necessary today. He is glad they try to involve parents. Mr. Stringfellow notes that when principals come present to

the board they should be sure to bring the appropriate staff members with them. He notes that some students learn differently. Mr. Stringfellow suggested an article in *USA Today* regarding the income gap, an article in *Republican American* on suicide prevention, and an article on special needs in the summer edition of *Autism File*. He notes there is a new magnet in a neighboring town breaking ground and that Boston is making changes in their elementary schools. Mr. Stringfellow hopes members of the community volunteer their time as tutors and mentors. Last, Mr. Stringfellow recommended the book, *He Talked Like a White Boy*.

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 8:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Neal Leon
Board Secretary