

## **MANCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION**

### **Regular Meeting December 9, 2013**

7:00 p.m.  
Lincoln Center

**PRESENT:** Crockett, Cruz, Hagenow, Leon, Pattacini, Pazda,  
Scappaticci, Stafford, Thames

**ALSO PRESENT:** Interim Superintendent of Schools Dr. Kisiel, Assistant to the  
Superintendent for Finance & Management Brooks,  
Assistant Superintendent for Pupil Personnel Services  
Matfess, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum Radikas

**ABSENT:**

#### **A. OPENING**

##### **A.1&2. Meeting Called To Order**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairperson Pattacini. All in attendance participated in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, led by Mr. Pattacini.

##### **A.3. Adoption Of Minutes Of Previous Meeting**

**ADOPTED – Minutes Regular Meeting of the Board of  
Education of November 25, 2013.**

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

**9/0 – Voted in favor.**

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

##### **B.1. High School Principal Search**

**Dr. Kisiel** reviewed the steps being taken regarding the search for a new high school principal. Copies of the newspaper advertisement as well as brochure were included in the agenda. Applications are available on our website and must be submitted by January 21, 2014. The week of January 21<sup>st</sup> Mr. Geary, Dr. Kisiel, and HR will review the applications and turn them over to the interview committee. The committee will begin interviews the week of February 10<sup>th</sup> and any off-site visits will be done the week of

February 24<sup>th</sup>. Final interviews will be held approximately March 3<sup>rd</sup> and an appointment should be expected mid-March with a start date of July 1<sup>st</sup>.

### **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 with their agenda.

#### **C.2. Establish an appropriation in the amount of \$120,000 for the Out-of-Town Magnet School Transportation Grant for the FY 13/14**

#### **C.3. Transfer of Funds**

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

- Transfer from Buckley School Admin Printing/Advertising to Buckley School Admin Contracting Services account in the amount of \$440

#### **C.4. Extended Field Trip Request – Manchester High School – Broadcast Journalism Course – Orlando, Florida – Parent & Teacher Chaperones – 3/18/14-3/23/14 – 10-14 Students**

**The Chairman called for a motion.**

**Secretary Scappaticci moved and Mr. Leon seconded the recommendation to adopt the Consent Calendar, as outlined in Section C of tonight's agenda.**

**9/0 - Voted in favor.**

### **D. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Ms. Donna McCarthy Watson, 23 Bramblebush Road, thanked the SMARTR Committee and the Board of Education for trying to make Manchester a great place for children to learn and grow. She hopes they will take a closer look at Waddell to possibly renovate and expand that school instead of close it. She points out many parents in that district are homeowners and walkers, noting only one bus serves that school. Recently Waddell received a new roof and there is already 21<sup>st</sup> Century learning happening with each classroom utilizing a smart board. Waddell has an active PTA, who is currently raising money for a new playscape. There is also additional space currently being utilized for Central Supply, which could be converted to classroom space. Waddell is in a central location and their test scores continue to rise. Waddell received a ConnCan award for academic achievement four years ago. Ms. McCarthy Watson read an excerpt from Kathy Oulette, then Superintendent, "The Connecticut Coalition for Achievement Now (CONNCAN) recently honored Waddell Elementary School as a

2009 Success Story School, one of 15 Connecticut public schools around the state for progress towards closing the achievement gap between poor, African-American, and Hispanic students and their white, middle class peers. Connecticut Success Story Schools are overcoming odds and make it work." Alex Johnson, Chief Executive Officer of ConnCan says "Our schools such as Waddell Elementary are a hopeful starting point in our effort to ensure that every child in our state gets a great public education." The school has dedicated parents, and the principal, teachers and support staff love the students and work hard every day to educate the entire child. She asks that the Board give Waddell a good look for expansion, not closure. She notes her children went to Manchester Public Schools and are currently in college, products of this system.

Ms. Janice Medynski, 89 Saddlehill Road, is a first grade teacher alongside Ms. Watson at Waddell. She also thanked the SMARTR Committee and applauded the hard work and vision for the future. She is asking, as a resident, a parent, and an educator at Waddell, for a second look to be given to Waddell. Ms. Medynski notes she loves the Waddell families and the students work hard there. There is an active PTA and it is a neighborhood school. She previously taught at Nathan Hale and was very sad to see it close. Waddell has a vibrant community and Ms. Medynski implored the Board to please consider saving the school.

Ms. Tracy Maio, 57 Horton Road, grew up in Massachusetts and went to a neighborhood school and she feels the Waddell community is a tight-knit neighborhood school community. She was not impressed with the SMARTR presentation. Just because it took effort does not mean that they presented the right plan. She has no problem with the suggestion of a 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> grade academy. She sees the point and understands where that is going. Ms. Maio feels the rest of the plan has not been looked at and to pour money into two schools that need a lot of work doesn't make sense. She feels we could put less money into different schools to expand them and that the decision was made solely on location. Waddell is the most racially balanced school in our district, so she feels the numbers do not make sense. Ms. Maio cannot see the reason for the school to close, noting they do not have low test scores. She does not think this is the plan to go with and we need to figure out a better plan and voting down this plan does not mean going back to the 90's plan of renovating a school every few years, but to come back with a better plan of attack.

Ms. Kim Gorman, 71 Strickland Street, noted she sent Board members an email earlier in the day expressing her concern over the SMARTR recommendation for both the 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> grade academy and the plan to close Waddell and relocate the students to an expanded Robertson. She thanked those members who had already responded to her and noted Susan Holmes (a Board of Director member) had sent her the strategic school profiles for Waddell and Robertson. She noted that Robertson did out-perform Waddell in some aspects, so her email was partly in error. She does understand the need to racially balance schools and the need

to obtain funding for facilities improvements, however as a mom of a first-grader thriving at Waddell, she does not care about that. Her child is happy and learning in a neighborhood school. She is not convinced after reviewing the CREC report that SMARTR does much more than address racial balance and facility upgrades. As a higher education professional, her concern first and foremost is the quality of education that her child is receiving. Ms. Gorman notes that many of her neighbors and friends send their children to St. Bridget's, St. James, Cornerstone, and she came close to sending her child to one of those schools, but she had heard about the wonderful Kindergarten teachers at Waddell when her child was entering school age and now she doesn't want to change schools. She notes we need to know more than a plan addressing racial balance and funding issues. What is in the best interest of the children academically should be considered.

Ms. Autumn Struk, 26 Little Street, is a Waddell parent and secretary of the Waddell PTA, Waddell Project Playground Lead. She notes the previous principal of Waddell referred to the school as a "little United Nations". The school is centrally located and has all nationalities making up the school. She wants to know how Waddell was chosen over other schools. Ms. Struk points out the new roof recently installed with tax money and other renovations that took place over the past years and planned for the near future. She wonders why we would put money towards Robertson when we could save money by expanding Waddell, which has available property. Ms. Struk feels all the discussion has centered around money to be received by the state, but the most important discussion has not come up, which is the children and how this will impact them. She wants to know how Waddell was chosen, how this plan would allow for better technology and how changing the neighborhood will impact the children. She notes Waddell has decent ratings and with the recent Broad Street renovation and current \$96,000 playground project, it doesn't make sense.

Mrs. Schootz, 12 Conway Road, was at the joint meeting last Tuesday and complained that she could barely see the numbers being referred to and could not see them at all on the replay. She feels the teachers and other ladies who spoke tonight are right. She wanted to know why Martin was not chosen to close. Mrs. Schootz wants a Plan B. She feels if we do not come up with a Plan B maybe someone else, the state perhaps, can come in and help give us a Plan B. She notes her household has a Plan A and B. Mrs. Schootz pointed out that Ms. Pelletier stated renovating each school one at a time would take approximately 32 years. She feels we have already lost two years. Renovating Bennet/Cheney will cost another two years. She wants to know where the money is. She thinks you can't guarantee 65% from the state, saying that is the interest and we won't get 65% of all the money. Mrs. Schootz says we have debt in town and the Board of Education just cared about one plan and forgot about everything else, and we need a Plan B. Again she asked, why Martin has

not been discussed. She thinks the options should be to shut down Verplanck, Martin or Washington.

Mr. Eric Larson, 125 Scott Drive, teaches at MHS and is co-advisor for the Manchester High School's Broadcast Journalism class along with Mr. Jones. He notes they are headed to Florida in March, which was just approved on the Consent Calendar. He thanked the Board for that approval. The convention experience, workshops, hands-on training, and networking with students and professionals will be invaluable for the students and he is excited. Depending on available funds, 10-14 students will make the trip and he appreciates the Board's support and consent. Fundraisers to offset the cost are planned for January 8<sup>th</sup> at Catsup & Mustard and January 15<sup>th</sup> at the Landmark Café, among others.

Ms. Laura Tartaglia, 162 Homestead Street, is a renter in the Waddell district and moved here because the last town she lived in had no community feel. She wanted deeper connections. Her child started school requiring PT, OT and speech therapy and has progressed so much that he only needs speech now. The teachers go beyond what their duty is and take extra time with him. She feels big classrooms cannot provide the same education and the kids that are falling behind will fall further behind. Another thing to consider, she is a walker. If her son is bussed to school and becomes ill she will need her fiancé to take time off work to pick him up, which could cause him to be fired. She doesn't feel everything has been considered and wants us to look at everything. Her son loves his school and they often walk to after school programs. She has a community she can call for help, and she knows teachers and other parents will stay outside with her child if she is running late. She doesn't see this happening in bigger schools. She also feels nothing has been said about the education side and helping with the transition. Ms. Tartaglia feels Waddell should be look at for expansion as it needs less work and if we are so concerned about education why not take that into consideration.

Luis Gonzalez, student, is part of Mr. Larson's Broadcast Journalism class and hopes one day to get a degree in communication. The trip approved tonight will help his future. He hopes to be a sports analyst and reporter for ESPN some day. He thanked the Board for their approval, noting this trip will help further his education and build his skills.

Ms. Amy Dias, 143 Leland Drive, is a new homeowner who picked her home for its school. She is also a new educator at Waddell and notes there is a real community feeling there. She wonders how teachers will be able to collaborate if there are seven teachers for each grade level, noting it's hard enough to collaborate with 3 teachers per grade now. She doesn't see that happening. Ms. Dias also points out that coordinating school-wide activities and even recess will also be more difficult with so many students. She wonders how students and families will feel connected. She feels families pick Manchester for its small

community schools where students can walk to school, and the small town flavor. She feels families may choose to go elsewhere and hopes we will dig deeper.

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, hopes we will look at the whole neighborhood and equity. He feels it was a big mistake to get rid of the equity program four years ago. He states we need to look at all students to learn and the Board needs to hear "our voices" too, as a person of color and a former student, noting non-parents contribute tax dollars to support schools too. Mr. Stringfellow went on to talk about the Korean War and recommended a book *Korean War History* for the high school. He also noted Nelson Mandela's death and recommended a book *The Many Faces of Nelson Mandela*, along with the movie *Long Walk to Freedom*. He feels Mandela was his hero. Another book Mr. Stringfellow recommended was *Sexual Harassment and Bullying*. He notes his voice as a person of color counts.

Ms. Jessica Carter, 109 Lockwood Street, has two children at Waddell and loves building memories walking to school with her kids. Before having her children attend Waddell she was "iffy" on public schools, but now she loves her children's school and the teachers there. She notes that Robertson has a transient population and wondered if this has been taken into account regarding racial balance. She notes homeowners at Waddell can be counted on. She notes if Waddell is expanded and more students are brought there they will experience good things. She notes it is hard, with young children, to get to these meetings and there are more people than this room can hold who wish they could be here to speak on the subject.

Mr. Ron Curran, 65 West Middle Turnpike, has a daughter in Kindergarten at Waddell. She will be directly affected by this plan eventually. He is concerned that the committee did not even tour Waddell. He feels renovating a school that has a transient population versus a school with roots doesn't make sense. Why can't we bus the transient residents, who are bussed anyway, to Waddell? He notes we cannot win against magnet schools because they get more money than local schools, but the community feel we have is where we win against them. Magnets are beautiful, but have no community feel.

Ryan Jones, 2 Faith Circle, grew up in Manchester and is now a teacher here, co-advisor with Mr. Larson. He notes Manchester has a unique and diverse story. Regarding fundraisers for the March trip to Florida, he will post information on the website. He thanked the Board for their approval of the field trip request.

Mr. Pattacini ended the public comment session by reviewing that SMARTR did in fact tour every school and reviewed the available critical needs assessment report, which identified \$20 million in repairs needed in the district. Mr. Pattacini is encouraged to hear the points of view and perspective of the public and notes

we will arrive at a plan that our community supports. He appreciates the community coming out to speak this evening.

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

### **E.1. Pupil Personnel Services Update**

**Dr. Kisiel** reviewed that he felt it was important to bring the scope of Special Education Services and costs to the board before the budget workshop meetings. Ms. Matfess gave a Power Point on her department, which is available on the website.

**Mr. Leon** thanked Ms. Matfess for her hard work. He noted that reducing out of district placements from 115 five years ago to 59 saves millions of dollars. He wondered if the special education programs were in most schools or just a few. Ms. Matfess pointed out Buckley, Keeney, Waddell, and Robertson host full special education classrooms. Mr. Leon wondered if SMARTR spoke with Ms. Matfess about how her programs would be affected by their plan. She stated they did not. She noted it is challenging to keep moving her programs on a space available basis and notes her special education preschool needs an appropriate facility.

**Ms. Pazda** was confused about the magnet tuition. Ms. Matfess explained this is separate from the general magnet tuition, and is for students with IEPs, for the cost of their services, such as therapy, para-professionals, etc. Ms. Pazda noted that acceptance to magnets is on a lottery basis, so we have no way to know each year who else may be chosen. Ms. Matfess reviewed that while the magnet provides the services, Manchester chairs the PPTs and pays for the services.

**Mr. Pattacini** wondered how much of the Special Education budget is mandated. Ms. Matfess estimated 100%. She also noted the district is not always 100% compliant and sometimes needs improvement. Sometimes this happens when a student moves to our district with an outdated PPT timeline, or maybe weather postpones a meeting, however we still get "dinged" for these compliance issues.

**Ms. Matfess** also spoke about outplacing students versus keeping them in district. When a student goes to school out of town they are not part of the community or building relationships here. Special schools also do not provide the same rigor of instruction that we provide. We also provide supports in the home that outplacement facilities may not.

**Mr. Pattacini** had a question about the state reimbursement for outplacements. Ms. Matfess reviewed we are responsible for the first \$14,000 in costs if a state agency outplaces a child; if we outplace a child we

are responsible for the first \$65,730 in costs. After that the state reimburses 70%. Mr. Pattacini questioned why only 70% and Dr. Kisiel stated it is a policy decision at the state and federal level. Originally, the state paid 50% of all costs, which would equate to much more than they pay currently. IDEA is a federally funded program channeled through the Department of Education.

## **E.2. Alliance Grant Year 2 Quarterly Report**

**Dr. Kisiel** presented a Power Point, available on the website, outlining the \$2,592,535 Alliance Grant information provided to the state, which is now required to be provided on a quarterly basis. He reviewed attendance, suspensions, and assessments for the district. It was pointed out that two years ago MHS had an attendance rate of 74% and currently they are at 93%! Dr. Kisiel stated only a few points will be highlighted this evening, as many of the items in the report have previously been discussed.

Priority Area #1 - Implement early intervention and instructional interventions aligned to the Common Core to close the achievement gap in literacy and numeracy: Ms. Matfess reviewed the Jumpstart Program, which exposed 55 children to a Kindergarten experience. It was noted the children made social gains, but limited skill acquisition. The program also provided parenting workshops each week.

**Ms. Radikas** reviewed instructional walk-throughs and stated the first District Improvement Team meeting will be December 18<sup>th</sup>.

**Mr. Thames** wondered how families were recruited for Jumpstart. Ms. Matfess reviewed the many advertising strategies, including through pediatricians, flyers, and visits to housing developments. They had hoped for 180 families and had 55. Mr. Thames felt this was a very important program.

**Ms. Pazda** wondered about the preschool program for parents. Ms. Matfess noted each week there was a parent training component included. Ms. Pazda wondered if data had been compiled from parents. Ms. Matfess noted that parents were very positive about the program, often wishing for a longer day.

Ms. Pazda asked about Lexia. Ms. Radikas reviewed previously this was a Tier 2 intervention but now it is a district-wide program for all students. Parents will be able to access the program from home to work with their children to encourage reading with their children.

**Ms. Cruz** questioned targeting 180 children and only having 55 enroll in Jumpstart. She wondered what efforts could be made to bring in more students. Ms. Matfess reviewed several other ways that were tried to access families, including asking local preschools to recruit, sibling flyers, and

recruiting through the Readiness Council. Maybe starting earlier this year will help. Dr. Kisiel pointed out that some families were hesitant since it is a new program. He hopes that parents that participated last year will sell it to other parents to help promote participation. He notes it is difficult for a parent of a young child to "give up" that child to school.

Priority Area #2: Improve talent development strategies to improve teacher and administrator effectiveness. The new teacher and administrator evaluation systems were completed this past summer and the training for that is ongoing.

Ms. Radikas reviewed instructional rounds and job-imbedded professional development through the curriculum coaches. The coaches assist teachers in implementing two strategies for content areas, Writer's Workshop and Math Talk. Ms. Radikas talked about coordinating the curriculum into a "live binder" that can be accessed throughout the district, accessible by all staff. Currently each school has their own "drive" which cannot be accessed by other schools. She also noted we used credits with the state to have access to hundreds of videos for teachers to use for professional development.

Priority area #3: Expand collaboration of school-community program-service opportunities focused on improving student achievement, graduation rates, student attendance, and reducing the number of suspensions, disruptive behaviors, and school-based arrests. Dr. Kisiel noted that last year Manchester was recognized by the Commissioner and Lieutenant Governor for our effort in introducing, through the Alliance Grant, a range of wraparound services that outreached to our families to provide additional support to our students. It is not just about mathematics and literacy, but additional support is sometimes needed to engage our families and students. Leading this effort is Heidi Macchi, district outreach social worker, reviewed the goal to reduce chronic absenteeism, disruptive behaviors, and substance abuse, increase family engagement, and improve achievement for at-risk students. Previously she performed her job duties alone, but thanks to Alliance Grant funding she now has 9 members on her team, both full and part-time.

**Ms. Cruz** was excited to hear how Ms. Macchi's department has grown. She was curious if Enfield was one of the towns that recently reached out to Manchester for guidance and Ms. Macchi confirmed they were. Ms. Cruz was pleased with the positive impact Manchester is having.

**Mr. Scappaticci** thanked Ms. Macchi for including stories of the families she serves and not just numbers.

**Mr. Leon** pointed out that once Alliance Grant funding runs out these programs are in jeopardy and the community needs to understand that eventually this must be funded.

Priority Area #4 – Increase the level of college and career readiness of secondary school students, particularly those in underperforming subgroups by personalized learning. Dr. Kisiel noted that Mr. Geary previously spoke on the Chromebooks and Medical Academy. Mrs. Radikas noted strategy 3 of this section identifies student writing exemplars reflective of district student expectations. One thing we would like to do is provide online examples of student writing over the trimester, so both parents and students have tangible work to look at for each grade and each part of the year, based on the Common Core State Standards.

**Ms. Cruz** asked about the timeframe of this quarterly report, as this was the first one we had seen. Dr. Kisiel reviewed that the state had just asked for one so he will be doing one every 48 days, with the last one presented at the July meeting.

**Mr. Crockett** wondered if we had received the check from the state yet. Dr. Kisiel stated we had received the commitment in the mail, however Mrs. Brooks stated the check should have arrived 11/30 and had not yet.

**Ms. Pazda** felt this was a fabulous initiative with great opportunities. She thanked the staff for their hard work. She was curious about the Alliance Grant, noting it was awarded to the bottom 30 districts. If we make strides and are no longer in the bottom 30, do we lose the funding? Dr. Kisiel stated that improvement is expected and will not impacting funding through next year. The Alliance Grant is a soft way the state can provide Manchester with funding earmarked specifically for reform efforts and not filtered through the town.

## **F. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

### **F.1. SMARTR Committee Recommendation**

**Mr. Pattacini** reviewed that at the joint meeting of the Board of Education and Board of Directors last week the SMARTR Committee had presented their recommendation. They have put in a great deal of work. Mr. Pattacini would like to compile questions that Board members would like addressed by either SMARTR or the administration. He noted that the Board of Education will be responsible for supporting and endorsing the plan and we need to be comfortable that all questions are satisfied.

**Mr. Stafford** would like a full copy of the demographer's report. Dr. Kisiel directed him to the website, where there is a copy. Mr. Stafford would like to

know the bus to walker ratio of all schools. The administration will provide that information. The teacher collaboration with 7 teachers per grade level concerned him. Will the teachers have time during the day to collaborate? Dr. Kisiel stated there is no plan for 7 classrooms per grade. The plan is for 5 sections, which currently exists in some grades in some schools already.

**Mr. Thames** wondered why Nathan Hale was not considered in this equation. He also thanked the teachers for coming out to speak tonight. Mr. Pattacini pointed out that the committee had previously recommended Nathan Hale to be looked at for a magnet school. Currently the state has suspended funding for magnets, but that is still in progress.

**Ms. Pazda** stated this is an opportunity for Manchester to see new schools built. We cannot forget about curriculum in designing the schools. She wonders if Central Office could focus on curriculum and wonders why not have a theme for the 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> academy.

Next, Ms. Pazda feels we need to engage parents and residents. She suggests making it easier for parents to attend, possibly hosting an ice-cream social and while the kids are being entertained we could speak with the parents. We need to think outside the box, use Facebook and email, etc.

Ms. Pazda feels we need to "brand" Manchester and this important project. Public relations is an important topic for Manchester Public Schools.

Last, Ms. Pazda stated the Board needs to review the policy for closing schools to see how it aligns with the plan. Mr. Pattacini agreed, encouraging Board members to review the policy on school closure. He assured Ms. Pazda that the policy will be followed and the administration would work to respond to her other three items.

**Ms. Hagenow** noted that the speakers tonight made good points about not closing a school near the renovated Broad Street area. She would like to revisit the recommendation on schools and would like to discuss the impact on students in general and special education.

**Ms. Cruz** had concerns about the presentation. She had expected this report from SMARTR months ago and was concerned the information was not as detailed as she expected. She noted that the cost of transportation was not discussed. She was disappointed with the recommendation. She knows that the Board of Education makes the decision but would like to know the next steps from administration. She feels SMARTR fulfilled what was asked of them. Mr. Pattacini stated it was unfair to have administration proceed until we know which way the Board will go. We need to identify the questions and

hear the answers and then will discuss the next steps. Public hearings are also on the agenda.

**Mr. Leon**, who chose to leave SMARTR after one year, would like to know when a final decision has to be made. He notes that SMARTR did a lot of work and a solution is difficult. Someone will be unhappy. Mr. Leon notes that the Mayor has stated he does not support Waddell closing, though that is a Board of Education decision. Mr. Leon again expressed concern over making this into a three referendum project. He worries one will pass and the others won't. He would also like to see the savings associated with consolidating schools, what the ongoing operating costs would be versus what they are now and how much we will save. He wishes politicians would stay out of the issue.

**Ms. Pazda** is confused and needs more specific direction. Mr. Pattacini reviewed that after we determine what additional information is requested, we will discuss the next steps.

**Ms. Cruz** is concerned with the public forums, wanting to give the community an opportunity to speak. She asks the public to review the Board policy on school closure and educate themselves.

**Mr. Leon** noted people should not lose sight of the fact that SMARTR was started because of the critical assessment of our school buildings. We have lost sight of the buildings. He notes that is why Nathan Hale closed and that Washington is on the same doorstep. Washington may not last another 4-5 years and may face the same fate as Nathan Hale. While we are waiting what do we do? Our Board has to stand up and make a recommendation on all schools.

**Mr. Crockett** stated that he will bring the questions posed to SMARTR. He is sorry that people think the committee took too long. There was a lot of information to go through, they toured all the schools, and heard many reports and presentations along the way. Dr. Kisiel did talk about the special education department to SMARTR and he points out SMARTR does not make decisions and nothing in the recommendation is etched in stone. He applauds Waddell's parents for speaking out. Someone will not be happy with the plan. As for the packaging of the referendum, that is not SMARTR's call, it is for the Board of Directors to decide. He feels we need to focus on getting Bennet/Cheney moving along first. Maybe we can do Bennet/Cheney on one referendum and package the next two schools into one referendum. It is a good plan, two new schools and closing two others. He does not care which schools close personally. Mr. Crockett feels we need a decision by February and no matter what is chosen, closing a school "sucks".

**Mr. Leon** stated there are tough decisions to be made. He took issue with Mr. Crockett stating he does not care which school. He feels that is disrespectful and wrong. Mr. Crockett stated he wants the plan to succeed.

**Dr. Kisiel** noted the Board approved the 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> grade academy concept. That is the primary objective. The underlying question is which school and he feels we cannot decide that by February. If we agreed with SMARTR's recommendation of two 530 pupil schools, then schools will close. He will ask the demographer to take a look at Robertson and maintaining the residential community of Waddell if the Board authorizes the Superintendent to obtain that information. As for swing space, we cannot make this by February, we need general ideas for the next referendum.

**Mr. Pattacini** wondered if SMARTR considered swing space. He wondered what would happen if Waddell stayed open and Robertson closed, or possibly both stayed open. He would like information gathered and sent through the Buildings & Sites and Curriculum & Instruction committees to help gather information.

**Dr. Kisiel** wondered if the Board intended to schedule a public forum next week. Mr. Moynihan, Principal of Waddell, stated the school is available on December 18<sup>th</sup> to host that. Mr. Pattacini stated the availability of SMARTR and the Board of Education will be reviewed and an announcement will go out regarding the public forum date.

**Mr. Leon** did not feel it was wise to hold a public forum before the questions posed tonight were answered. Ms. Cruz would like to add the community's questions and get all the answers together. Mr. Thames stated we owe the community an opportunity to make their concerns known and address them. Perhaps the parents of Nathan Hale did not feel they were part of the process. Mr. Stafford would like to hear from as many people as possible. He notes he received three emails today with lengthy questions, not just about Waddell. He notes the forum should not just be able Waddell, but a broad aspect of questions. Mr. Leon clarified, he was not saying not to listen to the community, just saying that the Board has not made a decision regarding Waddell and at this point he does not think Waddell is on the table anymore and we need answers to the other questions first.

**Mr. Pattacini** stated it was in the best interests of the community to allow them the opportunity to gather questions to be addressed, recognizing the Board may move in a different direction. Mr. Leon suggested that the questions that have already been asked be listed so the public can see them. Mr. Pattacini noted he appreciates the significance of this decision and that Board members will not make decisions lightly and will continue to gather information.

## **G. NEW BUSINESS**

### **G.1. January 8<sup>th</sup> Budget Workshop**

**Dr. Kisiel** requested the Board suspend the policy regarding the timing of his budget presentation to allow additional time to review the budget with Mr. Geary and Mrs. Brooks. The budget will be ready to present on January 15<sup>th</sup>.

**Secretary Scappaticci moved to suspend the policy for the current school year that requires the Superintendent to present the Board with a recommended budget not later than the first regular meeting, but require the Superintendent's budget presentation no later than January 15, 2014. Leon seconded the motion.**

**9/0 – Voted in favor.**

## **H. COMMUNICATIONS**

None.

## **I. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

None.

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

Mrs. Schoutz, 12 Conway Road, thanked Ms. Matfess for her presentation. There was a lot of information presented and special education has changed since her child was part of the program. She notes the Board needs to hear from the public and keep politics out of it. She states we need to listen to teachers and parents. When Nathan Hale closed she was boo'd by the audience because she agreed with closing the school, and her children went there. She states that if the parents wanted to go to the meetings they would have been there. Waddell parents will come out. Hard decisions have to be made by the Board of Education with the parents and teachers input, and the Mayor should stay out of it. There is too much politics involved.

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, supports the Consent Calendar, particularly item #4. He notes there are good things happening at the high school and the teachers are doing a good job. He thought Ms. Matfess had a good presentation. Mr. Stringfellow gave several book and article recommendations. He implored the Board to listen to all ideas and notes SMARTR has their work cut out for them. He hopes to hear from voices of color and notes we should value diversity.

Autumn Strek, 26 Little Street, is a parent of a child that participated in Manchester Preschool. Her son was originally identified with possible speech

impairment, but eventually found to have cognitive thinking delay and he has grown so much. She is thankful to Ms. Matfess and her program.

Denise Curran, 65 West Middle Turnpike, has a Kindergartener at Waddell and wants the school to stay open. She is an MCC graduate and notes this has always been a town of neighborhood schools and she encourages that to be kept. The fact that SMARTR has no idea how special education will be incorporated in the program is disturbing. She has a 1 year old with Down's Syndrome and recommended the Jumpstart program reach out to Birth-to-3 to find more families to participate.

**K. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS**

**Mr. Thames** thanked Ms. Radikas for the information provided to the board regarding SAAM. He reviewed that 500 students were assisted academically by the program and 160 students were impacted by the 3 day absence rule. He notes Ms. Radikas indicated that the 2014 planning team will review this rule. Mr. Pattacini noted that the administration will incorporate this information into a future Alliance Grant update.

**L. ADJOURNMENT**

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

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

**9/0 - Voted in favor.**

**Adjournment 10:05 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

Jason Scappaticci  
Board Secretary