BOARD OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE
MANCHESTER SCHOOL DISTRICT SAU #37

September 25, 2023 **6:30 p.m.**

1. Mayor Craig called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

2. Mayor Craig called for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Southside Middle School – Kelly Espinola, Principal

Committee Member Perich introduced the student that was present.

Kayleigh Young – Grade 5

3. A moment of silence was observed keeping the Cavanaugh family, who had a bereavement last week, and Jack O'Mara's family in our thoughts and prayers. Jack was a long time Manchester Teacher and coach who has been retired for many years but has passed away. He taught in the district for 35 years and was a coach of the first girls soccer program at West High School. He was just under 30 years of coaching and taught for 35 years. While coaching, he managed to win 16 girls soccer titles and that probably has not been repeated since.

4. The Clerk calls the roll.

Present: Committee Members Turner, Parr, Soule, Want, Bonilla, Tassey, Argeropoulos, O'Connell, Potter, Perich, Dion, Hamer, Leapley, Gonzalez (left at 7:50 p.m.) and Mayor Craig.

5. RECOGNITIONS

There were no recognitions this evening.

PUBLIC FORUM

6. The purpose of the public forum is to give the residents of Manchester the opportunity to address the board. All people wishing to speak will have up to three (3) minutes to do so, and any comments must be directed to the chair. Any resident wishing to speak will come forward to the nearest microphone, clearly state their name and address when recognized and give their comments.

There was no one present wishing to speak.

a. If there is no one else present wishing to speak, a motion is in order to take all comments under advisement and further to receive and file any written documentation presented and to table the remaining minutes for public comment to the end of the meeting for those that have not already spoken.

*On motion of **Committee Member Soule,** duly seconded by **Committee Member Turner,** it was moved to table the remaining minutes for public comment to the end of the meeting for those that have not already spoken. All were in favor and the motion passed.*

7. Response to Public Comment
(Note: Motions limited to sending items to Committees only.)

As no one spoke, there were no responses.

8. **PRESENTATIONS**

There were no presentations this evening.

9. ACTION AGENDA

There were no items under the action agenda this evening.

10. CONSENT AGENDA (ITEMS 10 – 17)

11. Mayor Craig advises if you desire to remove any of the following items from the Consent Agenda, please so indicate. If none of the items are to be removed, only one motion will be taken at the conclusion of the presentation.

Committee Member Turner removed item 13-f.
Committee Member Hammer removed items 13-a and 13-e.

The balance of the consent agenda was as follows:

12. Approval of minutes from the Board of School Committee meetings on: September 11, 2023 meeting.

13. Report(s) of the Committee of Policy, if available.

a.
b. Job Description for the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support for Behavioral Health (MTSS-B) Director

c. Assistant Athletic Director Job Description and Position
d. Revisions to Transportation 100: Student Transportation
e.
f.

14. Report(s) of the Committee of Teaching and Learning, if available.

15. Report(s) of the Committee of Finance and Facilities, if available.

a. 2024 Retiree (over 65) Health Insurance Plan Renewal
b. Treasurer's Report
c. Financial Reports
d. FY23 Line Item Transfers
e. City Services Invoices ($192,832.11)
f. Manifest of Authorized Expenditures (August 2023) ($16,274,843.07)
g. Professional Leave Requests ($20,888.21)
h. Manchester Apprentice Program
i. City Year Contract Fiscal Year 2024 ($350,000.00)
j. Central High School Security Door(s)

16. Report(s) of the Committee of Student Conduct, if available.

17. Report(s) of the Committee on Education Legislation, if available.

a. Legislative Advocacy Letters
b. BOSC Education Legislation List of Priorities

*On motion of **Committee Member Soule,** duly seconded by **Committee Member O'Connell,** it was moved to approve the balance of the consent agenda. All were in favor and the motion passed.*

13. Report(s) of the Committee of Policy, if available.

a. Revisions to policy Student 116.2: Child Restraint and Seclusion

Committee Member Hamer stated in the new policy, at the end of number five, it states that the Superintendent or their designee will be make an annual report to the conduct committee on the restraint and seclusions that took place in the previous school year and he stated that he had some questions regarding this. His questions included:

1. Is the data coming from Aspen or how will it be tracked? It was stated that they are working on the details currently on how this will be tracked. It was stated that they have not yet formatted the report but it would have to be identified data designed to ensure student privacy and still give the committee a good sense of the numbers and what happened.
2. It was asked what the value of the information will be, as it will be unidentifiable, thus we would not receive much information on what happened, as it could identify the location, which in turn could identify a student.
3. There are certain staff who are trained in each school to perform the restraint and seclusion. It was stated that this is correct. It was stated that some of the staff are trained on safe restraint and the Administrators are trained as well.

*On motion of **Committee Member Hamer,** duly seconded by **Committee Member Gonzalez,** it was moved to approve item 13-a, policy Student 116.2: Child Restraint and Seclusion. All were in favor and the motion passed.*

e. Bus Drivers Job Description

Committee Member Hamer stated this is the bus drive job description and it was asked how many drivers we were looking to hire?

Dr. Gillis stated that currently the district does not have bus drivers that are hired specifically by the district. They are looking to get this out and possibly starting recruiting and hiring to fill possible shortages from STA or MTA. They will be coming back at upcoming meetings to discussion next steps as far as what the internal transportation program might look like.

Other question and comments included:

1. They are starting to look into what a bus driver employment package might look like and bringing some drivers into the district to backfill the workforce shortages.
2. Would we be maintaining our own buses to cover these drivers? It was stated that we currently have buses at both MTA and STA that are unused. These buses are owned by the school district.
3. Location for housing of buses is being reviewed as part of the long term facilities plan.

4. It was stated that drivers would be hired for a certain amount of hours per week, including some after school activities.
5. The district is already having a hard time hiring all of their teachers, paraprofessionals and other staff members.
6. The district has had a hard time finding vendors to handle all of the bus routes in the city of Manchester for the students. MTA is trying to phase out their bus runs. We need to do something to offset these issues.
7. The District has connected with Worcester Massachusetts to converse about how they were able to bring their bus drivers in house and how that has worked for them.
8. The team was thanked for trying to come up with an alternative to help with the transportation issues we have.

*On motion of **Committee Member Argeropoulos,** duly seconded by **Committee Member Bonilla,** it was moved to approve item 13-e, Bus Drivers Job Description. All were in favor and the motion passed.*

f. Amendments to policy Students 116.1: Expectations for Students in Athletics, Extracurricular and Co-Curricular Activities

Committee Member Turner stated that it is her understanding that we are amending this policy as we have had problems with transporting students. She stated that on page 47 of the agenda it talks about parents giving written consent to have their student transported and it spells out the requirements to be able to transport a student. She stated that her interpretation is that at the beginning of the season all signed releases would be collected and the coach would have a copy letting them know who has permission to ride with a parent if a bus has to be cancelled for transportation to a game. A list of who is qualified and willing to transport students will also be kept. She asked if it is acceptable for the coaches to hold onto this information?

Attorney Cox Pelletier stated that this is accurate. She was not envisioning that they would scramble las minute to collect the releases and the insurance information on the drivers. They would have a list of drivers who have met the qualifications and are approved to transport the students, along with their driver's license, registrations and insurance information.

Other questions and comments included:

1. This policy is valid for 60 days and prior to that time frame being up, they will review and possible ask for it to be continued or for additional revisions to be made.
2. Originally the insurance limit was set at $500,000 and since that time, it has been indicated that no one met this requirement and that this is a commercial amount and not an individual person's amount. A lot of parents had interest in driving but were not approved as they could not meet this requirement.

*On motion of **Committee Member Turner,** duly seconded by **Committee Member Perich,** it was moved to approve item 13-f, amendments to policy Students 116.1. Committee Member Leapley was opposed. All others were in favor and the motion passed.*

COMMUNICATIONS

18. Superintendent's Communications.

a) Board Report Email Update

There were no questions or comments on this item.

b) Fall Class Size Data – by Forrest Ransdell, Assistant Superintendent of Operations

Mr. Ransdell stated he provided everyone with some revised data that was he brought into the meeting this evening. The initial data included in the packet was incorrect and he stated that he had used his operational numbers for class assignments. The policy calls for our goal class sizes to be 20 for students grades K-4, 25 for grades 5-12 and 24 in lab classes. He stated that there are currently 109 sections, out of 359 sections across the school district that have class sizes that are over the recommendation, which is 30.3%. Anecdotally, he stated that the classes and the number of students in each class are down from last year significantly.

Questions and comments included:

1. We are not looking to hire more teachers at this time. We have the teachers needed to run the classes that we have in the district. The issue is having the classroom space within the buildings.
2. The district continues to work to decrease class sizes in the district.

3. It was stated that the Board needs to keep in mind that the numbers are a representation of the whole. For example, if you have Algebra II, Trigonometry Honors and they may have 33 students in the class but that is not a single section. That teacher could be teaching five sections.
4. It was stated that West High School has six classes that are over the recommendation of 25.
5. The Board was reminded that the class size limits were reduced but are also based on other conditions being met, including the hiring of teachers but also having the space in the buildings to house those teachers.
6. There are some buildings that have lower numbers is more than 1 of their classes in one subject and those classes could be merged to allow that teacher to move to another area in the district to lower those class sizes.
7. Policies in the district are to be adhered to by the Administration and the staff and the students. Policies are not a suggestion.
8. We should look to spread teachers out across the district.
9. It was stated that the administration is willing to hear any off line recommendations that Board Members may have to help with this.
10. This policy is aspirational and we want to make sure that we are getting to a point where we are meeting these requirements.
11. We need to look at these class sizes in the light of what those will cost to the district and keeping the budget in perspective.
12. We need to do what is best for our students, which is to decrease the class sizes in the district.
13. It appears that getting our high school courses done early did not help with being able to make sure that we had class sizes that were equivalent across the district and that we did not have too many classes that were very large or too many that were small.
14. It is still early in the year and the class sizes will change over the next few weeks.
15. We need to have some comparisons to other schools in the state.
16. We promised our families that we would have more AP classes for equity of our students and even if the class sizes are small, the classes need to be maintained.
17. It was stated that on page 12 there are 15 sections that are special education classes, these classes need to be small.
18. There are also classes with smaller class sizes that are targeting our ELL students.
19. Class sizes across the district, in all of our schools, need to be equitable.
20. The Board would like to hear from the High School principals on these class sizes.

21. We are currently down one Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning.
22. We need to make sure that the Long Term facilities plan is addressing these concerns of space within our schools to be able to decrease our class sizes.
23. Some classes are being combined. Such as if you have a section that is French IV and a section that is French V and they both have lower numbers, those classes can be combined.

c) Superintendent Updates

Dr. Gillis gave an update on Transportation. It was stated that transportation continues to be one of our major areas of focus and concern, and is a very fluid situation. Our transportation team has been working to respond and ensure all students have safe transportation between school and home. Just prior to our last full board meeting a little over two weeks ago, our new transportation provider, STA, informed the district they would be unable to continue to service to the entire slate of routes that they had agreed to service. Specifically, this immediately affected several charter schools and one private school. The schools included: Holy Family, Kreiva Academy, Mills Falls, Spark and Founders Academy. The district's transportation team immediately began to reach out to the affected schools, as well as the other vendors and partners to work to find coverage for those routes. By Friday, September 15, our transportation team had found coverage for home to school transportation for Kreiva, Mills Falls and Spark. Holy Family informed the district that families had stepped up to provide transportation for the time being until normal service was available. This left the largest of the charter schools, Founders Academy, as a final school to address. Since that time, our transportation team has continued to work to cover routes, and in fact met with STA and MTA late last week to further collaborate on solutions. This meeting helped us lead to an offering for Founders to provide full transportation home to school which began today. We've established a schedule across the district that involves early arrival and late departure for many of our students. One of our charter schools, Mills Falls, has rejected that schedule. Our expectation is that we'll be able to redeploy the small bus later for middle schools and Holy Family. She did want to stress we have a number of schools within our district who are also impacted by early arrivals and late dismissals. In particular, for two years, McLaughlin Middle School held that very same schedule. Our district is striving to eliminate such early arrivals and late departures, which notably impacts students in schools across the district, and we will notify families once we are able to meet the school. We have several items related to transportation that were on our agenda this evening. First, we brought forward a Transportation policy 100, which spells out transportation services provided

by the district. In that policy, the district currently goes above and beyond what is required by the state for student transport transportation. The proposed change that you approved this evening will allow us to the extent that the district is limited by transportation resources to flex back to the state requirement, which is providing transportation only for students in K to 12, who lived more than two miles. To be clear, we are still going to provide K to 12 transportation to the best of our ability as we roll forward. Second, we recommended updating our policy Students 116.1, which you also approved this evening. This modified the insurance requirements for families who want to carpool students in the event that the district sponsored transportation is not available for an extracurricular event. The change specifically addresses the level of insurance required for a family member who wanted to provide transportation. Finally, we brought forward the job description for bus drivers to allow the district to augment the workforce resources available to our vendors and proactively assist the needed response for our current transportation challenges. She wanted to thank the board for approving that job description as well this evening. We understand our contractors have limited driver resources. The approved job description will be a supplement, not anything to replace at this point in time. She also wanted to restate that the district team continues to focus on transportation and are focusing on that night and day in our attempts to get transportation squared away for all of our students and their families.

Questions and comments included:

1. The teamed was thanked for al the hard work that they have done regarding transportation.
2. If someone is reaching out to the district, they need to reach out to Kelly O'Brien Hebert on the transportation. Contact information for transportation will be provided on the website.

Regarding Dual Language Emersion Program

Mrs. Perron and Mrs. Doherty were present to speak. They stated that she is the Executive Director of English Learner's instruction. Last week, the district hosted two days of meetings to determine the feasibility of a dual language program. The meetings were facilitated by a national consultant, Alexandrea Guilamo from TaJu educational solutions. At the end of the sessions, the team felt it was feasible to begin implementation of a Spanish/English two way immersion program starting with kindergarten classrooms in the fall of 24/25. This program would be district wide, open to all students throughout the district. The two way model we chose would bring together native Spanish speakers and native English speakers with a 50/50 mix. There are many different instructional models within the dual language framework but the model that research shows is most effective is

the 90/10 model, which means 90% of the instruction is in Spanish to start and 10% in English, likely in Manchester that might be more of a modified 90/10 and looking more like an 80/20. A lot of that would depend on bilingual staffing availability across unified art programs. The district plans to host an informational meeting for Manchester staff and the community on October 4 at Memorial High School. We will have information out about that meeting as soon as possible and we acknowledge that the date is fast approaching but the team felt it was important to kind of seize the momentum after these initial meetings and get information out to the community as soon as possible to gauge interest. We will be the first district in the State of New Hampshire with this type of programming available.

Dr. Gillis stated that she has two last updates. We had our second annual State of the District last Thursday, followed by CelebratEd on Saturday, both events had incredibly positive attendance and good information that was shared back and forth. Of particular note, she was deeply touched by watching our students on Saturday up there on the stage and a number of you pointed out to me as we talked during the day, we forget, because we go up on stages, and we're by microphones quite often, that it's a pretty daunting task for a little person to go up there on the stage and belt out a song or present their work. Our students, they absolutely stepped up to the task. With everything that we've got going on, our students really showcased the good in our schools and what is possible for their outcome. She wanted to thank everybody for those two events and just remind everyone that good things are happening within the district.

19. Board of School Committee Members' Communications.

There were no items under Board of School Committee Members Communications.

20. Personnel Report.

Committee Member O'Connell removed item #6.

*On motion of **Committee Member Soule,** duly seconded by **Committee Member Want,** it was moved to approve the balance of the personnel report and the supplemental personnel report. All were in favor and the motion passed.*

The approved personnel report was as follows:

RESIGNATIONS/RETIREMENTS: CERTIFIED STAFF

Name	Position	Building	Salary
Michael Harding	Teacher - Health	Hillside	$43,050.00
Sheri Hatfield	School Psychologist	District	$84,701.00

LEAVES OF ABSENCE: CERTIFIED STAFF

Name	Position	Building	Salary
Ashley White	Teacher - English	Hillside	$61,740.00
Alyssa Harvey	Teacher - Elementary	Green Acres	$46,497.00
Jayna Rolon	Teacher - Elementary	Gossler	$44,006.00
Tony Dailey	Teacher - Elementary	Gossler	$44,002.00

NOMINATIONS: CERTIFIED STAFF

Name	Position	Building	Salary
Timothy Olden	Math Teacher	Southside	$79,190.00
Catherine Stavenger	Math/Literacy Interventionist .5	Gossler	$39,595.00
Nicholas Dobe	Teacher - Health	Hillside	$42,025.00
George Dovas	Special Education Teacher	Parkside	$79,190.00

RESIGNATIONS/RETIREMENTS: NON-CERTIFIED STAFF

Name	Position	Building	Salary
Alda Alvarez	Crossing Guard	Smyth	$15.89
Zachary Joy	Para-Educator II	West	$16.41
James Corson	Crossing Guard	Weston	$15.89
Judy Sylvia	Crossing Guard	Northwest	$15.89
Tammy Detjen	Para-Educator I	Parker-Varney	$15.45
Tina True	Administrative Assistant II	District	$18.90
Emmett Foss	21st Century Site Coordinator	Parker-Varney	$26,700.00

NOMINATIONS: NON-CERTIFIED STAFF

Name	Position	Building	Salary
Krystal West	Para-Educator I	Parker-Varney	$15.45
Doreen Ford	Para-Educator II	Parker-Varney	$15.97
Sejla Bajramovic	Para-Educator I	Green Acres	$15.45
Maria Sarfraz	Para-Educator I	Hillside	$15.45
Yusufu Juma Hamisi	JV Assistant Boys Soccer Coach	West	$2,454.10
Eileen Burke	JV Assistant Field Hockey	Central	$2,462.90
Kyle Bokuniewicz	Freshman Football Coach (Split)	Memorial	$1,732.50
Ryan Sosnak	Assistant Football Coach	Memorial	$3,703.00
Cali Hagen	Volleyball Coach	Parkside	$902.00
Alexis Mercado	JV Volleyball Coach	West	$2,462.90
Kurt Schulz	Cross Country Boys Coach	Memorial	$3,034.90

Kaitlin Buskirk	Para-Educator I	Green Acres	$14.45
Brittany Fitzpatrick	Para-Educator I	Parkside	$15.45
Melissa Desaulniers	Para-Educator I	Weston	$15.45
Tina True	Administrative Assistant III	Beech	$20.98

21. TABLED ITEMS

(A motion would be in order to remove any item from the table.)

There were no tabled items this evening.

22. NEW BUSINESS

1. Committee Member Soule
    a. CelebratEd was Saturday and it has grown over the years for our families and students. This year all 21 Schools participated and did different things. The bookmobile on Saturday gave out 847 books to our students. The goal next year is 1,000 books. She wanted to thank everyone who participated, volunteered and attend the event.
2. Committee Member Argeropoulos
    a. We need to hire an Assistant Superintendent. Our administration is overburdened. We also need to make sure that we get an HR Director in place. They are hard to come by across the state but we need to make sure that we are reaching out and trying to fill these spots. It was stated that research has been done to hep with marketing and they are moving forward.
    b. He has spoken with his co-workers in Nashua on the CelebratEd event and they have indicated how awesome this event is. He thanked everyone for all that they did on this event.
3. Committee Member O'Connell
    a. He thanked Committee Member Soule and Want for the inordinate amount of work and effort that they put in over the year for the CelebratED event.
    b. Demands are high on the superintendent and we need to make sure that we are providing her with the staff she needs. We need to look at the pay scale to make sure that we are competitive with districts and businesses around us. We should hire a Headhunter company to help with this process.
4. Committee Member Turner

a. She also commended everyone on the work of CelebratED and stated that she was there all day on Saturday. There were so many staff, teachers, principals, assistant principals and more that were there. This was the largest turnout that she has seen. The showcasing of so many talented athletes, from bands, dancing, choir and etc was amazing. This allowed our younger students to show up and see what is available to them as they go to middle school and high school. She thanked Committee Member Want and Soule and the committee on all the work that was done to make this happen. It was great to see all the students wearing their school gear and to be on stage performing.

5. Mayor Craig
    a. She stated that Memorial runs and exchange program and there are students coming from Germany that still need housing. This is the 40th anniversary of this program. and if anyone is available to host students it takes place from September 30th till October 18th. She stated that her daughter participated and they have hosted families and created bonds that continue even now.

23. A motion is in order to go into non-public session under the provisions of RSA 91-A:3 II (a, b, and c, e, j and l) and RSA 91-A:2, I (b): for the dismissal, promotion or compensation of any public employee or the hiring of any person as a public employee; and, for matters, which if discussed in public, would likely affect adversely the reputation of any person; consideration of negotiation of pending claims or litigation; consideration of confidential, commercial or financial information that is exempt from public disclosure under RSA 91-A:5, IV; consideration of legal advice provided by legal counsel, either in writing or orally; and, Strategy or negotiations with respect to collective bargaining.

7:48 p.m.

On motion of ***Committee Member Turner,*** *duly seconded by* ***Committee Member Argeropoulos,*** *it was moved to go into non-public session under the provisions of RSA 91-A:3 II (a, b, and c, e, j and l) and RSA 91-A:2, I (b): for the dismissal, promotion or compensation of any public employee or the hiring of any person as a public employee; and, for matters, which if discussed in public, would likely affect adversely the reputation of any person; consideration of negotiation of pending claims or litigation; consideration of confidential, commercial or financial information that is exempt from public disclosure under RSA 91-A:5, IV; consideration of legal advice provided by legal counsel, either in writing or orally; and, Strategy or negotiations with respect to collective bargaining.*

Roll Call: Committee Members Turner, Parr, Soule, Want, Bonilla, Tassey, Argeropoulos, O'Connell, Potter, Perich, Dion, Hamer, Leapley and Mayor Craig voted yes. Committee Member Gonzalez was absent. Motion passed.

24. A motion is in order to call the meeting back to order.

8:40 p.m.

*On motion of **Committee Member Perich,** duly seconded by **Committee Member Potter,** it was moved to call the meeting back to order. All were in favor and the motion passed.*

*On motion of **Committee Member Argeropoulos,** duly seconded by **Committee Member Turner,** it was moved to seal the minutes. All were in favor and the motion passed.*

*On motion of **Committee Member O'Connell,** duly seconded by **Committee Member Dion,** it was moved to approve item #6 of the personnel report. All were in favor and the motion passed.*

ADJOURNMENT

25. If there is no further business, a motion is in order to adjourn.

*On motion of **Committee Member Hamer,** duly seconded by **Committee Member Want,** it was moved to adjourn. All were in favor and the meeting adjourned at 8:41 p.m.*

True Copy. Attest.
Respectfully Submitted,
Angela M Carey
Clerk of Committee