

Mansfield Board of Education Meeting

February 6, 2014

Council Chambers 7:30 p.m.

Board Members: Mark LaPlaca, Chair, Randy Walikonis, Vice-Chair; Martha Kelly, Secretary, Susannah Everett, John Fratiello, Sarah Lacombe, Katherine Paulhus, Jay Rueckl, Carrie Silver-Bernstein

Agenda

- 7:30 Call to Order
7:35 Special Presentation
7:50 Hearing for Visitors
8:00 Communications (P. 1)
8:05 Additions to the Present Agenda

Reports:

- 8:10 Committee Reports
8:15 Report of the Superintendent
- MMS Field Trip (M) (P. 5)
 - Mansfield Professional Development and Evaluation Plan Update
 - Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC)
 - Class Size/Enrollment
 - 2014-2015 Proposed Budget – District Management, Support Services, Special Education, Other

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: (M)

January 30, 2014 Meeting (P. 7)

NEW BUSINESS:

- 9:50* Hearing for Visitors
9:55 Suggestions for Future Agenda

Adjournment

* Estimate

Mansfield Public Schools: Board of Education Goals – 2013-2014

- I) Help each student to be a confident and successful learner through differentiated instruction and support. Monitor student progress to ensure growth.
 - a. Engage and motivate each student.
 - b. Improve the mathematics, reading, science, and writing skills of each student to support college and career readiness.
 - c. Promote the cognitive, social, and emotional development of each student.
 - d. Support the full breadth of the district's programs, systematically review program offerings, and explore expanding programs.
 - e. Provide positive school climate through positive behavior support systems and encouraging character development to ensure student safety, health, physical, and emotional well-being.
 - f. Increase engagement and participation of parents/guardians in the education of their children.
 - g. Encourage the civic engagement of students.
 - h. Align our current Language Arts/ Reading, Science and Mathematics curriculum with the Common Core State Standards (CCSS).
 - i. Integrate current technology into the instructional program to extend student learning of subject matter and appropriate use of technology.
 - j. Explore additional support services for students in need of community and/or health services.
 - k. Ensure all student transitions within and between environments are supported and successful.
 - l. Incorporate curricula that investigate energy use and environmental issues.

- II) Attract, support, and retain qualified, motivated, and diverse professional staff.
 - a. Facilitate and encourage a positive, professional learning community.
 - b. Recognize teacher and staff effort and success regularly.
 - c. Foster a climate of mutual respect at all levels.
 - d. Maintain quality educational programs at multiple sites while adjusting staff levels and resources despite any changes in overall enrollment.
 - e. Support current and future school/district leadership to maintain and surpass current levels of student achievement.
 - f. Implement, with input and collaboration from certified staff, an effective professional development and evaluation program that supports the development of confident student learners and encourages the continued growth of all staff.
 - g. Provide regular opportunities for all staff to share feedback about the effectiveness of the district's programming.

- III) Monitor the District's quality and efficiency of facilities, sufficiency of space, level of security, adequacy of maintenance, and efficiency of student transportation.
 - a. Communicate quarterly with Town Council about ongoing needs for infrastructure, security, and technology.
 - b. In collaboration with the Town Council, develop and implement a long-term plan, supported by voters, to address prek-8 building needs.
 - c. Implement the improved school security and technology recommendations as approved by the Board.

- IV) Increase the effectiveness of the Board of Education.
 - a. Invest time and effort in Board members' learning and development.
 - b. Celebrate and acknowledge student achievements at Board meetings and other venues.
 - c. Foster and encourage communication between the Board and the communities it serves.
 - d. Collaborate with community members and organizations that support the District's students; including Mansfield Youth Services Bureau and Mansfield Advocates for Children.
 - e. Examine evidence regarding school readiness and review prekindergarten educational opportunities for Mansfield children.
 - f. Meet regularly with our state legislators.

- V) Plan for long-term fiscal sustainability.
 - a. Advocate for continued Education Cost Sharing which supports current programming and develop a plan to address any change to current funding level.
 - b. Continue to explore partnerships with other groups to maximize program effectiveness while containing costs.
 - c. Investigate alternative revenue, including public and private funding sources and grant opportunities.
 - d. Continue to educate ourselves and the public at large on long-term financial ramifications of balancing board goals and priorities.

Robert's Rules of Order General Guidelines

As outlined in the MBOE By-Laws, Robert's Rules of Order shall govern the proceedings of the Board unless otherwise provided by the by-laws. Following are some general guidelines from Robert's Rules and the By-Laws that should be followed to ensure efficient meetings and the rights of all members, aid decision-making and allow all to be heard.

1. During any discussion, a member must be recognized by the Chair before speaking.
2. A member will not be allowed to speak a second time until all other members wishing to speak have been allowed to do so.
3. Members should refrain from speaking a second time unless they have a new point to make or need to respond to new information.
4. As a general rule during discussion, comments should be directed through the Chair to the whole Board, rather than to other or individual members. All discussion is with the Board as a whole. Questions of the Superintendent or other non-BOE members making presentations should be directed to that individual.
5. Private conversations can be distracting to those speaking and should be limited.
6. During discussion, the Chair should try to provide equal time to those in favor or against a given topic or motion.
7. A majority is more than half of the votes cast, not a majority of the Board. For example: if only 7 members choose to vote, and the result is 4-3 in favor, the motion is adopted. Members who abstain are "refraining from voting".
8. If discussion on a *motion* is lasting a long time, any member can "move the previous question" or "call the question". They must be recognized by the Chair in order to do so. This is not debatable, and a two-thirds vote is required to pass. If two-thirds vote in favor of ending debate, the Board ends all discussion on a motion and then moves to an immediate vote on that motion.
9. Committee reports that recommend action should be submitted in writing. This allows for clear understanding of recommendations.

Celeste N. Griffin

From: Mark LaPlaca
Sent: Friday, January 31, 2014 10:49 AM
To: Kristin Gildersleeve; MBOE_BOE
Cc: Fred A. Baruzzi
Subject: RE: Mms gym teachers

Kristin,

Thanks very much, the Board takes any budget cuts very seriously and is currently engaged in the process of discussing the Superintendent's proposed budget. The Board is committed to maintaining the full breadth of the program, even in light of declining enrollment and rising personnel, healthcare, and facility expenses. Please stay involved as we grapple with how to do that.

Mark LaPlaca

Chair, Mansfield Board of Education

From: Kristin Gildersleeve [ctgildersleeves@gmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, January 30, 2014 2:10 PM
To: MBOE_BOE
Subject: Mms gym teachers

Rumors are swirling that board of Ed is considering decreasing gym teachers at mms. It is my opinion that this is a terrible idea. The students need more access to good physical education teaching, not less. This is such an important time for kids to find exercises that they may enjoy and continue with good habits for their entire lives. Thank you for your consideration,

Kristin Gildersleeve

Sent from my iPhone

Celeste N. Griffin

From: Mark LaPlaca
Sent: Friday, January 31, 2014 10:50 AM
To: Kathy Ward; MBOE_BOE
Cc: Fred A. Baruzzi
Subject: RE: Physical Educator MMS

Kathy,

Thanks very much, the Board takes any budget cuts very seriously and is currently engaged in the process of discussing the Superintendent's proposed budget. The Board is committed to maintaining the full breadth of the program, even in light of declining enrollment and rising personnel, healthcare, and facility expenses. Please stay involved as we grapple with how to do that.

Mark LaPlaca

Chair, Mansfield Board of Education

From: Kathy Ward [wardgervino@gmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, January 30, 2014 1:27 PM
To: MBOE_BOE
Subject: Physical Educator MMS

Dear Board Members,

I am the parent of a middle schooler and a former MMS school counselor. It has come to my attention that the Board is considering reducing the MMS Physical Education staff by .5 upon the retirement of Dr. Norton. If in fact that is what is being considered, I would to take a moment of your time to share some comments.

We all agree that physical activity is critical for our children's well being. One of the many wonderful things about the Mansfield Public Schools is the commitment to the related arts. While many school systems reduce the number of minutes kids have for PE and the Arts, Mansfield has continued to provide quality minutes and instruction.

It is already unfortunate that MMS students spend from 8:00-2:50 sitting down with little opportunity to move and be active even during X block. Granted, a few students are lucky enough to go to the gym during X, but not the majority. That leaves PE as the one time that many (too many) students are active during the week. I am assuming if we reduce the staff by .5, we may be reducing the number of PE minutes as well. As a parent and educator I think that is absolutely the wrong direction to go in.

As a middle school counselor, I can tell you that physical education class is often the one and only "classroom" that is comfortable for some kids. It is often the one place where they feel they can be successful...and just like the other kids!

Physical Education teachers quite often relate to kids on a more personal level than do classroom teachers. I believe that is because of the nature of instruction and the less formal atmosphere of the gym. I know this to be very true for several of our PE teachers in our school system.

If it were up to me...I would like to see our kids in the gym, on the courts, the track and the fields once a day everyday! I understand that cannot happen but please do not cut back on the programming levels we currently have.

I appreciate you taking the time to consider my comments. I also greatly appreciate all the time and effort that all of you give to the students and families of Mansfield. What a wonderful place to live!

Kathy Ward
51 Chatham Dr.

Celeste N. Griffin

From: Mark LaPlaca
Sent: Sunday, February 02, 2014 10:25 AM
To: K Knecht
Cc: MBOE_BOE; Fred A. Baruzzi
Subject: RE: Letter for Board of Education

Kathleen and John,

Thanks very much, the Board takes any budget cuts very seriously and is currently engaged in the process of discussing the Superintendent's proposed budget. The Board is committed to maintaining the full breadth of the program, even in light of declining enrollment and rising personnel, healthcare, and facility expenses. Please stay involved as we grapple with how to do that.

Mark LaPlaca
Chair, Mansfield Board of Education

From: K Knecht [kkstorrs2004@sbcglobal.net]
Sent: Friday, January 31, 2014 10:01 PM
To: Mark LaPlaca
Subject: Re: Letter for Board of Education

Hello!
Here is a Word attachment, and also a copy in the body of the letter. Formatting gets a bit lost, but hopefully this works for you.
Thanks,
Kathleen and John

Kathleen & John Knecht
137 Birch Road
Storrs, CT 06268
January 30, 2014
Mansfield Board of Education
Town of Mansfield

Dear Mansfield Board of Education:

This letter is to question the proposal to diminish Physical Education Teachers at Mansfield Middle School from 3 positions to 2.5. The goal of the Board of Education is to be fiscally responsible but to remain focused on the needs of the students. Reducing the Physical Education Staff at the Middle School is not addressing the needs of those students. Every student in the school is required to take Physical Education, therefore every single student is now going to feel the negative impact of this decision. We urge you to reconsider. One of the crucial elements in today's society is raising the awareness of the benefits of fitness and healthy lifestyles. Physical Education classes in Mansfield have always been led by teachers who are creative and encourage students, whether athletically inclined or not, to participate in a variety of ways to improve their self confidence, their well being, and to learn in a safe experiential environment. Physical Education is a crucial element for students, especially those in the Middle School grades. The current structure of the Physical Education classes provides teachers to work together to keep students engaged and to provide a variety of activities within the scheduled P.E.

class times as well as to provide students who desire access, to go during their X Block period. This works very well and promotes success and engagement!

We have had three sons progress through the Mansfield Middle School programs, and Physical Education has always been a highlight in their class schedule. Middle school students are growing and maturing and having the time to exercise their bodies makes it possible for them to then go back to classes which require their focus after having released some physical energy. Having the opportunity to go to PE during X Block is a valued part of the society of the Middle School. Given that the schedule does not permit students to have a daily PE class, this provides those who need a physical release daily the chance to have their needs met. Reducing staff will diminish this opportunity.

Another negative effect of reducing the staff by 0.5 will increase the wait time during class for students as they wait to be instructed or for their turn to participate. Students sitting or standing and waiting are not engaged, and this will likely lead to behavior incidents, which in turn will require the teacher to focus on that, which then leaves the class unable to proceed.

Again, a negative impact of the proposed change will be the increase in class size, or extension of time that it will take to complete units such as the Fitness Testing. Teachers will spend more time on the test, which will take away from their ability to allow students who have completed the test go on and do something productive with their time. Having enough supplies and equipment on hand for a larger class size may in fact require an increase in the budget itself, or a decrease in class offerings!

Larger class sizes will diminish the ability of teachers to provide individual instruction or to make personal connections with students. Physical Education class is a class like no other, and for many students their P.E. teacher is the person that they feel most connected with. Many of our students come from backgrounds that may be more fragmented or stressed and having the opportunity to have a teacher show you they care can save us all from having more costly interventions down the line. Reducing the staff levels will impact the ability for the teachers to build these relationships as the teacher will have to focus on controlling the crowded classroom and limit access to materials due to safety reasons. One of the stated objectives of the PE program at the K-4 level is to provide fundamental skills, and the Middle School program builds further on that so that students can feel successful during their high school years as well as prepare them for life skills, whether recreational or employment related. Numerous studies show the importance of living a healthy lifestyle including exercise and proper nutrition. Diminishing access to the current comprehensive Physical Education program currently in place will work against the wellness curriculum that we are promoting. Larger classes with more lag time will also possibly cause students to lose interest in the topics and turn away from sports altogether. We understand that this is being done from a cost perspective, but we strongly believe that there are other places that costs can be reduced if necessary. The projected \$61,131 in savings is not the item that is going to make the largest difference if included in the final budget presented to the town later this year.

Thank you for your dedication to support the educational needs of the students in our town!

Sincerely,

Kathleen & John Knecht

Kathleen & John Knecht

Mansfield Public Schools School Trip Request Form

Type of Trip:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Field Trip	<input type="checkbox"/>	Extracurricular/Club Trip	<input type="checkbox"/>	Day Trip
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Enrichment Trip	<input type="checkbox"/>	International Trip	<input type="checkbox"/>	Overnight Trip

Class, Club, or Organization: Green Energy Robotics Team

Requested by: **Doug Perkins**

Date Requested: **2/06/14**

Destination (Be Specific): **Vex World championships in Anaheim, CA
Anaheim Convention Center**

List academic, social, and/or civic expectations from the Mission Statement that will be met by taking this trip:

Students will compete on a world stage with robots from 24 different countries

Date(s) of Trip: **4/22/14 to 4/27/14**

Number of School Days to be Missed: **4**

Time of Departure: **6:00 AM 4/22/14**

Time Returning to School: **April 28 2014**

Number Attending:

Students Faculty Staff Parents Others

If the date(s) requested impact(s) instructional time, please give valid rationale why the trip cannot be taken during a non-instructional period:

World Championships are only on these days.

If substitute coverage will be provided, please describe how classroom instruction is likely to be affected:

Staff will leave lesson plans so that instruction here will not be affected.

School Trip Request: Cost Detail

Expense Detail	District Share (total)	Student Share (per)	Chaperone Share (per)
Substitutes	2 Teachers Four days/\$70.00		
Admission Fees		\$75.00	
Transportation		\$400.00	
Lodging		\$500.00	
Meals		\$325.00	
Other			
TOTAL	\$560.00	\$1,300.00	

Other Trip/Cost Related Notes: _____

How have students/parents been informed that financial assistance is available for students in need?

We will be conducting fund raising activities that parents will be informed of and asked to help with.

Are funds available to support students in need?

Fund raising will help defray trip expenses.

Section Below Completed By Administrator Only:

Is the itinerary required to be sent home to parents? Yes No

Number of chaperones required: Staff Members 2 Outside Personnel _____

This will be forwarded to the Mansfield Board of Education for approval.

Approved Denied Trip Itinerary required and attached

Administrators Signature: *Thanh Nguyen* Print Name: Thanh Nguyen

Date of Board Approval if Applicable: _____

Nurse's signature indicating that the names of students attending have been submitted 10 school days in advance of the trip: *[Signature]*

DRAFT

**Mansfield Board of Education
January 30, 2014
Minutes**

Attendees: Mark LaPlaca, Chair, Randy Walikonis, Vice-Chair, Martha Kelly, Secretary, Susannah Everett, Sarah Lacombe, Jay Rueckl, Carrie Silver-Bernstein
Absent: John Fratiello, Katherine Paulhus

The meeting was called to order at 7:30pm by Mr. LaPlaca.

SPECIAL PRESENTATION: Jessica Hodge, 4th grade teacher at Goodwin School, and students presented information about their Journeys Language Arts unit.

HEARING FOR VISITORS: Sheryl Lambert, Darren Dale, Jessica Neumuth, and Kathy Marshall spoke regarding the .5 Physical Education position in the proposed 2014-2015 budget.

COMMUNICATIONS: Email received from the Mansfield Middle School Physical Education teachers, Brenda Bissell, Adam Ramsdell, and Karen Norton

ADDITIONS TO THE PRESENT AGENDA: None

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Policy Committee: Mr. Rueckl reported the Policy Committee will meet once they have been able to review the draft policy from the Board's attorney.

REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT:

- **Be Well Update:** Ms. Jordan Frost, Project Specialist and Rita Kornblum, Community Health & Wellness Coordinator for Eastern Highlands Health District discussed the Be Well Program.
- **Religious Pluralism Update:** Mr. Baruzzi reported on the religious pluralism policy and how it is implemented at the schools.
- **2014-2015 School Calendar:** Motion by Mr. Walikonis, seconded by Mrs. Kelly to adopt the proposed 2014-2015 School Calendar. Vote: Unanimous in favor.
- **Enhancing Student Achievement:** One new project will be implemented at the schools in support of this activity.
- **2014-2015 Proposed Budget – Regular Instructional Program:** Mr. Baruzzi and the principals reviewed and answered questions related to the Elementary and Middle School Instructional Program proposed budget.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

- Motion by Mr. Walikonis, seconded by Mrs. Lacombe, to approve the minutes of the January 23, 2014 Meeting. Vote: Unanimous in favor with an edit to suggestions for future agenda.

NEW BUSINESS: None

HEARING FOR VISITORS: Adam Ramsdell, Physical Education Teacher at Mansfield Middle School, spoke regarding the .5 Physical Education position in the proposed 2014-2015 budget.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE AGENDA: Mr. Walikonis requested discussion regarding the voting at Vinton School.

Mr. Rueckl suggested there be a Press Release regarding the Technology Grant

Motion by Mrs. Lacombe, seconded by Ms. Everett, to adjourn at 10:03pm. Vote Unanimous in favor.

Respectfully submitted,
Celeste Griffin, Board Clerk