

Salem School Committee
Meeting Minutes
Monday, October 16, 2017

A Committee of the Whole (COW) meeting of the Salem School Committee was held on Monday, October 16, 2017 at 5:00 p.m. in the School Committee Chambers at Collins Middle School, 29 Highland Avenue, Salem, MA.

Members Present: Mayor Kimberley Driscoll, Mr. Patrick Schultz, Mr. James Fleming, Ms. Mary Manning, Ms. Kristine Wilson, and Ms. Deborah Amaral

Members Absent: Dr. Brendan R. Walsh

Others Present: None

Call to Order

Mr. Patrick Schultz called the Committee of the Whole (COW) Meeting of the Salem School Committee to order at 5:00 p.m.

Discussion on Review of Superintendent Margarita Ruiz's Evaluation

School Committee members carefully reviewed the provided documents of the Evaluation template, Assessment document dated November 7, 2017, Superintendent Self-Assessment for the past year with highlights in the areas of Student Learning, Professional Practice, and Goals and entire Educator Evaluation rubric to use as a tool. Mr. Schultz walked members through the documentation that members are to complete.

Step 1 is the *Assessed Progressive Towards the Goals* form that evaluates Superintendent Ruiz's approved goals from the prior year. Mr. Schultz reviewed the expectations. He noted that the form could not be completed due to the delay in student performance data from DESE.

Step 2 is the *Assessment Performance on Educator Standards*, which assesses how the Superintendent performed against each of the standards. Members discussed last year's evaluation and the start of this year's summative and evaluation process.

Discussion

Members discussed the Superintendent's contract dates.

Superintendent Ruiz's Self Evaluation

Superintendent Ruiz presented her self-assessment on Standard 1 that focused on the key areas of work: Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment, Evaluation, and Data Informed Decision-Making and talked about the development of the district's comprehensive Strategic Plan approved by the School Committee. The Strategic Plan was developed using a community engagement process that allowed strong participation of teachers, paraprofessionals, parents, school leaders, and community members. Superintendent Ruiz explained noted the continuation of the full implementation of the Standards Based report cards in grades K-8 in 2016 and 2017 school years and rollout to 9th graders in 2017 and 2018 school years. Superintendent Ruiz commented on the revised reading and writing curriculum in grades K-8 that is fully aligned with the standards-based report cards. Superintendent Ruiz reported that the district is piloting a new PALS assessment in Kindergarten. They also rolled out an accelerated literacy program in Middle School grades last year. They engaged in a cross-functional team last year selecting a platform for assessments that include an online assessment at the request of many teachers.

Students will be taking formative assessments online this year.

Discussion

Members engaged in discussion on a number of the highlights that Ms. Ruiz presented. Mr. Fleming who they attributed the authorship of the Strategic Plan to. Ms. Amaral responded that it was to the District Personnel, in partnership with the School Committee, who approved it. Ms. Ruiz said that the New Profit was there just to support the process throughout. They were the organizers and helping out. They took notes. They did a lot of what the School Committee Secretary does: taking the Minutes and organizing Agendas but as far as the content, under what is included in the plan, that was strictly a process that was done with the district, with community input, and the convenings. Ms. Manning said she was on the Steering Committee. She watched them all year because she had plenty of experiences with outsiders who came in and shared their feedback and it was not followed through with. The Steering Committee was totally organizational and supportive. Mr. Fleming commented on the tool kit that Ms. Ruiz mentioned, regarding teachers now having an amazing tool kit. He agreed and said he saw an example of the rosters teachers are using. He said it is a very good implementation of technique, and shared an example of the student quiet time after recess. Ms. Manning asked Superintendent Ruiz if the PALS assessment is an individual assessment. Ms. Ruiz said it was and that some parts of it can also be done in groups. Mr. Fleming asked if it is used across the board for all Kindergarteners. Ms. Ruiz responded that it was. Ms. Amaral asked about the students who do not speak fluent English. Ms. Ruiz said that it would depend on the level they were in. Level 1 and 2 would take the LEAD assessment.

Mayor Driscoll stated that online assessments involve both teacher and Information Technology and inquired as to how that worked in the first year of implementation of Whole School assessments online. Ms. Ruiz shared that the IT Department have been an amazing partner in this work. Members engaged further in the topic of new assessments. Superintendent Ruiz shared that decisions are never made by one person but by a cross-reference group of teachers and administrators in order to include everyone's input and make the best decisions. Ms. Ruiz informed that new assessments replace A-NET and are less expensive. The assessment tool, School City, will enable teachers to adjust and even create their own interim assessments in-between common assessments. Ms. Ruiz said that this is what they like about School City. They would chronicle the data. She would be able to look at the dashboard and see how all of their graders are doing in the Science Common assessment.

Briefing on Standard 1

Superintendent Ruiz reported they wrote all the curriculum maps for Social Studies aligning them to the States' standards. They completely replaced and revamped their K-12 curriculum. At the High School level, they also launched a group, which started out largely and is now a group of teachers that are looking to infuse a Social Studies curriculum. They also engaged in the revising and renewing of the Carleton Innovation Plan, which was successfully done. They successfully implemented the MCAS 2.0 online assessment in grades 4 and 8 as mandated by the state. All of the students were able to take the assessment online. Testing occurred without major hitches. In terms of Extended Learning time, the Salem YMCA was successfully incorporated as part of the Extended Day Model at the Bowditch School. Going to the YMCA as part of the Extended Day is now standard at Bowditch. Ms. Ruiz shared that they aligned the timing and location of summer programs to leverage resources and reduce overall expenses. Superintendent Ruiz said that she also collaborated with the Bentley Board in the evaluation of Marlana Alfonso, the Head of School. The Board is the primary evaluator signed as secondary collaborator. Ms. Ruiz stated that they continue to conduct instructional rounds. This is also standardized as part of the practice. It is done twice a year. They conduct observations and

provide school leaders with useful feedback on the areas of improvement. They have been doing that systematically since 2015 and continue to do so. Superintendent Ruiz shared that they still have some work in terms of college and career growing culture. Work began in High School in the creation of redesigning the Director of Guidance Counselor positions and the College and Career Readiness Center, in addition to the new positions that were created for the externships and career readiness coordinator. Ms. Ruiz told members they heard this year of the work that is being done in the redesigning of the High School. Ms. Ruiz stated that she had not come prepared this evening to talk about data. She wanted to reserve her data for the Student Learning goals. What she has is not the comprehensive list of the data. Ms. Ruiz ended her briefing stating that she pointed out the highlights. Much more work was done but she forwarded the highlights for the committee members.

Discussion on Standard 1

Mr. Fleming asked Superintendent Ruiz if the Bentley Board used the same evaluation tools that are required of them. Ms. Ruiz responded that they did.

Mayor Driscoll inquired if there is an established protocol or a practical way to engage leadership within the buildings or what their expectations were for classrooms. She asked Superintendent Ruiz for insight. Ms. Ruiz responded that they still require principals to conduct instructional rounds. They created a shared document, a folder on a Google Drive that uploads their feedback. Feedback is shared among all. Superintendent Ruiz gave the members further insight and details regarding instructional rounds. Mayor Driscoll clarified that teachers have some flexibility. Ms. Ruiz responded that they do depending on the schools' data and the patterns seen on the data.

Mr. Schultz asked if the district personnel looked at the feedback of principals and other evaluators. What they have heard is that it was not balanced at all/it was unbalanced; that there was an unbalanced approach to evaluations. Ms. Ruiz said they do that work several ways. As part of the evaluations of principals, Ms. Ruiz goes into Teach Point and reviews teachers' feedback. She, Kate Carbone, or Margaret Marotta provide feedback. They also have a consultant working with their district who provides rounds. She goes into classrooms with principals to conduct observations with the principals and guides the principals on the feedback. Ms. Ruiz continued that it is an area of continuous growth. Ms. Ruiz further explained why they are working closely with teachers to help them develop that eye of observation. They have different levels of proficiency among administrators. Some are less experienced and thus are developing that ability. Others have been at it for longer period of time. She does look before she rates principals at Standard 1. Ms. Ruiz continued that she is aware that the quality of the feedback has been improving, as understanding of its methodology has increased. Work still needs to be done.

Mr. Fleming commented that if they are not going to be talking about data they would then skip through *Total Enrollments*. Ms. Ruiz agreed. Ms. Manning asked Superintendent Ruiz who supervises or supports the Adjustment Councilors of the Career and College Department. Ms. Ruiz responded that it should be the Team Chair along with Margaret and one of the Principals. Ms. Manning clarified that it was not a specific position. Ms. Ruiz said that they are organized; they do not work in a vacuum.

Ms. Amaral asked Superintendent Ruiz if she knew how the graduation rate compare to the state. Ms. Ruiz responded that she did not have that data with her. Rate had changed from 5 to 4 and some of the numbers may have gone down because of it. Ms. Ruiz said she would get the data by the next meeting.

Superintendent's Briefing on Standard 2

Superintendent Ruiz guided the members to the 5 areas under Standard 2. Superintendent Ruiz stated that one of the big priorities of this past year was the establishment of a structure to provide students with a systematic wraparound support and the adoption of City Connects as a structure. There was much preparation last year for the implementation of City Connects this year. They only added one position to the budget related to City Connects. Ms. Marotta was able to organize her staffing in order to ensure that all of their schools have an adjustment counselor and a Citi Connects Coordinator. They have the Citi Connects supervisor that oversees Citi Connects Coordinators in the district. Last year, they did all the training and prepping. They are doing all class reviews this year in October and gathering data. Ellen Weinstein will be present this evening at the Regular School Committee meeting to provide more information. Superintendent Ruiz reported that they adopted Talent Ed platform for School Spring. They are still using School Spring. It is still used for anyone looking for a job in Salem. The positions are there, however viewers are forwarded to Talent Ed when applying. It is a much better system for keeping track of the entire application process.

Collective Bargaining

Ms. Ruiz stated that they have collaborated with the Policy Subcommittee and the Committee at Large to negotiate contracts for teachers, paraprofessionals, and administrators this year. Ms. Ruiz stated they had Operational Institute this summer. They met with all of the principals and went over all of the aspects of the district. Ms. Ruiz mentioned the hiring of two assistant principals at the Bowditch School, Superintendent advisory on staff attendance, addressed issues of safety in their buildings. Staffs are now supposed to sign in when entering the building. They also implemented A-SUB, an online staff tracking system to help ensure the district have more data.

Communications

Ms. Ruiz reported that there is improvement on consistency and level of communications from Central Office, E-News letter, etc.

Discussion on Bargaining

Ms. Manning asked about the hiring of the Bowditch School principal. Superintendent Ruiz said that things are going well. There are students who are resisting the structure that is being put in place. Students are used to a certain way and may resist change. The difference this year is that students are adjusting to the new Principal very well, and she only hears positive things from staff. Members shared feedback. Ms. Ruiz shared further insight on family engagement and Citi Connects.

Discussion on Communication

Mr. Fleming commented on the status of the website. Superintendent Ruiz said that the website is going to be redesigned this year, it will be one of the highlights next year.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Committee of the Whole (COW) School Committee this evening, Mr. Fleming entertained the motion to adjourn. Ms. Manning seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by:

Angelica Alayon, Secretary
Salem School Committee

Meeting Materials

COW Notice 10/16/17

Evaluation Template

Assessment Document

Superintendent past year self-assessment with highlights

Educator Evaluation Rubric tool