Salem School Committee

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, September 6, 2016

A regular meeting of the Salem School Committee was held on Tuesday, September 6, 2016 at 7:00 p.m. in the School Committee Chambers at Collins Middle School, 29 Highland Avenue, Salem, MA.

**Members Present**: Mayor Kimberley Driscoll, Dr. Brendan Walsh, Mr. James Fleming, Deborah Amaral, Ms. Mary Manning, and Kristine Wilson.

**Members Absent:**  Patrick Schultz

**Others Present**: Ms. Margarita Ruiz, Superintendent, Kate Carbone, Assistant Superintendent, Margaret Marotta, Assistant Superintendent, Chief of Communications Kelley Rice, Business Manager Kristin Shaver, and Chief of System Strategies Dr. Jill Conrad

**Call to Order**

Dr. Walsh called the Regular Meeting of the Salem School Committee to order at 7:00 p.m.

**Approval of the Agenda**

Mr. Fleming moved to approve the agenda as presented. Ms. Wilson seconded the motion. The motion carried.

**Approval of Minutes**

Mr. Fleming moved to approve the minutes of the August 22, 2016 Regular School Committee meeting as amended. Ms. Wilson seconded the motion. The motion carried.

**Questions and Comments from the Audience**

Dr. Walsh announced that the School Committee would not be taking up the matter of the Resolution to Not Raise the Existing Cap on Charter Schools in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts this evening as all members are not present this evening. He noted that the matter would be taken up at the next meeting on September 19, 2016. He also noted that there was a large audience in attendance this evening and stated that those who wished to speak on the matter may do so this evening as the matter is on the agenda.

Ms. Gray of 73 School Street addressed the School Committee and spoke against raising the cap on charter schools and relayed her experiences as a student at Salem Academy Charter School noting that the later transferred to Collins Middle School.

Margaret Crosby of 34 Thistle Street addressed the School Committee and stated that she is a part time Salem Public Schools employee and has also worked in the Boston Public Schools. She stated that her concerns are about how students with special needs are served noting that there needs to be more inclusion for special education students.

Ben Winthrop of 3 Winthrop Street addressed the School Committee and stated that he is concerned that charter schools are not controlled by the elected School Committee that the citizens elect in Salem and urged people to vote No on Question 2.

Nicole Zimmerman addressed the School Committee and stated that she attended Salem Academy Charter School from grades 6-10 and she is not a fan. She talked about discipline and noted that she attended North Shore Tech in the 11th grade.

Mrs. Zimmerman addressed the School Committee and stated that her concern was that the discipline at SAC was to take students out of the classroom and there were no accommodations made. She stated that he daughter had to have a tutor and online classes to catch up.

Dr. Alexandra Pineros Shields addressed the School Committee and urged the members to support Dr. Walsh’s resolution. She stated that she has concerns about charter schools noting the funding structure and the lack of public oversight by the local School Committee.

Ms. Levy addressed the School Committee and stated that she is a former Salem Academy Charter School student and loved it. She stated that she was given opportunities there that resulted in her being accepted to Dartmouth College. She stated that she tutors a young boy who was unsuccessful in the Charter School lottery and was very disappointed that he would not be attending the school. She stated that there needs to be more Charter School seats for families that want to send their students to them.

Liz McGovern of 41 Webb Street addressed the School Committee and stated that she is the Co-Chair of the Salem Special Education Advisory Council and announced that they will be holding their first forum of the year on September 22, 2016 at 6:00 p.m. in the School Committee Chambers. She reported that Superintendent Ruiz will be addressing the group. Childcare will be provided.

Ms. McGovern also addressed the School Committee and stated that she would urge the School Committee to support the resolution against raising the charter school cap. She stated that it is not just about Salem and it will affect the entire state. She stated that the cities and towns need the money that goes to charter schools and states that Salem loses $4 million dollars a year now.

Fawaz Abusharkh addressed the School Committee and stated that he is in favor of increasing the cap on charter schools. He reviewed a list of misconceptions about charter schools that people have noting that they are public schools that answer to DESE. He stated that they have a lottery to choose students for the charter schools and noted that Salem officials draw the lottery for the Salem Academy Charter School. He stated that the only difference between Salem Academy and North Shore Tech is that the North Shore Tech hires people to serve on their Board and there are no elected officials from any community serving on that Board.

Mr. Abusharkh stated that we need better choices and parents should have more choices to send their children too. He stated that the only good schools are charter schools. He noted that SAC is number 14 in the state and explained that they find a way to succeed. He also stated that elected officials do not always make the right decisions.

**Action Items**

1. Deliberation on the Resolution to Not Raise the Existing Cap on Charter Schools in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts – Tabled 8/22/16

Mr. Fleming moved to table the matter to the September 19,2016 School Committee meeting. Dr. Walsh seconded the motion. The motion carried.

1. Deliberation on the second reading of the revision to Policy 5219 Teaching About Drugs, Alcohol and Tobacco

Ms. Amaral moved approval. Dr. Walsh seconded the motion. The motion carried.

**Superintendent Report – Margarita Ruiz**

Superintendent Margarita Ruiz addressed the School Committee and reported on the following events and activities in the Salem Public Schools:

Ms. Ruiz reported that on August 31st she had a privilege to address 80 Salem High School students who are serving as Peer Mentors and are volunteering their time to mentor the Salem High School Freshman. She explained that they will be encouraging students to participate in sports, clubs and activities at Salem High School. She noted that this program will reinforce the positive culture of building leaders at Salem High School.

Ms. Ruiz reported that she was excited to welcome Salem Teachers back to school this year and noted that it is her favorite day of the school year. She reported that the annual convocation was held at Salem High School on August 31st. She explained that the district will continue to align our work with the Accelerated Improvement Plan and to encourage family and community engagement.

Ms. Ruiz reported that the Strategic Planning Process is underway and noted that there will be many opportunities to engage in this important process.

**Presentations and Reports**

**Presentation on Teachers Summer Learning Opportunities for the 2016-17 School Year**

Assistant Superintendent Kate Carbone and Assistant Superintendent Margaret Marotta made a presentation on Summer Learning Opportunities for Teachers. Ms. Carbone reported that teachers planned and facilitated most of the summer PD sessions and noted that workshops allowed for teacher collaboration and planning. She noted that they received great feedback from teachers on the programs. She also noted that the sessions focused on strengthening teacher content and knowledge in key areas.

Ms. Carbone reported that the featured sessions for teaching and learning focused on Literacy and Math, Science and Standards Based Practices.

Ms. Marotta reported that featured sessions for Pupil Personnel Services focused on providing a positive welcoming climate for students and reported that 25 district staff attended a three day training session on Facing History and Ourselves on difficult conversations about race and identity in schools. She also reported that 71 staff members attended training on Safety Care Certification, learning how adults inadvertently contribute to crisis situations and about supportive interventions that prevent crisis.

Ms. Marotta reported that 35 nurses and SAC’s attended training on screening tools and supports to prevent and reduce drug and alcohol usage. She also noted that 10 PBIS Coaches attended a multi-day conference leading sustainable tiered systems of intervention.

Ms. Marotta also reported that 21 staff attended trainings on supporting students with ASD via New England Center for Autism. She also reported that 25 staff attended training offered by Landmark School on topics related to educating students with learning disabilities and all special education team chairs attended IEP Boot Camp to improve IEP’s and services to students with disabilities.

Director of ELL, Rebecca Westlake addressed the School Committee reported on featured sessions offered by the Office of English Language Learners. She reported that 27 ESL teachers attended a 3-day teacher institute to collaborate and plan curricula and learn new pedagogical language practices. She also reported that 15 principals, Assistant Principals, Coaches and Teacher Leaders attended a 3-part leadership series on equitable school structures for English Language Learners.

**Presentation on Preparation for the 2016-17 School Year**

Ms. Ruiz reported on the Leadership Structure Cohesion of the School District, noting that they are leveraging our human capital to accelerate improvement. She explained that the leadership team participated in a four day Leadership Institute. She was joined in the presentation by Emily Ullman, Kate Carbone, Margaret Marotta and Jill Conrad.

Emily Ullman, Director of Extended Learning Time reported that Day 1 of the Institute featured a presentation by Dr. Hal Colston, Director of Partnership for Change on Visioning Engagement: Not About Us, Without Us. She also reported that Heidi Guarino, Senior Consultant with Education First made a presentation on Stakeholder Engagement and Outreach: 10 Best Practices.

Ms. Ruiz and Kate Carbone reported on Day 2 – Standards Based Practices and Effective Data Use.

Ms. Carbone reported that the Standards Based Practices provided in depth training for leaders on three key standards based practices – unpacking standards, formative assessments, and grading student work against standards. She noted that Vanguard teachers facilitated the breakout sessions.

Ms. Ruiz reported that the session on effective data use focused on coaching on planning/scheduling data cycles, sharing tools to inform data work, and time for planning with the team.

Margaret Marotta reported that Day 3 focused on Access for All. She reported that the three main foci of instruction were consistent and clear classroom routines, pre-teaching vocabulary, pairing visuals with verbals. She also noted that school leaders engaged in stations around the foci of instruction and planned for future professional development for their staff.

Chief of Systems Strategies Dr. Jill Conrad addressed the School Committee and reported on the Operations Leadership Institute that was held on Day 4. She stated that it focused on human capital management. She also noted that a Back to School Check In meeting was held on August 25th where brief updates from all operational departments were given and expos and exchanges between Principals and Operational leaders took place.

Dr. Conrad reported that 117 new hires were processed over the summer and of that – 65 of them were new teachers. She stated that there are 38 open positions at this time although some have been filled since last Friday. She also reported that 37 teachers resigned over the summer.

Mayor Driscoll asked if any feedback was given from teachers who resigned. Dr. Conrad stated that there is no exit interview process in place and that is something that they need to work on.

Dr. Conrad reported that other highlights of their work include new, more efficient onboarding procedures, cleaning up the substitute list and improving their recruiting strategy. She also reported that they have been following up on background checks and finger printing required and the renewal of staff CORI’s.

Dr. Conrad reported that there are new modules for MUNIS Self Serve & Absence Tracking and new this year is the Superintendent Advisory – Absence Tracking System.

Dr. Conrad reported that the Parent Information Center is now registering all students for all grades and reported that there are a total of 4,122 students registered for the Salem Public Schools as of September 1st. She noted that 150 of those students are new to Salem. She also reported that they are improving procedures and collaboration with Pupil Personnel Services, ELL, and other departments.

Business Manager Kristin Shaver addressed the School Committee and reported that they have implemented the AESOP System which is a new absence tracking system for staff. She also noted that transportation has been processing applications all summer and there is a new online bus application. She also reported that bus routes and rosters were distributed to all principals by August 25th and bus passes have been delivered to the schools for opening day. She also reported that the district has purchased a new 77 passenger school bus.

Ms. Shaver reported that the Food Services Department has new uniforms this year. She also noted that the Freight Farm at Salem High School is providing vegetables which have been harvested and served in the summer meals program. She noted that 24,000 meals were served through the summer feeding program.

Ms. Shaver reported that the Building Services Department has been busy all summer getting the buildings ready for the start of school. She reported that the lighting at the Bentley School has been upgraded, the first and second floor lobbies of the Nathaniel Bowditch, two offices and two classrooms have been repainted. She also reported that a new playground was installed at the Bates School noting that parents Sarah Murphy and the Bates PTO led the effort and were assisted by the building services department.

Ms. Ruiz reported that Director of Technology Matt Killen was unable to attend the meeting this evening so she will be giving the update on technology. She reported that the IT Department was transferred to the City of Salem as of July 1st and Matt is part of the SPS Management Team. She reported that there have been some new staff members hired and the Aspen SIS Conversion trainings have been held for staff. She also reported that Blackboard Connect is the new robo information system to notify parents and communicate with families. She also reported that work continues on the WiFi buildout and should be fully upgraded by the end of September.

Ms. Ruiz reported that the district has been working on the Emergency Responsiveness Plan and reported that safety manuals have been completely revamped and have been provided to every teacher and classroom in the district. She also reported that everyone entering a school building will be required to sign in and sign out.

Ms. Ruiz also reported that ALICE trainings will been held in all schools and information provided in the training manuals have been provided to all staff. She reported that online training will start in September and onsite trainings will be held in November. She noted that the when drills are held for staff and students they will be presented in a developmentally appropriate manner.

**Finance Report**

1. **Approval of Warrants**

There were no warrants presented for approval this evening.

Mr. Fleming moved to approve the warrants as stated. Ms. Manning seconded the motion. The motion carried.

**Budget Transfer** There were no budget transfer requests this evening.

**Subcommittee Reports**

**Policy Subcommittee**

Ms. Amaral reported that the Policy Subcommittee met this evening to review the 6000 policy series. She also noted that they would be meeting on September 15, 2016 to discuss the policy on Students in Arrears on School Lunch and Breakfast payments.

**School Committee Concerns and Resolutions**

Ms. Manning suggested that the School Committee vote to change the meeting time of the September 19, 2016 Regular Meeting from 7:30 p.m. to a 7:00 p.m. start time. She noted that the matter is governed by policy and the Policy Subcommittee is currently reviewing the 6000 series and may recommend permanently changing the time but until that policy is passed it needs to be voted on to change the time of the meetings.

Ms. Amaral moved to start the September 19, 2016 School Committee meeting at 7:00 p.m. Mr. Fleming seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Mr. Fleming recalled that earlier in the meeting there was reference to the North Shore Tech School Committee and the membership of it. He reported that the City of Salem School Committee appoints a representative to that School Committee as does each City of Town that is in the North Shore Tech Regional School District.

**Questions and Comments from the Audience Regarding the August 22, 2016 Agenda**

Liz McGovern of 41 Webb Street addressed the School Committee and reported that the Salem SEPAC is in the process of planning their events and fundraisers for the coming school year and recalled that some of the topics they covered last year were Basic Rights, Technology, and Transition Planning. She reported that they are always happy to have new members and urged parents to join them noting that they are trying to grow in visibility and impact.

Fawaz Abusharkh addressed the School Committee and complimented Ms. Ruiz and her leadership team on the improvements they have made to the Salem Public Schools. He stated that it is a privilege and an honor to have her here.

Mr. Abusharkh stated that parents have a right to choose what they feel is best for their children and we need to protect parent’s rights. He further noted that there are waiting lists for Charter Schools so that more students can attend them. He also reiterated his statements made earlier in the evening stressing that Charter Schools are public schools and are publicly funded.

Dr. Alexandra Pineros Shields addressed the School Committee and stated that the Salem Public Schools have made a lot of progress in the last year and she is pleased that her daughter will be attending school here. She reported that at one point she and her family thought about moving out of Salem and reconsidered and reported that she is happy that she stayed.

**Adjournment**

There being no further business to come before the School Committee this evening, Mr. Fleming moved that the School Committee adjourn the meeting. Ms. Amaral seconded the motion. The motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

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Eileen M. Sacco, Secretary

Salem School Committee

**Meeting Materials and Reports**

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MASC Resolution on Charter School Cap

Policy 5219 Teaching About Drugs, Alcohol and Tobacco