

**Salem Public Schools
Salem School Committee
Meeting Minutes
August 16, 2021**

On August 16, 2021 the Salem School Committee held its regular School Committee meeting at 7:00 PM using the Zoom platform.

Members Present: Mayor Driscoll, Ms. Mary Manning, Mr. Manny Cruz, Ms. Amanda Campbell, Dr. Kristin Pangallo, and Ms. Ana Nuncio

Members Absent: Mr. James Fleming

Others in Attendance: Superintendent Stephen Zrike, Assistant Superintendent Kate Carbone, Assistant Superintendent Mary DeLai, Chelsea Banks, Liz Polay-Wettengel, Marc LeBlanc, Linda Farinelli, Glenn Burns, Adam Colantuoni, Charlene Moske-Weber, and Dr. Clovene Campbell

Call of Meeting to Order

Mayor Driscoll called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. Mayor Driscoll read the new Public Participation Policy 6409 and also explained the request for Spanish interpretation for participation.

Approval of Agenda

Mayor Driscoll requested a motion to approve the Regular Agenda. Ms. Manning motioned and Ms. Nuncio seconded. A roll call vote was taken.

Ms. Manning	Yes
Dr. Pangallo	Yes
Ms. Nuncio	Yes
Ms. Campbell	Yes
Mayor Driscoll	Yes

Motion carries 5-0

Approval of Consent Agenda

Mayor Driscoll requested a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Dr. Pangallo motioned and Ms. Manning seconded. A roll call vote was taken.

Ms. Manning	Yes
Dr. Pangallo	Yes
Ms. Nuncio	Yes
Ms. Campbell	Yes
Mayor Driscoll	

Motion carries 5-0

Mr. Cruz entered at 7:12 pm

Public Comments

The School Committee Secretary announced that there were several public comments.

Michelle Grundy, 6 North Pine Street requested that her comment be read aloud.

Would the school department be willing to provide N-95 masks to teachers/staff and KN-95 masks for kids? Dr. Michael Osterholm, Director of the Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy strongly suggests that we could stop the spread of the Delta variant better if people wore more effective masks like the N-95 to protect us from aerosol spread. (Even just one per staff member).

Julia Knisel, Becket Street requested that her comment be read aloud.

According to the latest published COVID risk level data, Salem is nearing the "yellow" category with 9.2 average daily cases per 100,000 in population. What community risk level (or other threshold) has the District and School Board set to reinstate the remote learning option, especially for students who are not yet eligible to get vaccinated?

Sarah Dulong, 2 Arnold Drive requested that her comment be read aloud.

Dear School Committee Members and Superintendent Zrike,

I am happy and relieved to see how serious Salem is taking covid-19 and helping protect our kids in school and happy with the new recommendations being added to help protect kids and the community. With that being said I still have a pit in my stomach as a parent of two elementary age kids who don't qualify for vaccines yet that even with all this strong mitigation it is still not enough. I feel two areas of concern for me are unmasking at any point in school and not having the option of remote school.

I really want to send my kids in person...my kids want to go back in person...last time they were in person was march 2020. I am concerned that the schools are still looking at last year's success as a point to show how this year will work the same way with even less mitigation in some areas for a much more contagious strain of the virus. Last year my child's elementary school did classrooms by cohorts so they could have smaller classroom sizes which they are not doing this year which I don't understand why when this year we have a much more contagious strain.

Though my biggest concern is the unmasking inside school. I spoke with my friend's wife last night who is a pediatric ICU Dr in Nyc (to help me navigate the true risks to my children going back in person from a scientific viewpoint and coming also from a Dr who deals with covid in children every day) and told her the efforts Salem is doing which she commended Salem on and I discussed my biggest concern is the mask breaks indoors and eating inside (breakfast lunch snack) which she agreed on is not ideal during this delta variant. I know at my school parents volunteered for lunch breaks but mask breaks need to be done outside too. It negates wearing masks in school if everyone takes them off inside for breaks especially with the highly contagious delta variant. Also we discussed the kind of mask that is needed to protect your child with delta is a kids kn95 or 5 layer mask. Having those masks can help reduce transmission in big ways..has the schools looked into providing these kinds of masks to the younger students who are not eligible for vaccines yet. With the outdoor initiative in Salem with all the elementary schools I feel that this should be taken advantage of 100% by the schools and use it as much as possible. We all know the outdoors is the safest place right now with the virus..I think outdoor learning for these young kids who aren't vaccinated should be a crucial part of keeping them safe this year, keeping mask breaks outside so they can remove them safely without possibly infecting others as well as getting fresh air which is so important and let students opt out of breakfast lunch and snack inside because I know for me personally I don't want my kids eating inside a school right now. Second is the remote option. I feel completely frustrated as a parent that this was not taken into consideration or even had questionnaires sent out to look at interest in it. Both my children had an extremely successful year doing remote and it would have been ideal to have this option until they had the chance to be vaccinated. It is upsetting that our neighboring town of Peabody had a well thought out robust remote program and we don't. I know we didn't know about Delta last school year but we know about it now and we need to take this seriously and give choices to families who may not feel comfortable sending their child in person until vaccinated..home-school shouldn't be the only option ..people want to keep their kids safe (or high risk family members) but also still be a part of their community remote offered that. I don't understand why it's not being discussed and offered.

*Thank you for all that you are doing and I hope you take into consideration what I have said in my letter as well
Thank you, Sarah Dulong*

Danielle Norris-Gardiner, 19 Boardman Street requested that her comment be read aloud.

Delta is a different beast, and from what we are seeing in schools that have already started in other parts of the country, what worked well last year will not be enough this year. I feel very strongly that we must ask our children and staff members to "hold the line" and exercise great ingenuity and strict protocols for just a bit longer. Vaccine eligibility for the 12 and under set is within sight, and it would be heartbreaking for kids to get ill when they've already sacrificed so much the past 18 months. I urge schools to mandate that mask breaks should only happen outdoors, breakfasts should be eaten outdoors if possible or at the very least finished before the morning bell rings so everyone is masked up when school starts. Outdoor lunches should happen well into the late fall with an opt-in option for parents to have their kids eat even in colder winter temperatures if dressed properly. I tell my kids that "cold is better than COVID." 15 minutes of above freezing temperatures is not perilous, and it will not leave them with lasting health issues. We cannot say the same of the Delta variant.

Lise Hansen-Damato, 53 Hawthorne Street requested that her comment be read aloud.

I really appreciate how comprehensive the plan is - this in conjunction with the measures that were approved by SC last week (which I strongly support). However, I'm very concerned that there has been no public discussion about plans for children to continue their learning from home if they must quarantine. Is there a plan? If so, it would be great for the district to share that. If not, I hope that one is in the works. If I have Covid, and my kid is healthy and able to learn but simply not allowed to be in school, he should not miss two weeks of learning time. And I'm pretty sure he'd be labeled truant at that point. We know that infections will happen. We know that quarantines will be required. Lets be prepared to continue learning whenever possible.

Joanne Scott, Boys & Girls Club of Greater Salem requested that her comment be read aloud.

Our Boys & Girls Club is excited to collaborate with Shamus Mruk and other Salem High School Staff at the Community program at Saltonstall School on Tuesdays and Thursdays. We look forward to helping to give kids a hands up to a fulfilling and rewarding life!

Report from the Student Representative - Hawa Hamidou Tabayi

None

Educator's Showcase

None

Report of the Superintendent

a. Presentation regarding the Community Office in Salem High School

Superintendent Zrike announced that there would be a presentation from the Community Office in Salem High School. Shamus Mruk and Scott Tombleson, assistant principals and Glenn Burns, principal of the high school came before the Committee to give an update on the Community Office at the High School. Mr. Mruk reported that at the conclusion of 1st quarter at the high school, 88% of 9th graders were failing at least one course. He added that statewide 96% of 9th graders who do not fail a class in the 9th grade graduate on time but on the other hand, 75% of 9th graders who failed four classes do not graduate on time. Therefore, they are focused on ensuring that our 9th graders are on track. He explained the Community Office is a place to connect with SHS students and families. Tutoring and support is available, there is access to guidance counselors, childcare, technology resources and hot meals are offered. There are teachers and staff who volunteered for the first 2 months and ROOT provided meals. The SHS intern program and First Church in Salem supported the child care program. The results of

the offering have been that 2x more classes have moved from failing to passing with increased GPAs. This has impacted students with EIPs, emerging bilingual students, and 9th graders. Enrollment grew throughout the year with 202 SHS students who accessed the Community Office. Students continued to attend through the summer which helped with learning gaps from virtual school, and offered support for the increased social emotional needs. They will continue to offer tutoring, hot meals, free childcare and technology resources 2 evenings a week at Saltonstall location. They would like to expand their services to partner with the Boys and Girls Club, offer athletics, arts and activities for SHS students and create a community center for the students and families to connect with SHS.

b. Back to School Update

1. Health and Safety Recommendations Part 2

Dr. Zrike began with explaining the health and safety regulations. Dr. Zrike introduced Dr. Campbell who he said was available to answer questions. Ms. Banks was introduced and explained that part 1 of the health and safety recommendations were discussed last week and she would now explain the second part of the recommendations. She stated that the only students that need to be isolated are those who test positive. She does not believe that close contacts will need to be quarantined. Rather, they can test and stay with the rapid on-site testing now available. In order to participate, a parent consent form, which is being sent home, will need to be signed and returned. The new recommendations include: vaccine or biweekly Covid testing for staff and high respiration activities. Dr. Zrike announced that there will be a SPS staff forum tomorrow night regarding the recommendations.

Dr. Zrike addressed the question of remote learning. He announced that only 7 districts in the state applied and were granted approval and explained that the reason SPS did not apply is because there were not many requests for it.

Mr. Cruz asked what would happen if a student tests positive. Dr. Zrike responded that we do have a plan, but will need to speak to the Unions and will share with families next week.

Several other questions were asked regarding masks. Dr. Campbell recommends doing as many activities as possible outdoors. If indoors, she recommends trying physical distancing and staggering lunches and breaks. She also answered that children do not necessarily need a specific mask, as long as it fits well then it works.

Dr. Pangallo asked if vaccines are considered effective even though they were quickly introduced. Dr. Campbell responded that the technology was developed pre-Covid. Normally it takes years to approve but technology has made the process much quicker. There was also a question from Ms. Manning regarding what exactly is in the vaccine and Dr. Pangallo explained that the makeup of the vaccine cannot change anyone's DNA, which are some of the concerns people had.

Dr. Zrike announced some of the highlights for the school year, such as the new high school schedule and start times, facility safety updates, and small class sizes with new outdoor spaces.

Dr. Zrike introduced Assistant Superintendent Kate Carbone who reported on the preschool updates. She explained that there are 14 preschool classrooms and added 72 seats, and are still looking to hire teachers for PE and art. They have selected a preschool curriculum and will be partnering with 3 community partners and professional development will be done jointly with these partners. She explained that 2 lotteries were held and they will not be holding a 3rd, just filling seats as applications come in through the Parent Information Center.

2. Enrollment

Dr. Zrike reported that the numbers for kindergarten are low. The high school has 843 students, of which 167 are seniors. He said that at the moment, we have an increase of 41 students from last year's October 1 enrollment.

3. Staffing

Dr. Zrike introduced the new Executive Team members for the district. He announced that there are still some open vacancies for staff although they are working to fill them.

Dr. Zrike announced that going forward we would be providing Spanish interpretation for all the School Committee meetings and also provide a Spanish recording.

c. ESSER 3 Overview and Planning Presentation

Dr. Zrike introduced Assistant Superintendent Mary DeLai who gave an update on the ESSER funds. She outlined the amount awarded for each fund: ESSER I, ESSER II and ESSER III (which has not been applied for yet), how much has been expended and what is still available.

Ms. Campbell asked for an update on the targets that were set for the preschool program. Dr. Zrike responded that unfortunately some of the targets were not met for many different reasons and said they would forward more information once the program is settled. Ms. Nuncio asked if the parents are denying the seats due to ½ day enrollment rather than offering a full day program or 4 days vs 5 days? Dr. Zrike explained that the new classrooms did offer full day, but some of the parents require extended days, which the preschool does not offer. Dr. Pangallo added that the Curriculum Subcommittee will be meeting to discuss the Preschool curriculum. Ms. Manning asked about the frequency of the cleaning at the schools and is everything we put in place last year still happening? Ms. Banks responded that last spring the CDC modified their recommendations on cleaning since the virus is not so much a contact spread concern but a respiratory concern. Therefore, the schools are still doing a daily cleaning and the deep cleaning is now done once a week.

Ms. DeLai announced that they are fully staffed with custodial staff. She said that they are having the HVAC systems checked again this year to make sure that they are all working efficiently and appropriately. There is also a change with buses that they will not be cleaned and sanitized between each run, but at the end of each day.

Old Business

None

New Business

a. Acceptance of donation from First Church in Salem in the amount of \$1,500 for the SHS Community Office Program

Mr. Cruz made a motion to accept the donation from First Church in Salem in the amount of \$1,500 for the SHS Community Office Program. Ms. Manning seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken.

Ms. Manning Yes

Mr. Cruz Yes

Dr. Pangallo Yes

Ms. Nuncio Yes

Ms. Campbell Yes

Mayor Driscoll Yes

Motion carries 6-0

b. Deliberation and vote to accept the job description for the District Coordinator of Translation and Interpretation Services

Mr. Cruz made a motion to accept the job description for the District Coordinator of Translation and Interpretation Services. Mrs. Nuncio seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken.

Ms. Manning Yes

Mr. Cruz Yes

Dr. Pangallo Yes

Ms. Nuncio Yes

Ms. Campbell Yes

Mayor Driscoll Yes

Motion carries 6-0

Mr. Cruz reported that the Personnel Subcommittee had reviewed the job description and gave their feedback. The committee unanimously supported this.

c. Deliberation and vote to accept the recommendations of the Superintendent for school reopening health and safety part 2.

Ms. Manning made a motion to accept the recommendations of the Superintendent for school reopening health and safety part 2. Mr. Cruz seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken.

Ms. Manning Yes

Mr. Cruz Yes

Dr. Pangallo Yes

Ms. Nuncio Yes

Ms. Campbell Yes

Mayor Driscoll Yes

Motion carries 6-0

d. Deliberation and vote on request from League of Women Voters - Salem and the Salem Education Foundation to use the School Committee Chambers in the Collins Middle School and to waive fees.

Dr. Pangallo asked if the public should be allowed in the building. Ms. Manning suggested possibly moving to a larger space such as the auditorium where people could be spaced out. A friendly amendment was added that the request should be aligned with the district's COVID protocols.

Dr. Pangallo made a motion to approve the request from League of Women Voters - Salem and the Salem Education Foundation to use the School Committee Chambers in the Collins Middle School and to waive fees. Ms. Nuncio seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken.

Ms. Manning	Yes
Mr. Cruz	Yes
Dr. Pangallo	Yes
Ms. Nuncio	Yes
Ms. Campbell	Yes
Mayor Driscoll	Yes

Motion carries 6-0

Finance Report

None

Subcommittee Reports

Ms. Nuncio announced that there were 19 policies for second reading and 5 policies recommended for deletion. She added that Dr. Pangallo had attended the last Policy Subcommittee meeting and requested additional information regarding policy 5711.01 Students with Food Allergies.

a. Policy Subcommittee

- i. Policies for Second Reading
 - 5417 Student Attendance at Public Events
 - 5701 Health Services/First Aid
 - 5704 HIV
 - 5708 Automatic External Defibrillators (AED's)
 - 5709 Medication Administration
 - 5710 Do Not Resuscitate Order
 - 5711 Wellness
 - 5711.01 Students with Food Allergies
 - 5711.02 Nutrition
 - 5711.03 Physical Activity
 - 5712 Athletic and School-Related Activity Concussion Policy
 - 5714 Alternative Transportation on School Grounds
 - 5801 Accident Insurance

5803 Student Parking
 5804 Free and Reduced Breakfasts and Lunches
 5805 Use of Handheld Devices
 5806 Student Observations
 5807 Athletics and Student Activities Fees
 6201 Review of Policies

Ms. Nuncio made a motion for second reading of the policies listed above. Mr. Cruz seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken.

Ms. Manning	Yes
Mr. Cruz	Yes
Dr. Pangallo	Yes
Ms. Nuncio	Yes
Ms. Campbell	Yes
Mayor Driscoll	Yes

Motion carries 6-0

- ii. Policies for Third Reading
 - 4109 Leaves of Absence
 - 5405 Interrogations and Searches
 - 5406 Student Demonstrations and Strikes
 - 5407 Corporal Punishment
 - 5408 Student Discipline
 - 5408.01 Discipline of Students with Disabilities
 - 5408.02 Exclusion for Non-School Related Concerns
 - 5409 School Bus
 - 5410 Harassment and Violence
 - 5413 School Property
 - 5414 Vandalism
 - 5415 Bomb Threats
 - 5416 Use of Physical Restraint
 - 5501 Responsible Use of Technology
 - 5702 Availability of In School Programs for Pregnant Students
 - 5703 Immunizations of Students
 - 5705 Child Abuse and Neglect
 - 5706 Communicable Diseases
 - 5707 Student Physicals

Ms. Nuncio made a motion for third reading of the policies listed above. Mr. Cruz seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken.

Ms. Manning	Yes
Mr. Cruz	Yes
Dr. Pangallo	Yes

Ms. Nuncio Yes
Ms. Campbell Yes
Mayor Driscoll Yes
Motion carries 6-0

Mr. Cruz thanked Ms. DeLai for clarification on information regarding the bus drivers that he had requested at the last meeting.

School Committee Concerns and Resolutions

Ms. Nuncio asked if no changes were made to the Policies, could we add **no change and the reviewed date** to the policy and not send it through three readings. This will be followed up with legal, then will report back.

Adjournment

Mayor Driscoll requested a motion to adjourn. Mr. Cruz motioned and Ms. Nuncio seconded. A roll call vote was taken.

Ms. Manning Yes
Mr. Cruz Yes
Dr. Pangallo Yes
Ms. Nuncio Yes
Ms. Campbell Yes
Mayor Driscoll Yes

Motion carries 6-0. Meeting adjourned at 9:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Nancy A. Weiss

Executive Assistant to the School Committee & Superintendent

Approved September 13, 2021