

**Salem Public Schools
Salem School Committee
Meeting Minutes
December 6, 2021**

On December 6, 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, Ms. Ana Nuncio, and Mr. James Fleming

Others in Attendance: Superintendent Stephen Zrike, Assistant Superintendent Kate Carbone, Chelsea Banks, Liz Polay-Wettengel, Marc LeBlanc, Linda Farinelli, Adam Colantuoni
Bethann Jellison, Janice Fischer, Elizabeth Lutts, Elizabeth Masucci, Finn Gallagher, Ghali Bezzate
Jeff Perrotti, Landon Callahan, Molly Blaauw Gillis, Molly Robinson

Call of Meeting to Order

Mayor Driscoll calls the meeting to order at 7:03pm. She reminded the public of the Public Participation Policy 6409 and also explained the availability of Spanish interpretation.

Approval of Agenda

Mayor Driscoll requested a motion to approve the Regular Agenda. Mr. Fleming motioned and Mr. Cruz seconded. A roll call vote was taken as requested by the school committee secretary.

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

Motion carries 7-0

Approval of Consent Agenda

Mayor Driscoll requested a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Topics for approval include:

- Approval of minutes of the regular School Committee meeting held November 15, 2021
- Approval of minutes from Committee of the Whole meeting held September 1, 2021
- Approval of minutes from Committee of the Whole meeting held November 22, 2021
- Approval of Warrant: 11/18/2021 - \$415,538.51; 11/24/2021 - \$266,810.55; 12/2/2021 - \$396,352.43
- Approval of donation of kitchen equipment, valued at \$2,033. from New England Culinary Arts Training to SHS culinary arts program

Dr. Pangallo motioned and Mr. Fleming seconded. A roll call vote was taken.

Ms. Manning Yes

Mr. Fleming Yes

Dr. Pangallo Yes

Ms. Nuncio Yes

Mr. Cruz Yes

Ms. Campbell Yes

Mayor Driscoll Yes

Motion carries 7-0

Public Comments

The school committee secretary announces there is one public comment submitted.

Ellen Finn of STU, 32 Oakland Street - Salem, MA 01970

Everyday we at Collin hear the following words: What's your legacy? Leave Collins better than how you found it. In writing this letter I want you to know that I'm trying to do just that. I've worked at the Collins for over 23 years and both of my children have reaped the benefits of attending school here. I have seen many changes, initiatives, challenges, and struggles. These last few years however have been more taxing on all of us. And the pandemic, as we all know, has made things worse. But I don't believe this is the only issue we face as a school, 56.4% of our students are considered economically challenged. 68.8% are labeled as having high needs, 24% of the students have special needs. Our support staff is made up of the most dedicated hard working people I have ever met. However, there are just not enough of them. Looking at our support staff and numbers. It may seem as though we have plenty, but as a teacher I will tell you: All of the above mentioned issues are weighing heavily on our students minds and souls. There's not enough. Our students need support. We have found that the old ways of disciplining kids is not beneficial to their current needs. Students need to be in the classroom learning, negative behaviors need to be addressed immediately and teachers need to teach. I'm not saying that there doesn't have to be negative consequences for negative behavior. Sometimes a negative consequence can teach a student right from wrong. What I am saying is that our students are screaming out for help, and we need to listen, people such as Dali Cruz who is part of our behavior support team at Collins, make it their job to support students in need. I know resources are tight but we need more Dali Cruz-s. And yes, we are lucky enough to add Mr. Diaz recently, who has proven to be just as effective as Ms. Cruz. But once again, we still need more help. For example, Stephanie is having a difficult time focusing in the classroom. For many various reasons. She has become agitated and begins to disrupt the learning environment. This behavior escalates because the student does not have all the tools to handle difficult situations like this. Dali is called, comes into the classroom to not only help the student refocus in class, but just let the teacher know that he or she knows that they are not alone. This readjustment may happen quickly, or it may continue until the student has come down and is ready to learn. Either way, the teachers are able to continue to teach the rest of the student body without missing a beat. The negative focus has shifted from the disruptive child to the lesson that is being taught in the classroom as resumes, as it should. It isn't fair to all the other students ready to learn when teachers have to spend so much of their time dealing with disruptions from individual students. I've seen this scenario play out again and again to the benefit of all students, parents and teaching staff. I'm not saying that this is the only thing Salem public schools need, but it is a start, I highly encourage that when you are looking for best practice, best practices for our students and staff - this is definitely one of them. Please hire more support staff who will

work directly with the students, help to bridge the relationships between staff and students without more help and see what is happening all over the country with teachers. I am also worried that more good teachers will leave causing more disruption and learning. Thank you for your time.

Report from the Student Representative - Hawa Hamidou Tabayi

Ms. Hamidou Tabayi expresses the SAG has faced some setbacks due to Spirit week and holidays. A meeting on Friday during crew time at SHS will allow time to determine availability of the SAG and determine if the retreat will be in person, hybrid, or virtual. Ms. Hamidou Tabayi is hopeful this will happen within the month.

Mayor Driscoll asks about the retreat and wonders if they are with SHS students or if it'll be regional. Ms. Hamidou Tabayi expresses that right now the population of the SAG is solely SHS students which is why it's scheduled at a location and a time for SHS but those interested in joining the group between now and the retreat are welcome.

Educator's Showcase - Carlton Innovation School

Ms. Jellison introduced an E1 student, Ghali and E2 student - Finn. She notes the importance of transitions at Carlton and introduces the three teachers Elizabeth Lutts, Elizabeth Masucci, and Janice Fischer. She shares a powerpoint. Student, Ghali, presents first and Finn follows. Their presentations include three interesting facts about themselves and why they are ready for their transition.

Ms. Manning asks if Bethann Jellison could give a quick overview of program verbiage used to determine the different levels of the Carlton Innovation School

- P1 - Kindergarten Standards
- P2 - 1st/2nd Grade Standards
- E1 - 3rd Grade Standards
- E2 - 4th/5th Grade Standards

Our kids come in and each child is individual and once standards and social-emotional readiness is evident, they transition into the next level. The transition is not determined by the end of a specific timeline but rather their readiness that they show. The individual review stood true with the end of the most recent trimester resulting in six students transitioning out of a population of 250 students within the school.

Jeff Perrotti to discuss his work with the district in supporting the LGBTQ+ community

Jeff Perrotti shares the "Safe Schools Program" page on the DESE website and notes how to find this page as a member of the public. The program exists to help build policy surrounding safety and inclusivity. He reviews the various components of the website including curriculum resources and the policies posted, noting two of the most viewed being: Principles for Ensuring Safe and Supportive Learning Environments for LGBTQ Students & Guidance on Supporting Transgender and Gender-Nonconforming Students.

Mr. Perrotti continues his presentation noting the importance of student voice and appreciation for opening the presentation with student voices. He shares a video of students sharing how they identify themselves. Following the video and audio he introduces Landon Callahan who recently graduated from college and shares he's worked with Mr. Callahan through high school. President Obama was developing guidance on gender identity and they asked for a student and family to interview and he was the chosen one and became the name for transgender student rights. He also mentions Molly and Dan Gillis being on the call to join the conversation as well with the perspective of parents.

Dan Gillis and Molly Gillis share the story of their third grade daughter who is transgender noting the emotional implications gender-specific decals and expectations played in her early years. The parents note difficult times when Holden would not want to go to school being labeled a boy but seeing herself as a girl. She would experiment with wearing dresses but would wear "boy clothes" to school. The days were hard during this timeframe. As soon as she was comfortable in her own skin and could express herself she went to school and the teachers were stunned by the change overnight. Things progressed overtime: pink clothes, skirts, shoes and then it progressed. As she got more comfortable with herself she grew her hair longer, she changed her pronouns. The teacher was very open with communication and adjusting her teaching style - not dividing the classroom by boys/girls or labeling the classroom with boy/girl specific stickers, postings, etc. Mr. and Mrs. Gillis have worked with the school to create a Rainbow Alliance Club for students and families to have a safe space. Teachers and staff at the school were and continue to be incredibly important to Holden's and our lives. Mrs. Gillis explains how she's worked their experience into the curriculum of the district.

Mr. Perrotti shares his screen and Mr. Callahan is welcomed to discuss terms. He notes knowing and understanding the terms to become more familiar can allow folks to have conversations in a more comfortable way. Along with the screen share and presentation, Mr. Callahan goes through a series of terms surrounding gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, etc. Mr. Callahan shares his story of transition starting from 2-3 years old and the emotional and physical changes that occurred over the years until his transition was complete. He notes difficulties and the bright notes of his transition and what work he's able to support with the knowledge and experience of his transition.

Mr. Perrotti shares the law developed for civil rights purposes. He notes the importance of not only safe spaces but also brave places for students and families. He shares a clip of a student's story coming out to their family and the difficulty the person initially faced and then transitioned to having support.

He asks if Ms. Robinson would like to speak to the work in Salem. She is the supervisor of Social-Emotional support and is a part of the LGBTQ Action Committee, started by the Safe Schools grant which recognizes the need for support to students at risk in the LGBTQ community. Over the years, the group has expanded: staff, students, families, community members. They review how to make SPS accessible to all students and how to continue to make

it a safe place for all students. She notes reviewing the language in various forms used by SPS, along with reviewing trainings completed every year for staff to understand changes to support the LGBTQ community. Recently, a Facebook page was started where families can connect and have a community page to view. An email account was created for questions and comments to be shared. In June, during Pride month, the team did a great deal of promotion and the team continues to get more attraction and momentum in their work. She notes the long way to go but the commitment to keep at it is there.

Mr. Perrotti shares a final clip of a child sharing who they are and the importance of those supporting who they are. After the clip, Mr. Perrotti shares statistics for those who are close to those who identify as being gay or lesbian and for those who are close to those who identify as being transgender. He opens the floor for comments and discussion.

Ms. Manning requests explanation in referring to NAGLY and the P-Flag. NAGLY student run, adult support group for LGBTQ communities. Salem has a location in the mall in downtown Salem and the P-Flag has been broadened as a symbol of support and acceptance of all identities within the LGBTQ+. She also notes the support being available regarding sexual orientation along with the stories shared this evening surrounding transitions and transgender. Mr. Perrotti agrees the proactive work is for all inclusive groups who could use support and acceptance.

Mayor Driscoll notes she has a conflict and needs to exit the meeting with hopes to return at 8:35pm.

Conversation continues surrounding Salem being a largely inclusive community with work still needing to be done to broaden support and acceptance. There is mention of the partnership with the Safe Schools program to continue with the work of SPS and to keep the conversation open surrounding the support of LGBTQ+ students, families, and community members.

Superintendent's Report

Dr. Zrike notes SHS coming in second place at the annual Turkey Toss event and the second place result of the math competition at Collins. He also shares appreciation for Ms. Finn's public comment and agrees there is work to be done to better support her perspective. He agrees the work of Dali is important and he sees the work in progress each day.

He mentions the update on snow days being traditional snow days and that there is no guidance from DESE stating a remote learning day would count as time on learning so for inclement weather, school cancellations will remain traditional days off.

Dr. Zrike introduces Liz Polay-Wettengel and Adam Colantuoni to present on SPS Core Values and Identity in connection to the presentation given by Jeff Perrotti. He mentions the work being done to develop a new logo and tagline for the Salem Public Schools, separate from that of the city which will be noted in the presentation by Ms. Polay-Wettengel and Mr. Colantuoni.

SPS Core Values and Identity

The presentation begins with a screen share and discussion that in order to develop a SPS identity, review of the core values created with the 2017 strategic plan had to occur. In order to re-evaluate and develop core values, an inclusive practice of hearing from students, families, staff, and community voices occurred. The questions framed a result of what each stakeholder feels represents theirs or their child's school experience. The conversations allowed for a variety of updated core values to be presented, some mimicking those listed in the 2017 Strategic Plan. A great result of these conversations was how the district can bring to life the values agreed upon to drive the district.

Ms. Polay-Wettengel shares the four options for the public to vote to be the next logo for SPS. The timeline for sharing the logo would be when the website launches on December 20th. After the logo is live, a tagline will be developed to support the core values.

Ms. Manning raises concerns of the presentation of the four logos questioning the design and the relation to the core values. Ms. Polay-Wettengel provides some insight to the development of the logos and what some of the elements within each represent. Dr. Zrike notes that further evaluation of the logos could occur at the SC retreat in January 2022. Mr. Cruz notes having a further conversation to discuss the feedback regarding the currently proposed logos.

Ms. Polay-Wettengel also provides a preview of the new website she's been working on to go live in the coming weeks. Feedback from committee members is positive with appreciation for a clean-looking website that seemingly shows to be easy to navigate. Noting the opportunity to visit the website in a native language is a huge benefit.

Old Business

None

New Business

Accept recommendation of Building & Grounds subcommittee to vote to request the City Council to amend and reallocate the use of \$200,000. CIP funding originally intended for SHS restroom renovations to include SHS (\$100,000.) and district-wide (\$100,000.) bathroom renovations.

Mr. Fleming entertains a motion for the school committee to vote on the reallocation of funds to be presented to city council for adoption and confirmed reallocation. Mr. Cruz seconded.

Dr. Pangallo asks a clarifying question wondering if the need to reallocate is due to the other schools needing refurbishment and needing funding or if SHS doesn't require all the funding allowing it to be distributed through the districts for other schools. Mary DeLai confirms there is enough money for SHS renovations with the realignment of the funding. She notes the \$100,000 specific to SHS will accommodate the upgrades necessary and as identified as

concerns and proposed in previous meetings while also providing funding to the rest of the district as well.

A vote is taken:

Ms. Manning	Yes
Mr. Fleming	Yes
Mr. Cruz	Yes
Dr. Pangallo	Yes
Ms. Nuncio	Yes
Ms. Campbell	Yes

Motion carries 6-0

Deliberation and vote on request from PEM to use School Committee record book (1839-1861) as part of an upcoming exhibit occurs. Ms. Manning requests a motion to approve. Mr. Fleming and Ms. Nuncio raise hands to motion. Ms. Ana asks what the exhibit will be about and Dr. Pangallo shares that Salem was one of the first municipalities to abolish racial segregation in schools.

Ms. Manning	Yes
Mr. Fleming	Yes
Mr. Cruz	Yes
Dr. Pangallo	Yes
Ms. Nuncio	Yes
Ms. Campbell	Yes

Motion carries 6-0

Subcommittee Reports

Policy Subcommittee Report:

- Policies for Second Reading:
 - Policy 1101.01 Non-Discrimination Policy
 - Policy 1103 Distribution of Notices
- Policy reviewed - no changes proposed
 - 1104 Emergency Closings Delayed Openings and Dismissals

Ms. Nuncio makes a motion to move Policy 1101.01 and Policy 1103 for second reading. Dr. Pangallo seconded.

Ms. Manning	Yes
Mr. Fleming	Yes
Mr. Cruz	Yes
Dr. Pangallo	Yes
Ms. Nuncio	Yes
Ms. Campbell	Yes

Motion carries 6-0

Ms. Nuncio takes note that Policy 1104 requires no changes and has been reviewed and will be noted as updated for the record.

School Committee Concerns and Resolutions

Adjournment

Mr. Fleming motioned to adjourn. Ms. Manning seconded. A roll call vote was taken.

Ms. Manning Yes

Mr. Fleming Yes

Mr. Cruz Yes

Dr. Pangallo Yes

Ms. Nuncio Yes

Ms. Campbell Yes

Motion carries 6-0. Meeting adjourned at 9:11pm.

Respectfully submitted by,

Jensen Frost

Executive Administrative Assistant to the Deputy Superintendent