

**Salem Public Schools
Salem School Committee
Meeting Minutes
December 7, 2020**

On December 7, 2020 the Salem School Committee held its regular School Committee meeting at 7:00 PM using the Zoom platform.

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

Members Absent: None

Others in Attendance: Superintendent Stephen Zrike, Assistant Superintendent Kate Carbone, Ms. Mary DeLai, Dr. Jill Conrad, Ms. Chelsea Banks, Mr. Duncan Mayer, Rebecca Westlake, Bethann Jellison, and Sayonara Reyes

Call of Meeting to Order

Mayor Driscoll called the meeting to order at 7:05 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. Mr. Fleming motioned and Mr. Cruz seconded. The Mayor called a roll call vote.

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. Mr. Fleming motioned and Ms. Manning seconded. The Mayor called a roll call vote.

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 Comment

The School Committee Secretary announced that there was one public comment that had been submitted in writing and has requested to be read aloud.

Allison Vargas, 620 Lynnfells Parkway, Melrose, asked for her comment to be read aloud. "I will keep this short. There have been multiple students, staff and admin testing positive for COVID 19. I am worried about the health and safety of our staff and families. In my medical professional opinion I do not think a January start for bringing all students back is a smart idea with surging cases. Many of our families will travel for the holidays and I foresee more spread of the virus in our schools. How will we find substitutes this year when more staff are getting sick? Hospitals are filling up and flu season will be upon us. Please look at the science and data and reconsider. Thank you. "

Two additional comments were submitted after the public comment portion of the meeting closed.

Tricia Cullen, 41 Walter Street. "How do you keep the remote students in the remote setting and the in person students in school because we have seen students (not covid related) just default to remote when they cannot get to school. Has communication been sent to families establishing protocol?"

John Robinson, 2 Scenic Place. "My name is John Robinson, and I represent Salem Children's Charity and we just wanted to let everyone know we are still holding our event online starting December 15th please check us out on www.biddingowl.com/salemchildrenscharity. Thank you very much for all of your constant support!"

Report from the Student Representative

Duncan Mayer updated the Committee that the Student Advisory Council has been given permission for the bathroom improvements. He also announced that he is looking into what the DESE guidelines are and what is expected of students and staff.

Report of the Superintendent

a. Returning Students to School Update and Staff and Student COVID Testing Update
Dr. Zrike introduced Bethann Jellison who gave a perspective of what's going on in the schools from an administrator in the building. Ms. Jellison began with announcing that Grades K-2 are back in-person learning. She explained that kids need routine, contact with friends, in person contact with teachers and contact with books. She added that distractions from being home

can sometimes get in the way. Questions were asked from the Committee regarding how did students handle being sent home and how did teachers pivot to remote if a class was asked to quarantine. In addition, Mr. Fleming asked how many students are in-person in each classroom and Ms. Jellison confirmed 16 in-person and 21 for remote classrooms. Mr. Mayer asked if there were any concerns about attendance and Ms. Jellison responded that for the most part attendance has been good.

Dr. Zrike began his presentation by announcing that although there has been an increase in cases in the schools, there is still limited evidence of any transmission in schools and so far there has been no need to close any schools. He said the dashboard is being updated weekly and he relies on the advice of the nursing team. Mr. Fleming voiced concerns about the upcoming holidays and with cases being on the rise, would the district consider moving to January 11th for a return to school. Dr. Zrike reiterated that testing results for the schools have been low for positive cases (less than 1% positive) and that most are getting infected through family gatherings. Dr. Zrike explained that every decision that is made is a local decision. He said that the local medical team meets every 2 weeks and tonight's recommendation comes from the DESE guidance, Department of Public Health and the medical experts.

The Mayor asked for an explanation of the poll testing. Dr. Zrike introduced Chelsea Banks who explained that 374 school staff and 150 city staff were tested. The vast majority were all negative. Of those results, only 4 were positive (2 school and 2 city). Ms. Banks explained that surveillance testing is not diagnostic testing and this just helps us pick up if there is COVID in our community. In addition, Ms. Banks announced that starting this week they will be testing high school students, that waste water testing pilot is being done and a local biotech company is working on a self swab voluntary test for 6th graders.

Mr. Mayer voiced his concerns in the mental health needs of the students and suggested investing in resources. The Superintendent agreed with Mr. Mayer and also concerned with the risks and mental health of the students.

Dr. Zrike announced that his plan for return will include a recommendation for hybrid for grades 3-5, 7-8 and 10-12. The timeline will be as follows: Week of January 4th will be remote for all students, Week of January 11th start all K-8 that are in-person learning and high school students that are in-person, Week of January 11th starts the hybrid model, Week of January 25th will be hybrid, and Week of February 1st starts hybrid for high school grades 10-12.

Ms. Campbell asked what will happen if a student is not vaccinated for the flu by December 31st. Dr. Zrike responded that all in-person learners will need to have the vaccine or will have to be remote. He added that there will be more information regarding this at the December 21st School Committee meeting. Ms. Manning asked if there was a shortage of the flu vaccine and The Mayor responded that she believes there is an adequate supply of the vaccine.

Dr. Conrad came before the Committee to explain the kindergarten assignment and the dual language program registration recommendation to extend the Batch 1 and Batch 2 timeline

deadlines. She stated that their proposal for extending the kindergarten assignment timelines will allow families additional time to determine their choices for kindergarten and would allow the district more time to plan for next year's reopening model. For the dual language program, since this is a new program and this year has been "unique" they are proposing to continue this program as a "pilot" for the second year (2021-22) and take the necessary time to evaluate the program before recommending a change.

b. Parent Advisory Council Update

Mr. Cruz announced that the Parent Advisory Council has had their first meeting with 11 parents in attendance. He explained that they are still waiting for more parent representation with 2 open at-large seats. He is requesting recommendations for how to choose the 2 liaisons.

Old Business

None to report.

New Business

- a. Deliberate and vote on the appointment of Dr. James Picone as Salem's Representative to the Essex North Shore Agricultural & Technical School District

Mr. Fleming made the motion and it was seconded by Ms. Manning. 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

- b. Deliberate and vote on the Superintendent's recommendation to adjust Batch 1 and 2 deadlines for 2021-22 Kindergarten registration.

Mr. Cruz made the motion and it was seconded by Mr. Fleming. 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

Mr. Cruz asked if the Committee needed to vote on moving the reopening date to January 11, 2021. Ms. Manning made a motion to support the Superintendent's recommendation of return to school for January 11, 2021. Mr. Fleming seconded the motion. 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

Finance Report

a. Budget Transfers

Mayor Driscoll requested a motion to approve the transfer in the amount of \$5,250 from fringe/stipends to tutors. Ms. Nuncio made the motion and it was seconded by Dr. Pangallo. 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

Mayor Driscoll requested a motion to approve the transfer in the amount of \$4,000 from expense reimbursements to contract services. Mr. Cruz made the motion and it was seconded by Dr. Pangallo. 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

Subcommittee Reports

Ms. Nuncio announced that the Policy Subcommittee is scheduled to meet Thursday, 12/10 at 8:30 am. Dr. Pangallo announced that the Curriculum Subcommittee had met on December 1st

and discussed 4th & 5th grade puberty curriculum, early literacy curriculum, and discussed report cards.

At the last Policy Subcommittee meeting, there was discussion and a change to the Student Transportation policy and additional discussions are ongoing regarding the Student Dress Code policy (which the LBGQT task force has forwarded their concerns) and discussion of adding an Annual Review policy. They have also referred for first reading the following policies.

- a. Policy Subcommittee
 - i. Policies for First Reading
 - 3601 Student Transportation Services
 - 5217 Student Publications
 - 5222 Parental Notification of Courses Involving Human Sexuality
 - 5300 Class Size
 - 5400 Student Conduct
 - 5401 Hazing
 - 5401.01 Prohibition of Bullying and Cyber-bullying
 - 5403 Alcohol Use by Students
 - 5411 Dress Code Policy

Mayor Driscoll requested a motion for first reading of the above mentioned policies. Mr. Cruz motioned and Ms. Nuncio seconded. A roll call vote was taken.

Ms. Manning	Yes
Mr. Fleming	Yes
Dr. Pangallo	No
Ms. Nuncio	Yes
Mr. Cruz	Yes
Ms. Campbell	Yes
Mayor Driscoll	Yes

Motion carries 6-1

School Committee Concerns and Resolutions

Ms. Manning announced that she recently spoke with former Interim Superintendent Kathleen Smith who extends a hello to everyone and wishes for a happy holiday season.

Mr. Fleming requested a hard copy of the FY21 Budget.

Ms. Nuncio has requested a follow up report of what form of informal assessment will be taking place this year.

Adjournment

Mayor Driscoll requested a motion to adjourn. Mr. Fleming motioned and Ms. Nuncio 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. Meeting adjourned at 8:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Nancy A. Weiss

Executive Assistant to the School Committee
& Superintendent