

Salem Public Schools School Committee

Meeting Minutes

July 13, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.

The Salem Public Schools held their regular School Committee meeting on July 13, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. This meeting was held using the Zoom On-line Meeting Platform.

In Attendance: Mayor Driscoll, Mary Manning, James Fleming, Ana Nuncio, Amanda Campbell, Kristin Pangallo, Manny Cruz, Duncan Mayer

Other in Attendance: Superintendent Stephen Zrike, Kate Carbone, Jill Conrad, Deb Connerty, Liz Polay-Wettengel, Kristin Shaver

Call to Order

Called the meeting to order 7:05 pm

Mayor Driscoll asked for motion to approve the consent agenda and mr. fleming motioned and Ms. Manning seconded. Vote by roll call:

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

Motion Carries

Mr. Fleming motioned to approve the Agenda and Ms. Manning seconded.

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

Motion Carries

Report of the Student Representative

Duncan Mayer reported they are working on the end of year report. He held off on sending it to see if anything pertinent came up over the summer. They have been doing some house keeping and waiting to see what the upcoming school year will look like. The Mayor asked if the students received the surveys. Duncan hadn't seen it yet. The Mayor is going to make sure the students receive the link to the survey as it pertains to reopening of school.

Superintendent Zrike asked about following up with Duncan to schedule something to meet with students.

Report of the Superintendent

Superintendent Zrike expressed he is thrilled to be here in Salem. He has met with different parent groups using Zoom. He is hoping to put out an entry plan within the next few weeks. He wants to stay on task even though we are working on the re-opening. He asked for names of groups and organizations he could get to know.

Superintendent Zrike explained he has been meeting one-on-one with the principals. They discussed what needs improvement and what they would think success at the end of the school year would look like. He explained he is also working on the re-opening of schools.

Superintendent Zrike shared a power point presentation on some of the choices for re-opening in the fall. He explained his goal is to get as many students back to school as possible and as safe as we can. He discussed the core values as being wellness, equity, community, and flexibility. He shared the plan the Department of Education asked schools to prepare. Those plans are in-person learning, hybrid learning, and remote learning. Some guidance sent from the State are safety training, face masks, reducing mixing, modifying instruction for some classes like physical ed and band, addressing student needs, and exploring creative outdoor spaces.

Superintendent Zrike explained how the district is preparing and displayed subgroups from the re-entry task force. These subgroups include: Health and Wellness, Human Capital & Staffing, Academics & Social Emotional Learning, Building-based Operations, Districtwide Operations, Special Education Services, Communications, and Families & Stakeholders. In addition to this, he shared a return timeline. Superintendent Zrike explained items that need to be explored. This included, stakeholder input, system Capacity, and learning options. Finally, he included opportunities for engagement. These opportunities are, weekly Facebook Live, Parent and Student Surveys, Student Input, Socially distant community events, Ongoing Collaboration with each School, and a Teacher Town Hall.

Mayor Driscoll asked the committee if they had questions. Mr. Fleming asked about the number of cases using scientific information. Superintendent Zrike explained that the guidance from DESE included numerous studies. However, we could see things shift either way. He stated the Department will release information about what to do if cases rise. Additionally, they have pediatricians who will share their beliefs as to safety for the children should we return to school. Ms. Campbell inquired about how often families and staff will receive updates between now and when decisions will be made. Superintendent Zrike informed her that he is holding weekly updates. As it pertains to when parents will know, we have been instructed from DESE that we will release more information in August. Ms. Campbell explained staff will have lots of questions and she is hoping there is a discreet way for people to ask questions. Superintendent Zrike agreed this is important and we will explore ways for the staff to communicate their concerns.

Mayor Driscoll asked if there were any more questions. She admits this is a work in progress and then Duncan Mayer asked Superintendent Zrike if the students will have an opportunity to meet with him to discuss this. Superintendent Zrike agrees and would like to meet to discuss this. Mr. Mayer also asked how we will protect our most vulnerable. Superintendent Zrike agrees we need to protect this population and we will work on ways to do that. Mr. Cruz explained to the public that he is present but dealing with some personal family illness so he video make not be running from time to time.

Mayor Driscoll moved on to the results from the survey on remote learning. Dr. Conrad went through the survey on remote learning. The goal was to identify what worked well and what needs improvement. She explained the district had 706 responses. This came from families who spoke English, Spanish, and Portuguese. She identified that 382 students in grades 4-12 were surveyed. There were 45.9% surveyed were in the Elementary level and 54.1% were in the Secondary level. The survey targeted forms of learning, remote vs in person. More students at the secondary level preferred remote learning. She identified google classroom and Schoology as tools for remote learning. The district survey if the work given was too much, too little or just about right. This yielded about 64% believing the workload was just about right. The students determined the amount of work assigned results also varied depending on teacher. However, 60.5% agreed the workload was the right amount. Other topics surveyed were connecting with 44.6% of parents preferring small group meetings which had the most impact on student engagement. Some barriers identified 22.4% with no barriers, 22% identified students lack of interest in remote learning, 16% had difficulty navigating instructions and 15% struggled with knowing what to do.

Dr. Conrad identified what worked well during remote learning. These items included, amazing teachers, small group meetings, zoom meetings, and frequent communication all contributed to successful learning. She then identified what didn't work well as not enough small group meetings, a need for clearer instructions, a need for more online instructional time, centralizing logins, more one on one time, better grading systems. and passwords. Parents would also like to have more recorded video lessons and training and support for parents.

Mayor Driscoll everyone for all their work in remote learning. The staff worked hard and fast to turn this around. Ms. Manning agreed the job they did was outstanding. Ms. Manning also added if Dr. Conrad thought there were any indication about what families would prefer going forward. Dr. Conrad explained the three options were evening split across the board. Ms. Campbell asked if there were any thought to re-asking these questions at the transition meetings for example barriers and paper assignments versus on-line platforms. She would like to get a full picture of what remote learning looked like for families. Mr. Fleming congratulated the faculty on their work from March to June. He explained he would like to determine the rate of participation from elementary through secondary. He would like the staff to develop numbers relative to participation. Mayor Driscoll asked if we have data on this. Dr. Conrad explained they do have some of this but we are still analyzing. Mayor asked if we could check to see who didn't check in versus collecting who did check in to classrooms. Ms. Nuncio asked if there was any thought given to families who are possibly at food pantries to engage them incase they are unaware of what is happening in the district. She would like to prioritize engaging the parents of those students who are not participating. Mayor Driscoll agrees there is a digital divide as far as

connectivity. She explained that it is not just a connectivity issue but also logging in and navigating systems. Kate Carbone explained there is a RFP to support families through a grant we are applying for. She explained we did target our most at risk students to attend the summer programs. Dr. Pangallo asked we will be moving to a single platform. Kate Carbone explained they are going to meet on this. At the time this began we asked teachers to use what was familiar to them. This did cause challenges so it is on our list to resolve. We are meeting on Wednesday to address this. Ms. Manning added the confusion parents may have. The Committee continued a brief discussion on various platforms available for teachers and students to use.

Superintendent Zrike explained the results speak volumes to the work that was done. He informed the Committee there are very few districts with positive results, so this was quite remarkable. He agrees we need to work to reach out to families we didn't reach. Fortunately, we have time to plan for the fall where in the spring that wasn't the case. He is confident we will do well and thanked everyone for making the past spring a success.

New Business

She then moved on to new business. The Mayor asked the Committee to review the upcoming School Committee Meeting dates. She then asked for a motion to approve the meeting dates. Ms. Manning motioned and Mr. Cruz seconded. Vote by roll call:

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

Motion Carried

The Mayor moved on to Subcommittee Reports. She requested a motion to approve a third reading of policy: 5215.01 Directory Information Regarding Students. Mr. Cruz motioned to approve and Ms. Nuncio seconded. Vote by rollcall:

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

Motion Carried

Mayor Driscoll asked about a motion to approve the second reading on policy 6409 Public Participation at School Committee Meetings. Ms. Nuncio motioned and Mr. Cruz seconded. At this time, Ms. Nuncio asked to share the document with the public. She explained the policy was addressed to maintain discourse and the public requested more interactive communication with the School Committee. She identified an opportunity for Spanish language interpretation and a revision to eliminate the second public comment period. However, we maintained the first public comment. The public can request

comments prior to the meeting. However, if there are comments after the comment period they will be reviewed by the committee and will be added as an addendum to the minutes. Finally, she explained some additional information added to accommodate remote meetings. Mr. Cruz explained the addendum allows the Committee to review them and act accordingly if an issue needs to be followed-up on.

Mr. Cruz referred to Kate Carbone to bring up another document that would explain the history of how the public can interface with the Committee. He shared a parent document by Ms. Cornell this document shared a variety of mechanisms that would give parents opportunities to speak with School Committee members and have an active role in decisions. He also identified Ms. Polay-Wettengel who was hired to spearhead communications with the parents. Mayor Driscoll asked for clarification on whether this document was part of the policy or was it a separate discussion. Mr. Cruz confirmed this is two separate discussions. He explained a commitment to work on ways to keep communication open. This was an example of the work they have been doing since February. Ms. Campbell shared some concerns about limiting comment periods. She asked that we refrain from using the word citizen in the policy as that is not the correct language. She wanted clarification that some items to may not be of the prevue of the school committee. Mayor asked if everyone is ready for second reading on this policy or do you want to revisit this. Ms. Manning stated their intent is to do the second reading on the policy.

Mayor Driscoll to roll call vote on the second reading

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

Mayor Driscoll moved on to first reading of the following policies:

5416 Use of Physical Restraint

4105 Staff Conduct with Students

Motion made by Ms. Nuncio and Seconded by Mr. Fleming to approve the first reading. Mayor Driscoll

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

Amanda Campbell gave an update on the Equity & Engagement Subcommittee meeting. She talked about a presentation from the district Equity Team. She suggests the full Committee hold a meeting to see the presentation. She talked about incorporating equity into the plans as we return to school. They made some decisions and will make those available once they work out the details.

Mayor Driscoll agrees we should hold a Committee of the Whole to review the presentation. She also would like to hear from students on this subject area. She believes it's important to hear what the district is working on.

School Committee Concerns and Resolutions

Mayor Driscoll took a few minutes to recognize Kristin Shaver who is leaving the district. She thanked her for all her work with transportation, facilities, and human resources. She presented Ms. Shaver with the City Seal.

Public Comment:

Scott Andrade of 12 Scott Rd. He spoke about COVID and ways COVID is transmitted. He supported a remote learning plan until April. He also recommended online learning platforms. He made suggestions about how to facilitate on-line learning.

Victoria Massone, 99 Essex St. She spoke about the funds that will be distributed due to COVID. She questioned the way in which schools can submit projects for this funding. She included the need for outdoor learning space.

Ann Berman, 1401 Crane Brook Way. She requested we post the School Committee dates for the public. She also asked about ventilation repairs to the buildings.

Steve Kapantais, 23A Wisteria St, He addressed the need for a second public comment at School Committee meetings. He referred to several Committee member in agreement this was important for working parents. He informed the Committee reducing public Comment reduces communication.

Mayor Driscoll requested that someone respond to the comments.

Adjournment

Mayor Driscoll requested a motion to adjourn. Mr. Fleming motioned and Ms. Manning. Vote by roll call

Ms. Manning Yes

Mr. Fleming Yes

Dr. Pangallo Yes

Ms. Nuncio Yes

Mr. Cruz Yes

Ms. Campbell Yes

Mayor Driscoll Yes

Meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by

Jennifer Gariepy

Executive Assistant to the School Committee
& the Superintendent