

**Salem Public Schools  
Committee of the Whole  
School Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
July 29, 2020 at 5:30 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:** Mary Manning, James Fleming, Ana Nuncio, Amanda Campbell, Kristin Pangallo, Manny Cruz, Duncan Mayer

**Absent:** Mayor Driscoll

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

Mary Manning called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m.

Ms. Manning explained the purpose of the meeting is to discuss the work that is going on for the Re-opening of schools. She introduced Chelsea Banks. Ms. Banks introduced herself. She was a former teacher. She has been a consultant and formerly worked in Boston as a consultant.

Ms. Manning then moved on to introduce Superintendent Zrike. The Superintendent began to share information on reopening. He explained they had to prepare three possible ways of reopening. He explained the final plan needs to be submitted by Friday. He is not making recommendations tonight but rather sharing what work has been done.

Superintendent Zrike informed the Committee they will be releasing their final plan to the public on August 6, 2020. He is hopeful to have a vote taken on that evening. He explained this is the timeline. He spoke about the various subgroups who have met and how much shifting of plans has taken place. Ms. Manning asked for clarification on the plan that is due on Friday and asked more specifics of the plan and what exactly is due. She also added that there is no requirement for a vote but rather it is just our support for the plans.

Superintendent Zrike explained the Department of Education is looking for a summative no longer than 400 words on each of the three plans. They want to see what we are considering for hybrid, in-person, or remote learning. He stated the Department will send feedback on the plans. The documents are not very extensive.

Superintendent Zrike shared a presentation on returning. The presentation included core values. These values included wellness, equity, community, and flexibility. He displayed a map of the country showing COVID hot-spots. He mentioned there was a case of COVID in the district in which he did share this information publicly and with the School Committee and they took the necessary steps to address the issue. He explained the virus will determine what the district will do as far as the plans go. He covered the guidelines sent by DESE. These included, training, face masks, reducing mixing of students, regular handwashing, addressing student needs, and improving HVAC systems as well as exploring outdoor spaces. He then spoke about the impacts of COVID risks of infections and the risks of not returning.

Superintendent Zrike discussed the way schools will be different and that he is hopeful to maximize creativity and safety to enhance student learning. He addressed the public and explained that education across the country hasn't been perfect. The current draft plan is based on science. They are committed to seeking and responding to the public and meeting the needs of staff and students. He further stated the system is dependent on everyone doing their part. Superintendent Zrike displayed a timeline from July 6 through August. He gave the public an update on the work that has been done and what will be done going forward. He showed the Committee a graph that shows how many seats can fit in a building with spacing students 6 feet apart. He explained we will need to rethink the use of classrooms and non classroom spaces.

Ms. Manning asked for questions. Ms. Campbell asked if the 6 feet distance was from desk to desk or chair to chair. Dr. Zrike explained it was chair to chair. Ms. Campbell asked about using nontraditional classrooms and having access to things like white boards. Superintendent Zrike explained we could use those additional spaces but are not included in these plans. Chelsea Banks confirmed that the data displayed does not include cafeteria or gymnasiums. Mr. Fleming asked to have an opportunity to review the layouts prior to the next meeting. Amanda Campbell also asked to consider teachers who are not in classrooms but need a place to work.

Ms. Banks then gave a presentation about all the stakeholders input. She displayed ways we are collecting information using surveys, focus groups, and regular communication by means of newsletters, facebook live and town hall events. Ms. Banks explained some of the data from the surveys. She noted that lower level grades would prefer in person learning and higher grades would prefer hybrid and remote learning. She also included that 400 families have expressed a preference for remote and 20% of our families are unsure of a preference.

Dr. Conrad gave data from the staff survey. She explained there were 645 responses from the staff. About 1/3 of the staff felt comfortable or very comfortable with in person model. Overall, more staff appear to be more comfortable with a hybrid model. The primary drivers in these results were to meet the needs of the students. Finally, she added that staff wanted more specifics on the plans.

Ms. Manning asked about a deadline for a leave for next year. Dr. Conrad explained they reached out to all staff to start conversations with Human Capital if they were in need of a leave. Ms. Manning stated the staff had to reach out to Human Capital or they couldn't take a leave. Dr. Conrad explained we are trying to determine staffing. Superintendent Zrike explained we wanted to offer staff the opportunity to put this in for unpaid leaves. He also explained we will be as flexible as we can with our staff. Mr. Fleming asked to clarify the hybrid model. Dr. Pangallo asked about a student survey. Superintendent Zrike explained they had a town hall meeting but will look at a survey for the reopening. Ms. Nuncio asked about markings where students should walk and stand in various spaces. Superintendent Zrike explained there will absolutely be markings for students. They currently have a meeting scheduled to go over this.

At this time, Kate Carbone presented the three models of reopening, in-person, hybrid, or remote learning. Ms. Carbone began with the in-person mode. She noted instructional priorities are; Welcoming Environments, Adapting Texts, Comprehensible Input, and Meaningful Interactions. She explained we need to work on how to handle restrictions such as facing forward desks. She explained our current teaching models encourage group work. This is something we will need to adjust. She explained we are in good shape in with curriculum, scope and sequence and she feels we have a strong

foundation for in person learning. Ms. Carbone discussed the Hybrid learning. She explained this is part remote and part in person. They are looking more deeply at the two day in person and two day remote. This would give us one day for cleaning. Finally, she moved on to the full remote learning model. She explained they are working on ways to do things better moving forward. She explained this is not a one size fits all situation but we are going to work to prioritize groups. These groups are in tiers 1-4. Each tier identifies various subgroups of students from Els to students who struggle with on-line learning.

Ms. Manning asked for questions. Mr. Fleming asked about the tiers and the first two tiers are students with needs and wants to make sure students in the other tiers don't knock kids out these first two tiers. Ms. Carbone agrees and the tiers are there to meet the needs of all our students. Mr. Cruz thanked the team on the work they have done on the re-opening. He also spoke about having directional signs for the students. He agrees with the tiers and is glad we are addressing this. He would also like children in foster care to be incorporated in this. He also wants to be sure we are reaching out to the Latino families. He would like to make sure they are receiving supports. Duncan Mayer asked about oversight of subgroups who are more vulnerable to COVID and that we are prepared to act if an issue arise. Ms. Connerty explained they are working with transportation, we are increasing cleaning protocols, training and keeping kids in cohorts. She also explained we have additional PPE. We are also working with families who chose to stay home and do remote learning. Ms. Campbell asked how the students day will look? Ms. Carbone explained we don't have specifics. She discussed that at the high school level cohorting is more difficult but we can do this easier in the lower grades. Ms. Campbell wants to see how we are decreasing a risk to our teachers if they are seeing all their students in one week. Ms. Carbone will review this and we should have more information at the next meeting. Ms. Banks explained that we are working on this and typically scheduling usually starts in December of the prior year and our staff is working really hard to work on this. Ms. Campbell understands and just wanted to make that point. Ms. Nuncio would like each school to track down all students and make sure they have chrome books and connectivity. She would like a date to be set to complete this. Ms. Carbone agrees. Ms. Nuncio also inquired about transportation. Superintendent Zrike explained he has spoken with the bus companies. Finally, Ms. Nuncio explained the Latino community usually return from the Dominican and will need to quarantine. She wants to know if there is a plan for a staggered start. Superintendent Zrike agrees there needs to be plan for all students who will need to quarantine. Dr. Pangallo informed the public and the Committee that we recognize that one thing is consistent is we can open schools in low risk areas. However, more importantly we need testing to be able to resume regular activities. She also agrees with Ms. Campbell that we need to weigh our risk versus rewards when it comes to the hybrid model. She also recognized classes may be difficult to get into at the high school level in a hybrid. She also expressed concern about students having a connection to their schools in the remote model.

Finally, she would like to know if teachers are working both remotely and in person and what is the start date for students and staff. Ms. Carbone explained we are trying to eliminate the need for teachers to do both remote and in person. Superintendent Zrike agreed this is why we incorporated a Wednesday off for teachers to prepare. He also hopes to bring the start date to the next school committee meeting. However, we are still working on start and end times. Superintendent Zrike also expressed how hard our principals are working and Ms. Manning agreed. Ms. Campbell also informed the Committee she is not in favor of teachers returning to the classroom. She knows it's difficult and she herself feels terrible about this but she feels the right choice is to stay home.

Ms. Nuncio asked about transportation and if parents will be refunded for the time they didn't use the bus because of the closure. Dr. Zrike will communicate this to the public. Ms. Manning and Mr. Fleming do not remember this decision but will check the minutes. Duncan Mayer asked about increased resources for students who are struggling emotionally. Ms. Connerty explained her adjustment counselors are trained for this. We are planning for this should we return.

At this time, the Committee discussed future meetings. Ms. Manning asked if we should schedule another meeting on the 17<sup>th</sup> of August. Mr. Fleming motioned to move the August 10<sup>th</sup> meeting to August 17<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Campbell seconded. Vote by roll call:

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

Motion carries

Ms. Manning also reminded the Committee to let Lisa Mansfield know if they were attending the graduation? Mr. Fleming thought it was Mindy. Superintendent Zrike mistakenly put Mindy's names down to contact.

Mr. Fleming motioned to rise and report. Ms. Nuncio seconded the motion.

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

Motion Carries.

Meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by

**Jennifer Gariepy**

Executive Assistant to the School Committee  
& the Superintendent