

Salem School Committee
Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes
Monday, April 30, 2018

A Committee of the Whole (COW) meeting of the Salem School Committee was held on Monday, April 30, 2018 at 6:15 p.m. in the School Committee Chambers at Collins Middle School, 29 Highland Avenue, Salem, MA.

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

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Margarita Ruiz, Superintendent, Kate Carbone, Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning, Margaret Marotta, Assistant Superintendent for Pupil Personnel Services, Kristin Shaver, Business Manager, Jill Conrad, Chief of Systems Strategy, and Kelley Rice, Chief of Communications.

Call to Order

Mayor Driscoll called the School Committee of the Whole (COW) Meeting to order at 6:15 p.m.

School Committee of the Whole (COW) Meeting

Superintendent Ruiz explained that the purpose of the meeting is to talk about two topics: The 1-1 initiative (and financial aspect of sustaining a 1-1 initiative in the district), addressing concerns as to available options and ways that other districts address concerns and Reorganizing the way they work in the district, namely changing their structure from an Assistant Superintendent for Pupil Personnel Services (PPS) and Director of Pupil Personnel Services (PPS)

High School Technology Initiative

Ms. Ruiz introduced Mr. Eric Chamberlin, Director of Digital Learning Salem Public Schools, a brand new position in the Salem District, to explain where they are with regards to the 1-1 initiative and to think about what are the financial models they thought of in making this presentation. Mr. Chamberlin shared a brief history of his experience and skills in relation to 1-1 initiatives. Mayor Driscoll introduced Matt Killen, Director of IT who works with the schools and the city and helped lay the platform for them being in the position to have Wi-Fi use and supports. Ms. Driscoll shared that Mr. Chamberlin and Mr. Killen also work closely together. Mr. Chamberlin agreed and said that he began in late November and immediately noticed the strong Wi-Fi foundation. Mr. Chamberlin stated that the question is not whether to do a one-to-one program at the High School, because every 6th, 7th, and 8th grade student at the Collins Middle School has one. They have to keep that momentum going as well as to accomplish most of the goals they have in many parts of the strategic plan. They really cannot scratch the surface without every student having a device. Mr. Chamberlin talked about some of the research that he has done about programs that are in the region.

Salem High School

Mr. Chamberlin informed members of what is currently happening at the High School, there are about 100 Chromebooks. A Chromebook is just a smaller version of laptop and is not full featured as a Mac or a Windows based laptop. It runs basically off of the Chrome operating system. It is fast, agile, and they can manage it in the cloud. It is easy to turn features on and off for every single device in a school, class level, and the entire district. They have 100 of them at the Salem High School. Teachers have to check out an entire rolling cart and bring it

into their classrooms, use them, and then roll it back to the library. Every student at the Collins Middle School has a device.

Proposed Plan

Mr. Chamberlin continued that the proposed plan would be that next year all of the Freshman would get this same Chromebook device. It would be rolled out with just the Freshman, because the Freshman class at the High School has already done a lot of the heavy lift around standards-based grading. They already have that behind them and already done this year. It is also the grade level where they are generally going in a harmonious group meaning Freshman Biology is generally mostly Freshman, Freshman English is generally mostly Freshman, etc. Geometry can be all four classes once they get into the 10th grade, etc., etc. Mr. Chamberlin continued that is why it makes sense for a pilot, in the first year, to be just Freshman. How they roll this up to upper grade is up for discussion.

Research

Mr. Chamberlin continued that he has researched a lot of the programs that are being used now and proposed the Chromebook, a laptop that can also be converted over to a tablet. It has a touch screen where one can work on Math and balance equations in Chemistry. It has tactile features for universal design for learning, for all learning styles. The price point is really not that far off from the entry level Chromebook that are currently in their classrooms and it goes so much further. Mr. Chamberlin said he was amazed when the Chromebook representative came and showed them how the Chromebook is waterproof and safe enough to withhold when dropped 4 feet. There are also other models that handle 120 pounds of pressure on top.

Cost

Mr. Chamberlin continued that he explained its features as some people might think that the price point may be higher than expected and said they can go cheaper but they all know that when they go cheaper failure rates in the 2nd year suddenly have 30% failure rates, cost increases, and greater issues occur. Mr. Chamberlin showed the Chromebook device example again and said that they have a cart of Chromebook over at the Salem High School in place, in a little innovation group. They have four teachers who are putting it into motion. They are getting excellent reviews on its speed, teacher options, its touch-screen ability, etc., etc.

Mr. Chamberlin explained that they would basically have to include a \$30 license with Google that allows for ministering making the number rounded to \$300 per device. The projected Freshman class enrollment for next year with a \$300 device is a \$75,000 outlay. Mr. Chamberlin said that the cost is not a one-time fee but a yearly tech fee. Other schools in the region such as Danvers and Waltham, for example, have a similar 2 in 1 device and they are projecting out that it will last four years, the entire four years of High School. They would have to get into the refresh after the four years. By then, they would have to decide what technology has come about, what is available then, and what the price points will be. They can, at least, pretty much count on that price, if not slightly smaller in case prices decrease over time, for the next four years.

Discussion

Mayor Driscoll said that one other reason they are thinking about the Freshman is because obviously Collins Middle School students will be heading off to High School and it makes sense to roll out with them. Mr. Chamberlin agreed. Mayor Driscoll asked Mr. Chamberlin if he would say that Salem High School teachers would be ready to use Chromebook as a conduit for learning or teaching. Mr. Chamberlin responded they have a small innovation group of four, as he mentioned earlier, where they made a call for action to participate in a pilot. Mr. Chamberlin continued that Salem High School Principal, Mr. Angeramo gave him a classroom,

an office space. He is going to do some open houses this spring and try to get whatever momentum he can. He met with Jamie Flynn with regards to his Freshman team to get some common planning time. They have posted some Chromebook professional development for this summer, a day-and-a-half meetings called Chromebook Academies. Grade 6 through 9 teachers, under the plan and in a one-to-one classroom, would come in. Mr. Chamberlin continued that, as with any spectrum, there will be variations in teacher reactions and responses to this and assures that had only positive reactions in the past. Mayor Driscoll asked about the transition for textbooks and materials being online to prevent students having to carry textbooks. Mr. Chamberlin responded that Joanne Keefe and he are working together and that it could be two or three years down the road. Members engaged in further discussion.

Option 1 - Funding

Mr. Chamberlin explained that the first option would be to fund it and shared that the city of Danvers, for example, has decided that this is an instructional need and that they are going to fund it. Mr. Chamberlin said that if Salem is going to roll out to three grades at \$75,000 per year, the following year is going to be a big number. Then, they can relax the following two years if that is how they would like to do that. They can continue annually as they do with bussing and other annual school expenses.

Option 2 - Family Participation

Mr. Chamberlin suggested calling it a Tech Fee as opposed to a device rental or insurance as the state would not like the idea that families would be charged for insurance. Most schools come up with a tech fee for professional development, just a fee for running the program. They would have to keep the economically disadvantaged in mind, which is roughly half of the High School students, according to DESI figures. They would have to budgetarily support half of the student bodies. They could ask families for support. They are not going to pay for the program but they would be able to generate monies to do that long term support they were asking for – that 10-15% of the devices that get broken and need repairs from the natural wear and tear. Mr. Chamberlin said he has done a fair amount of research in talking with, and visiting schools, and through a Tech Administrator's newsgroup where a number of people over the last two or three years have asked this kind of question. With the choice options, if he had to vote, he would prefer Option 2.

Student Awareness Improves Responsibility

Mr. Chamberlin explained that, as Matt Killen talked about and history shows through the data from all those devices – students tend to be more responsible when they know that the device they are using would not be replaced with a new one if it happens to break or need repairs. Students are presented with the option of utilizing the same device despite breakage; the device would be repaired as needed but would not be replaced. The student would continue to use the same device after the repair is made. Mr. Chamberlin continued that breakage rates decreased and ownership and student respect for the device increased. Raising student level of awareness of their responsibility is key. Mr. Chamberlin shared that the city of Malden, for example, with 2,200 students at the school, actually collected the devices each year. They are in year 2 of every student having a device. They have such a tangent population that they felt they would lose X amount over the summer, because students would disappear and devices would go missing.

Option 3 - Bring Your Own Device (BYOD)

Mr. Chamberlin explained that students might own their own device. Mr. Chamberlin reminded School Committee members of their Strategic Plan's goals such as personalized learning, 21st Century skills, and lofty goals. The spectrum of things that teachers are able to do, in a Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) program, is diminished in that they would not know if they are

working with Windows, an up-to-date Mac, a Chromebook, or an outdated computer that can still have online but might take 45 minutes to load. The differences cause a setback on the Strategic Plan's goals.

Next Year 2019 Mandatory MCAS Computer-Based Testing

Mr. Chamberlin informed that MCAS computer-based testing will be mandatory next year for grades 9 and 10. They do not have the capacity to set up every personal device to prep it for computer-based testing. They are going to buy or move two full grade levels of Chromebook to the High School to accomplish testing. Mr. Chamberlin assured School Committee members that Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) would not go down the path they have listed in the Strategic Plan. Mr. Chamberlin informed School Committee members that the state has an informative 16-page White paper on the benefits and drawbacks of BYOB, provided the link address for them to search, and encouraged them to review it for its insightfulness. Mr. Chamberlin commented on one of its questions at the end that talked of feelings of fairness between students when they realize their personal device may not run as others do.

Possible Option 4 - Reimbursement

Mayor Driscoll asked of a 4th option consisting of reimbursement where everyone is consistent – all have the same type of device, families pay for it, and having a rental program and used programs for students who cannot afford it. Mayor Driscoll mentioned that she knows that is what they do at Essex Tech. Student families pay for their Ipad, and the library loans out for the students to use throughout the year if they cannot afford to pay but the device continues to be owned by the school. Mr. Chamberlin responded that he did not include that in the presentation and explained that it is a very narrow field in the broad sense of Massachusetts Education. Mr. Chamberlin said that the 4th option is not in the presentation, but it is noted.

Purchasing for Four-Year Usage

Mr. Chamberlin explained that taking \$300, dividing it by 4, and seeking as much help from families to come up with as much of that \$75 that they can over the four-years and the student can take it with them when they graduate. Students might wonder if there will be any value after the four years as no one knows what 4 years looks and this technology hasn't been around long enough. Members mentioned that a lease-to-own and payment plan options might be considerable. Mr. Chamberlin mentioned a list of cities that use Chromebook in the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) statistics.

Discussion on Insurance Fee

Mayor Driscoll asked about any insurance, whether Danvers charges it, for example, and why Mr. Chamberlin feels that may not be good. Mr. Chamberlin responded the State's white paper says 'no-no' but the Danvers website clearly offers the \$30 insurance fee. It offers the form applicants would need to complete and submit the payment with it. Mayor Driscoll asked if that would mean that they would get it replaced if the device gets lost. Mr. Chamberlin responded that he believes it to mean a free repair on the first time, a 2nd incident would indicate that they would be responsible for splitting the charge, and a 3rd incident would require them to be fully responsible for the entire charge. Members shared further insight, feedback, and further discussion on the topic.

Optional Poll

Mr. Chamberlin mentioned that there is an optional poll that asks, "Do you have a program?" and "What device?" for example. Mr. Chamberlin said he would argue that if they do the research, most of them are leftovers from 2012/2013, and that a very small group would stay with IPAD in 2018 because of the price point. Many have figured out that they are restricting possibilities without a keyboard. Mr. Chamberlin shared that Revere switched over to

Chromebook last year and Peabody is the only city that he knows of that is going one grade at a time; they started with 9th Grade last year, with 10th Grade this year, and obviously 11th and 12th Grades next year.

Mr. Chamberlin said that it is just a matter of choosing a pathway and said that they are ready to move forward once the School Committee makes their decision and chooses which option they would like move forward with.

Strategic Plan's Classroom Technology in the Classroom

Superintendent Ruiz said they felt it was important to present the options to the School Committee. They had met with the Curriculum Subcommittee, and there was some discussion about the 1-1 Initiative and concerns about a fee and having families pay any sort of fees. Superintendent Ruiz continued they felt it was important to provide the School Committee with the information, options available, and what a fee would be for. There is that considerable 4th option but keeping in mind that a monthly fee for purchasing a device may be difficult for many families. They wanted to provide them with the landscape of what this will cost with affirming their commitment in pursuing a one-to-one device and rolling this up to the High School. This is very much talking about their strategic plan. One of the things that is prominent in the Strategic Plan is having technology in the classroom. They have the district's support for that now and will be able to provide professional development for their teachers and class support. Ms. Ruiz continued that there are opportunities to have groups of teachers work at the school level and students are already technologically savvy. Chromebook will not be new to them as they already use phones and technology at home and would feel comfortable using it. Ms. Ruiz concluded by sharing that they wanted to present this information to the School Committee, as they would like to move forward with this initiative and consider the financial implications for them.

Discussion

Ms. Campbell said that MacBook is used by many and asked Mr. Chamberlin about the integration between the Chromebook and the MacBook. Mr. Chamberlin responded that MacBook runs through the Chrome browser. Teachers may feel that the engine is a bit different and they can do some things that students cannot as well as everything else. Ms. Campbell commented that having Chrome installed on the desktop would be the same. Mr. Chamberlin said that both MacBook and Chromebook are the same with just different avenues. Mr. Chamberlin continued that he has learned that he could work with the Chromebook device very successfully and be happy to do it because of the ability to a) stand should-to-shoulder with students and b) the functionality of the flip (being able to connect the projectors wirelessly and move around the room).

Discussion on Financing

Members agreed that they are comfortable with the recommendation of the Chromebook device equipment and perhaps moving everyone to the Chromebook model for consistency and better affordability. Mayor Driscoll said that the big question that they need to wrestle with is how to implement this refinancing perspective and definitely has some concerns about long-term sustainability. They do not want to start a fee program but they also do not want to add charges later in order to sustain the program. Ms. Driscoll continued that she loves the idea of personal ownership for the students and questioned what the Schools would do with the device during summer break, as she would also want students to continuously use them throughout the summer. There is also the question of boundaries as well as new versions that come up just about every two years with the ever-changing technological advancements. They may want to invest in those iterations going forward.

Mr. Fleming said they would still have to pay 50% if they went into a buy program. Mayor Driscoll pointed out that with each device costing \$300, they can have a very affordable \$10 monthly payment program. Families can pay up front or a \$10 monthly payment amount. Members deliberated on the monthly payment cost dollar amount and agreed to make it very affordable for all. Devices should still be completely equitable, made available to all students regardless and considered the option of signing out a device as needed by students depending on the circumstance. Members continued to engage in further discussion.

Conclusion

School Committee members agreed to work on a policy that is more towards the lease-to-own or rent-to-own concept and make it as affordable as possible, with awareness of the need to lend and anticipate how best to do that. Mayor Driscoll shared it is more about the ownership for students and their families than the cost of the device to the district and thinks of the long-term finance effect.

Pupil Personnel Services Leadership Structure

Superintendent Ruiz responded to Mr. Fleming's previous request, at their last meeting, on the Pupil Personnel positional structure. Ms. Ruiz explained there is a lot of pieces in the work of Margaret Marotta's position as Assistant Superintendent that are not directly related to Special Education hence not only Pupil Personnel. Ms. Ruiz said she sees this as an opportunity to reorganize in the way of doing the work performance and going back to a Director of Pupil Personnel. They are thinking of taking those pieces out of that function, of Assistant Superintendent for Pupil Personnel Services that are not directly Special Education, and then have a more distributed leadership model in their district. Superintendent Ruiz explained that Ms. Carbone and Ms. Marotta oversee large departments, and it is all about delegating to their teams. Ms. Ruiz provided a visual 'Reorganizing The Way We Work' handout and copy of Salem Public Schools Job Description – Draft #2 Executive Director of Pupil Personnel Services.

Superintendent Ruiz explained that Ms. Marotta has done a lot of work, especially around the strategic plan in working with the early childhood providers – beginning to organize them and have conversations about the expectations and how they calibrate those service providers to prepare Kindergarten students. City Connects, their partnerships, and district partnerships, is a structure not solely for Special Education but providing student support in general. Ms. Ruiz listed alternative elements that Ms. Marotta also oversaw, placed in the bucket of alternative education. They also go under teaching and learning, because they are parts of specialized programs

Superintendent Ruiz explained other responsibilities that Ms. Marotta had taken over such as ALICE for example, and shared that she sent out a survey to Directors, Principals, team shares and those centrally connected to Pupil Personnel Services. They want to gather feedback and with her team to help reorganize certain pieces that are not solely for special education for when posting for Executive Director of Pupil Personnel Services (PPS). Members reviewed the job description handout. Superintendent Ruiz informed School Committee members that she has not posted the job description pending on presenting it to the School Committee and asked to post tomorrow, if possible. Ms. Ruiz said she would like to engage the teams in a conversation to gather their input, reorganize, and return to the School Committee with a work start and structure on how they are going to carry out the work. School Committee members continued to review the job description handout, asked question, and

Ms. Wilson said that the Personnel Subcommittee meeting had discussed that the \$110,000 salary is very low and discussed raising it to attract applicants. Members agreed to reword the Salary Range word to say: "Up to \$135,000." Mayor Driscoll explained that they had a previous review of the information and talked of the position being enhanced as Ms. Marotta took on more responsibilities. School Committee

members agreed that Superintendent Ruiz post the position and continue a follow-up meeting to receive further feedback and input from Superintendent Ruiz.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Committee of the Whole (COW) School Committee this evening, Mr. Fleming motioned to rise and report. Ms. Campbell and Ms. Manning seconded the motion. The motion carried. The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by:

Angelica Alayon, Secretary
Salem School Committee

Meeting Materials

Committee of the Whole (COW) School Committee Meeting Agenda

Reorganizing The Way We Work handout

Salem Public Schools Job Description – Draft #2 Executive Director of Pupil Personnel Services