

Salem School Committee
Meeting Minutes
Monday, January 7, 2019

A regular meeting of the Salem School Committee was held on Monday, January 7, 2019 at 7:04 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, Jill Conrad, Chief of Systems Strategy, Kristin Shaver, Business Manager, and Kelley Rice, Chief of Communications

Call of Meeting to Order

Mayor Driscoll called the regular meeting of the Salem School Committee to order at 7:04 p.m.

Revised Consent Agenda

- Minutes of the Committee of the Whole meeting held December 17, 2018
- Minutes of the School Committee meeting held December 17, 2018
- Approval of Warrants: 12/27/18 in the amount of \$275,944.88, 1/3/19 in the amount of \$365,636.24, 1/10/19 in the amount of \$244,203.91
- Deliberation and Vote on the request by Salem High School Harvard Model Congress Team to participate in a four-day conference in Boston, MA on February 21-24, 2019, during vacation week

Mr. Fleming motioned to approve the Revised Consent agenda. Ms. Wilson seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Approval of the Agenda

Mr. Fleming moved to approve the Agenda as presented. Mr. Cruz seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Public Comment #1: Questions and comments from the audience

Kathleen Coates, 51 Hathorne Street, followed up on a correspondence she previously sent to School Committee members with feedback that echoed some of the concerns of others on the hiring process for all administration positions. Ms. Coates highlighted some of the concerns that was brought forward and hoped School Committee members would discuss any evaluation about hiring process that has taken place to date. Ms. Coates shared her concern to see public updates on the process of having these positions posted and hopes School Committee will have a discussion with consideration of previous feedback.

Donna Fritz, 57 Summit Street, briefly shared details of some of the challenges and favorable feedback of the transition at Witchcraft Heights School, her personal experience with the 3rd grade teaching team, and her excitement of the attentiveness and presence of the new assistant principal. Ms. Fritz continued that she thinks the school started very well this year and is glad of the teaching team. Ms. Fritz shared her concern and explanation of the need for an additional full-time nurse and less students in classrooms.

Jennifer Bo-Chabancany, 19 Harvard Street, #5, shared her feedback on the loss of the Bates Elementary School Principal and Assistant Principal last school year, shared her concern of the current temporary principal, and asked School Committee members when the position would be filled.

Amanda Peterson, 52 Buffum Street, shared an overview of her personal experience of the Bates Elementary School and need for increased communication with families.

Presentation and Reports

Superintendent's Report – Margarita Ruiz

Superintendent Ruiz welcomed back all students and staff from the holiday break and wished everyone a Happy New Year. Ms. Ruiz informed everyone that she is centrally engaging the cross-functional team to identify metrics they can use in different dimensions to ensure progress of students who transitioned from the Nathaniel Bowditch School. They are diligently working on this and would provide the School Committee with a report on identified metrics. Ms. Ruiz continued that the City Connects Coordinators and Family Engagement Facilitators continue to focus their work of smoothing the transition for the school community. Ms. Ruiz explained she is directly working with the Equity and Engagement Department in the district and the Everyday Democracy partnership with a continued focus of ensuring equity in the classrooms; they partner with coaches from Everyday Democracy as part of their Nellie Mae grant for family engagement in the district and would be reporting to the School Committee soon. Ms. Ruiz said that Salem High School would be hosting an alumni College Fair tomorrow. Students, of all grade levels, would have the opportunity to hear from 20 Salem High Alumni who will share their personal college university learning experiences. Ms. Ruiz publicly thanked all of the alumni that signed up to share their insights and provide feedback to current students.

Other Reports

Update on the Principal and PPS (Pupil Personnel Services) Hiring Process

Superintendent Ruiz reported that the feedback of all School Committee members is incorporated into the recommendations in the hiring process. Ms. Ruiz informed they are in the process of seeking an outside partner to help ensure the instruction of highly qualified candidates for the Pupil Personnel Services position and process development with School Committee members. Superintendent Ruiz continued they are in the final stages and would return with a full timeline and following steps in the search process. Ms. Ruiz reported they anticipate the completion of a survey, within the next two weeks, for Salem High School on time changes and the school calendar vacation setup. They will be presenting the survey to School Committee members for their review and feedback, within the next week, before distributing the survey to parents, teachers, and general public

Superintendent Ruiz announced that the district would be hosting its annual Kindergarten Info and Expo event on Tuesday, January 15, 2019 from 6:30pm to 8:00pm for incoming families of Kindergarten students at the Collins Middle School. Ms. Ruiz shared that the Math Association of Superintendents would be hosting a series of community forums tomorrow night in response to the need of ensuring educational equity for all students and in relation to the Parent Funding formula used by the state. There will be a forum close to Salem, at the Malden High School, tomorrow January 8, 2019 at 6pm in the Jenkins Auditorium. Superintendent Ruiz reminded members of the School Committee and the public that they are all invited. Superintendent Ruiz confirmed there would be a School Committee Retreat on Saturday, January 12, 2019, from 8am to 12 noon, in the Marsh Hall building of Salem State University. Superintendent Ruiz announced this week marks the beginning of the principal hiring process for the Bates Elementary and Collins Middle School. Both positions will be posted on Thursday, January 9, 2019. Both its communities will receive an invitation letter to meet with the Superintendent for an explanation of the process. A staff meeting of the Collins Middle School will take place on January 15, 2019 at 3:45pm and with families on January 17, 2019 at 6pm. A staff meeting of the Bates Elementary School will take place on January 16, 2019 at 2:15pm and with families at 6pm.

Discussion on the Seeking of An Outside Partner To Help Ensure Instruction Of Highly Qualified Candidates For The Pupil Personnel Services Position

Mr. Fleming inquired more about the outside partner that Superintendent Ruiz mentioned, for help with the recruitment process. Mayor Driscoll shared a dialogue of discussions that School Committee members previously had on the recruitment, timing, and screening of the hiring process and brief explanation of how important it is for this help on the front end of the recruitment process for the Pupil Personnel Services Director position. Superintendent Ruiz recalled that members previously talked about not having enough feedback on what happens in the initial screening of candidate resumes and performatives and shared they are committed to providing the School Committee with a report with all of the applicant candidates and criteria for those that do not advance to take the performative assessments. Ms. Ruiz continued to provide additional details. Members asked questions, shared feedback, and engaged in further discussion.

Discussion on 2019-2020 Principal Hiring Process Slide

Members discussed and agreed on changes to the hiring process. Superintendent Ruiz said she would revise the slide and present the revision to the School Committee for a final review.

Enrollment Targets for 2019-20 Kindergarten Registration and Student Assignment

Ms. Conrad provided a standard student enrollment update for the current year, based on the October 1st, 2018 enrollment count with the inclusion of some historical data for a view of enrollment trends over time and in recent years. Ms. Conrad walked members through the presentation. Ms. Conrad also shared the data showing the percentage of Economically Disadvantaged students in each school, with data based on the state's measure for Economically Disadvantaged. Based on the data, each elementary school is now "balanced" or within the 5% margin as set by the district's student assignment policy. As a result the enrollment targets that will be set for the 2019-20 Kindergarten registration process will be 50%/50% for each school. This means that 50% of the available seats at each school will be made available to families who qualify as low-income, and 50% will be available to those who are non-low income.

Action Items: Old Business

Deliberation and Vote on the Acceptance of the Request by the Polish Language School to Retroactively Waive the Unpaid Fees for the Use of the Carlton Innovation School for the 2017-18 School Year –Tabled From 11/19/18

Mr. Fleming motioned to remove the deliberation and vote on the acceptance of the request by the Polish Language School off the table. Ms. Manning seconded the motion. The matter carried.

Discussion

Mr. Fleming reported that the Buildings and Grounds Subcommittee met on December 11, 2018 to discuss the request to retroactively waive the unpaid rental charge fees of \$2,590.00 for the use of the Carlton Innovation School for the 2017-18 school year. Mr. Fleming informed School Committee members that the Buildings and Grounds Subcommittee agreed to approve the fee waiver request.

Mr. Fleming motioned to approve the deliberation and vote on the acceptance of the request by the Polish Language School to retroactively waive the unpaid fees for the use of the Carlton Innovation School for the 2017-18 school year. Mr. Cruz seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Action Items: New Business - None

Finance Report - None

Subcommittee Reports - None

School Committee Concerns and Resolutions

Mayor Driscoll talked about the School Committee of the Whole (COW) retreat on Saturday, January 12, 2019 to discuss the budget timeline. Ms. Driscoll provided a brief update on Early Education program. Mr. Fleming asked if there might be any concerns relative to funding of the program due to the longest government shut down. Members asked the School Business Manager, Kristin Shaver, to flag any potential issues (for future considerations) the School Committee may need to be aware of or tend to such as delays in funding or programs that might face challenges.

Public Comment #2: Questions and comments from the audience

Kathleen Coates, 51 Hathorne Street, commented on the positive communication exchanges with the Bates Elementary School.

Lisa-Hansen Damato, 53 Hathorne Street, inquired about the Director of Human Resources (HR) position, read last year's shortened version of the advertised job description aloud, and stated the importance of the position in connection to the hiring process. Ms. Damato asked on the measurement data tool for economically disadvantaged students relative to free breakfast and lunch for all.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the School Committee this evening. Mr. Fleming entertained the motion to adjourn. Ms. Wilson seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by:

Angelica Alayon, Secretary
Salem School Committee

Meeting Materials and Reports

School Committee Revised Consent Agenda January 7, 2019

Minutes of the December 17, 2018 Committee of the Whole (COW) meeting

Minutes of the December 17, 2018 School Committee meeting

Salem High School Harvard Model Team Field Trip Request

Polish Language School Request for Fee Waiver on the Use of the Carlton Innovative School Facility

2018-19 January 4, 2019 Student Enrollment Report

2019-20 Enrollment Targets for Student Assignment

Economically Disadvantaged by School Presentation

2019-2020 Principal Hiring Process one-page slide presentation