

**Salem Public Schools
Salem School Committee
Meeting Minutes
October 13, 2020**

On October 13, 2020 the Salem School Committee held its regular School Committee meeting at 7:00 PM using the Zoom platform.

Members Present: Mayor Kimberley Driscoll (entered at 8:30 p.m), Ms. Mary Manning, Ms. Amanda Campbell, Dr. Kristin Pangallo, Mr. Manny Cruz, and Mr. James Fleming

Members Absent: Ms. Ana Nuncio

Others in Attendance: Superintendent Stephen Zrike, Mary DeLai, Jill Conrad, Liz Polay-Wettengel, Chelsea Banks, Deb Connerty, and Duncan Mayer

Call of Meeting to Order

Vice Chair Manning called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

Vice Chair Manning read the new Public Participation Policy 6409 and also explained the request for Spanish interpretation for participation.

Agenda

Vice Chair Manning requested a motion to approve the Regular Agenda. Mr. Fleming motioned and Mr. Cruz seconded. The Vice Chair called a roll call vote.

Ms. Manning	Yes
Mr. Fleming	Yes
Dr. Pangallo	Yes
Mr. Cruz	Yes
Ms. Campbell	Yes

Motion carries 5-0

Consent Agenda

Vice Chair Manning requested a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Mr. Fleming motioned and Dr. Pangallo seconded. The Vice Chair called a roll call vote.

Ms. Manning	Yes
Mr. Fleming	Yes
Dr. Pangallo	Yes
Mr. Cruz	Yes
Ms. Campbell	Yes

Motion carries 5-0

Public Comment

There were no public comments.

Report from the Student Representative

Duncan Mayer reported that they will be hosting a Student Forum for Health & Wellness on October 21st at 5:00 p.m. Mr. Mayer explained that there will be medical experts and wellness professionals that will be participating. He is coordinating with the principals to make sure it is advertised. Mr. Mayer also reported that there will be elections coming up for class officers and the student advisory council.

Report of the Superintendent

a. Back to School Update

Superintendent Stephen Zrike presented the plan for returning more students to school in November. He added that there will be items that he will have more details on at next week's School Committee meeting.

Dr. Zrike began with explaining that tonight's presentation will review the reopening data, including data that we have received from families, information on how things are working now, a proposal for transition to the November reopening, and the logistics and next steps to make this happen.

The Superintendent explained that our current model is remote instruction for all grades with the exception of 570 Tied 1 priority students that are in-person either in the classroom or at hub labs. Another 142 students are in partner labs such as YMCA, Boys & Girls Club, Campfire Girls, etc. In addition, Hub Connects is available outdoors to all students. Feedback so far has been that remote learning has improved from this past Spring. Chelsea Banks add that results from a parent survey that was conducted recently, shows that there was a significant increase in demand from families changing their "unsure" response to "in-person". This past summer the demand for in-person was 51% where in October it jumped to 74%. The demand is even higher for the youngest learners (PreK-3) where the summer survey showed 54% demand for in-person and in October it was 82%. Dr. Zrike explained that focus groups were held with parents, students, and educators (including teachers, paras and coaches). Dr. Zrike added that the feedback he has received from these focus groups include the flexibility for remote learning, appreciation of teacher responsiveness and acknowledging that teachers are working very hard, understanding the challenges for the youngest students but admitting that things are getting better, and also to focus on equity with understanding why some students were prioritized.

Superintendent Zrike reminded the Committee that they had approved in August the original plan, which was K-3 in person and remote for 4-12, which set conditions that if they changed, so would the plan. The plan changed on August 12th due to new data and we are continuing to watch the trends.

Dr. Zrike's proposal is to return to the original plan with bringing back the youngest students in-person, therefore, in-person PreK-2 (possibly 3), hybrid grade 6 (possibly 9), and remote grades 4 - 5 and grades 7-12. The Superintendent went on to explain that there has been a high request for in-person and we are looking at possibly offering in-person if possible. In addition, grade 6 had a higher request for in-person than grade 7 & 8 and is considered a transition grade (from the Collins). He added that grade 9 is also a transition grade and they are exploring the option of possibly offering hybrid to them. In addition, they are exploring adding in-person options for next level of priority which would include CVTE, students at risk of dropping out and students who are overage and under credit. Logistics for this in-person PreK-2/3 proposal to work would likely include shortening the in-person day, as well as other changes. For the grade 6 hybrid, it would involve separating the students into 4 groups such as Group A: current in-person students, Group B: Mon/Tue in-person, Group C: Thurs/Fri in-person, and Group D: fully remote. Wednesday will be remote for all. The key items to consider are increased transportation costs due to limited capacity and additional cleaning and staffing challenges due to small class sizes and safety protocols.

The next steps include returning Bentley/ECC to their buildings, work out details of the class groupings, facilities, schedules and transportation, continue working with the Unions. At the School Committee meeting of October 19th, they are hoping to announce the plan for the 3rd grade, any changes to start and end times, confirm and announce the 9th grade plan and continue to work to improve the hub lab experience. As far as long term planning, they would like to examine options of in-person learning for upper elementary, establish clear windows for families that want to opt-out and plan for social connection after Thanksgiving.

Several School Committee members asked questions regarding the proposal, including clarification of the reduction in time and inquiring who will be doing the contact tracing for the district and explanation of how the cohorts would work and transportation questions. In addition, it was established that a vote for this plan would not take place until next week's meeting of October 19th.

Mayor Driscoll entered the meeting at 8:30 p.m.

Old Business

None to report.

New Business

None to report.

Finance Report

a. Budget Transfers

Mayor Driscoll requested a motion to approve the transfer for the Teaching and Learning Department in the amount of \$50,000 from salaries to instructional supplies to cover expenses

for home learning kits for students. 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
Mr. Cruz	Yes
Ms. Campbell	Yes
Mayor Driscoll	Yes

Motion Carries 6-0

Subcommittee Reports

Mayor Driscoll explained that the Committee of the Whole had met on October 5, 2020 to review opportunities to look at land under the jurisdiction of the school department and city owned land in close proximity to school department property for exploration of potential housing. There was a review that took place for the high school land by the Urban Land Institute, which outlined the next steps and are looking at a master plan. In addition, the property adjacent to Witchcraft Heights Elementary School we are looking at the next steps of exploration of feasibility. May Driscoll added that they have agreed to move forward with exploration and will keep the School Committee informed. She added that these are very preliminary conversations.

School Committee Concerns and Resolutions

Mr. Cruz reminded the Committee that the deadline for submitting public comments for the Chapter 70 local contribution study to DESE is Friday, October 16th and encourages his colleagues to submit a comment. The School Committee secretary will forward the link to the Committee members. Mayor Driscoll requested a motion as a School Committee to submit comments to this body in order suggesting that DESE engage in a hold harmless with respect to student counts for Chapter 70 formula. Mr. Cruz made the motion and Mr. Fleming seconded. A roll call vote was taken.

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

Motion carries 6-0

Ms. Manning voiced a concern over DESE requiring MCAS this year and also a concern on the Spanish Interpretation policy. Ms. Manning is concerned about the noon deadline for the request of the interpretation and asked for clarification. Mr. Cruz responded that he agrees that the time is restrictive and is something we should revisit. Ms. Campbell also agrees and would

like to have a conversation regarding the translation services. Mayor Driscoll suggested that the Policy Subcommittee discuss this.

Adjournment

Mayor Driscoll requested a motion to adjourn. Mr. Fleming motioned and Mr. Cruz seconded. A roll call vote was taken.

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

Motion carries 6-0

Meeting adjourned at 8:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Nancy A. Weiss

Executive Assistant to the School Committee
& the Superintendent