

**Salem Public Schools
Salem School Committee
Meeting Minutes
September 13, 2021**

On September 13, 2021 the Salem School Committee held its regular School Committee meeting at 7:00 PM using the Zoom platform.

Members Present: Mayor Driscoll, Ms. Mary Manning, Mr. Manny Cruz, Ms. Amanda Campbell, Dr. Kristin Pangallo, Ms. Ana Nuncio, and Mr. James Fleming

Others in Attendance: Superintendent Stephen Zrike, Assistant Superintendent Kate Carbone, Chelsea Banks, Liz Polay-Wettengel, Marc LeBlanc, Linda Farinelli, Glenn Burns, Adam Colantuoni and Hawa Hamidou Tabayi

Call of Meeting to Order

Mayor Driscoll called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m and called attendance. Mayor Driscoll read the new Public Participation Policy 6409 and also explained the instructions for Spanish interpretation.

Attendance

Mayor Driscoll called the attendance.

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

Approval of Agenda

Mayor Driscoll requested a motion to approve the Regular Agenda. Mr. Cruz motioned and Mr. Fleming seconded. A roll call vote was taken.

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

Motion carries 7-0

Approval of Consent Agenda

Mayor Driscoll requested a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Mr. Fleming motioned and Ms. Manning seconded. A roll call vote was taken.

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

Motion carries 7-0

Public Comments

The School Committee Secretary announced that there were 3 public comments, but since addresses were not included, they were considered anonymous and were not read into the minutes. The Mayor announced that the comments would be forwarded to the Committee for their review.

Educator's Showcase

None

Report of the Superintendent

a. Start of School Update

Superintendent Zrike presented his start of school update. He spoke of the excitement he is hearing of being back from both staff and students. He announced that the class sizes are small and they have increased the use of outdoor spaces for learning and eating. In addition there is a return of extracurricular activities. In addition, he explained that regarding the 1:1 access for technology, we currently have enough devices for anyone that needs one.

Dr. Zrike also gave an update on enrollment and said there has been a slight decrease since August although they are still enrolling and final reporting will not be until October 1st. There has also been an increase in interest in homeschooling. He believes that this could be due to there not being any remote option this school year. Dr. Zrike also shared with the Committee the demographic information.

Dr. Zrike announced that although there are still a few vacancies, most of the teacher positions have been filled and those still open are currently being filled by substitutes or paras. He then introduced Assistant Superintendent Kate Carbone to speak regarding academics.

Ms. Carbone explained that the PreK expansion classes are up and running. She said there are 2 new classes at Bates and 2 at Horace Mann. There were a total of 72 open seats, 31 enrolled to the Bates and 30 for Horace Mann, which leaves 11 open seats. She added that the district is working hard to provide families with the application and information for the program. Both

Leanne Smith and Amy Richardson have reviewed and selected the curriculum and teachers have been trained together with our community partners. She also said that they have assigned a literacy coach to focus on the PreK classrooms. In addition, classrooms received some new furniture, books, toys and games to promote creative play.

Ms. Carbone reported that the New Teacher Institute was held this past summer and 80 plus educators were welcomed to the district. This was a 4 day institute that ran August 23-26. They were oriented on district instructional priorities and also had additional training on social emotional learning. In addition, they were given time to meet with colleagues that were in similar roles so that they could plan and collaborate for the first day. They are getting ready to launch a new K-2 literacy curriculum with professional development available. The IT team is in the process of setting up the digital curriculum and also provided teachers with a new single sign-on software, Classlink. Ms. Carbone announced a new library project that they are currently working on. This project will focus on diversifying the libraries and is being supported by a grant which was received. Bentley received books for their Dual Language Library. The CMS library project is supported by ELT resources and also the K-5 classroom libraries will be audited for equitably books and teachers will have access to \$500 to upgrade their classroom libraries.

Ms. Carbone spoke of the importance of having Tier 2 academic supports in place such as tutors, enhanced tools available to teachers to support Tier 2 interventions and Tier 2 playbooks. In addition, there will be student support services, such as behavior specialists, at each school and also refocusing the need to strengthen implementation of existing SEL curriculum. There will also be a 2 hour training on September 22 open to all staff regarding reducing anxiety and oppositional behavior in the classroom. Lastly, Ms. Carbone reported that for instructional technology, distribution of Chromebooks to grades 6-12 is nearly complete, carts are available in each K-5 classroom and 20 Chromebooks and chargers will be at each school to support any quarantine/isolation if it should happen.

Ms. Carbone explained what the district is doing in preparation for quarantine or isolation remote learning. Rather than just provide the student with a packet of materials, the following was created:

Option 1 - simultaneous teaching, which allows students to join their 4 core classes through video. A camera will be set up in the classroom to capture the teacher during instruction. If a student participates in this option, they will be marked present.

Option 2 - check in, which will allow students to check in with their teachers for 15 minutes either before or after class time. Teachers will introduce the classwork and will provide any guidance needed. If the student participates in this option, they will NOT be marked present.

Superintendent Zrike addressed the transportation challenges we have been experiencing and explained the changes that we have requested. He added that there has been more parents driving their students to school in addition to road construction, which has resulted in traffic at the schools. In addition, there has been a large number of late registrations. He said that there has been improvement after the first 2 weeks, but there is additional work to be done with the routes.

Dr. Zrike also gave an update to facilities and thanked Zissis Alepakis and his team for the work they have done preparing the schools. He explained outdoor classrooms have been installed, although they are still finishing up at Bates. Additional HEPAs have been provided to the cafeterias, office spaces and classrooms that have less ventilation. They are in the process of installing/updating door monitoring systems, playground repairs, SHS chair lifts repair, flag pole repairs at Saltonstall and Horace Mann and the exterior doors at Bentley and Saltonstall. In addition, they are still on track for future projects such as the WHES tiles, the Collins office space, playground mulching and inspection, fencing replacement, additional security cameras, water bubbler replacement, HVAC maintenance and repairs of bathroom stalls.

Dr. Zrike introduced Chelsea Banks who gave an opening school COVID update. She updated the Committee with the number of reported cases for both students and staff, which are 6 total positive student cases (5 this week) and 1 positive staff case (no new cases this week). She also reported that 41% of students have consented to the weekly COVID tests and 1,257 tests were conducted last week and also reported that 85% of all staff (including 95% of teachers) have shown their proof of vaccination. Ms. Banks explained that they are in the process of implementing the Test to Stay program and gave an overview of the communications and process for this year. Ms. Banks also gave a brief review of the COVID testing process and how the Pool PCR Tests are conducted, as well as the weekly testing schedule for both students and staff.

Mr. Cruz asked a question regarding the playgrounds and the safety concerns that were mentioned and also the discussion at the last Building & Grounds Subcommittee meeting regarding upgrades to them. Dr. Zrike responded that some of the upgrades, for instance the mulch, needs to be done now and then to do an assessment on accessibility and examine the other playgrounds that may need to have upgrades done. Dr. Zrike suggested that it may be a good idea to schedule another Building & Grounds Subcommittee meeting to discuss the playgrounds.

Mr. Cruz also asked if he could receive further information regarding the vaccination rates and be provided a breakdown regarding the percentage of staff and departments that are vaccinated. Ms. Banks responded that she would follow up with Mr. Cruz.

Ms. Manning asked for clarification on the COVID testing schedule and Ms. Banks explained how the testing team would accommodate any retesting that needed to be done in case of a positive pool. Ms. Manning also requested if she could observe the training that was scheduled for 9/22. Ms. Carbone will provide Ms. Manning with a link for the training. Ms. Manning also asked how the decision is made about which books are removed from the libraries. Ms. Carbone offered to forward a training video on curriculum bias to Ms. Manning which would help answer her question.

Mr. Fleming asked a question regarding the waiting list for the PreK classrooms. Ms. Carbone explained that they went through the list and offered seats to all who were still interested and

there are currently no families on the waiting list. Mr. Fleming also asked about an open position in the Dual Language program and Dr. Zrike responded that the open position was for a paraprofessional not a teacher.

Ms. Nuncio asked if there was any Spanish PreK curriculum that could be made available at the Bentley School? Ms. Carbone explained that there are no PreK classrooms at Bentley at this time. Dr. Zrike added that they would eventually like to add a PreK dual language curriculum as they expand the PreK program.

Dr. Pangallo asked for the families on the waiting lists that refused the PreK seat, do we have a sense of their reason for declining. Ms. Carbone responded that there were a variety of reasons, such as no response from the family when we reached out, issues with transportation, extended day or deciding to stay with their current situation. Dr. Pangallo asked for clarification on the test to stay program and Ms. Banks explained that it is only for students who were close contacts of those who tested positive in school. If a child has a positive case at home, they should quarantine at home.

Mayor Driscoll commented that she has received feedback regarding the PreK expansion program and although families were very happy, there were some that were disappointed that they could not participate due to no after school care. She asked if there was any discussion of eventually expanding the afterschool program to include the PreK. Ms. Carbone said that there has been discussion that later this year they would like to do a survey to see what the families need and take next steps based on that. Mayor Driscoll also praised the work on getting the test to stay program running, but stressed the importance of vaccination and how we still need many more young adults to be vaccinated. Ms. Banks explained that they have offered many clinics and are planning on more events that will offer vaccination clinics.

Ms. Manning asked for clarification on the age of consent for the vaccine and Ms. Banks responded that once they turn 18, they can sign the consent. Under 18 will need a parent to sign, but the consent is now available electronically and the parent does not need to be present.

Mayor Driscoll acknowledged that the student representative, Hawa Tabayi had joined the meeting.

b. Central Office Organizational Chart

Superintendent Zrike shared a draft of the organizational chart which outlined the direct reports for Teaching & Learning to Assistant Superintendent Kate Carbone and for Operations to Assistant Superintendent of Finance & Employee Engagement Mary DeLai. Dr. Zrike explained that the next step would be to have this available online so the public would know who they would need to contact for specific information. Mr. Cruz commented that he appreciated the increased diversity in the staff.

Report from the Student Representative - Hawa Hamidou Tabayi

Ms. Tabayi reported that the Student Advisory Council had their first meeting last week. At this meeting they focused on getting out their intentions and visions on what they want to do in the district and steps on how to do them. Among some of their discussions were their interest in implementing restorative justice practices as alternatives to the way discipline and conflict are approached in the schools. She added that they would be requesting data when it comes to tension, suspensions with regards to all interactions with SPS students and Salem Police Department to gauge the situation they are in and see how they want to approach it. They also would like to increase their overall membership districtwide with emphasis on making it an equitable membership. In addition, they would like to be involved in the city's anti-racism efforts. Ms. Tabayi also stated that the Student Advisory Council, which is districtwide, would like to make the distinction between them and the Salem High School Student Council and how to restart that group. Dr. Zrike informed Ms. Tabayi that Ms. Polay-Wettengel is available to help the SAC get information out and also, he is planning to have the Salem Police Department Chief attend one of the School Committee meetings to share some of the data. Mr. Cruz offered help when they decided to discuss a possible retreat and Dr. Pangallo asked for the students' perspective on the reopening of schools.

Old Business

None

New Business

- a. **Deliberate and vote on the appointment of Superintendent Stephen Zrike as Salem representative to the Northshore Education Consortium Board for 2021-2022.**

Mayor Driscoll requested a motion on the appointment of Superintendent Stephen Zrike as Salem Representative to the Northshore Education Consortium Board for 2021-2022. Mr. Fleming made the motion and Ms. Nuncio seconded. A roll call vote was taken.

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

Motion carries 7-0

Finance Report

None

Subcommittee Reports

Ms. Nuncio reported that a change was made to policy 5806 Student Observations which included adding language that explains interpreter services will be provided by the school.

a. Policy Subcommittee

- i. Policies for Third Reading
 - 5417 Student Attendance at Public Events
 - 5701 Health Services/First Aid
 - 5704 HIV
 - 5708 Automatic External Defibrillators (AED's)
 - 5709 Medication Administration
 - 5710 Do Not Resuscitate Order
 - 5711 Wellness
 - 5711.01 Students with Food Allergies
 - 5711.02 Nutrition
 - 5711.03 Physical Activity
 - 5712 Athletic and School-Related Activity Concussion Policy
 - 5714 Alternative Transportation on School Grounds
 - 5801 Accident Insurance
 - 5803 Student Parking
 - 5804 Free and Reduced Breakfasts and Lunches
 - 5805 Use of Handheld Devices
 - 5806 Student Observations
 - 5807 Athletics and Student Activities Fees
 - 6201 Review of Policies

Ms. Nuncio made a motion for third reading of the policies listed above. Ms. Manning seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken.

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

Motion carries 7-0

Dr. Pangallo gave an update on the Curriculum Subcommittee that met last week. She stated that there was discussion regarding the preschool curriculum and discarding outdated instructional supplies.

Ms. Campbell reported that the Equity Subcommittee met on August 25th. The purpose of this meeting was to brainstorm on possible scholarships for students in the Student Advisory Council. She added that the information has been sent to legal counsel for review.

School Committee Concerns and Resolutions

Mr. Cruz raised a concern on declining enrollment. He said although we have had previous conversations, he would like to further discuss this. In addition, Mr. Cruz brought up that he would like an update on the planning of the arriving Afghan refugees. Mayor Driscoll explained that there is starting discussion in other cities and towns regarding the possibility of their arrival with arranging housing, etc.

Dr. Pangallo, reminded everyone that tomorrow is election day for the primaries. She also requested a discussion regarding the vaccine policy and if we should discuss a full mandate.

Adjournment

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

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

Motion carries 7-0. Meeting adjourned at 9:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Nancy A. Weiss

Executive Assistant to the School Committee & Superintendent

Approved September 27, 2021