



School Committee Meeting Materials

Regular School Committee Meeting

May 15, 2017

7:00pm

*Mr. James M. Fleming
Ms. Deborah Amaral
Ms. Mary A. Manning*



*Mr. Patrick Schultz
Dr. Brendan R. Walsh
Ms. Kristine Wilson*

Mayor Kimberley Driscoll, Chair

“Know Your Rights Under the Open Meeting Law, M.G.L. c.30A § 18-25 and City Ordinance Sections 2-2028 through 2-2033.”

May 11, 2017

REGULAR SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the Salem School Committee will hold a Regular School Committee meeting on **Monday, May 15, 2017 at 7:00 p.m.** The meeting will be held in the **School Committee Chambers at Collins Middle School, 29 Highland Avenue, Salem, MA.**

REVISED AGENDA

I. Call of Meeting to Order

II. Approval of the Agenda

III. Approval of Minutes

- a. Deliberation and Vote on the Minutes of the Regular School Committee Meeting held on May 1, 2017

IV. Questions and Comments from the Audience

V. Superintendent’s Report – Margarita Ruiz

VI. Presentation and Reports

Update on Inter-District School Choice

SPS Strategic Plan

2017-18 Transportation Application Process and Timeline

Update on the BACS and WHES solar projects

VII. Public Hearing

Public Hearing on Salem’s Participation on the Inter-District School Choice program for 2017-18

VIII. Action Items

- a. Deliberation and Vote on Salem's Participation in the Inter-District School Choice Program 2017-18
- b. Deliberation and Vote on the Approval of the SY 2017-18 School Calendars
- c. Deliberation and Vote on the SPS 5-Year Strategic Plan
- d. Deliberation and Vote on the Nathaniel Bowditch 8th Grade Field Trip to Canobie Lake Park
- e. Deliberation and Vote on the Approval of the New Liberty Innovation School Lock-in Event
- f. Deliberation and Vote on the Resolution in Support of the Foundation Budget Review Commission recommendations

VIII. Finance Report

- a. Approval of Warrants
- b. May 11, 2017 in the amount of \$424,286.02
- b. Budget Transfer Requests

IX. Subcommittee Reports

Policy Subcommittee

- a. Deliberation and Vote on a Policy 6406 Voting Method – Tabled from 5/1/17

X. School Committee Concerns and Resolutions

XI. Questions and Comments from the Audience

Respectfully submitted by:

Angelica Alayon, Secretary to the
Salem School Committee

Salem School Committee
Meeting Minutes
Monday, May 1, 2017

A regular meeting of the Salem School Committee was held on Monday, May 1, 2017 at 7:00 p.m. in the School Committee Chambers at Collins Middle School, 29 Highland Avenue, Salem, MA.

Members Present: Mayor Kimberley Driscoll, Dr. Brendan R. Walsh, Ms. Mary Manning, Mr. James Fleming, Mr. Patrick Schultz, Ms. Kristine Wilson, and Ms. Deborah Amaral

Members Absent: None

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

Call to Order

Mr. Schultz called the Regular Meeting of the Salem School Committee to order at 7:00 p.m.

Approval of the Agenda

Mr. Fleming moved to approve the agenda as presented. Dr. Walsh seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Fleming moved to approve the minutes of the April 3, 2017 School Committee Minutes. Ms. Manning seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Mr. Fleming moved to approve the minutes of the April 24, 2017 School Committee Minutes. Ms. Manning seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Questions and Comments From the Audience

Fawaz Abusharkh of 4 Harrison Road addressed the budget. He was unsure if his comments this evening would actually have anything to do with members of the School Committee. He said that Stephen Lovely, Jerry Ryan, and Arthur Sargent held two meetings recently and felt they were withholding from serving the needs of Salem schools and other city matters for political purposes. Mr. Abusharkh shared that the people and students of Salem need to know that there are political obstacles despite current struggles with the School Committee level budget. He emphasized that they need to know of the actual city problems, mentioned Stephen Lovely, Jerry Ryan, and Arthur Sargent as being that cause, and pleaded they take action.

Geoff Millar, 29 Boardman Street, agreed with Mr. Abusharkh's concerns. He spoke in favor of the same topic and asked what the backup plans would be if the City Ordinance are not approved by City Council and if that agreement is not reached with the medical center. He asked the School Committee that if they do take a vote on the budget, they talk about what the plan is; to

consider what the backup plan is if funding for City Connects are not approved. It does not mean there is no City Connects or are we trying to cut other places in the budget in order to take care of it. He suggested that when the budget topic comes up, that a motion be made to amend the budget total to Sixty Million One Hundred Seventy Six Thousand, Two Hundred Sixty Four Dollars, which would add that \$350,000 City Connects funding to the budget and consider passing it that way and allow the City Council to decide what they are going to do with that. Mr. Millar also reported that there is almost Seven Hundred Thousand Dollars in cuts from prior year in the budget, outside of the Personnel realm. He shared that he has brought cleaning wipes and tissues to his students' classroom. He is aware of teachers that are doing a lot more than that in providing supplies to their classrooms. There are teachers who do not have soap in their teacher lavatory if they do not provide it themselves. He reminded School Committee members of his previous request, at the start of the budget, to consider the needs of students, teachers, and families. He asked School Committee members again this be considered.

Superintendent Report – Margarita Ruiz

Ms. Ruiz acknowledged the success of the District's strong Arts program. She thanked all of the Art and Music teachers for their dedication and commitment to inspiring students. Ms. Ruiz invited School Committee members and the public to join them on Wednesday, May 3rd at 6pm for the Annual Arts All City evening concert at the Salem High School. The evening will showcase choral, band, and string performances by Salem students. Ms. Ruiz commented that the first round of Kindergarten student assignments were mailed on Friday, April 28, 2017 – these are families who have completed their applications as part of Batch 1 and submitted it to the Parent Information Center by March 1st. The 2nd round of assignments will be mailed out by July 1st. The Superintendent shared that Salem's administration of the MCAS 2.0, where 4th and 8th Graders are taking the test online, for the 1st time across the state this year, have gone very well. She said that the IT Department has been very helpful and thanked the principal and all the staff members who did a great deal of work in preparing administration of the MCAS test. Ms. Ruiz said she has asked Jill Conrad to provide the Committee with an introductory background on School Choice. They are not making a full presentation but just giving them some background on the topic and gather member concerns and questions for a more in-depth discussion at their next Committee of the Whole meeting (COW).

Discussion

Mr. Fleming asked if there is assurance of speedier test results and greater efficiency as a result of students taking the test online. Ms. Ruiz said the overall long-term goal is to be able to provide a quick turnaround in the results. Ms. Carbone commented that they are not sure but they will ask and let him know.

With reference to the topic of School Choice, Mayor Driscoll asked what the deadline was for them, to act on this matter. Ms. Ruiz responded that the vote has to be done by June 1st, 2017. That would require a Committee of the Whole (COW) meeting prior to the public hearing, which is scheduled for May 15th, during the Regular School Committee meeting. Ms. Ruiz will be proposing they have the Committee of the Whole (COW) meeting on that same day, before the Regular School Committee meeting were

they will hold the hearing. Jill Conrad will provide information and they will gather questions and address them at the COW meeting. Mr. Schultz commented they would have to vote on a specific plan. Both Mayor Driscoll and Ms. Ruiz agreed. Ms. Ruiz said that she would come up with a proposal, with her recommendation.

Presentations and Reports

Update on the Proposed FY18 Budget

Superintendent Margarita Ruiz addressed some issues that came up during the recent Public Hearing on the Budget. One of the questions that came up was in relation to what is included and what is itemized under Contracted Services. She provided School Committee members with a handout that shows a listing of Contracted Services Expenditures for FY17 that will give everyone an idea of services related to contracted expenses. Included in the document is reconciliation to the FY18 budget. Ms. Ruiz addressed another concern that had been brought up regarding a Central Office budget increase of \$750,000. She said that the Central Office remains at 4 percent of the operating budget. The overall district budget increased over a year by 2 ½ percent. As discussed, the majority of the increase went to fund contractual obligations. Any changes to the budget for FY18 have been highlighted. Ms. Ruiz responded to Ms. Manning's previous inquiry to the Schools' library. The District will be auditing their current libraries to ensure they are keeping up with best practices, digital learning, and to ensure that the materials are culturally diverse and inclusive and reflect the demographic changes. In addition, Ms. Ruiz affirmed that they would not have any staff reductions or hours at any of their district libraries. Superintendent Ruiz also addressed Ms. Manning's concerns on the Buildings and Grounds budget and what they plan to undertake to address them. She continued to address other concerns previously mentioned at the prior Regular School Committee meeting. Superintendent Ruiz said she is deeply disappointed that the resources to launch City Connects are stalled at the City Council level. The North Shore Medical Center Community Benefits Agreement was partly earmarked for the launch of City Connects. That would cover the cost of individual training for every school in the program and the assessments, etc. These expenses were not built into the operating budget. If the City Council chooses not to act, they would have to forego pursuing this opportunity. The shift in roles for adjustment councilors would revert back to their previous responsibilities. Ms. Ruiz hopes that a solution or resolution to this would be found. She clarified that those expenses have not been rolled into the operating budget; this budget does not reflect that. She hopes the City Council would allow those funds to be used for the children of Salem.

Discussion on the Salem Public Schools FY17 Contracted Services Expenditures

Mr. Fleming commented that others might not know what the various categories are for. The information shows initials and broad categories such as ELL, Elevation or Medical Consultant. Others will not know what actual expenses are for. For example, others may know of a vendor but do not have a description of what the vendor is going to do. Mr. Fleming suggested that a description of their performance should be added. Ms. Ruiz said they add that. Mr. Fleming said that it can then be posted with the budget for

the public either as an Addendum or on the website as low broadcasting to the general public. Mr. Schultz asked to what level of detail should be included in the itemization. School Committee members continued brief discussion on the topic. Dr. Walsh asked if the amount of \$128,000 on the FY17 Contracted Services Expenditures for Achievement Network (ANET) would be lower on the next fiscal year. Ms. Ruiz said they are in the process of selecting a new District Interim Assessment. It would be a repurposing of this amount, not be a reduction or addition. Dr. Walsh clarified that it would not be specifically going to ANET. Ms. Ruiz agreed. Dr. Walsh said that should be reflective to an extent on the list of Contracted Services Expenditures. Ms. Ruiz said that the reason why it is not reflected on the list is because they are using ANET this year. Dr. Walsh referred to this reflection for the FY18 year. Mayor Driscoll said that the FY18 Budget does not provide specific layout by vendors. It just lays out the category. Dr. Walsh commented that the categories are broad. Mayor Driscoll said she understands that going into the next fiscal year, they may want to delineate the contracted services by what's professional development versus what's officiating and referenced that would take some time. Mayor Driscoll said this list is a snapshot for now. Further discussion of the list of Contracted Services Expenditures ensued. All members agreed that it would progressive to include a bit more detail and transparency in the future. Mr. Schultz asked if this list is already made available to the public. Mr. Fleming said it was not. Mayor Driscoll suggested it be put up on the budget website. Mr. Schultz said it would help as its information on the range of spending provide a lot of clarity on its own. Ms. Ruiz said they would be happy to include more information to the list.

Discussion on the FY18 Budget

Mayor Driscoll and School Committee members discussed the FY18 Budget. Mayor Driscoll commented they should ensure School Committee members are aware of the school-related requests made in the City's capital budget.

Mr. Fleming stated he is dropping his previous request for an additional \$6,000 to the Salem High School budget.

Discussion on City Connects

Dr. Walsh brought up the Questions and Comments from the audience segment to Mayor Driscoll as she was not present at that time. He said that, although he is not suggesting this, one of the commentators did make the suggestion that the Mayor might consider putting more money into the school budget for this purpose. Dr. Walsh acknowledge that she had already added \$100,000 to cover some areas. Mr. Schultz said that the whole council votes on the budget and so all of them would have to vote to reject the budget. It might be nice to have a vote on this by the whole committee. Dr. Walsh commented he just does not know where Mayor Driscoll would find \$350,000 in local funding to do this. Mr. Fleming said he thinks they should send the budget without any additional funds to the City Council and inform them that their vote on that particular Community Benefits Agreement depends on their servicing of children with City Connects. In response to this topic, Mayor Driscoll said they do not have \$350,000. She is still making cuts to the non-city side of the budget to get it balanced

and to prepare it for submission of the council. If the CBA is not adopted, they are not only going to lose funding for City Connects but also monies to benefit police, street improvements, and seniors, among others. It has taken more time than they would have liked. She thanked School Committee members who have been at these meetings and advocated on behalf of the agreement. Mayor Driscoll does not see this council turning their backs on the funds. This is a donation to the city relative to the hospital's growth. There are a lot of positive items contained within it, in addition to the school funding. The vast majority of the councilors want to support it. She hopes they may get this out on May 11th. If for some reason it does not move forward, there would not be a City Connects program. Mayor Driscoll talked of the benefits of City Connects. She commented that City Council wanted to see that the School Committee supports City Connects. She stated at the meeting that the vote on the Agenda this evening in support of City Connects should provide them with that assurance.

Overview of School Choice in MA and Process Timeline for Salem to Deliberate on whether to accept students under the School Choice option.

Jill Conrad gave an introduction and overview of Inter-District School Choice in MA and Process Timeline for Salem to deliberate on whether to accept students under the School Choice option. The law assumes that all local districts participate in school choice, unless they vote to withdraw from the program, and the vote must take place by June 1st of each year.

Discussion

Mr. Fleming asked for clarification in that if they vote against School Choice, would that preclude a Salem student from utilizing School Choice in a School Choice District. Ms. Conrad said it does not. A local school district's decision on whether or not to participate in the school choice program does not affect a Salem residents' eligibility to exercise school choice to attend another receiving district. Mayor Driscoll asked if they could target specific grades if they were to consider allowing School Choice students to come from other outside communities, how tailored can it be. Ms. Conrad said that based on last year's feedback, her understanding is that it can be tailored to what they want it to be. The person she spoke with last year retired. She would like to have those questions answered with those who are present before they finalize that. Mayor Driscoll inquired how much it can be tailored and impact Special Education. She was under the impression that the Sending District would still bear some of those responsibilities but she would like to better understand what that is so that they are aware of that, going in. Margaret Marotta said she could answer some of those questions. Mayor Driscoll said they would share it for the 15th but asked if there were some risk avoidance, because the sending district is still a contributing factor. Ms. Marotta said they are essentially still responsible to cover the cost of the Special Education program for the students. Ms. Manning asked if they could declare a certain school besides the fact they can declare a certain grade level. Mayor Driscoll said that in other words how targeted could it be. Ms. Manning said yes. Ms. Wilson asked of how transportation works under that program. Mr. Schultz said that is up to the parents to get the kids into the school district. Mr. Fleming said he would like an answer to

that. Ms. Conrad responded with information. School Committee members continued discussion on the topic. Mayor Driscoll said that she would like to know more information if they are to make a recommendation. Mayor Driscoll asked how long are they locked in if they commit to this program, whether the student is there forever or if there is a locked-in timeline that cannot be locked-out. Mr. Fleming said he thinks they have to take a vote every year. There was further discussion on the topic. Ms. Conrad recorded the members' questions and said she would prepare responses for the upcoming Committee of the Whole meeting scheduled for May 15th.

Action Item

Deliberation and Vote on the Salem Public Schools FY18 School Budget.

Mayor Driscoll entertained the motion to approve the Salem Public Schools FY18 School Budget.

Mr. Schultz moved to approve the Salem Public Schools FY18 Personnel Budget in the amount of \$45,778,563. Ms. Wilson seconded the motion. Mr. Fleming opposed. The motion was approved/carried.

Mr. Fleming moved to approve the Salem Public School FY18 Non Personnel Budget in the amount of \$11,029,268. Ms. Wilson seconded the motion. The motion was approved/carried.

Dr. Walsh moved to approve the total FY18 Salem Public School Budget in the amount of \$56,807,831. Ms. Manning seconded the motion. Mr. Fleming opposed to the Personnel portion of it. The motion was approved/carried.

Mr. Schultz moved to approve the total FY18 Bentley Academy Charter School Budget in the amount of \$3,018,725. Ms. Wilson seconded the motion. The motion was approved/carried.

Deliberation and approval on the Superintendent's Recommendation regarding the MCAS School Climate Survey

Discussion

Ms. Ruiz said she mentioned the survey at their last meeting. The Department of Education is piloting school climate questions as part of their Science MCAS. She will be stating to the Committee (later in May and early June) that much work was done between Salem Public Schools and the Salem Teacher's Union. They reviewed and created, with collaboration from the Curriculum Subcommittee, a School Climate Survey that will be used for self-assessment and goal setting within the evaluation process and for school improvement planning. The survey that was developed here for grades 3 to 5 contains twenty seven questions. It is a survey that was carefully worked on by the district and their union. Ms. Ruiz recommendation to the School Committee is that they do not administer the Pilot Survey questions from the Department of Education as part of the MCAS.

Mr. Fleming motioned to approve the Superintendent's Recommendation regarding the MCAS School Climate Survey. Dr. Walsh seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Deliberation and Vote on the Resolution in Support of the North Shore Medical Center Community Benefits Agreement and the City Connects program

Discussion

There is no resolution language. There is a statement resolution in support of the City Connects Program by the School Committee. There was further discussion on this.

Mr. Fleming motioned to approve a Resolution in Support of the North Shore Medical Center Community Benefits Agreement and the City Connects program. Dr. Walsh seconded the motion. The Motion carried.

Approval of North Shore Education Consortium's establishment of a Capital Fund

Discussion

Dr. Walsh asked if this may be moved over to the next meeting and get more detailed information before voting. Mr. Fleming agreed. Kristin Shaver provided details.

Dr. Walsh motioned to approve the North Shore Education Consortium's establishment of a Capital Fund. Ms. Manning seconded the motion. The Motion carried.

Approval of SHS-JROTC field trip to San Diego, CA May 18-21

Mr. Fleming motioned to approve the Approval of SHS-JROTC field trip to San Diego, CA May 18-21. Ms. Wilson seconded the motion. Mr. Schultz and Ms. Manning opposed the field trip. The Motion carried.

Approval of Collins Middle School 8th Grade Overnight Field Trip to New York City, NY

Mr. Fleming motioned to approve the Approval of Collins Middle School 8th Grade Overnight Field Trip to New York City, NY. Ms. Wilson seconded the motion. The Motion carried.

Approval of the Collins Middle School 8th Grade Out-of-State Field Trip to Canobie Lake Park in Salem, NH

Mr. Fleming motioned to approve the Approval of the Collins Middle School 8th Grade Out-of-State Field Trip to Canobie Lake Park in Salem, NH. Ms. Wilson seconded the motion. The Motion carried.

Finance Report

a. Approval of Warrant

March 4, 2017 in the amount of \$269,338.48

Dr. Walsh motioned to approve the warrant as stated. Mr. Fleming seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

b. Budget Transfer Requests FY17-17, FY17-18, FY17-19, FY17-20

Budget Transfer Requests

Business Administrator, Kristin Shaver explained that Horace Mann Laboratory School has requested to transfer \$1,500.00 from Textbooks to Instructional Supplies.

From Account	Account Number	Amount
Horace Mann Laboratory School Textbooks	13570621-5511	\$1,500
To Account	Account Number	Amount
Instructional Supplies	13570621-5514	\$1,500

Dr. Walsh moved to approve the Horace Mann Laboratory School’s Budget Transfer request from Textbooks to Instructional Supplies. Ms. Wilson seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

The 2nd is Pupil Personnel Services Department request to transfer \$2,000.00 from Equipment to Office Supplies.

From Account	Account Number	Amount
Pupil Personnel Services Department Equipment	13640161-5860	\$2,000
To Account	Account Number	Amount
Office Supplies	13640161-5421	\$2,000

Mr. Fleming moved to approve the Pupil Personnel Services Department Budget Transfer request from Equipment to Office Supplies. Mr. Schultz seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

The 3rd is the Teaching and Learning Department transfer request of \$34,000.00 to allow for the purchase of instructional materials and online resources.

From Account	Account Number	Amount
Teaching and Learning Department Stipends	13990160-5150	\$34,000

To Account	Account Number	Amount
Instructional Supplies	13570141-5421	\$34,000

Ms. Amaral moved to approve the Teaching and Learning Department Budget Transfer request from Stipends to Instructional Supplies. Mr. Fleming seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

The 4th is the Buildings and Grounds Department transfer of \$120,000.00 from Electricity and Gas to Building Maintenance.

From Account	Account Number	Amount
Buildings and Grounds Department		
Electricity	13530121-5211	\$20,000
Gas	13530151-5215	\$100,000
Building Maintenance	13530121-5241	\$120,000

Discussion

Mayor Driscoll asked for an overview. Ms. Shaver gave brief overview. Dr. Walsh inquired as to what accounted to \$100,000.

Mr. Fleming moved to approve the Buildings and Grounds Department transfer of \$120,000 from Electricity and Gas to Building Maintenance. Dr. Walsh seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

Subcommittee Reports

Policy Subcommittee

Deliberation and Vote on a Policy 6406 Voting Method – Tabled from 4/3/17

Discussion

Ms. Amaral requested that this policy remain tabled. She asked this be put on the Agenda for discussion at the end of the Committee of the Whole (COW) meeting.

School Committee Concerns and Resolutions

Mayor Driscoll suggested that an update on the Solar Project be added on the next meeting Agenda.

Ms. Amaral referred to the very low roof solar panels at Witchcraft Heights. She said it would be wise to have a barrier.

Mr. Fleming said he has been trying to work on an issue for the last seven days. He is quite upset with the way he was treated by the administration and did not provide him with information he had requested. He felt they did something without his knowledge on that

particular issue. Mayor Driscoll asked if this involved School Committee members. Mr. Fleming said it did not.

Dr. Walsh thanked the Mercy Tavern and its owner Mr. Schultz, on behalf of Salem Children's Charity, for their contribution of a portion of their profits to them and the North Shore CDC.

Mayor Driscoll thanked the members of the Finance Subcommittee and the schools' Finance team for all their hard work. It takes a long time to put together this budget and following up with members of the staff.

Questions and Comments from the Audience

Lisa Hanson Damato, 53 Hawthorne Street, spoke on two things. She added to Mr. Geoff Millar's earlier comment. She herself has contributed two or three gallons of hand soap, 600 antibacterial wipes, and 36 boxes of tissues. She said she does not mind it but considers other classrooms that may not be able to do that. She also spoke regarding testing at the Salton Stall School library that prevents other students from entering and utilizing the library resources.

Fawaz Abusharkh of 4 Harrison Road reiterated his calculation of the difference of \$750,000 to the central office's budget between last year and this year and detailed how he calculated the 40% - 41 % (\$750,000) budget increase for central office. He said that he would be available to discuss this but no one contacted him. Mr. Abusharkh said that he agreed with Dr. Walsh about speaking to the Councilors. He suggested and encouraged parents contact City Councilors Stephen Lovely, Jerry Ryan, and Arthur Sargent and demand attention to the needs of their city, schools, and children.

Adjournment

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

Respectfully submitted by:

Angelica Alayon, Secretary
Salem School Committee

Meeting Materials and Reports

School Committee Agenda May 1, 2017
Minutes of the April 3, 2017 Regular School Committee Meeting
Minutes of the April 24, 2017 Regular School Committee Meeting
Policy 6406
Update on the Proposed FY18 Budget
Salem Public Schools FY17 Contracted Services Expenditures handout

MEMORANDUM

To: Salem School Committee

From: Margarita Ruiz, Superintendent

Date: May 11, 2017

Re: Final Recommendation Regarding Salem's Participation in MA's Inter-District School Choice Program for 2017-18

Cc: David Angeramo, Principal, Salem High School

As you know, the annual decision on whether or not to participate in the MA Inter-District School Choice program is scheduled for May 15, 2017 following the Committee of the Whole meeting (at 6:00 pm) and public hearing (7:00 pm) on this topic.

This year, I am recommending the Salem School Committee consider a limited form of participation at the high school level. Specifically, my recommendation for the 2017-18 school year is the following:

- **Salem should accept up to twenty (20) non-resident students in the 9th grade at Salem High School for the 2017-18 school year.**

Over the past several weeks, my staff and I have conducted an in-depth review of the Inter-District School Choice program based on available information, discussions with representatives from the MA DESE School Finance Office (which oversees this program), and discussions with fellow Superintendents and Business Managers. During this process, we have learned much about how the program works and have had all of our questions answered. In addition, we have discussed this recommendation with the Principal of the Salem High School who supports this proposal.

As we have sought answers to our questions, the concerns we initially had dissipated and the opportunities to both better serve nearby students looking for additional options, mitigate some of the challenges associated with housing instability that many of our students experience, and potentially stabilize and/or increase enrollment at SHS became apparent. A complete summary of the information we've gathered, including answers to the questions you identified and advice from participating districts is attached for your review. In addition, I am attaching a 1994 Advisory Opinion on School Choice from MA DESE that offers some helpful information as well.

While there are some potential challenges associated with participation (and we should certainly be thoughtful and diligent to mitigate those), in my opinion, the benefits outweigh the challenges. Further, my recommendation to accept only 20 students in this first year is modest enough to be manageable, allowing the district and the high school an opportunity to "test out" the concept without affecting current staffing and/or programmatic plans for the 2017-18 school year.

I ask you to support this recommendation and I look forward to discussing it further with you during the Committee of the Whole meeting scheduled for 5/15/17 at 6:00 pm.

**Participation in the MA Inter-District School Choice Program
Information for the Salem School Committee
DRAFT 5/15/17**

BACKGROUND

The state of MA has allowed inter-district school choice since 1991. M.G.L. 76, 12B allows non-resident students to enroll in school districts that elect to participate in the inter-district school choice program. The decision on whether or not to participate is up to local school committees which must hold a public hearing on the issue and vote on whether or not to participate in the program by June 1st of each year.

Districts that vote to receive students via the school choice program are called “receiving districts.” Districts that have resident students enrolled in non-resident districts via the school choice program are called “sending districts.” To date, Salem Public Schools is a “sending district” with over 72 Salem resident-students attending other districts via the school choice program. A breakdown of the districts into which these Salem students have choiced-in is below along with information about the grade level of Salem students enrolled in other districts.

Receiving District (2016-17)	Count
BEVERLY	24
HAMILTON WENHAM	9
MANCHESTER ESSEX	2
MAVA	6
PEABODY	25
TECCA	5
TRITON	1

KF	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12
3	1	3	4	5	1	7	6	10	6	7	10	9

Districts do not have to send students in order to receive students, or vice versa. Individual school communities decide if they would like to receive students.

INTER-DISTRICT V. INTRA-DISTRICT SCHOOL CHOICE

Inter-District school choice is the statewide program that allows non-resident students to enroll in participating districts, statewide. An Intra-District school choice program refers to how a district assigns students within its boundaries such as a specific district's own policies that may allow forms of choice for resident students among schools within the district. Salem Public Schools currently has an Intra-District school choice program by virtue of its choice-based student assignment policy (see [SC Policy #5103](#)).

LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION, STATEWIDE

Participation in the program has expanded over the 16 years since its inception with 32 districts participating in FY92 and 190 districts participating in FY17. This means that approximately 15,000 students are currently enrolled as non-resident students in districts other than where they reside. In some parts of the state, such as in western MA, nearly all of the districts participate while in other parts of the state, participation varies. Within Essex County, almost half of the school districts in the county (15 of the 32 school districts), currently participate in the school choice program. A complete [list of participating districts](#) can be found on the DESE website.

TUITION REIMBURSEMENT FOR NON-RESIDENT STUDENTS

Sending districts pay tuition to receiving districts for each student enrolled via the school choice program. According to the law, the tuition rate, per student, is set at 75% of the per pupil operating cost (for the receiving district), capped at \$5,000. According to DESE, tuition rates for all districts are now at the \$5,000 cap.

The money for tuition comes from a district's state aid. The state deposits money that would otherwise go to the sending district's Chapter 70 aid into the School Choice Tuition Trust Fund. The state treasurer distributes funds to receiving districts based on a district's number of non-resident students. A projection is made in the fall, based on the October 1 enrollment count, per district, and the actual enrollment is adjusted based on a reconciliation process that takes place each spring.

Participating districts must establish a revolving account to manage incoming tuition dollars. The funds in these accounts can be carried over and districts have flexibility to use the money from the tuition reimbursements deposited in this account in flexible ways, as needed. There are no restrictions on how this money is to be used, however, DESE advises that school choice tuition is intended to cover any additional out-of-pocket expenses associated with students who are enrolled under the school choice program and to provide a financial incentive to encourage districts to participate in the program. Allowable expenditures may include any expenditures for staff, materials, equipment, or services that directly enhance the quality of a district's educational programs and benefit students who currently attend a district's schools. Funds may

not be transferred to another municipal department for purposes unrelated to education, or for payment of debt services.

For additional information on tuition reimbursement, please visit the [DESE Advisory on the Financial Administration of the School Choice Program](#).

REIMBURSEMENT FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS

In addition to the \$5,000 per-pupil tuition rate, districts may get reimbursed for special education increments, based on an accounting of all special education services provided to students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), including any transportation required as part of an IEP, and/or the cost of an out-of-district placement. The amount of the increment is determined by applying annual cost rates to the specific services cited in a pupil's individual education plan (similar to "circuit breaker" program). It is the receiving district's responsibility to keep an accurate record of what services were counted toward the cost. For information on the cost rates that would be applied, please see the [special education services calculator](#).

TRANSPORTATION

Receiving districts are not required to provide transportation to non-resident students enrolled via school choice. If a student is enrolled via a school choice program, the parent/guardian is obligated to get the student to school. The only exception to this is in cases where transportation is required as part of a student's IEP. In these cases, the receiving district is responsible for ensuring the transportation services are provided, but they are reimbursed via the special education increment claim forms.

ROLE OF INTRA-DISTRICT SCHOOL CHOICE (E.G., STUDENT ASSIGNMENT POLICY)

If a school district operates an intra-district school choice program (such as Salem's student assignment policy), school choice students would be assigned using the same criteria as resident students, however, resident students can be given priority over non-resident students. According to MGL 76, Section 12B(d), "If the city, town or regional school district operates an intra-district choice plan, non-resident students may apply for schools on the same basis as resident students, but the intra-district choice plan may give preference to resident students in assigning students to schools."

ROLE OF CHAPTER 74 - VOCATIONAL EDUCATION (Revised 5/15/17)

Students who choice into a district via the inter-district school choice process must be allowed the same access to available programs as any other student. This rule also applies to all Chapter 74 programs available within the school(s). The tuition reimbursement rate for these students is the school choice rate.

Some Chapter 74 programs – such as Salem's -- have admissions policies that allow non-resident students to enroll in the district's Chapter 74 programs via the non-resident tuition process. The Non-Resident Tuition Rate is higher than the school choice reimbursement rate. Non-resident students (who are **not** already admitted via the school choice process) may apply, through a separate process, to attend the SHS Chapter 74 programs via the non-resident tuition

application process, allowing the district to charge a higher rate to the sending district. Sending districts have the authority to approve or reject these applications depending on the types of Chapter 74 programs available in their home district.

The two processes are and should be managed as separate processes. In general, a student who enters the district via school choice remains in the district as a school choice student with access to the same opportunities available to resident students. Simultaneously, the school may receive additional applicants for the Chapter 74 programs via the non-resident tuition process, and these may be taken for any grade level that offers Chapter 74 programs.

For more information about tuition reimbursement for Chapter 74 students and the role of school choice, please visit the [DESE Guidelines](#).

DETERMINATION OF AVAILABLE SEATS WITHIN A DISTRICT

When a local school committee opts to participate in the school choice program, it may specify the grade level(s), school(s), and level of enrollment it will accept via school choice for any given year. While some school districts choose to open their enrollment to students at any grade level and/or school, many have identified specific grade levels and have set caps on the number of students they will accept for those grade levels. It is up to each local school district to determine the total number of students they will accept via school choice for any grade level(s) and/or school(s) identified. This information must be reported to the state by June 1st of each participating year.

SELECTION OF STUDENTS

Once a school district opts to participate in school choice, the selection of students must be free from discrimination on the basis of race, color, religious creed, national origin, sex, age, sexual orientation, ancestry, athletic performance, disabilities, special needs, home language, or academic performance. If the number of applicants exceeds the number of available seats, the selection process must be on a random basis. Once a student is accepted and enrolled via school choice, that student must be treated as if s/he were a resident of the district. In addition, these students must be allowed to complete their education within the district, until graduation.

ROLE OF A STUDENT'S DISCIPLINE RECORDS

According to the 1994 Advisory Opinion on School Choice, "there is nothing in the school choice law that would prohibit a receiving school district from considering the discipline records of an applicant. School districts must use this criterion carefully to avoid challenges. If there are more applicants than seats, the review of discipline records should not take place prior to the lottery (should be after the decision to admit is made).

RESEARCH ON INTER-DISTRICT SCHOOL CHOICE IN MA

Currently, there is no research available on the MA Inter-district school choice program, however, a researcher from Boston University is beginning a study to look at the impact that school choice has on student outcomes in MA. A few articles have been written on the subject, however, and additional resources may be helpful, including:

- [School Choice Opens Options Beyond District Schools](#) (WBUR, October 20, 2014)
- [Wachusett Regional School District School Choice FAQ](#)
- [Mapping School Choice in MA: Data and Findings](#) (Boston Foundation, 2003)
- MA DESE [website on school choice](#)
- [Parents' Guide to School Choice in MA](#)

GETTING STARTED - HOW IT WOULD WORK

When a local school committee votes to participate in the inter-district school choice program, the next steps entail:

1. Submitting the decision and description of the total # of seats available at the specific grade levels and/or schools that will accept non-resident students
2. Establishing a deadline for initial applications (recommended, most districts do this, as an example, see [Beverly School Choice Application](#), [Ipswich School Choice Application](#))
3. Advertising the availability of seats to non-resident students (optional -- context and consideration of relationship with surrounding districts important factor)
4. Receiving applications by the deadline
 - a. If the district receives more applicants than spaces, a lottery must be held to select students (siblings can be given preference in a lottery)
 - b. If the districts receives fewer applicants than spaces, all students who apply are enrolled and the remainder can be filled on a rolling basis
5. Complete the registration/student assignment process for those students who have been accepted via the school choice process
 - a. Residency verification -- to verify the sending district
 - b. Other registration requirements as established by the local School Committee policy (e.g., student assignment policy)
 - c. Language and special education evaluations as needed
 - d. Other procedures as applicable
6. Enroll the student in the new school
7. Track and monitor any address changes (Note- if a the student moves to another town, must report new city/town of residence so the state can charge the tuition to the correct city or town)
8. Include non-resident students in the October and March SIMS reports
9. Complete the school choice claims process in the spring to claim reimbursement for non-resident students, including any special education services provided as part of a student's IEP (due in the last week of April, each year)
 - a. A claim form completed for each choice student
 - b. A special education increment form completed for each student with an IEP
 - c. Tuition deducted from sending districts' local aide accounts/added to receiving districts' local aide accounts
10. Local aide accounts for both sending and receiving districts are adjusted based on school choice enrollment.

INSIGHTS FROM PARTICIPATING DISTRICTS

A handful of district leaders from other, participating school districts (Beverly, Burlington, Hudson, Manchester-Essex, Norton, Somerset, West Bridgewater, etc.) were contacted and asked to share their thoughts regarding the potential benefits and challenges of participation. They were also asked to share any advice they would give to school districts considering participating in school choice. Below is a summary of their feedback and insights.

Potential Benefits of Participating

- The district gets to recover some of costs associated with the benefit extended to our staff that allows them to have their children attend school in Burlington.
- It provides us a flexible option for some of our neediest high school students who often do not have housing security. It allows us to provide them stability in their schooling.
- It provides the district with a small, but flexible revenue source to solve problems quickly
- Has helped the high school with enrollment
- “Choice was the best thing that happened to the district.”
- “One of the best decisions our school committee has made.”

Potential Challenges of Participating

- There are some students who "choice in" who require significant support to graduate
- For non-special education students, the \$5000 per student does not cover the full cost of educating the students received. Some districts get into a situation where they may enroll more students than they actually can support, based on the staffing levels they have. There is a fine line of taking enough kids and taking too many kids.
- Be careful about considering tuition reimbursement as a revenue stream to cover operational costs
- Balancing the right number of students to allow in via choice with capacity to serve

Advice from Participating Districts

- Initially, start small
- Many school committees believe that if they vote not to participate in choice that their students can't leave to participate in another district that accepts choice students. This understanding is incorrect.



SALEM PUBLIC SCHOOLS Strategic Plan

2017-2022

LETTER FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Dear Students, Parents, Staff, and Community Members,

Almost one year ago, the Salem Public Schools embarked on an ambitious mission: to chart for ourselves a path to the future, one that would build on the excellent progress that we have been making—and accelerate the process of change so that all of Salem’s children will be prepared to thrive in the world that awaits them.

We live in changing times; the pace of change almost takes my breath away sometimes, especially when I think about all that our young people will need to know and be able to do in the years to come. Our school district, like most districts in the nation, is slowly adjusting to the new realities of this hyper-connected, global society in which we live. But it is time we step up the pace of change; our children are counting on us to do so. And the very future of Salem depends on how well we educate our next generation of leaders and contributors.

These realities are the reason I set out to create a strategic plan for the next five years and beyond. It would have been a fairly straightforward task to rally the troops in central office and spend a few weeks brainstorming a set of goals, strategies, and tactics. The School Committee could have easily held a retreat to craft a vision and mission on behalf of the district and community. That’s how strategic planning is typically undertaken in public schools. But I knew that we needed to do it differently in Salem, that we needed to create a strategic plan with the entire community, in an open and transparent way, so that all of the voices in our city could be heard and all of the creativity that resides in our community could be harnessed on behalf of our children.

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"There is no greater power than a community discovering what it cares about."

-Margaret Wheatley

Many of you have been part of this community-engaged process, whether you served on one of six work teams or on the Strategic Planning Steering Committee, or whether you attended one of three Citywide Conversations in which you were asked to provide detailed feedback about the proposals put before you. You may have been one of the teachers who completed the teacher survey or participated in teacher focus groups, or perhaps you filled out the community survey or attended a student focus group or parent coffee. We are proud and grateful that so many people in Salem took the time out of their busy schedules to participate in the creation of our collective roadmap to an exciting new day in the Salem Public Schools. Getting to know you better and hearing your ideas has truly been an energizing process for me, and I hope it has been gratifying for you as well.

If you have not yet had the opportunity to participate in our stakeholder conversations, fear not. We will continue to engage the community as we build an improved system together. You will continue to keep us honest as we invest in strategies that have been demonstrated to deepen student engagement in their learning—one of the fundamental tasks of a strong educational system.

In the field of education, professionals talk a lot these days about personalized learning. What that means is that educators must be attuned to the strengths and needs of each child in their classrooms, and to create a vastly expanded toolkit of strategies for reaching every child. This is no small feat, and we must work together and all become learners if we are to realize our dream of becoming a world-class school district, second to none in Massachusetts. This is an ambitious, but achievable, dream that I ask you to join me in embracing.

And so, as your superintendent and as a proud resident of Salem, it is my pleasure to present to you the results of our collective work together: the 2017-2022 Salem Public School Strategic Plan.

Every child in our community has come into this world with a set of natural gifts. Let us commit to one another that it is our collective mission to develop these gifts to the fullest capacity. Let us help all of our children find their sense of purpose, and develop the capabilities that will enable them to become responsible family members, productive workers, and engaged citizens. We will all be the beneficiaries of such efforts for years to come.

With deep appreciation,

Margarita Ruiz, Superintendent

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A strategic plan is a roadmap to the future. The destination is a set of ambitious aspirations, matched by a set of robust strategies and action steps intended to build a healthy and successful organization. A strategic plan for an organization in the public sphere, such as our schools, carries an additional load: it must be accountable to a broad range of stakeholders because the future of our schools is inextricably linked with the future of our city. In just a few years, today's students will be leading our city—rearing families, and contributing to its economic and civic vitality.

In this strategic plan, the Salem Public Schools lays out a vision for the kind of school district we aspire to build for the 21st century, one that ensures that our future leaders and contributors will be equipped to strengthen and expand on what Salem's forebears have created: a diverse, creative, and prosperous city.

In partnership with the larger community, we created a statement to capture this grand yet realistic vision:

All students will be locally engaged, globally connected, and fully prepared to thrive in a diverse and changing world.

What kind of public education will provide these lofty outcomes, and what will it take to turn this vision into reality? How can the Salem Public Schools move from good to great and what kinds of opportunities will every student have access to in the formative years they are with us? These were the questions that animated our many conversations and explorations during the past year, beginning in August 2016.

Through a period of reflection and deliberation, district leadership identified six "Levers for Change" and constituted a work team to correspond with each Lever.

For months, these teams of district staff and members of the community came together to study national, state and local trends, conduct research and analyze data. In visioning and work sessions that spanned from August 2016 through February 2017, they expressed what they hope will be true of the Salem Public Schools (SPS) within five years and beyond:

- **Salem/SPS is a school district of choice across the North Shore**, with new families moving into the city to attend our world-class schools. There are excellent principals at every school in the district, and excellent teachers in every classroom.
- **Students and families feel that the schools are meeting their needs**, and the schools are reflective of the surrounding community. Diversity is celebrated and all students have

teachers who look like them and support their growth. Families and schools are true partners in children’s development and learning.

- **Schools prepare students for academic and professional success, and for civic participation.** SPS is a Tier 1 district with Tier 1 schools, and there are high retention and graduation rates for all students. Learning opportunities align with college preparation standards and careers of the future and schools leverage partnerships with industries and colleges in the community.
- **Schools are adaptive and forward-looking,** following new developments in neuroscience and designing innovations based on the latest research on child development, neuroscience, and effective teaching, and what works in education. SPS has made technology an integrated part of the district’s landscape, and made sure that teachers knew how to use it in order to improve learning. It will be second nature to assess and then meet the needs of every learner.

After seven months of dreaming and exploration, each work team presented a set of recommendations to the Strategic Planning Steering Committee in February 2017—and then to the community as a whole at a Citywide Conversation in March 2017. The district’s Senior Management Team then created an actionable plan based on the work teams’ recommendations, eventually adopting four core pillars around which to organize the district’s work:

Pillar 1: Create a Vibrant K-12 Teaching & Learning Ecosystem

An ecosystem is a community of interacting organisms and their physical environment. Many conversations centered on how to create a district-wide environment that is innovative, and that builds essential 21st century skills such as critical thinking, creativity, communication and collaboration. There was also widespread agreement about the importance of real-world experiences and classroom learning that is more engaged and student-centered.

Pillar 2: Reimagine the High School Experience

There is consensus nationwide that the American high school is an obsolete institution, aligned with an economy and society that no longer exist. Conversations focused on how to align Salem’s three high schools with the realities of modern life, and how to ensure that the high school experience helps every young person find a sense of purpose.

Pillar 3: Nurture Staff Leadership & Empowerment

The Salem Public Schools aspires to be a district in which everyone is a learner every day, and where people come to work because they have thoughtful and dedicated colleagues who are committed to each other’s growth and to the growth of their students. Teachers, in particular, voiced a desire to design their own learning and leadership path, whether in or out of the classroom.

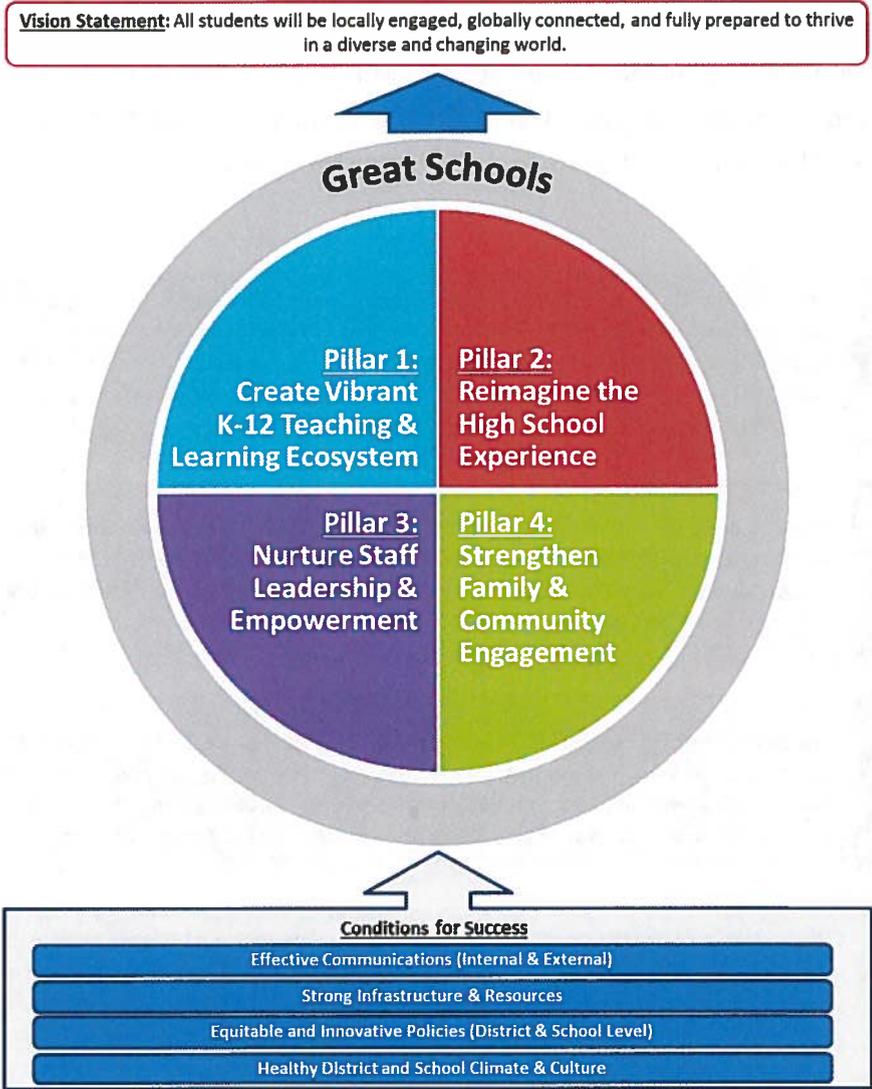
Pillar 4: Strengthen Family & Community Engagement

We heard time and again about the vital importance of partnership between families and schools, and about the centrality of community partners to enrich student learning. We also heard about the need for increased family and community awareness about the importance of early childhood education and available options for children in Salem. The community made clear that the district needed to significantly step up its game in these arenas.

Within each of these pillars are the goals, strategies and action steps that we believe will lead to the desired changes. Timelines for action are laid out in this plan. General indicators will help us measure our success on a regular and ongoing basis. Undergirding these four pillars are enabling conditions – core, district-wide commitments to form a foundation upon which the work of the strategic plan can be built – that we believe will be the foundation for our success:

- Effective internal and external communications
- Strong infrastructure and resources
- Equitable and innovative policies
- Healthy district and school climate and culture

Our Theory of Action is illustrated below. The enabling conditions support the work that is happening within each of the four pillars, which then results in great schools that help us realize our vision for Salem Public Schools’ students:



Moving from planning to implementation is a big leap, and managing change in a complex system that must adapt to ever-shifting conditions is not for the faint of heart. And yet, people in the district across the city have demonstrated in this strategic planning process that they are ready to take action.

The 2017-2022 Salem Public Schools Strategic Plan is intended to provide us with a strong sense of direction and hold us accountable to our efforts in the years to come. The road ahead will no doubt present us with unforeseeable challenges, but together, with focus and resolve, we are poised to create 21st century learning environments that are second to none.

OUR CHALLENGE

Salem, Massachusetts is a vibrant, coastal city located about 16 miles north of Boston. Named by *Boston Magazine* as one of Massachusetts’ “Best Places to Live” in 2013, our city has much to offer to residents and visitors, including several museums, a bustling commercial district on the waterfront, Salem State University, and easy access to Boston via public transportation. Our city will celebrate its 400th anniversary in 10 years, a milestone that is already on the minds of the city’s leadership. Salem has a population of about 43,000, with a median household income of \$60,690 (compared with \$68,563 for the state of Massachusetts overall).¹

Approximately 3,800 students are currently enrolled in the Salem Public Schools. The student population is fairly diverse, with about 38% identifying as Hispanic, and 28% having a first language that is not English.² Thirteen percent are English Language Learners (ELL), 21.5% have disabilities, and 46.6% are economically disadvantaged.³ As in most urban school districts, ensuring that all students learn and meet academic standards is an ongoing challenge. Indeed, while many students and schools have excelled (with some schools achieving Level 1 status), outcomes for other schools and students have lagged. In 2011,

	Salem Public Schools	Massachusetts
% of students who are Hispanic	38%	19.4%
% of students whose first language is not English	27.9%	20.1%
% of English Language Learners	12.7%	9.5%
% of students with a disability	21.5%	17.4%
% of students who are high needs	60.3%	45.2%
% of students who are economically disadvantaged	46.6%	30.2%

Source: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

¹U.S. Census Bureau

²Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

³*Ibid.*

Salem and Bentley Elementary School was designated a “Level 4” district by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, indicating that the school was low performing on state tests and had not shown signs of substantial improvement over time. Leaders swiftly mobilized to implement multiple strategies that would improve student learning such as strengthening curriculum, aligning assessments, increasing professional development, implementing data-driven practices, restructuring schools, and finally, recruiting a new superintendent in 2015, enabling the district to consider a more ambitious vision.

From the beginning, Superintendent Ruiz galvanized a highly collaborative approach to her leadership of the district along with a clear focus on structures and systems that improve learning in schools. By working together in alignment with the clear goals of the Accelerated Improvement Plan (AIP), schools have improved and students have made academic gains. In 2016, under the leadership of Superintendent Ruiz, the majority of the Salem Public Schools increased their ranking in the state and the district successfully emerged from its Level 4 designation and is now a Level 3 school district. Despite this progress, district leaders continue to ask – *what more can we do to ensure that all of Salem’s students are prepared for college, career, and citizenship?*

“The realities of today’s economy demand not only a new set of skills but also that they be acquired by all students.”

-- Tony Wagner, 2006

As we set out to address this challenge, it’s important to understand additional challenges that need to be addressed:

- **Declining Enrollment:** Enrollment in the district has declined from a total of 5,000 students in 2002-2003 to 3,791 in 2015-2016, with students most likely to leave the district between grades 5 and 6 and between grades 8 and 9.⁴ Nearly 20% of public school students who reside in Salem choose other schools outside of Salem Public Schools.⁵
- **Percentage of Students with Disabilities:** 21.5% of the Salem Public Schools student body has an identified disability, higher than comparable districts such as Lawrence (18.2%), Lynn (15.4%), and Revere (15.1%).⁶
- **Persistent Achievement Gaps:** The district’s 2016 MCAS results also reveal a test score gap for students with disabilities, ELL students, economically disadvantaged students, and Hispanic/Latino students when compared with their peers. About 32% of all students in the district scored in the Proficient or Advanced range, compared with just 9% of students with

⁴Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

⁵*Ibid.* Note: Excludes New Liberty Charter School (previously Salem Community Charter School) and Bentley Academy Charter School (2015-16).

⁶*Ibid.*

disabilities, 22% of economically disadvantaged students, 7% of ELL/former ELL students, and 20% of Hispanic/Latino students.⁷

2016 MCAS Results (all grades and subjects combined), Salem Public Schools

	Advanced	Proficient	Needs Improvement	Warning
All Students	6%	26%	45%	23%
With Disabilities	0%	9%	40%	51%
Economically Disadvantaged	3%	19%	49%	29%
ELL/Former ELL	0%	7%	48%	45%
Hispanic/Latino	2%	18%	48%	32%

Source: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

There are additional challenges associated with unsatisfactory levels of college and career readiness upon graduation, limited awareness of and participation in early childhood education programs, inadequate supports and professional development opportunities for teachers, and woefully insufficient efforts to engage families, especially those for whom socioeconomics, language and/or culture has been a significant barrier. The body of this plan provides more detail on these specific challenges.

The strategic planning process has catalyzed and mobilized multiple stakeholders to begin to address these many challenges in the district. In a community survey that was administered in February 2017 as part of the strategic planning process, Salem residents were asked what would make them more confident in the school district. Among the 284 survey respondents, the top five responses were 1) having a higher ranking/performance based on state measures, 2) more consistent and effective communication with families and community members, 3) more innovation and hands-on, project-based methods of teaching and learning, 4) increased ability to attract and retain high quality school leaders (reducing principal turnover), and 5) more opportunities/options for accelerated and advanced learners.⁸ Many of these sentiments were echoed by our community at the Citywide Conversations held in November, January, and March. The findings from these stakeholder engagement events were taken to heart by district leadership and have shaped this strategic plan in

⁷Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

⁸Salem Community Survey, administered February 2017

myriad ways. Those who participated in the public events will clearly see the imprint of their contributions.

In addition to the above, there are larger challenges in the world around us. Our rapidly changing and hyper-connected global society requires that our young people develop a much broader and deeper set of capabilities than were required of previous generations. In the past, a one-size-

“In the United States, we built a system to educate people to live in an industrial culture, and it was successful in its time. That system remains in place, which means we are now using a system that was designed to meet the needs of a world that no longer exists.”

-- Ray McNulty

fits-all education system was sufficient. In the industrial era and through the 20th century, our schools were tasked simply with getting people through the system. Some students did well and others simply got by, but virtually everyone found a place in the workplace and in society. Today, every student who walks through the district’s doors must know and be able to do what was once expected of a very few. In addition to mastering fundamental reading, writing and math skills, to be successful in the modern world, students must learn how to solve complex problems, to collaborate well, to communicate clearly, to utilize technology, to analyze data, to navigate and adapt in a world of uncertainty. Illustrating this point, it is estimated that approximately 50% of today’s jobs will no longer exist by 2030⁹, and an estimated 65% of students entering K-12 in 2011 will have jobs that do not yet exist.¹⁰ According to the Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education, 71% of all of the jobs in the Commonwealth will require education beyond high school. Having no postsecondary education will be a severe limitation on the job market, as just 29% of the jobs in the Commonwealth will be open to those who only finished high school.¹¹

The time for us to plot a new path to student success is now. Our community is eager for positive change, and the complex world in which we live requires that we adapt our approach to ensure that *all* of Salem’s students graduate from the school district fully prepared to succeed in college, career, and in life.

OUR OPPORTUNITY

While the changing times we live in pose new challenges, they also present us with new opportunities. The science of learning and human development is reaching a tipping point of new knowledge, enabling educators and others who care for our community’s children to draw on

⁹Ettling, M. (2015). How To Attract Talent For Jobs That Don't Exist Yet. *Forbes*.; Frey, T. (21 Mar 2014). "162 Future Jobs: Preparing for Jobs that Don't Yet Exist."

¹⁰Davidson, C.N. (2011). "How Technology and Brain Science Will Transform Schools and Business for the 21st Century."

¹¹Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education

innovative approaches that are known to improve outcomes and solve seemingly intractable learning and social problems. Scientists have literally peered into the human brain and have a clearer picture than ever before of how different one learner is from the next. Scientists like Todd Rose know for certain that there is no such thing as an “average” learner, but rather that each individual has a personal learning profile. By applying this advanced



understanding to the school and classroom, by employing the best strategies to attend to the wide variability of learners in our schools, we have an opportunity to shape a customized education for every child in the Salem Public Schools. Certainly, new digital technologies make possible innovations that were once thought to be entirely out of reach.

Fortunately, there are many schools and classrooms across the country (and in Massachusetts) that are already walking this path toward the creation of rich learning environments and whose promising practices can be an inspiration to us. And there are impressive pockets of excellence in our own schools and classrooms. We are poised to learn so much from those around us, and to pioneer our own homegrown approaches to powerful learning.

One approach about which we heard very vocal support was to maximize the tremendous natural and human assets of the City of Salem. As home to many local businesses and entrepreneurs, large educational and healthcare institutions, historical and cultural landmarks, a vibrant artistic community, houses of worship, community agencies and more, Salem’s abundant resources can be leveraged on behalf of our students. Whether through internships, job shadows, college courses, experiential learning, or community service, we can vastly expand the reach of our offerings to give every student a taste of the real world and their potential place in it. Salem’s rich diversity also ensures that all of our students will develop the skills to interact with those whose life experiences differ from their own—skills that employers say are vital to success in the 21st century.

In summary, on the eve of the city’s 400th anniversary, we have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to dream of what we want to become as a city, recognizing that in just a few years’ time, we will be passing the torch to the next generation. Our schools, therefore, are the innovation incubator for, and inextricably linked with, the future of our city. This strategic plan is intended as a living, breathing document that will guide our path forward.

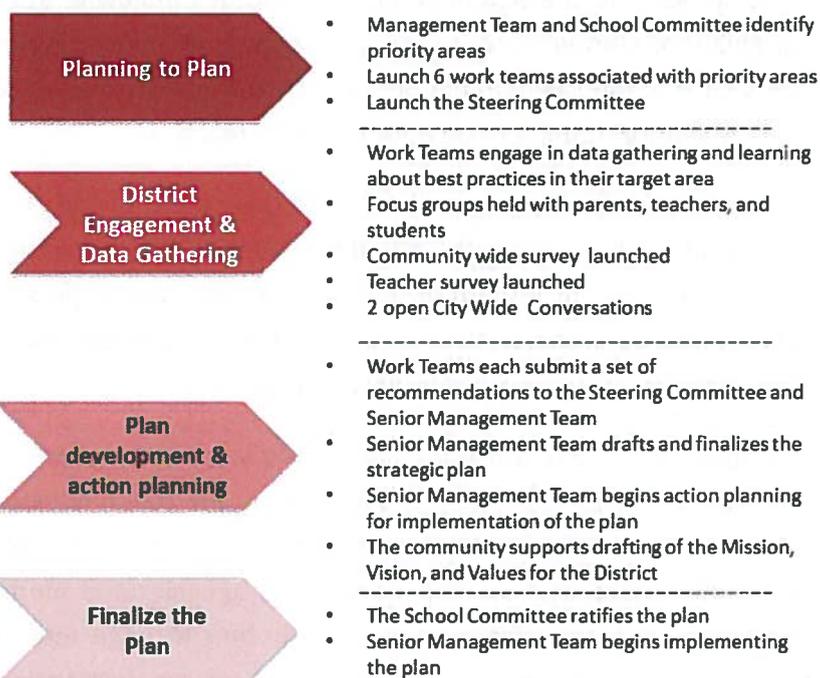
HOW THE PLAN WAS DEVELOPED

In the summer of 2016, when Superintendent Ruiz first assumed leadership of Salem Public Schools, she engaged in a 100 day [Listen and Learn Campaign](#) to understand the strengths and needs of the district. Coming out of her tour – which included one-on-one interviews, public forums, and an extensive review of the district data -- Superintendent Ruiz identified a number of important themes. She found that while the district had significant strengths across its schools, the district needed to focus on building intentional strategies in a number of key areas: teaching and learning, communication, engagement, recruiting and retaining talent, and infrastructure. In short, the Superintendent, School Committee, and Senior Management Team believed it was time for the district to embark upon an ambitious strategic planning process. The Superintendent enlisted the support of New Profit, a national non-profit organization based in Boston, to help facilitate the process, recognizing that the district needed an independent and experienced partner to help create the structures and processes for a community-engaged, future-focused strategic planning process.

In the spring of 2016, the strategic planning process began in earnest with a multi-stage endeavor to engage a broad swath of the Salem community in developing a

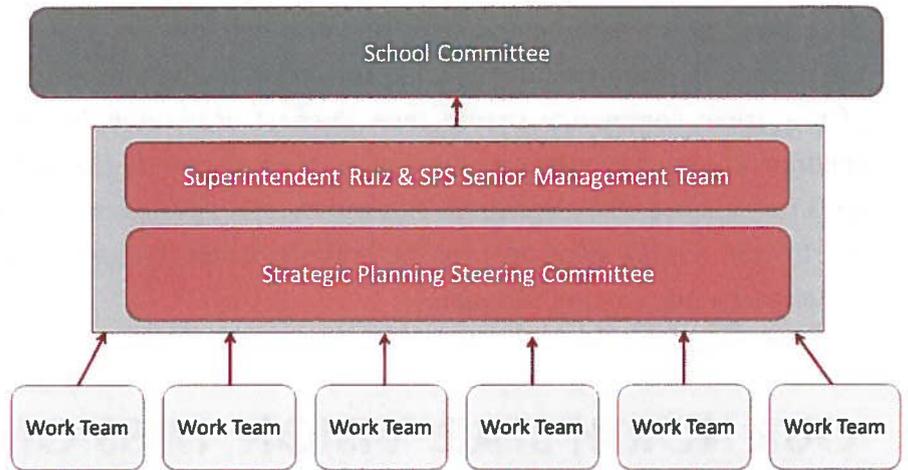
plan that would help build a world-class school district for all Salem students. Members of the Salem community were engaged in every step of this multi-stage planning process:

- Approximately 70 community members and district staff participated on six strategic planning work teams and on a Strategic Plan Steering Committee.
- Three citywide conversations were held to solicit community input on the mission, vision, and values of the district. Two of these conversations were held in English (with Spanish translations) and one was held in Spanish (with English translations). Approximately 200 attended the first, about 60 attended the second (held in Spanish), and about 125 attended the third.
- Dozens of parents and a few dozen students participated in focus groups about the future of Salem’s schools.



- About 80 teachers participated in focus groups and 338 responded to a teacher survey about teaching in Salem.
- 284 community members participated in a community-wide survey.

This planning process worked within a unique governing structure to ensure that the recommendations and plans developed represented the needs of the community and built upon the rich skills and knowledge that already exist within the district. This structure included a set of six work teams associated with



priority areas for the district. These work teams each had 7-15 members (district staff, teachers, parents, students, and community members) and two co-leaders – one from the Senior Management Team and one from the broader community. These co-leaders along with additional community members formed the Steering Committee responsible for providing support and advice to the work teams.

The Superintendent, School Committee, and Senior Management Team identified six priority areas, or ‘levers for change’ for the district: Family and Community Engagement, A Portfolio of Schools for the District, High School in Salem, Early Childhood Education in Salem, Teacher Leadership & Empowerment, and Meeting the Diverse Needs of All Learners. For each of these priority areas, the work teams met for six months, during which time they were tasked with researching best practices for each of these topics and providing recommendations to the Strategic Planning Steering Committee. The Steering



Committee provided feedback and support to the work teams and clarified goals and strategies emerging from the work teams. The goals and strategies in the pages that follow reflect what

emerged from the work teams, the Steering Committee, Senior Management Team, and ongoing input from the community.

As the work teams began to solidify a set of recommendations, the broader community was invited to respond to the recommendations and also help develop a shared mission, vision, and values for the district. In three community-wide conversations held between November and March, members of the Salem community shared their deepest aspirations for the future of our schools and our children. Community members were also asked to identify the skills they feel students most need to be successful in a changing world. This community-developed mission, vision, and values serve as the 'North Star' – the guiding light for the entirety of this Strategic Planning Process and for the work of the district in the coming five years.

OUR NORTH STAR: VISION, MISSION, VALUES & THE QUALITIES OF A SALEM PUBLIC SCHOOLS GRADUATE

VISION

*All students will be **locally engaged, globally connected, and fully prepared to thrive in a diverse and changing world.***

MISSION

We are a diverse and welcoming community that promotes the academic, social, emotional and physical development of each student through the equitable delivery of challenging, relevant, and joyful learning experiences.

We empower all students to chart a personalized path to success that includes a commitment to the common good.

VALUES

Salem Public Schools' values define what we cherish and how we conduct ourselves every day on behalf of Salem's children. In alphabetical order, they are as follows:

CELEBRATION OF DIFFERENCE

We celebrate the magnificent diversity of our community and recognize it as one of our greatest sources of strength. As we prepare our children for a diverse world, we must model the value that comes from different cultures, languages, perspectives and experiences. When we recognize and welcome our differences, we discover our common humanity.

COLLABORATION

Through collaboration we find new sources of energy and strength. SPS encourages and supports collaboration and exchange within our schools and district. When children see adults working well together, they learn to work well together—a skill that will benefit them in years to come in any endeavor. Moreover, SPS actively seeks out partnerships with the rich array of organizations that are the hallmark of our community. Everyone wins when the city becomes an extension of our schools and classrooms.

CULTURE OF LEARNING AND INNOVATION

We live in a world that is changing at a rapid pace, which requires that all of us take responsibility to be continuous learners. Building on what is working well, we closely follow emerging trends, identify and share promising practices, seek outside expertise when necessary, and embrace new approaches that will benefit our children. We are also nimble enough to adapt quickly to changing conditions.

EQUITY & ACCESS

SPS is committed to identifying and eliminating any and all barriers to educational achievement. To this end, we promote policies and practices that are fair and just, and make learning opportunities—in and out of school—fully accessible to all. We commit to ensure *every* student, regardless of background, meets our high standards for achievement, participation, and growth.

GROWTH FOR ALL

In our district, *everyone*—including administrators, teachers, students, staff and parents—has the opportunity to grow and develop new capabilities. It is our job as an organization to create the conditions for human flourishing at all levels. With high expectations come high levels of support.

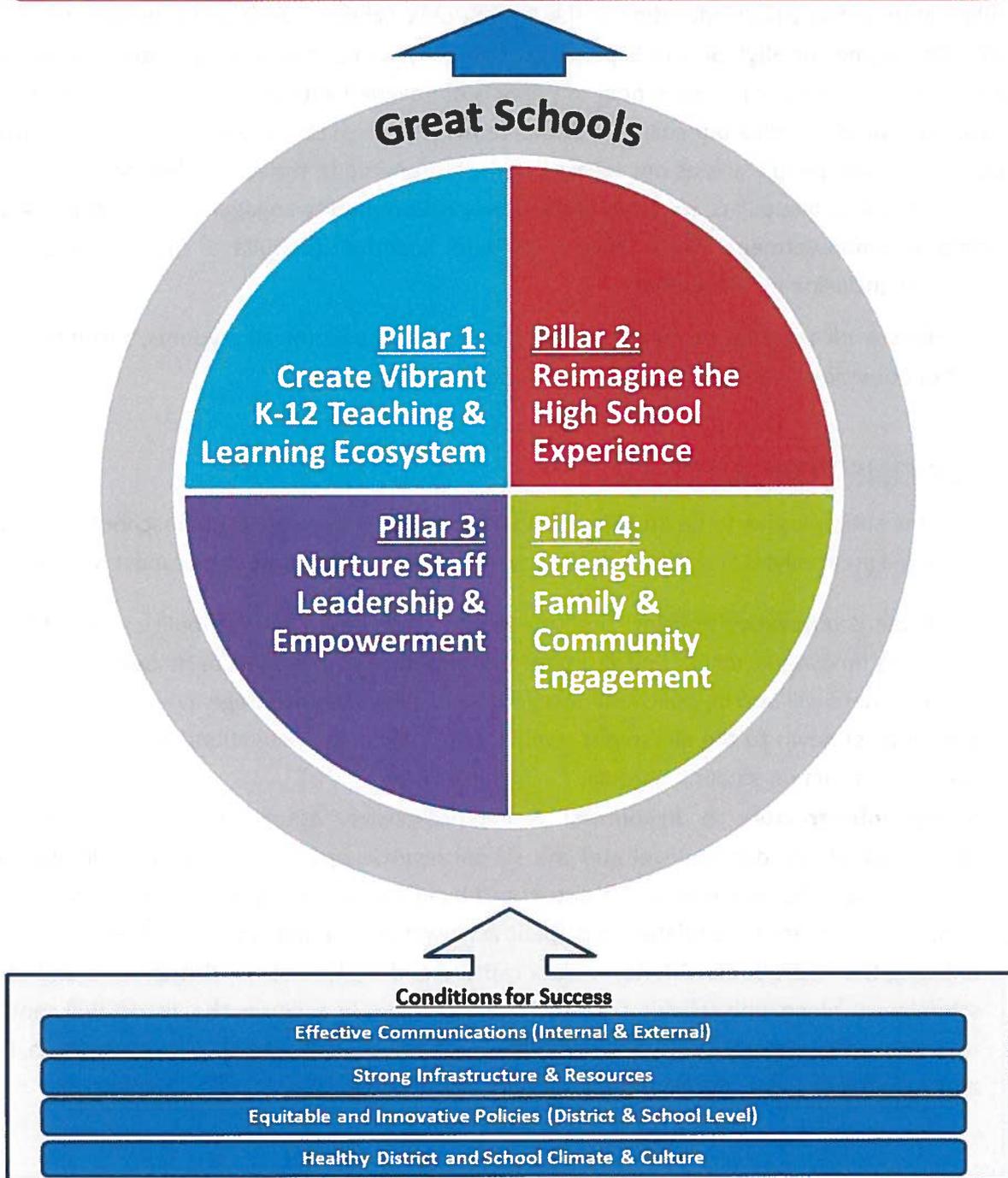
HIGH STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE FOR ALL

We expect and achieve the highest standards of excellence. This begins at the district level and extends to the school, classroom and each individual. There is simply no replacement for a job well done, whether it's creating an academically enriching curriculum, mastering a new skill, developing new knowledge, or attending to our physical plant and administrative operations with care.

THEORY OF ACTION

As the process continued to unfold and as ideas from community stakeholders were incorporated into a set of recommendations, a clear theory of action began to emerge for how Salem Public Schools will achieve its vision:

Vision Statement: All students will be locally engaged, globally connected, and fully prepared to thrive in a diverse and changing world.



At the foundation of our Theory of Action are the basic conditions that are required of any successful organization that serves the public interest: **effective internal and external communications; strong infrastructure and a consistent set of resources; policies that are both equitable and innovative; and a healthy climate and culture.** Those conditions will enable the development of four key pillars that will move the Salem Public Schools squarely into the 21st century. **Create Vibrant K-12 Teaching and Learning Ecosystem** ensures that, from the moment a Salem child walks in the front door of one of our schools, he or she is challenged by high standards that are met with high levels of support. The culmination of the child's education in the Salem Public Schools brings us to the second pillar in our plan: **Reimagine the High School Experience.** Currently, across the country, there is widespread recognition that the American high school of today is not aligned with the economy and the society into which we will be sending our children. With a reimagined high school experience, we can ensure that our city's young people are, as our vision promises, prepared to thrive in a diverse and changing world. The remaining two pillars are **Strengthen Family & Community Engagement** and **Nurture Staff Leadership & Empowerment.** These pillars will work together to build a community of trust, excellence, and inclusion for all students.

The four pillars work together to create a system of great schools for all students, resulting in the fulfillment of our vision for all of Salem Public Schools' students.

CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESS

In order for the strategic plan to be effectively implemented so that we have great schools for all that operate within a great school system, there are several conditions for success that must be met:

- **Equitable & Innovative Policies:** First, the district must ensure that its policies do not hinder access to innovation for all and promote the equitable distribution of resources across the district. There will also be policies in place that allow for and encourage innovation -- from the district level down to the classroom level -- with a focus on innovations that have the most powerful impact on student learning.
- **Strong Infrastructure & Resources:** A comprehensive vision for accessing and using technology at the district level and the school level in order to streamline administrative processes will also be created. The district will build and manage a robust data infrastructure in order to capture data related to student achievement, demographics, and learning needs, ensuring that there is consistency in data capture and analysis at the district level and at the school level, along with reliable access to city-level data. In addition, the district will continue to improve the internal systems and structures of the district, including transportation, food and nutrition services, student health services, finance, and facilities and maintenance.

- **Effective Communications:** To improve internal communications as well as external communications with families and the general public, the district will establish clear communication protocols both within and across schools.
- **District & School Climate and Culture:** A healthy climate and culture is essential for all organizations to function effectively. Having a strong climate and culture is even more important for those organizations – especially schools and districts – that aim to elevate performance and outcomes for all. If Salem is to achieve new heights in the future, a focus on school and district culture and climate is paramount.

IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN

Moving from the strategic planning process to implementation is a significant task that will require all hands on deck. We have begun developing an understanding of the processes and structures that will be needed to ensure effective stewardship of this change process. As shared owners for the various strategies and action steps are designated, the Senior Management Team will take responsibility for developing more detailed, step-by-step action plans, in partnership with others in the district and our community. In cases where staffing and resource constraints do not allow for simultaneous implementation of multiple strategies, the Senior Management Team will make decisions on which strategies to prioritize based on their cost, feasibility, and potential for impact on student learning. This process will be transparent and based on input gathered from the community during the strategic planning process. A continuous improvement advisory board will also be assembled to monitor progress on the implementation of the plan, ensure continuous improvement, and advise the Senior Management Team and the School Committee. This will ensure that the voice of the community continues to be reflected throughout implementation of the plan.

The team will develop metrics for each of the strategies and action steps in order to help assess progress toward our destination. We have also established a set of general indicators (*described below*) to hold ourselves accountable and determine progress as elements of the plan are implemented.

OUTCOMES & INDICATORS DASHBOARD

As we chart our course to a bright future, we have established the below draft set of outcomes to which we will hold ourselves accountable. We will work on finalizing the indicators and targets during the summer. We will do a deep dive into our data, establish data baselines for each outcome and will establish targets that make sense for each of the outcomes.

For each outcome, we will track and report on our progress on an annual basis, using the indicators described below. Over the next five years, the district intends to meet or exceed all of the targets.

Outcome (What are we aiming for?)	Indicator (How will we measure it?)
Reading to learn at the end of 3rd grade	% of students proficient in ELA, Mathematics and Science, as measured by state standards and MCAS scores
Prepared for middle school at the end of 5th grade	% of students proficient in ELA, Mathematics and Science, as measured by state standards and MCAS scores
Prepared for high school at the end of 8th grade	% of students proficient in ELA, Mathematics and Science, as measured by state standards and MCAS scores
On track to graduate at the end of 9th grade	% increase of 9th grade students who have successfully completed the academic requirements at the end of 9th grade
Graduating from high school in 4 years	% increase of entering 9th grade cohort who graduate in four years
College or technical school enrollment	% increase in number of students with concrete post-secondary plans
District enrollment across grade level	% increase in enrollment, especially in middle and high schools
Access to the arts	% increase of students taking arts classes
Attendance	% increase of students reaching attendance levels of 90 percent and above
Access to Advanced Placement classes	% increase of students taking AP classes % increase of students with passing scores
Access to community service and internship opportunities	% increase of students participating
Access to ACT/SAT	% increase of students taking the test % increase of students scoring well on the test
Closing the achievement gap for students of color	% decrease in gap
Closing the achievement gap for students with special needs	% decrease in gap
Closing the achievement gap for low-income students	% decrease in gap
Social-emotional well-being	% increase in number of students with good social-emotional health, as measured by % decrease in risk behaviors
School climate/culture	% improvement in school climate/culture as measured by % decrease in disciplinary action, bullying, etc.

THE FOUR PILLARS

The following pages contain details on the work that the district will undertake in each of the four main pillars listed in the Theory of Action: Create a Vibrant K-12 Teaching & Learning Ecosystem, Reimagine the High School Experience, Nurture Staff Leadership & Empowerment, and Strengthen Family & Community Engagement.

CREATE A VIBRANT K-12 TEACHING & LEARNING ECOSYSTEM

Research shows that students learn best when instruction is differentiated and personalized for their specific needs, skills, and interests.¹⁴ While the traditional model of a teacher lecturing in front of a class with the door closed may have worked in past decades, the demands of the 21st century require that students develop a new set of skills that cannot be effectively taught using the conventional 20th century model of education. Our district must ensure that every student has access to a broad range of curricular opportunities that will enable them to develop these skills.

Teaching and learning is at the core of the district's work. One of the four areas of focus that emerged from Superintendent Ruiz's Listening and Learning Tour was "Ensure Learning and Growth for Every Student, Every Day." In order to best prepare Salem's students for college, career, and civic readiness in the 21st century, it is essential that we continuously adapt and build upon our district's teaching practices to meet the ever-evolving demands of society.

We also heard this clearly from the community throughout the strategic planning process. On the community survey, "More innovation and creative, hands-on, project-based methods of teaching and learning" was one of the top five responses given by respondents when asked what would increase their confidence in the district. Personalized learning and competency-based models of education were also two of the most discussed topics at the November Citywide Conversation. Community



members also appreciate having a variety of educational options in the school district. When asked to identify "bright spots", the district's "strong commitment to the arts (music, art, and theater)" as well as "having a variety of school options from which to choose" were both among the top five responses. Still, community members voiced some concern over inequities that exist in the district and the community as a whole: "Addressing inequities between schools in the district and in the community in general" was

¹⁴"Continued Progress: Promising Evidence on Personalized Learning — Summary." (2015). Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

one of the top five “concerns and areas of challenge” identified by respondents to the community survey.

There are many effective and innovative K-12 teaching and learning practices already taking place in the district. For example, the Carlton Innovation School uses a competency-based model and many teachers throughout the district use project-based learning strategies in their classrooms. The district has also recently introduced standards-based report cards for all students, and there is a multi-year effort underway to develop teachers’ capacity to teach to the new state standards (standards-based instruction). Curriculum maps for English Language Arts, Math, and Science that are aligned to the Common Core have recently been created. There is also a strong commitment to an inclusive environment to meet the needs of all learners. In recent years, there has been increased focus on ensuring common planning time and data-driven practices. In terms of technology, the district’s wireless network now has improved bandwidth and the district is in the process of implementing a new student information system (Aspen). There has also been an improvement in access to technology tools and resources for staff and students, and there are emerging one-to-one initiatives. Across the city of Salem as a whole, there has been increased support for technology needs. Part of the implementation of this plan will entail continuing to identify these bright spots and spreading them throughout the district, so that all students have equitable access to these practices and options.

WHAT WE HEARD FROM THE COMMUNITY:

- Students learn in different ways and have unique needs. It is critical for the district to address the diverse needs of all learners.**
- The district needs to ensure that every student’s needs are being met— education shouldn’t be one-size-fits-all.**
- Students should have more opportunities to engage in project-based, collaborative learning.**
- Better publicity is needed about the strengths of SPS and the programming options already in place.**

Both the Portfolio of Schools Work Team and the Meeting the Diverse Needs of All Learners Work Team contributed recommendations to this part of the plan. The Portfolio of Schools Work Team was charged with addressing the following questions:

- What kinds of school designs will best prepare our young people for a future that will be very different from that of previous generations?

- How do we begin to identify and implement the most innovative approaches to meet those needs in every classroom?

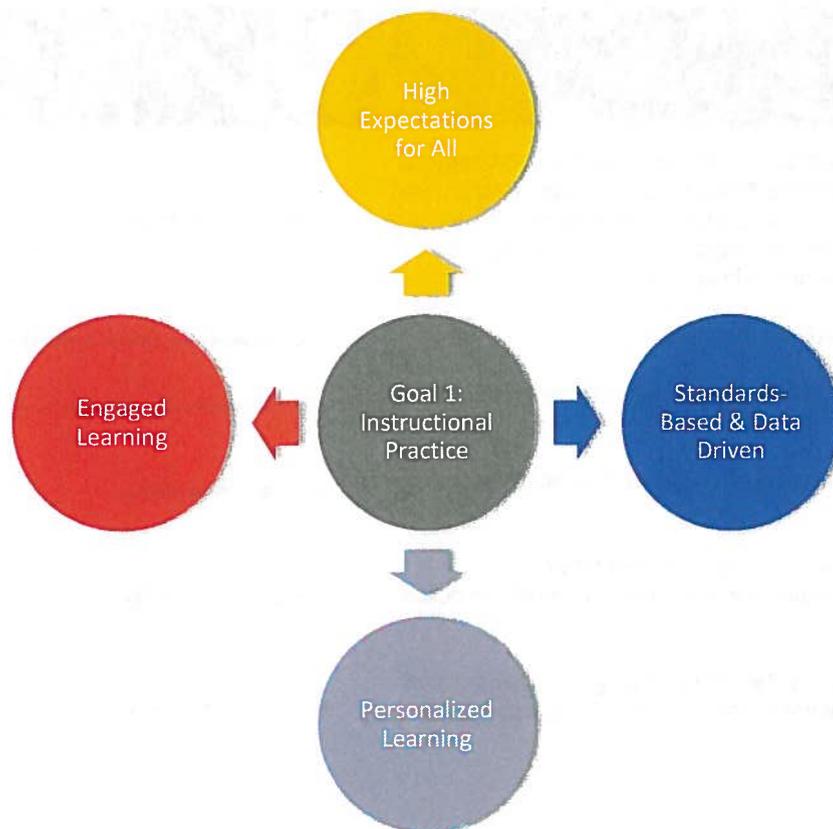
The Meeting the Diverse Needs of All Learners Work Team tackled the following questions:

- How do we best address the diverse learning needs of all of our students?
- How can we create learning environments – in and beyond the classroom – that will give all of our children rich, relevant, and rigorous experiences that will build their skills and help them develop habits of success?



The goals and strategies for effective K-12 teaching and learning are below. (Note: More detailed action plans with greater specificity on timing are currently under development.)

Goal #1: Ensure that all Salem teachers employ the most effective, engaging, and relevant instructional practices to promote high levels of student learning for all students



Strategy #1: Establish high expectations for learning, district-wide, to advance the core belief that all Salem students can learn at high levels.

2017-2019

2020-2022

- Develop a cross-functional team to engage educators in explicit conversations around mindset and expectations for learning and co-construct a plan for improvement
- Continue to promote instructional rigor through targeted professional development that supports classroom teachers in developing strategies to meet the needs of all students and practices that challenge them to learn at high levels
- Continue to support school leaders to observe teacher practice and provide actionable feedback resulting in rigorous instruction and personalized learning
- Continue to assure that the learning needs of all students are met in all environments, that IEP/504 accommodations and SEI strategies are implemented with fidelity to support meaningful student success
- Simultaneously increase enrollment of unrepresented populations in rigorous and/or accelerated learning opportunities and the capacity of teachers to differentiate instruction to meet the needs of those students throughout the district



Strategy #2: Continue efforts to ensure that all classrooms employ effective standards-based and data-driven instruction.

2017-2019

2020-2022

- Leverage existing teams and structures such as K-8 Vanguard Team, Grade 9 Standards-Based Practices Team, Instructional Coaches, Coordinators of Specialized Instruction, Instructional Rounds Teams to monitor progress in implementing standards- and data-driven instruction
- Scale-up standards-based practices
- Implement standards-based report cards for all grades and subject areas
- Use new assessment platform to refine data analytics to drive effective instruction
- Increase accountability for the implementation of differentiation strategies in all classrooms to meet the needs of all learners
- Develop and execute a plan for leveraging all classroom staff to support high student outcomes and hold all accountable for results



Strategy #3: Launch a district-wide initiative to ensure that all classrooms employ student-centered, personalized learning strategies to tailor instruction and supports to each student's individualized needs, skills, and interests.

2017-2019

2020-2022

- Develop and implement a system that ensures that teachers have deeper understanding of their students' academic, social, emotional, and physical strengths and needs as well as their cultural backgrounds (e.g., City Connects)
- Clarify the definition of what student-centered, personalized learning means in Salem
- Convene a cross-functional team to research personalized learning models, create opportunities for piloting innovative approaches, monitor student outcomes, and disseminate effective practices
- Provide high quality professional development to support teachers in implementing personalized learning strategies and hold all accountable for results



Strategy #4: Ensure all classrooms employ student engagement strategies which enable students to both gain real-world experience and apply their knowledge to collaboratively solve complex, real-world problems.

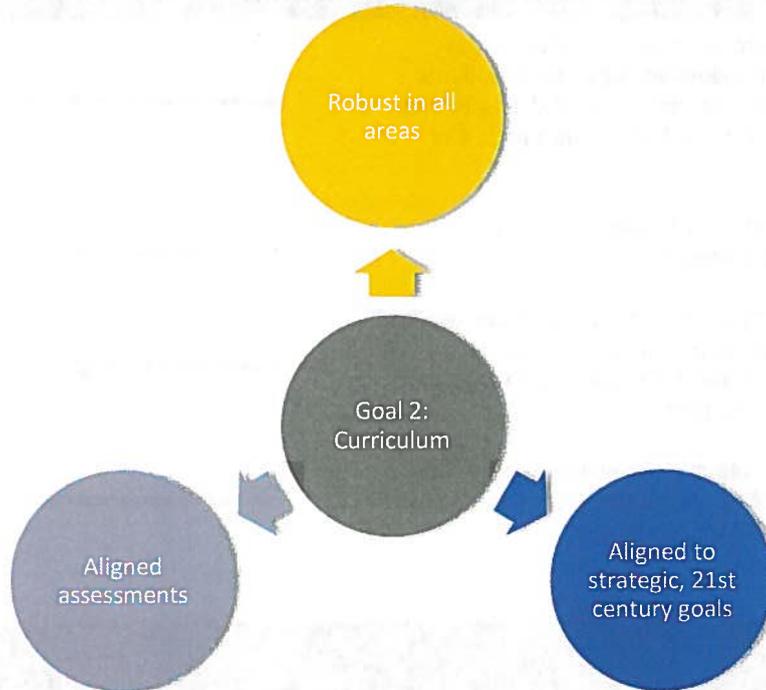
2017-2019

2020-2022

- Establish clear expectations for student engagement and deeper learning in the classroom
- Research high leverage practices and models
- Provide professional development that increases teacher capacity to incorporate engagement strategies within daily lessons
- Create opportunities for increasing engagement through service learning, place-based learning, connections to the community, field trips, etc.
- Monitor impact on student learning and student motivation



Goal #2: Strengthen Salem's K-12 curriculum to ensure that all students are locally engaged, globally connected, and fully prepared for the future



Strategy #1: Continue to develop robust curricula in all core and non-core areas. 2017-2019 2020-2022

- Annually review, update, and plan curriculum maps →
- Reassess staffing to support this work →
- Invest in instructional materials to support implementation of new or revised curriculum →

Strategy #2: Include 21st century skills and competencies, real-world experiences and applications, relevant connections to students' lives, interdisciplinary learning, and global connections. 2017-2019 2020-2022

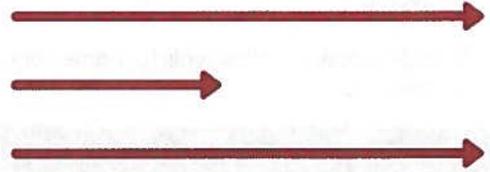
- Audit current curricula to identify where these skills and competencies are addressed or could be integrated →

Strategy #3: Design, develop, and implement a suite of curriculum-aligned formative, benchmark, and summative assessments to assess student learning across the curriculum.

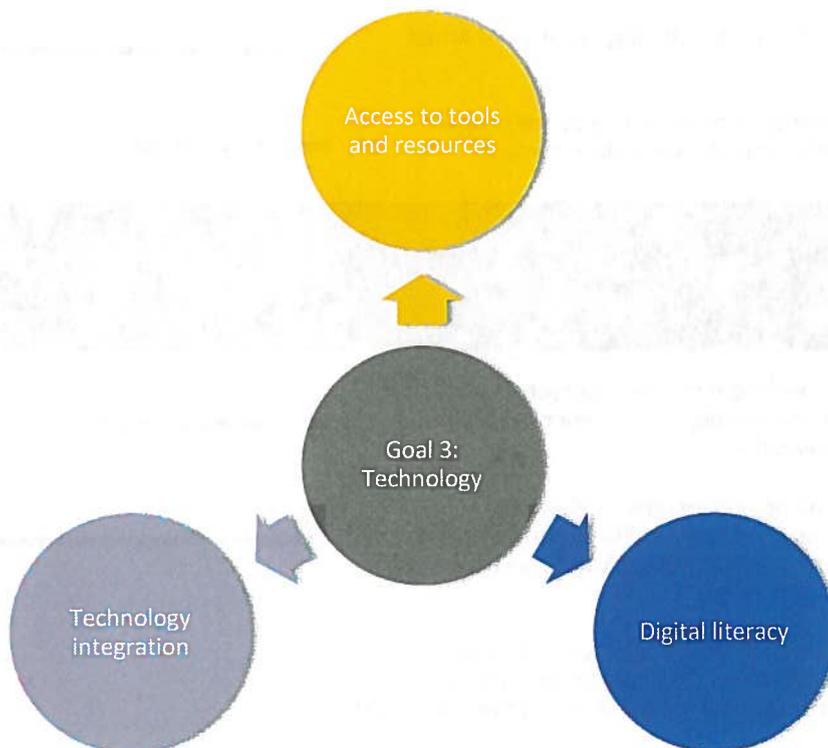
2017-2019

2020-2022

- Annually review the assessment landscape for balance of assessment types and alignment to the standards
- Develop rollout plan for new assessment platform
- Build teacher capacity to build their own assessments within the platform and access data



Goal #3: Ensure effective and purposeful technology use in schools and classrooms to support student learning



Strategy #1: Provide access to key technology tools and resources that strengthen teaching and learning.

2017-2019

2020-2022

- Revise and establish a comprehensive, five-year plan for technology
- Provide access to online tools for homework, instructional content, etc.



Strategy #2: Enhance knowledge, reasoning, skills in digital literacy, computer science, and technological competencies so that students are adept at solving complex problems using technology.

2017-2019

2020-2022

- Hire a Director of Digital Literacy and Learning
- Form a cross-functional team to create a design and oversee implementation of the digital literacy and learning initiative
- Define digital and other technology learning goals for students
- Provide support to integrate technology within and across content areas
- Explore implementation of a one-to-one device program supported by multi-year professional development



Strategy #3: Support all schools with efforts to expand their technical and human capacity for the integration and use of technology across the curriculum.

2017-2019

2020-2022

- Form a cross-functional team to assess current efforts for technology integration, develop a comprehensive plan, and oversee its implementation
- Provide ongoing support and targeted professional development for teachers to gain skills and competencies in the use of technology to support their work and enrich learning in any area
- Establish clear expectations for technology integration practices, provide support for implementation, monitor progress of implementation, and hold all accountable for results



Goal #4: Foster a culture of innovation that provides equitable access to powerful learning experiences



Strategy #1: Create policies that provide equity across the district.	2017-2019	2020-2022
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- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and examine data to better understand the extent of inequities within the district and policies and practices that may need to be addressed • Partner with community and other stakeholders to identify inequities • Develop proposals and initiatives designed to address current inequities while providing a pathway for all to access innovation | |
|---|--|

Strategy #2: Research innovative strategies, programs, or whole school models and assess their alignment to our district needs.

2017-2019

2020-2022

- Identify innovative practices, programs, or whole school models that have yielded high levels of student engagement and achievement for all learners
- Establish mechanisms to support dissemination of learning about innovative practices and models
- Create process for schools to explore, plan for, and pilot innovative practices, programs, and models



REIMAGINE THE HIGH SCHOOL EXPERIENCE

There is a growing recognition that the traditional model of high school is not in alignment with the demands of a rapidly changing world—the world that students will soon be entering as workers, citizens, and heads of family. As a result, there is an emerging field-based conversation about how to bring school and the larger world into better alignment through systemic strategies. Grounded in research that suggests human motivation leads to engagement and engagement leads to learning, there is also a growing trend around increasing “student voice” in order to empower students within their learning environments and take ownership over their learning.

High school is the culmination of our students’ experience in the district and our last opportunity to ensure that they are equipped for success in college, career, and life before they graduate. As they advance through elementary and middle school, our students look forward to the high school experience with great anticipation. It is essential that our high schools are designed to provide students with a wide variety of educational options that will enable them to shape their own learning, have a voice in the leadership of their school, and graduate with a clear plan for college and/or career. This will help prevent the exodus prior to the middle and high school



years that has been prevalent in the district over the last few years.

During the course of the strategic planning process, we heard from the community – as well as from high school teachers and students – that they would like to see more experiential learning opportunities for high school students, including more internship opportunities, vocational programs, and community service opportunities. At the March Citywide Conversation, there was significant support for the idea of increased project-based learning and real world experience for high school students.

This sentiment was echoed in the professional development sessions held to solicit feedback from high school faculty on the High School Work Team’s recommendations: when asked what most excited them about the recommendations, the top answer was the inclusion of internships. In high school student focus groups, one of the top challenges cited by students was that they would like to learn more about skills needed beyond high school and how to be prepared. They also expressed desire for additional resources for enrichments (such as field trips).

There are many assets in Salem’s high schools that will set the foundation for implementation of this part of the plan. For example, Salem High School has a block schedule that allows time for teacher collaboration and planning, and many high school teachers in the district have a flexible, innovative mindset. In addition, the high schools are well-resourced, with a robust guidance department, a wide variety of offerings in music, the arts, and advanced academics, and a wide variety of supports for students including academic centers, the Bridge Program, and alternative programming at Salem Prep and New Liberty Innovation School. There is also a robust leadership structure including principals, headmasters, a director of teaching and learning, head teachers, teacher leaders, and instructional coaches. Salem High also has a CTE program in place, with space and resources to expand. In addition, the transition to standards-based practices, grading, and reporting is well underway, and there is a competency-based model at New Liberty. The freight farm and Read Science Aquatics lab are innovations ripe with

WHAT WE HEARD FROM THE COMMUNITY:

The district should work toward college, career, and civic readiness for all students.

Students should have more opportunities to participate in internships, career/vocational technical education (CVTE), and service learning.

The district should empower students to take greater control over their own education and future. Students should have a voice in student governance, school operations, and school culture.

Students should leave SPS with the skills they need to be successful and to actively engage in a rapidly changing world.

opportunity to expand experiential learning. For college and career planning, there are community-based organizations like LEAP that can be leveraged and serve as a model, and advisory blocks currently exist in the high schools that can be repurposed. The high school guidance staff is committed to student success, and they will also be an important part of implementing this plan.

The High School Work Team was charged with addressing the following questions:

- In today’s changing economy, how can we make sure that all young people have a deeper set of skills and are prepared for the likelihood of multiple careers in a lifetime – some of which haven’t even been invented yet?
- How can we ensure that every young person in our high schools has a solid plan upon graduation?

The goals and strategies for high school education in Salem are listed below. *(Note: More detailed action plans with greater specificity on timing are currently under development.)*

Goal #1: Redesign programming and the instructional core around student-centered learning principles to better prepare students for college and career in the 21st century

Strategy #1: Support all students in the acquisition of rigorous core knowledge, skills, habits and attitudes needed for success in post-secondary education and the workplace.	2017-2019	2020-2022
• Plan to remodel the core curriculum	→	
• Implement remodeling of the core curriculum		→
• Plan and implement a strategy for integrating social-emotional learning skills into the curriculum		→
• Review current offerings to ensure that each course offered at SPS high schools is aligned to building 21st century skills and capacities	→	
• Diversify the high school assessment portfolio by exploring the use of capstone projects, performance-based assessments, and digital portfolios		→
• Increase enrollment and ensure success of under-represented populations (African-American, Latino, English Learners, and low socio-economic groups) in Advanced Placement courses	→	

Strategy #2: Connect learning to the community and real-world experiences through internships and community service projects.

2017-2019

2020-2022

- Expand opportunities for service learning and internships across content areas and grade levels
- Hire an Externship & Career Readiness Coordinator



Strategy #3: Strengthen personalized learning approaches that will accelerate and deepen student learning by tailoring instruction/supports to each student's individual needs, skills, and interests.

2017-2019

2020-2022

- Continue to implement standards-based grading & reporting practices
- Employ blended and online learning opportunities as a means for personalizing instruction
- Leverage online intervention programs to support struggling learners
- Provide students with opportunities for early college with the possibility of earning college credits
- Provide professional development on differentiation and instructional strategies that promote student-centered learning
- Provide teachers with time to collaborate with one another to work on scaffolds and differentiated approaches



Strategy #4: Prepare students who may choose to enter the workforce directly after high school with levels of skill and knowledge in a particular career area that will be valued in the marketplace.

2017-2019

2020-2022

- Build community partnerships to strengthen career and technical education programming and reinforce employability skills
- Consider CTE programming such as 3-D printing, robotics, networking, etc.



Strategy #5: Enhance digital literacy and computer science, knowledge, reasoning, and skills so that students are better adept at solving complex problems using technology.

2017-2019

2020-2022

- Integrate technology within & across content areas
- Implement a one-to-one device program supported by a multi-year professional development program, vision for digital literacy across content areas & budget for executing the plan



Goal #2: Implement structures and processes that will ensure that every student has a voice and opportunities for authentic leadership in and out of school

Strategy #1: Ensure authentic and ongoing student voice and ownership in policy and school governance.	2017-2019	2020-2022
• Create a place for students on already established leadership teams (i.e., ILT, School Committee, etc.)	→	
• Create structures to collect student feedback on all policies/governance		→
• Provide professional development for all staff in order to support strong collaboration between students and adults	→	
• Explicitly teach students collaboration and self-advocacy skills	→	
• Establish student-run judiciary body (peer mediation, peer court, restorative justice, etc.)		→
Strategy #2: Ensure authentic and ongoing student voice and ownership in the classroom.	2017-2019	2020-2022
• Collect feedback from all students about teaching and learning	→	
• Teachers build student choice into curriculum, instruction, and assessments		→
• Provide professional development for all teachers in order to build student choice into curriculum, instruction, and assessments	→	
• Build structures so that students can be involved in the development of assessments, community connections, and peer-to-peer instruction		→
Strategy #3: Ensure authentic and ongoing student voice and ownership in operations.	2017-2019	2020-2022
• Create a place for students on already established teams (i.e., ILT, School Committee)	→	
• Create a structure to collect student feedback on operations		→
• Provide opportunities for students to collaborate with adults around operational decisions such as classroom layout, facilities, handbook, and schedules		→

Strategy #4: Ensure authentic and ongoing student voice and ownership in school climate and culture.

2017-2019

2020-2022

- Students design, lead, recruit, and join various student activities and clubs
- Students sit on existing climate initiatives (e.g. PBIS teams)
- Students share their opinions through various climate and culture assessments
- Students co-lead PBIS team
- Students help develop climate and culture assessments, look at data, and help in developing action and based on data
- Students identify programming and participation gaps, and develop strategies to close the gaps
- Students lead assemblies
- Provide professional development for teachers on how to authentically share leadership with students



Goal #3: Create a college and career going culture throughout Salem high schools by facilitating college and career awareness activities

Strategy #1: Build a college and career going culture throughout Salem high schools.

2017-2019

2020-2022

- Ensure that every student has a college and career plan that informs what courses and extracurricular activities they focus on in high school and what colleges and/or post-secondary opportunities to explore that best align with their interests and goals
- Restructure guidance department to align with a 21st century vision of college and career readiness by actively supporting students to develop and implement personalized college and career plans
- Redefine roles/job descriptions and provide necessary professional development and training
- Map roles and shift some responsibilities from guidance counselors to advisories, classroom, or administrative staff
- Provide necessary training to support the delivery of effective college and career advising/coaching
- Build the infrastructure necessary to support internships and linked learning experiences



Strategy #2: Provide ongoing (adult) support to students in small groups. 2017-2019 2020-2022

- Increase time spent in Advisory →
- Assign students to Advisory based on college and career interests →
- Set expectations and develop a methodology for teachers to follow and train accordingly →
- Identify community partners to work/support teachers in Advisory →

Strategy #3: Redesign curriculum so that lessons are making important career and life connections. Add relevance to lessons. 2017-2019 2020-2022

- Provide professional development to support meaningful, career relevant lessons →
- Infuse experiential and project-based learning →
- See section of Restructuring for 21st Century Learning

Strategy #4: Engage parents in students' college and career plans and their ongoing progress. 2017-2019 2020-2022

- Develop a parent communication and engagement plan →
- Ensure parents understand purpose of college & career plans →
- Execute student-led conferences →

Strategy #5: Build the systems and structures to support internships. 2017-2019 2020-2022

- Hire an Externship/Career Readiness Coordinator →
- Engage community and business partners to establish: career fairs, guest speakers, internships and job-shadowing opportunities, dual enrollment opportunities, campus visits, expanded learning and community service opportunities →

Strategy #6: Provide a system of early intervention so that all middle school students are prepared for high school. 2017-2019 2020-2022

- Partner with community-based organizations to support career exploration starting in Grade 6 →

NURTURE STAFF LEADERSHIP & EMPOWERMENT

According to RAND Education, “Teachers matter more to student achievement than any other aspect of schooling.”¹⁵ Staff in administrative and support roles are also critical to ensuring a positive school climate and culture in which all students feel safe and supported. Throughout the strategic planning process, we heard about the importance of ensuring that all district staff receive the appropriate supports to teach and perform their jobs effectively, and that they are able to take ownership over their own professional development. We also heard about the importance of ensuring that the diversity of all staff better reflects the diversity of the student body and the city of Salem as a whole. Currently, 95% of Salem educators are White and 80% are women – not fully reflecting the reality of the student body in Salem.¹⁶

As part of the strategic planning process, a survey was administered to teachers and paraprofessionals in January 2017 to better understand what they value about their work in the district and what they would like to see changed. A total of 338 teachers and support staff responded to the survey. When asked what they value about their position in Salem, the top answer was “working closely and collaborating with colleagues,” with 60% of respondents choosing this as one of the things they value. When asked what they find challenging about their role in Salem, the top answers – after compensation – were “district/school culture” (34% of respondents chose this as one of the things they find challenging) and “professional development” (31% of respondents selected this). “Ownership of my professional development” and “insufficient opportunities for collaboration with colleagues” were also each selected by about a quarter of respondents as a challenging element of their work in Salem. Seventy-nine percent of respondents stated that it is “somewhat important” or “very important” to them to work in a school with a clear career leadership path for teachers, and 95% of respondents

WHAT WE HEARD FROM THE COMMUNITY:

There should be more diversity in all staff to better reflect the diversity of the student body.

All staff should be culturally competent and understand students' backgrounds.

Staff are a critical component of ensuring that schools are welcoming to all of their students and families.

More opportunities for peer learning and coaching should be created for staff.

Teachers deserve the respect that all professionals receive.

More mentors should be put in place.

¹⁵ “Teachers Matter: Understanding Teachers' Impact on Student Achievement.” RAND Education.

¹⁶ Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

indicated that it is “somewhat important” or “very important” to feel a sense of ownership/choice of their own professional development and growth. Only 35% of respondents agreed with the statement “I understand the direction in which the district is moving as it pertains to teacher leadership.” In the community survey, one of the top five “concerns and areas of challenge” identified by respondents was retention of talent (in particular, quality school leaders).

Clearly, teachers and support staff are eager for more professional development options that can help them improve their effectiveness at work and help them chart a path to leadership roles. There are already many positive things happening in the district related to staff leadership and development that can be maximized for even greater impact. There are many talented teachers in Salem with strong dedication to students and the community. There is a mentor program for first year teachers, and there are pathways to leadership roles including a teacher leadership program, “Vanguard Groups”, and Union leadership opportunities. The district has a cadre of instructional coaches that support and train teachers in instructional practice by content area, and there are instructional leadership teams at the school level. Teachers partner with the district to facilitate school year and summer professional development in Benchmark Assessment System (a literacy assessment), instructional strategies, standards-based curriculum, and specific content areas.

Teachers currently have some opportunities to collaborate with one another during common planning time at some schools and across schools by discipline, although specific collaboration structures vary across schools based on the size of the staff. “Vanguard Groups” have also been established to pilot standards-based practice materials and provide feedback before they are rolled out to the entire faculty. Teachers are given opportunities to write curriculum, evaluate assessments, and develop course units. The district also offers tuition reimbursement to support professional learning outside of the district, and SPS recently began offering professional development to Family Engagement Facilitators. Awards to recognize teachers are given by the district as well as by external sources. Finally, there are a number of meetings of district-wide bodies that allow staff to collaborate with peers on academic and operational improvements. When asked to identify the top “bright spots” in the district on the community survey, one of the top five responses was “caring and dedicated teachers.” All of this provides a solid foundation for a more comprehensive system of professional development for all staff to be created.

The Teacher Leadership & Empowerment Work Team investigated the following questions:

- As expectations of what students know and are able to do continue to rise, what do teachers need in order to learn about and implement the most innovative and effective practices?
- What kinds of opportunities and supports should teachers receive to grow as professionals?

After the work of the Teacher Leadership & Empowerment Work Team was complete, the Superintendent’s Senior Management Team expanded many of the Work Team’s recommendations to include all staff – teaching and non-teaching – in recognition of the fact that *all* staff have an impact on school climate, culture, and student learning outcomes. All staff members, therefore, have learning needs and deserve to grow in their respective positions.

The goals and strategies for Staff Leadership and Empowerment are below. *(Note: More detailed action plans with greater specificity on timing are currently under development.)*

Goal #1: Engage all staff in shaping their own professional growth and development in order to best serve Salem's children.

Strategy #1: Seek guidance from all staff in professional development so that all staff have a stronger voice.	2017-2019	2020-2022
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- Conduct an online survey and/or focus groups 
- Create a team of teachers, school leaders, administrative staff, and Central Office leadership to identify the focus and create a prioritized plan for professional development 
- Identify criteria for who is selected to develop and facilitate professional development 

Strategy #2: Create a core professional development program that is differentiated for new teachers, with increasing opportunities (as proficiency/experience increases) to self select professional development to meet their own professional interests and district needs.	2017-2019	2020-2022
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- Redefine and build a new teacher induction program, including specific supports for teachers of diverse backgrounds 
- Implement a new teacher induction program, including specific supports for teachers of diverse backgrounds 
- Define a core professional development program for new teachers and staff in years 1 to 3 
- For professional status teachers, plan how to differentiate professional development based on needs/focus of district; create a menu of learning options and professional development electives 
- For professional status teachers, differentiate professional development based on needs/focus of district; implement a menu of learning options and professional development electives 
- Annually review and revise the district's professional development structure to meet the needs of all staff 

Strategy #3: Identify and encourage expert staff (in-district) to create and implement professional development for their colleagues. Identify areas where outside professional development support is needed and proactively pursue those partners.

2017-2019

2020-2022

- Offer professional development on adult learning strategies and tools for teachers interested in facilitating professional development for their colleagues, including time to plan and practice
- Provide incentives and recognition for teachers to lead professional development
- Plan and implement conference style (multiple workshops simultaneously) delivery of professional development to better differentiate teacher experience



Strategy #4: Create more time and opportunities for staff collaboration.

2017-2019

2020-2022

- Identify structures and schedules that allow for collaboration within and across schools
- Convene professional learning communities within and across schools



Strategy #5: Leverage universities and valued partners to enhance professional development.

2017-2019

2020-2022

- Plan partnerships
- Implement partnerships



Goal #2: Build a leadership pipeline from within the Salem Public Schools.

Strategy #1: Provide staff in SPS with multiple pathways to authentic leadership opportunities that are clearly defined.

2017-2019

2020-2022

- Identify and clearly define all leadership roles that currently exist
- Create a visual matrix of those leadership opportunities that delineates those roles and is disseminated to all staff
- Explore leadership opportunities offered to teachers and staff in other urban districts



Strategy #2: Develop district-wide internal leadership program for adults. 2017-2019 2020-2022

- Work with universities and other partners in the field of education leadership to support the development of a leadership pipeline



Strategy #3: Develop clear criteria for leadership roles. 2017-2019 2020-2022

- Identify all leadership roles and create a detailed job description for each. Provide clear training trajectory for each leadership role



Goal #3: Intentionally recruit, select, onboard, develop, and support new and existing staff as well as increase the diversity of our staff to drive positive student outcomes and achievement.

Strategy #1: Establish data practices and strengthen systems to qualify trends in hiring, development, turnover, satisfaction, and strengths/gaps in existing employee base. 2017-2019 2020-2022

- Continue efforts to fully develop the Human Resource Information System (MUNIS) and work to ensure human capital data are available for analyses
- Create a dashboard to monitor progress
- Create a talent assessment



Strategy #2: Significantly increase the diversity of the district's talent pool to reflect the student population. 2017-2019 2020-2022

- Research effective strategies and practices to recruit and retain diverse educators
- Define diversity recruitment strategies, build a larger talent pool, establish diversity targets, create a diversity recruiting team, and create affinity support groups



Strategy #3: Establish adult culture of performance and commitment with clear ties to student achievement. 2017-2019 2020-2022

- Recognize teachers and outstanding instructional practices that yield positive student outcomes, calibrate best practices across the district, and create accountability mechanisms.



Strategy #4: Articulate and communicate value of working in SPS to new and existing staff.

2017-2019

2020-2022

- Using staff and administrator feedback, clarify and codify SPS internal and external marketing messages to new and existing staff to drive engagement, retention, and attract talent to the district
- Over time, create internal ambassadors who can help "sell" the district to others and refer quality candidates



Strategy #5: Build capacity, resources, and talent in the Human Capital Department to drive planning, implementation, and measurement.

2017-2019

2020-2022

- Clarify and codify roles and expectations for the Human Capital team, identify skill gaps for prioritized development, determine priorities for additional staff and systems, and clarify needed resources for budget proposal/future investment



Strategy #6: Build capacity and talent in district leadership and school leadership to be effective human capital managers through coaching, selection, professional development, and accountability.

2017-2019

2020-2022

- Clarify and codify roles and expectations for school leaders in the area of Human Capital, identify skill gaps for prioritized development, develop and deliver targeted professional development programming, and clarify needed resources for budget proposal/future investment



Strategy #7: Create talent pipeline/training for student teachers.

2017-2019

2020-2022

- Create structures for identifying effective supervising teachers to serve as mentors for student teachers
- Provide professional development in working with adult learners to the supervising teachers
- Launch talent pipeline and training for student teachers



Goal #4: Increase the cultural competence of all staff.

Strategy #1: Create a district-wide definition and vision of cultural competence.

2017-2019

2020-2022

- Work with an outside partner to develop a set of core values around cultural competence, share core values with faculty, and ensure faculty commitment to the values through intentional strategies and practices



Strategy #2: Create an intentional trajectory of professional development for all teachers around mindset and cultural competence.

2017-2019

2020-2022

- Work with a pilot group of teachers to develop a clear trajectory of professional development around mindset and cultural competence for new and experienced teachers, and ensure that both are consistently considered in all of the district's professional development



STRENGTHEN FAMILY & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Family and community engagement is widely recognized in educational literature as a key factor in the motivation and success of students.¹⁷ Research has shown that family involvement is positively correlated to math skills, literacy, and social-emotional skills in young children.¹⁸ Additionally, the U.S. Department of Education states that, “Research over the past 30 years has shown that engaging families in their children’s education increases student achievement and decreases dropout rates.”¹⁹

A range of stakeholders in the Salem community would validate this research. The need to expand the district’s capacity to improve Family and Community Engagement was a theme we heard echoed throughout the strategic planning process – in particular, at the Citywide Conversations, in the community survey, and in our Work Team conversations. In the community survey, one of the top five “concerns and areas of challenge” identified by respondents was family involvement. For years, there has been palpable tension around the differential treatment of families from different backgrounds, with low-income families, families of color, and especially those for whom English is a second language, often feeling marginalized and disenfranchised.

The good news is that families in Salem are eager for deeper engagement with the district, the schools, and especially their children’s teachers. The district is also ready to make a set of concrete

¹⁷“Parent, Family, Community Involvement in Education.” (2008). NEA Education Policy and Practice Department, Center for Great Public Schools.

¹⁸“The Impact of Family Involvement on the Education of Children Ages 3 to 8.” (2013). MDRC.

¹⁹Webinar Series: “Achieving Excellence and Innovation in Family, School, and Community Engagement.” U.S. Department of Education.

commitments so that all families feel welcome in the Salem Public Schools. Conversations about the central importance of family engagement also extended to a discussion about families with young children not yet enrolled in school, ensuring that families know what constitutes early childhood learning and development, as well as how to access high-quality programs. On the community side, we heard repeatedly that numerous organizations in Salem are eager to partner with SPS to bring their most valuable assets to the table.

There is already much to build on in Salem in these domains. For example, a team of family engagement facilitators, based in the schools, help foster relationships between families and schools. There has also been a more concerted effort to provide translation services to families over the last several years than there had been previously. Superintendent Ruiz has reached out to families who had previously felt unwelcome in schools – for example, by conducting community meetings, sometimes entirely in Spanish. The district also has the Partnership Collaborative, which is an effective, functioning body of resources to support schools’ mission and goals. The school district has ongoing and constructive partnerships with a number of community organizations. Salem has developed a “Children’s Cabinet”, a cross-sector group of organizations devoted to better leveraging community resources to support all kids. Initial support for this effort came from the By All Means Initiative of the Harvard Education Redesign Lab.²⁰ The school district recently received a grant from the Nellie Mae Education Foundation to bolster its family and community

engagement activities with the support of consultants from the organizations Everyday Democracy and Great Schools Partnership. In addition, Salem is developing a partnership with City Connects to support all students in grades K-8 with coordinated services, and is launching a website for families to

WHAT WE HEARD FROM THE COMMUNITY:

SPS needs to more deliberately engage parents and families in a variety of ways

There needs to be more consistent communication throughout the year—not just when there is a problem.

There should be more proactive efforts to connect with non-English speaking families- and to make school events more accessible and welcoming to them.

There should be consistent, two-way dialogue between teachers and families.

More opportunities for families to connect with each other and learn from one another should be created.

Families want easily accessible information on the early childhood education options that are available in the city.

²⁰“Education Redesign Lab Launches By All Means.” (2016). Harvard Graduate School of Education.

navigate resources to support the needs of all children. There will also be citywide trainings to engage the whole community in building a safe and supportive community for all young people. Finally, there are some grants that specifically support the work of family and community engagement, including the Coordinated Family & Community Engagement grant from the Department of Early Education & Care, Youth Immigration Dialogue facilitators supported by Nellie Mae Education Foundation, and Systems for Student Success supported by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The district also has a number of AmeriCorps fellows supporting English Language Learners (ELLs).

With all of this in mind, the Family & Community Engagement Work Team set out to craft recommendations answering the following questions:

- What strategies will make every school welcoming to all those who care about the kids enrolled there?
- How can educators, parents, and community best join together in partnership?
- How can we continue to broaden and deepen our formal community partnerships to benefit Salem’s children?

In addition, the Early Childhood Education Work Team discussed how best to engage the community and families to raise awareness of the importance of early childhood education and the options that are available in Salem.

The goals and strategies for Family and Community Engagement developed by both Work Teams appear below. *(Note: More detailed action plans with greater specificity on timing are currently under development.)*

Goal #1: Make family and community engagement an essential element of Salem Public Schools' work.

Strategy #1: Ensure that all SPS staff have the competencies and skills needed to respectfully engage our families and the community.	2017-2019	2020-2022
• Adopt a common definition of what a welcoming environment is	→	
• Provide the curriculum for existing meeting structures to deliver cultural competency and inclusion as part of professional development	→	
• Create a structure to identify staff members without regularly scheduled professional development in creating welcoming environments and other related areas	→	
• Support educators in conducting home visits	→	

Strategy #2: Create different types of family & community engagement so that everyone is able to participate and is interested in doing so.

	2017-2019	2020-2022
• Collect data on practices for family engagement that currently exist in our schools and across the district	→	
• Activate formation of an advocacy group that would exist outside the schools		→
• Explore models of family programming that meet ongoing and emerging needs of students and their families		→
• Clarify roles around who and how we connect with families and identify gaps and opportunities	→	
• Cultivate strong partnerships at all schools		→

Strategy #3: Build systems that simplify access to schools for families and the community in order to serve all students well.

	2017-2019	2020-2022
• Conduct review of current Parent Information Center (PIC) and other district offices that frequently engage with parents and families to identify barriers and opportunities, and recommend changes	→	
• Create clear expectations of all schools regarding communications with/to families	→	
• Research systems to more efficiently perform linguistic translation	→	
• Clarify role of and better utilize family engagement facilitators	→	

Goal #2: Harness the power of the community to share ownership of children's holistic well-being and growth everyday.

Strategy #1: Leverage community resources and school expertise to provide access to out of school opportunities including summer, after school, and early education.

	2017-2019	2020-2022
• Evaluate structures of shared responsibility for Salem's children through the work of the Children's Cabinet	→	
• Promote collaborative website to provide greater access to resources	→	
• Launch City Connects	→	
• Conduct outreach to families and the general public to increase awareness of the importance of early childhood education and what is available in Salem	→	

Strategy #2: Work with after school/out-of-school-time partners to align academic and social emotional curriculum with the district.

2017-2019

2020-2022

- Extend access to professional development for partners
- Train partners to deliver citywide workshops
- Formulate ongoing early childhood awareness through community outreach



Strategy #3: Enable efficient resource sharing and professional development across early childcare providers in Salem.

2017-2019

2020-2022

- Assess current practices and identify who is missing from the table
- Define indicators of what it is to be "Kindergarten ready"
- Build and support coalition of providers



Strategy #4: Support the development of a coalition of invested funders, business and community leaders, and faith leaders who can help create and fund an infrastructure for early childhood education & out-of-school time in Salem.

2017-2019

2020-2022

- Foster coalitions that work together to generate grant, private funding requests
- Establish pathways to regularly communicate with key stakeholders and advocates
- Assemble a multi-stakeholder continuous improvement advisory board to monitor progress on the implementation of the strategic plan, ensure continuous improvement, and advise the Senior Management Team and the School Committee





STRATEGIC PLAN ON A PAGE

Vision Statement

All students will be locally engaged, globally connected, and fully prepared to thrive in a diverse and changing world.



Great Schools

Create Vibrant K-12 Teaching & Learning Ecosystem

- **Goal #1:** Ensure that all Salem teachers employ the most effective, engaging, and relevant instructional practices to promote high levels of student learning for all students.
- **Goal #2:** Strengthen Salem's K-12 curriculum to ensure that all students are locally engaged, globally connected, and fully prepared for the future.
- **Goal #3:** Ensure effective and purposeful technology use in schools and classrooms to support student learning.
- **Goal #4:** Foster a culture of innovation that provides equitable access to powerful learning experiences.

Reimagine the High School Experience

- **Goal #1:** Redesign programming and the instructional core around student-centered learning principles to better prepare students for college and career in the 21st century.
- **Goal #2:** Implement structures and processes that will ensure that every student has a voice and opportunities for authentic leadership in and out of school.
- **Goal #3:** Create a college and career going culture throughout Salem high schools by facilitating college and career awareness activities.

Nurture Staff Leadership & Empowerment

- **Goal #1:** Engage all staff in shaping their own professional growth and development in order to best serve Salem's children.
- **Goal #2:** Build a leadership pipeline from within the Salem Public Schools.
- **Goal #3:** Intentionally recruit, select, onboard, develop, and support new and existing staff as well as increase the diversity of our staff to drive positive student outcomes and achievement.
- **Goal #4:** Increase the cultural competence of all staff.

Strengthen Family & Community Engagement

- **Goal #1:** Make family and community engagement an essential element of Salem Public Schools' work.
- **Goal #2:** Harness the power of the community to share ownership of children's holistic well-being and growth everyday.



Conditions for Success

Effective Communications (Internal & External)

Strong Infrastructure & Resources

Equitable and Innovative Policies (District & School Level)

Healthy District and School Climate & Culture

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Beth Beaulieu
Stephen Beauparlant
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Matt Condon
Jason Dinh
Heidi Guarino
Michelle Herman
Chad Leith
Charity Lezama
Mary Manning
Alexander Mitchell-Munevar
Patrick Schultz
Renee Venico

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION WORK TEAM

Charity Lezama (*co-lead*)
Margaret Marotta (*co-lead*)
Dena Bailey
Debbie Bishop
Nicole Brunelle
Nancy Charest
Andrea French
Cammie Jeffers
Joyce Parent
Amy Richardson
Leanne Smith
Berta Taveres
Brendan Walsh

FAMILY & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT WORK TEAM

Alexander Mitchell-Munevar (*co-lead*)
Emily Ullman (*co-lead*)
Carrie Francis Cabot
Lucy Corchado
Ellen Galligan
Shaun McManus
Nancy Meacham
Sayonara Reyes
Tania Buck Ruffen
Cindy Vincent
Debra Wonson

HIGH SCHOOL WORK TEAM

David Angeramo (*co-lead*)
Kate Carbone (*co-lead*)
Nate Bryant
Judd Berman
Jason Dinh
Carole Donnelly

Juan Encarnacion
Laura Fleming
Scott Gray
Graeme Marcoux
Lynne Mullen
Linda Saris
Patrick Schultz
Renee Venico
Jennifer Winsor

MEETING THE DIVERSE NEEDS OF ALL LEARNERS WORK TEAM

Chad Leith (*co-lead*)
Rebecca Westlake (*co-lead*)
Joe Amico
Deb Connerty
Marta Garcia
Mark Higgins
Julie Whitlow

PORTFOLIO OF SCHOOLS WORK TEAM

Jill Conrad (*co-lead*)
Heidi Guarino (*co-lead*)
Debbie Amaral
Chris Bednar
Jenn Mallett
Angela Quintin
Rich Thornett
Luz Villareal

TEACHER LEADERSHIP & EMPOWERMENT WORK TEAM

Matt Condon (*co-lead*)
Michelle Herman (*co-lead*)
Allyson Bacht
Liza Bento
Glenn Burns
Peter DiMauro
Jessica Eveleth
Beth Kontos
Maribel Morales
Jeremy Shenk
Kris Wilson

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Hadee Benoit
Sharla Hennessey
Kathy Marino
Mindy Marino
Debbie Phelan
Alma Pimentel

SPS SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM

Liza Bento
Kate Carbone
Jill Conrad
Matt Killen
Margaret Marotta
Nancy Meacham
Kelley Rice
Kristin Shaver
Emily Ullman
Rebecca Westlake

BUILDINGS & GROUNDS

Rafael Batista
Reynalda Batista
Ken Bedard
Dan Byors
Tom Dubois
Celsa Flores
Pat Hagen
Charles Jeffrey
Paul L'heureux
Paul Loud
Torin Mailloux
John Robinson
Carlos Silva

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Adriana Cunha
Jeannette Dubois
Lee-Ann Gibney
Deborah Jeffers
Irv Perrin
Patrice Toomey

CHILDCARE

Samantha Charest
Kelly Gwynn-Newsome
Arlene Mullaney
Matty Soto

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Bentley Academy Charter School 2017 - 2018 School Calendar

AUGUST 2017						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
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27	28	29	30	31		

SEPTEMBER 2017						
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OCTOBER 2017						
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NOVEMBER 2017						
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DECEMBER 2017						
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24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

- August**
 - 7 – 8 New Teacher Orientation
 - 9-21 Summer Teacher Professional Development
 - 22 – First Day grs. 1-5
 - 29 – First day for Kindergarten
- September**
 - 4 – Labor Day
 - 5 – Professional Development Day (full)
 - 27 – Professional Development Day (half)
- October**
 - 9 – Columbus Day
 - 18 - Professional Development Day (half)
- November**
 - 7 – Professional Development Day (full)
 - 10 – Veterans' Day observed
 - 22 – ½ day before Thanksgiving
 - 23-24 - Thanksgiving Break
- December**
 - 6 - Professional Development Day (half)
 - 20 - Professional Development Day (half)
 - 25 - 29 - Winter Break
- January**
 - 1 – New Year's Day
 - 12 - Professional Development Day (full)
 - 15 – Dr. Martin L. King Day
 - 24 – Professional Development Day (half)
- February**
 - 19 – 23 –February Vacation
- March**
 - 7– Professional Development Day (full)
 - 21 – Professional Development Day (half)
 - 30 – Good Friday
- April**
 - 11 - Professional Development Day (half)
 - 16 - 20 – April Vacation
- May**
 - 28 - Memorial Day
- June**
 - 21 – Last day of school / PD Day (half) (pending snow days)
 - 22-28 Snow day make up as needed

JANUARY 2018						
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FEBRUARY 2018						
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MARCH 2018						
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APRIL 2018						
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MAY 2018						
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JUNE 2018						
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	First Day grs. 1-5
	Schools Closed: Holiday or Vacation
	Schools Closed: Staff Report, Professional Development
	Half Day: Professional Development
	Half Day: ½ day before Holiday / Last Day of School (½ pending snow days)
	First day for Kindergarten
	Snow days – make up as needed

Carlton innovation School | 2017-2018 CALENDAR

28 – Professional Development Day (Full)

29 - Professional Development Day (Full)

30 - School Opens

AUGUST '17						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
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FEBRUARY '18						
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19 – 23 February Vacation

1 – Professional Development (half day)

4 - Labor Day

5 – First Day Kindergarten

27 – Professional Development (half day)

SEPTEMBER '17						
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MARCH '18						
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2 – Transition Meeting Day (No classes)

7 – Professional Development (half day)

30 - Good Friday

18 – Professional Development (half day)

9 – Columbus Day

OCTOBER '17						
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APRIL '18						
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29	30					

16- 20 - April Vacation

7- Transition Meeting Day (No classes)

10- Veterans' Day Observed

22 – ½ day before Thanksgiving

23- 24 Thanksgiving Recess

NOVEMBER '17						
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MAY '18						
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23 – Professional Development (half day)

28 - Memorial Day

6 – Professional Development (half day)

22 – 29 Winter Break

DECEMBER '17						
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31						

JUNE '18						
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5 - Transition Meeting Day (No classes)

13 – Last Day P1

15 - Last day of School (pending snow days)

18-22 Snow day make-up as needed

1 – New Years Day

15- M.L. King Day

24 – Professional Development (half day)

Draft 5.9.17

JANUARY '18						
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First Day of School	
School Closed: Holiday/ Vacation	
School Closed: Staff report professional development	
Half Day: Professional Development	
Half Day: before holiday/ Last Day of school	
First and Last Days of P1 (pending snow days)	
Snow Days: Make up as needed	
Transition Days (No classes)	

New Liberty Innovation School (draft 5.11.17)

2017-2018 School Calendar

September 2017						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
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October 2017						
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November 2017						
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December 2017						
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January 2018						
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February 2018						
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March 2018						
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April 2018						
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May 2018						
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June 2018						
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July 2018						
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August 2018						
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-  School Closed - Vacation/holiday for staff and students
-  Snow Days, if needed
-  Tentative Summer School Sched

-  Staff Professional Development Day (No school for student)
-  Early Release Days (School ends at 1:30)
-  Beginning and end of each trimester and December Symp

Trimester 1: 9/7/17-12/1/17 (12 wks)
Symposium: 12/4/17-12/22/17 (3 wks)
Trimester 2: 1/2/18-3/29/18 (12 wks)
Trimester 3: 4/2/18-6/21/18 (11 wks)

Please note we will NOT follow the district PD day in November will be off 10/31 instead.



Salem Public Schools
BATES, BOWDITCH, COLLINS, ECC, HMLS, SHS, SALEM PREP, WHES
2017 - 2018 School Calendar

AUGUST 2017						
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SEPTEMBER 2017						
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OCTOBER 2017						
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NOVEMBER 2017						
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DECEMBER 2017						
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August

- 29 – 30 New Teacher Orientation

September

- 4 – Labor Day
- 5 – Professional Development Day (full)
- 6 – Professional Development Day (full)
- 7 – First Day grs. 1-12
- 8 – Pre-K parent/child orientation
- 11 – First day for Pre-K and Kindergarten
- 27 – Professional Development Day (half)

October

- 9 – Columbus Day
- 18 - Professional Development Day (half)

November

- 7 – Professional Development Day (full)
- 10 – Veterans' Day observed
- 22 – ½ day before Thanksgiving
- 23-24 - Thanksgiving Break

December

- 6 - Professional Development Day (half)
- 20 - Professional Development Day (half)
- 25 - 29 - Winter Break

January

- 1 – New Year's Day
- 12 - Professional Development Day (full)
- 15 – Dr. Martin L. King Day
- 24 – Professional Development Day (half)

February

- 19 - 23 –February Vacation

March

- 7– Professional Development Day (full)
- 21 – Professional Development Day (half)
- 30 – Good Friday

April

- 11 - Professional Development Day (half)
- 16 - 20 – April Vacation

May

- 28 - Memorial Day

June

- 19 – Last day of school for Pre-k and K
- 21 – Last day of school / PD Day (half) (pending snow days)
- 22-28 Snow day make up as needed

JANUARY 2018						
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FEBRUARY 2018						
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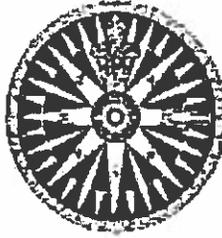
MARCH 2018						
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APRIL 2018						
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MAY 2018						
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JUNE 2018						
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	First Day grs. 1-12		First day for Pre-K and Kindergarten
	Schools Closed: Holiday or Vacation		Pre-K parent/child orientation
	Schools Closed: Staff Report, Professional Development		Last day Pre-K and K (pending snow days)
	Half Day: Professional Development		Snow days – make up as needed
	Half Day: ½ day before Holiday / Last Day of School (pending snow days)		



RECEIVED

MAY 04 2017

S.P.S.
SUPT.'S OFFICE

The Nathaniel Bowditch School

79 Willson Street * Salem, MA 01970 * Phone: 978.740.1290 * Fax: 978.740.1180

Rebecca Westlake
Interim Principal

Courtney Gosselin
Assistant Principal

Vito Umbro
Assistant Principal

May 4, 2017

TO: Salem School Committee

FROM: Rebecca Westlake

RE: 8th Grade Canobie Lake Trip

Please accept this request for the following trip to be presented for approval by the school committee on Monday, May 15, 2017.

We are requesting approval for the 8th grade annual "moving on" field trip to Canobie Lake Park, Salem, NH. The trip is in conjunction with the Collins student's trip.

- Date: Friday, June 16, 2017
- Time: 8:30 am-4: 45 pm
- Number of students -38
- Number of chaperones- 6
- Transportation- Salter Bus Company
 - Bus is paid by students and PTO (students pay \$5.00 each, balance by PTO)
- Park passes are paid for by the students

We apologize for the tardiness of this request, and respectfully request your approval.

Thank you,

Rebecca Westlake
Interim Principal

*Connected to scholars and families * Conectados a los estudiantes y las familias*
*Caring for all members of our community * Cariosos a todos los miembros de nuestra comunidad*
*Committed to a culture of achievement * Comprometidos a una cultura de éxito*



NEW LIBERTY INNOVATION SCHOOL

May 11, 2017

To the Salem Public Schools School Committee:

We, the students of New Liberty Innovation School are requesting your approval of a special event we would like to hold at our school on the evening and night of Saturday, May 27 and into the morning of Sunday, May 28th. We would like to hold a Lock-In Night at our school to celebrate the year's accomplishments, to celebrate the success of the upcoming graduates and to further build school community and culture.

Proposed Outline for the Event:

Open the school for participants at 5:00 pm

5:00-7:00pm--- Games and Team Building Activities

7:00-8:30pm-- Dinner

8:30-10:30pm Open Mic Night/Music/Dancing/Poetry

10:30-12:30pm Movie Watching/Popcorn

12:30am-1:00-- Free time/quiet time

1:00- 2:00 am-- A mystery game called Manhunt which is like hide and seek for adults. A game of tag with "hunters" and "hidiers" with two teams that capture one another. The goal is for one team to capture all the people from the opposing team.

2:00-4:00am-- Quiet time, movie watching

4:00-5:00am breakfast prep

5:00am-6:30am-- Breakfast

Break up for the day 7am-9am Includes cleaning up and packing up

Two staff will be providing supervision. The maximum number of students who will be allowed to attend would be 20 students. Students have to be in good standing with no major infractions to the code of conduct within the last two months. All school rules apply to the event.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jennifer Thomas, LICSW
Coordinator of Clinical Services

Ryan C. Sullivan
Graduating Student

A Salem Public School
Two East India Square, Suite 200, Salem, MA 01970
Ph: 978-825-3470 Fax: 978-825-3475

Whereas, the Constitution of the Commonwealth (1780) requires “it shall be the duty of legislatures and magistrates, in all future periods of this commonwealth, to cherish the interests of literature and the sciences...public schools and grammar schools in the towns” And

Whereas, *McDuffy v. Secretary of the Executive Office of Education* (1993) declared the “Massachusetts Constitution impose[s] an enforceable duty on the magistrates and Legislatures of this Commonwealth to provide education in the public schools for the children there enrolled, whether they be rich or poor and without regard to the fiscal capacity of the community or district in which such children live. It shall be declared also that the constitutional duty is not being currently fulfilled by the Commonwealth.” And

Whereas, *Hancock v. the Commissioner of Education* (2005) concluded “I do not suggest that the goals of education reform adopted since *McDuffy* have been fully achieved. Clearly they have not. Nothing I say today would insulate the Commonwealth from a successful challenge under the education clause in different circumstances.” And

Whereas, the Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center report *Cutting Class* (2011) found “the real value of the original foundation budget has eroded significantly over time, due in large part to rapid cost growth for health care and special education. Since the foundation budget's original design did not foresee this rapid cost growth, spending reductions have been forced in other key areas, especially *Regular Education Teachers*.” And

Whereas, the Foundation Budget Review Commission (2015) resolved “the good work begun by the education reform act of 1993, and the educational progress made since, will be at risk so long as our school systems are fiscally strained by the ongoing failure to substantively reconsider the adequacy of the foundation budget.” Therefore

We, the Salem School Committee petition the 190th General Court of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to implement without further delay in full the recommendations of the Foundation Budget Review Commission.

Memo:

To: Salem School Committee

From: Kristin Shaver

Date: May 15, 2017

Re: FY17 Budget Transfer Request – Bentley Academy Charter School enrollment adjustment

We are requesting the enrollment adjustment from the Bentley Academy Charter School to the Salem Public Schools budget, reflecting the October 1, 2016 enrollment of 257 versus the budgeted enrollment of 300. Per the agreement developed with Bentley Academy Charter School this year, the adjustment will be \$259,964 from the Bentley Academy Charter School budget to the following accounts in the SPS budget:

Account Description/Use	Account Number	Amount To
Pupil Transportation	13570151-5333	\$120,000
Vehicle Repair and Maintenance	13640181-5244	\$30,000
Contract Services – Bowditch	13570521-5320	\$25,000
Contract Services – District Wide	13252030-5320	\$69,964

I recommend approval of the transfer.



Kristin Shaver
Business Manager

Memo:

To: Salem School Committee

From: Kristin Shaver

Date: May 15, 2017

Re: FY17 Budget Transfer Request 22

The New Liberty Innovation School requests the following transfer to align funds with the intended expense:

Account Description/Use	Account Number	Amount To	Amount From
Instructional Supplies	13571621-5514		\$182.00
Contract Services	13571621-5320	\$182.00	

I recommend approval of the transfer.



Memo:

To: Salem School Committee

From: Kristin Shaver

Date: May 15, 2017

Re: FY17 Budget Transfer Request 23

The Salem High School requests the following transfer to align funds with the intended expense:

Account Description/Use	Account Number	Amount To	Amount From
Student Activities (Graduation)	13451031-5780	\$2,900	
Equipment	13571021-5860		\$2,900

I recommend approval of the transfer.



Memo:

To: Salem School Committee

From: Kristin Shaver

Date: May 15, 2017

Re: FY17 Budget Transfer Request 21

The Collins Middle School requests the following transfers to allow for funds to be used for museum entry for the 8th Grade New York City trip:

Account Description/Use	Account Number	Amount To	Amount From
Supplies	13570921-5429		\$268.31
Instructional Supplies	13570921-5514		\$1,745.45
Office Supplies	13570921-5421		\$175.00
In State Travel	13570921-5710		\$111.80
Dues and Subscriptions	13570921-5730		\$479.00
Stipends	13570920-5150		\$1,616
Contract Services	13570921-5320	\$4,395.56	

I recommend approval of the transfer.



SCHOOL COMMITTEE	6000
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS	6400
VOTING METHOD	6406

State law provides that:

The committee shall create and maintain accurate minutes of all meetings, including executive sessions, setting forth . . . the decisions made and the actions taken at each meeting, including the record of all votes.

No vote taken at an open session shall be by secret ballot. Any vote taken at an executive session shall be recorded by roll call and entered into the minutes.

Approval of a majority of the School Committee, equal to no less than 4 affirmative votes, is required for final adoption or amending policies; approving resolutions, contracts, calendars, improvement plans and the annual budget, as well as other non-routine items before the committee.

A quorum at a meeting may constitute approval for the purpose of routine matters of the committee including approving minutes, budget transfers and general items (e.g. field trips, referral of matters to Committee, etc.) and not specifically requiring approval of a majority of the full body

Members abstaining or declaring him or herself present understand that they are expressing their willingness to accept the will of the majority of those members actively voting.

In keeping with the law, the Salem School Committee has adopted as its policy the practice of recording every vote taken by the committee. The votes of each member shall be recorded.

Legal Reference: [30A:22](#)

- [Tabled March 6, 2017](#)
- [Tabled March 20, 2017](#)
- [Tabled April 3, 2017](#)
- [Tabled May 1, 2017](#)

Victoria Caldwell 9/22/2016 1:49 PM

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Victoria Caldwell 9/22/2016 1:55 PM

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Victoria Caldwell 9/22/2016 1:52 PM

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Debbie Amaral 1/10/2017 3:28 PM

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