

**Salem Public Schools  
Salem School Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
December 20, 2021**

On Monday - December 20, 2021 the Salem School Committee held its regular School Committee meeting at 7:00 PM using the Zoom platform.

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

**Others in Attendance:** Superintendent Stephen Zrike, Assistant Superintendent Kate Carbone, Chelsea Banks, Liz Polay-Wettengel, Marc LeBlanc, Linda Farinelli, Adam Colantuoni  
Gavin Softic, Susan Faria-Smith, and Anna Battista

**Call of Meeting to Order**

Mayor Driscoll called the meeting to order at 7:02pm after reviewing the attendance of those on screen noting Mr. Cruz is not yet present but should be right along.. Mayor Driscoll provides information about Public Comment per the Public Participation Policy 6409 and also explains the availability of Spanish interpretation. She makes a motion to approve this evening's agenda. (Mr. Cruz enters ahead of the approval)

**Approval of Agenda**

Mr. Fleming motioned and Ms. Manning seconded. A roll call vote was taken as requested by the school committee secretary.

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

*Motion carries 7-0*

**Approval of Consent Agenda**

Mayor Driscoll requests a motion to approve the consent agenda. Including:

- Approval of Minutes of the Regular School Committee meeting held 12/6/2021
- Approval of Minutes of the Committee of the Whole meeting held 12/6/2021
- Approval of Warrants: 12/9/2021: \$277,572.68 and 12/16/2021: \$627,540.12
- Approval of SHS overnight trip to Harvard Model UN Conference 1/27-1/30/22

Mr. Fleming motioned and Ms. Nuncio seconded. A roll call vote was taken.

Ms. Manning Yes

Mr. Fleming Yes

Dr. Pangallo Yes

Ms. Nuncio Yes

Mr. Cruz Yes

Ms. Campbell Yes

Mayor Driscoll Yes

*Motion carries 7-0*

### **Public Comments**

The school committee secretary read the first comment submitted by Jean Brietzke, 54 Lawrence Street - Salem, MA 01970:

Good Evening School Committee Members. First My family and I would like to take the time to thank Ms Ana Nuncio, thank you for all your dedication and hard work for our school district. We appreciate all the time you spend serving our board over. As a parent whose child attended Saltonstall through middle school I enjoyed getting to know you more with National Hispanic Heritage Month. It was such a joy. Always was such a joy to visit the Gables while you were there. You're a true gift to the people in our community's lives. Your positivity is infectious. This is not goodbye it's my way of Thank you for all your dedication and hard work for our on school Committee board chair district. Wishing you all the All the best for the future and good luck with your new chapter – keep in touch. Happy Holidays and Happy New.

Thank you to our to all our School Committee members Board for your leadership and commitment to our students, staff, and communities. Your dedication and hard work for our school doesn't go unnoticed.

Dr Stephen Zrike Hands down Best Superintendent in Salem Public school's system. Regarding last week's social media platform trend though it countrywide and was not a direct threat you and Madam Mayor took it as serious precautions and securely our school's open and safe . Thank you as always for everything you do to keep our schools children, teachers, and staff safe.

Wishing You members of the school Committee Board Happy Holidays and Happy New Year. Here's hoping A to pandemic to Endemic..

Just like to say Liz's wonderful job on the new website is a lot better than what it was and really Show's how hard she must have been working on this. Everyone has their own opinions and voices but. I truly like .. Out with the old in with the new..

The second public comment is read by Ann Berman - 1401 Crane Brook Road - Peabody, MA

Good evening Mayor Driscoll, Superintendent Zrike and members of the school committee,

I would first like to wish Ms. Nuncio a wonderful retirement from her school committee seat and thank her for her commitment to our students and educators. Your insight and perspective were always thoughtful and student-centered. I loved talking to you personally about your piano lessons and hope you are continuing them, and wishing you all the best in your next chapter in your life.

Tonight's agenda includes a discussion around the request of the Salem Academy Charter School to expand by adding 30 more seats; the Salem teachers union does not support this expansion. While it is understood that Salem is capped financially with the number of seats we already fill at the charter school, we do not endorse opening up more seats that might impact our neighboring communities. We do not believe that Salem Academy serves a student population reflective of the Salem Public Schools based on the data on the DESE website. When looking at the selected populations of students whose first language is not English, English language learners, students with disabilities, students with high needs and low income students, the Salem Public Schools educates a higher percentage of the students. Salem Academy does not actively recruit our newcomers when they arrive in Salem. Salem Academy is not able to educate our most vulnerable population of students. When looking at the data from the DESE website Salem Public Schools is only slightly behind sales Academy in regards to the 2021 student achievement scores. Our district is working really hard to increase the offerings at Collins Middle School and Salem High School. In my opinion, there's no need to add more seats to a school that doesn't offer more by way of academic achievement and extra curricular activities for students than our Salem Public Schools do.

Thank you for your time this evening. Have a wonderful holiday and a happy, healthy New Year pandemic free, I hope.

### **Report on the Superintendent's Summative Evaluation**

Ms. Manning provides background surrounding the process of evaluation of superintendents as developed by the DOE. She notes the evaluation will be available to the public following this meeting. Ms. Manning notes the summation is a compilation of all the school committee members assessments and comments. As the Vice Chair, she collects all the results and compiles them into the final document for review this evening. She reviews the summation of the evaluation of the comments made by all the committee members. The final rating for Dr. Zrike concludes as a Proficient scaling.

### **Superintendent's Report:**

Dr. Zrike shares appreciation for the comments received in his evaluation. He notes he particularly appreciates the discussion surrounding areas of growth for him. He acknowledges that the work doesn't get done without a great team of people to work with and alongside. He appreciates the candidness surrounding the feedback. He notes gratitude for the work done by Liz Polay-Wettengel on the new website that launched today.

### **Salem's allocation and plans for Elementary & Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER III) and Student Opportunity Act (SOA) funds**

Dr. Zrike opens his presentation with a screen share noting three levels of ESSER funding that was awarded to SPS between March 2020-Fall 2021. He notes the allocated funds through ESSER funding leading to the ESSER III funding the district has now applied for. He notes the purpose of use for the funding, and the requirements. Dr. Zrike notes funding plans and outlines the timeline of the funding ending in the 23-24 school year.

Following the presentation Mayor Driscoll notes concern for keeping the personnel that have been hired with this funding, knowing that the funding will someday not be available and the resources applied with this particular funding may not be available as the funding is temporary. She notes the concern for future packed budget hearings with the concern relevant to the use of this funding and future of resources.

Dr. Pangallo notes the funding regarding the smaller buckets of SEL and Mental Health support for the district. Dr. Zrike notes the difference in that bucket versus the academic support buckets. He notes looking forward to having further discussion in forums to discuss the ways the funding could be used.

Ms. Manning notes that she's not opposed to additional behavior specialists - but wants to note that behavior specialists are needed for the result of behaviors when resources could be used to avoid the behaviors presented.

She also notes having forums for community and wonders if there is an opportunity for the staff to have a platform to provide input as well.

Ms. Manning shares concern that there's a lot of talk around mental support for students but there isn't mention of support to staff. She wonders if there's support for those who are consistently supporting the young population.

Dr. Zrike follows-up in support for teachers, notes having opportunities available to teachers and staff, and mentions the work of behavior specialists and the broad work they're doing, not just policing with the students.

Mr. Cruz requests some reports surrounding the hiring pipeline to review in terms of being able to create a roadmap to have an intentional conversation surrounding pathways to ensure we layer the supports to fill vacancies with the people who are coming on board with the funding that expires. Conversations are had about inviting Ms. Talbot, Director of Teacher and Leader Development to a future SC meeting.

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Dr. Zrike continues his presentation with the topic of Student Opportunity Act (SOA). He notes that he's still learning what the implications are for Salem surrounding the SOA and notes in

2019 the committee spent a good deal of time on understanding the allocation of the funds via SOA. He notes the district plan-setting with mention of: struggling student groups, specific evidence based programs, monitor success and progress reducing disparities, and engage families. He notes the approval of the Salem plan from March 2020 which focused on the High School Redesign (BARR Model & Early College).

He provides an overview of the Initial Plan for FY21 and notes DESE is requesting districts to look at their former plans and provide updates for FY22 to resubmit the 3-year plan by April 1, 2022. He notes the difference in funding and the need to provide an explanation on how the funding will be used to close student opportunity gaps.

Mayor Driscoll notes hope for the number to increase funding and is interested in seeing what changes might be made by the administration to plan as it stands for resubmission. She asks the committee if there is anything else to be questioned or shared as it pertains to the funding presentations. She moves the meeting along.

#### **Salem Academy Charter School expansion - update**

He shares his presentation on the SAC request. He notes his analysis and shares an assessment of their request. SAC is requesting an expansion of 30 seats. Pre-2015, they had 372 seats, in 2015 they had an expansion or 480 seats and if their new request is granted, they'll receive 510 seats in grades 6-12.

Their rationale is: accommodate decline in attrition at the high school level and they run the risk of not receiving funding for the increased enrollment for the students they are retaining.

The City of Salem is capped at 469 Charter seats, that's all charters that our students attend. Per pupil impact per student is \$14,464. He notes considerations:

Impact of expansion:

- Students that attend charters will be be funnelled to SAC
- Increase state's subsidization of the school
- May increase enrollment from other communities that are not capped

Citywide school-aged population has dropped, does not suggest a need for expansion of seats

Concern that this is a backdoor to increase enrollment of Salem students at SAC

Concern that school has not right-sized now that Salem is no longer in the 10% of lowest performing districts.

Dr. Zrike does not recommend supporting the expansion. He notes the lack of clarity on how they can expand with a city cap. While he notes there isn't a financial loss, the optics are a bit unclear. DESE requests public comment on the request by January 7, 2022 and the board will review the request at the January 25, 2022 meeting.

Mayor Driscoll notes understanding what they are requesting has been a struggle giving that there is a distinct cap in Salem. She notes that there is nothing noted on the agenda to act

collectively, but if members wanted to do so, we could propose that at a future school committee meeting.

Mr. Cruz shares appreciation to Dr. Zrike's recommendations based on the considerations. Mr. Cruz wonders if collective action is an option for Dr. Zrike to raise as a support to providing his recommendation to the board. Mayor Driscoll notes that there isn't an action item listed, and though listed as a presentation in the Superintendent report, due to open meeting laws the body cannot take collective action. She notes the members can individually note where they stand and Dr. Zrike can incorporate that into his recommendation but at this point, no further action can be taken collectively.

Dr. Pangallo wonders about the numbers given and how it reflects the percentage of the student body in the same grade levels. She's not sure she has the accurate numbers. Around 2010 the charter school was about 14% of the 6-12 students and increased to 20% in 2015 and now they're showing 29% and they're asking to go to about 31% of our student body. She's concerned about that balance and notes that while the funding doesn't directly affect the city and district financially - the funding is coming from the state and could be used in more effective ways. She notes not being in support of the recommendation at this time.

Ms. Campbell requests to review the dates of public comment. She also shares her concerns supporting the STU president and Dr. Pangallo's comments.

Mayor Driscoll notes speaking to calendar and respect to how the committee would like to proceed at a future meeting.

#### **Northshore Education Consortium Annual Report**

Dr. Zrike notes this report is in the packet and for the sake of time, it will not be reviewed in detail but the report will be provided to the committee as they are completed and provided to the district.

#### **Final SlideShare from Dr. Zrike**

Dr. Zrike notes the at-home rapid tests being available to students and staff for the winter break, thanks to the city of Salem. He notes instructions will be available in English, Spanish, and Portuguese and distribution will be on Wednesday, December 22, 2022. He wraps up his presentations with well wishes for holidays and a happy winter break.

Mayor Driscoll notes thanks to the Baker/Polito team for getting 12,000 tests to the City of Salem.

#### **Report from the Student Representative - Hawa Hamidou Tabayi**

Ms. Hamidou Tabayi is not in attendance. Mr. Cruz shares the report provided by Ms. Hamidou Tabayi. Students are in the process of planning their first retreat and the students did complete the officers election and four names are read for the record with their voted roles:

- Vice Chair, 12th Grader: Jimena Pueyo

- Corresponding Secretary, 12th Grader: Emily Mercanti
- Press Secretary, 12th Grader: Sunning David
- Treasurer, 11th Grader: Allanah Heenan

### **Recognition for Ms. Nuncio**

Mayor Driscoll shares recognition and appreciation to Ms. Nuncio as she finishes her term as School Committee member as this is her final meeting on the committee. Mayor Driscoll notes the wish for the meeting to be in-person but hopes the gratitude is equally felt on the virtual platform. She notes Ms. Nuncio being Chair of one of the busier subcommittees. Ms. Nuncio receives a city seal, Salem apparel, and flowers along with gratitude. Ms. Nuncio takes the floor to accept the recognition and shares her gratitude for her time on the committee.

### **Old Business**

None

### **New Business**

#### **Deliberation and vote on MOU between Salem School Committee and STU regarding recognition of Family Engagement Facilitators**

Mayor Driscoll entertains a motion to adopt the MOU as presented and discussed in the executive session of the Committee of the Whole prior to this evening's meeting. Ms. Manning makes the motion, seconded by Mr. Fleming. A roll call vote is taken.

A roll call vote was taken.

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

Motion carries 7-0

#### **Vote to endorse and support a district statement of inclusivity for our LGBTQ+ families**

Ms. Campbell provides context surrounding the creation of the statement and bringing the statement forward to the full committee.

Mayor Driscoll entertains a motion to endorse the district statement of inclusivity for our LGBTQ+ Families. Mr. Cruz makes the motion, seconded by Dr. Pangallo. Mayor Driscoll thanks the equity subcommittee and others in preparing this statement as it reflect the equity work within the district. A roll call vote is taken.

A roll call vote was taken.

|             |     |
|-------------|-----|
| Ms. Manning | Yes |
| Mr. Fleming | Yes |

|                |     |
|----------------|-----|
| Mr. Cruz       | Yes |
| Dr. Pangallo   | Yes |
| Ms. Nuncio     | Yes |
| Ms. Campbell   | Yes |
| Mayor Driscoll | Yes |

Motion carries 7-0

## **Finance & Operations Report**

### **Budget transfers**

Ms. DeLai shares there are three budget transfers for the evening. Mayor Driscoll entertains a motion for approval of the budget transfers. Ms. DeLai notes on budget transfer three, there is an error in the account description, which should read: Special Education Collaborative Tuition.

Mayor Driscoll entertains a motion. Mr. Fleming makes a motion for the approval of all three budget transfers. Seconded by Ms. Manning.

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

Motion carries 7-0

## **Subcommittee Reports**

### **Policies for Third Reading:**

Policy 1101.01 Non-Discrimination Policy

Policy 1103 Distribution of Notices

Mayor Driscoll entertains a motion. Ms. Nuncio makes the motion, Mr. Cruz seconded. Mayor Driscoll notes any comments to be made now as it's the final opportunity for these policies now in third and final reading. A roll call vote is made.

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

Motion carries 7-0

### **Policies for First Reading:**

1107 Public's Right to Know

1102 Advertising in Schools

1105 Media Relations/News Releases

Mayor Driscoll entertains a motion to approve for first reading. Ms. Nuncio motioned, Ms. Campbell seconded. Mayor Driscoll asks if there were any substantial changes to be noted here at the public meeting. Mr. Cruz notes some of the policies were sent for legal review and updates were made. A roll call vote is made.

Ms. Manning Yes

Mr. Fleming Yes

Mr. Cruz Yes

Dr. Pangallo Yes

Ms. Nuncio Yes

Ms. Campbell Yes

Mayor Driscoll Yes

Motion carries 7-0

#### **Policies Reviewed Requiring No Changes:**

1108 Taping and Video

Mayor Driscoll notes for the record there are no changes and no action required.

#### **School Committee Concerns and Resolutions**

Mr. Cruz, again notes gratitude for Ms. Nuncio. He calls out that Ms Nuncio is the first Mexican-American school committee member and praises the work she's done for equity progress, and her work specific to the latino community

#### **Adjournment**

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

Ms. Manning Yes

Mr. Fleming Yes

Mr. Cruz Yes

Dr. Pangallo Yes

Ms. Nuncio Yes

Ms. Campbell Yes

Mayor Driscoll Yes

Motion carries 7-0.

Meeting adjourned at 8:41pm.

Respectfully submitted by,

*Jensen Frost*

Executive Administrative Assistant to Assistant Superintendent