

**Salem Public Schools
Salem School Committee
POLICY SUBCOMMITTEE
Meeting Minutes
February 22, 2022**

On February 22, 2022 the Policy Subcommittee held its regular meeting using the Zoom on-line meeting platform.

Members In Attendance: Ms. Beth Anne Cornell, Ms. Mary Manning, and Mr. Manny Cruz

Others in Attendance: Dr. Stephen Zrike, Vanessa Fagundes, Mary DeLai

Call of Meeting to Order

Ms. Cornell calls the meeting to order at 4:33pm.

Mr. Cruz	Present
Ms. Manning	Present
Ms. Cornell	Present

Approval of Minutes

A motion is made for the approval of the minutes of February 9, 2022. Ms. Cornell requests a motion. Ms. Manning made the motion and Mr. Cruz seconded. A roll call vote was made.

Ms. Manning	Yes
Mr. Cruz	Yes
Ms. Cornell	Yes

Motion carries 3-0

Review proposed changes to Policy 3601 Student Transportation Services

Ms. Fagundes starts the presentation with the discussion of data previously presented to the committee. She notes being able to collect mileage information for every student in the district based on home address and school assignment, using Google Sheets and Google Maps. She shares she is presenting data today regarding newcomers and low-income students regarding ridership.

Ms. Manning asks if Google Maps is accurate to detect walking in the manner a student would (i.e. on sidewalks) and if Google Maps takes into consideration areas they may note dangerous (i.e. Highland Avenue). Ms. Fagundes shares that Google Maps usually identifies the fastest route from Point A to Point B and the district uses Google Maps for current ridership routing.

Ms. Cornell flags previous discussion identified students needing to walk in zones deemed unsafe would automatically be eligible for ridership. Ms. Manning and Mr. Cruz echoes agreement in that previous discussion. Discussion of who will aid in determining safety of routes is had - be that police or city officials.

Ms. Fagundes opens her presentation, opening with data regarding current ridership. She proceeds to show the breakdown between mandatory and non-mandatory riders throughout the district, grouped by grade level. Clarification is provided for the mileage requirement (over 1 mile) to be granted transportation. She continues along to the breakdown of newcomer ridership based on brackets of mileage and goes into further detail of the numbers within those brackets of who would be mandatory or non-mandatory if not labeled as "newcomer."

Ms. Cornell asks if there might be a reason grade 6 ridership numbers might be so low. Ms. Fagundes revisits the current ridership data to showcase the grade 6 population noting the mileage requirements for transportation.

Ms. Fagundes continues the presentation noting different grade levels and the impact to transportation if the mileage criteria were to change. Discussion surrounding the current and projected ridership is had discussing data for ridership in grade 3-5. Clarification is provided for semantics and numbers are discussed for increased ridership and bus needs if mileage were to change. Ms. Fagundes moves along to the grade 6-8 bracket to note what would happen if mileage expectations were to change, requiring a population of students to be mandatory riders. She then moves along to the grade 9-12 data and projections.

Ms. Fagundes continues her presentation with Low-Income Data regarding students who are identified as low income per the information from the Parent Information Center, and the breakdown of low-income in relation to mandatory and non-mandatory riders. Ms. Cornell wonders if there is a reason for the 40% of non-mandatory ridership and Ms. Manning asks if families need to provide a reason when applying. Ms. Fagundes notes they do not need to provide a reason - it's first come, first served if you get your application in early - you get transportation.

Ms. Cornell and Mr. Cruz noted the work done to compile the data and presentation. Mr. Cruz shares concern for the capacity if mileage brackets are changed and how routing would look in practice. Ms. Cornell notes the data overview being helpful as she was curious to see what would happen in regard to ridership if mileage changes were made. She notes the data being helpful to set parameters as there isn't quite a reason behind ridership currently in regard to mandatory and non-mandatory placement. Ms. Cornell also raises that the data notes an argument for low-income students receiving transportation.

Ms. DeLai raises concern for the impact on budget if the mileage brackets were to be considered for change resulting in increased mandatory ridership and therefore a need for more buses. She mentions each bus that would need to be added to accommodate this change would result in a cost of \$80,000. She notes current bussing and cost and mentions it will be a significant investment for the district if an increase occurs and more buses are added for routing. Ms. Manning requests having the funding Ms. DeLai outlines in terms of what was planned, what the actual cost has been and is, and what would be the potential cost of adding to the fleet if changes are made. Mr. Cruz echoes the desire to have the financial data and Ms. Cornell notes having the financial data can help move the policy forward with decision-making in mind to move the policy along to the full committee.

Dr. Zrike notes the change in school times being a factor and a difficulty in planning and scheduling bussing as the times have changed. Ms. Manning asks if the schools will return to extended day in the future and Dr. Zrike notes that the CMS and Bentley will likely mimic the hours of Saltonstall as the days are tough on students when they are longer.

Ms. Cornell reviews the next steps for the committee, including: making decision on change of mileage with an emphasis on safety, clear set of criteria for non-mandatory ridership, and removing the first come, first serve process. With making decisions surrounding the aforementioned, she notes being cognizant of budgetary needs and requirements. Dr. Zrike suggests potentially having a schedule solidified for start and end times. Ms. Cornell asks Ms. Manning and Mr. Cruz what information would be needed in order for discussion of policy changes to be wrapped up at the next subcommittee meeting.

Ms. Manning asks if there is a way Aspen could create a read on who's missing a lot of school from specific neighborhoods. She wonders if there are specific zones of the city that highlight an issue in regard to transport. She notes having the information for chronic absenteeism and location being a factor in her decision missing. Ms. Cornell notes the low-income criteria would be a useful tool. Ms. Fagundes notes that she will be able to run a report with those noted as having chronic absenteeism and their address.

Ms. DeLai asks for clarification from Ms. Cornell notes her desire to make low-income a criteria and asks if she wants an open threshold for mileage or if brackets would still be considered. Ms. Cornell notes there would need to be mileage criteria unless a low-income student falls within one of those unsafe zones. Ms. DeLai also notes the caution to identifying low-income as there are many ways one might identify being low income and some agencies accept that and others not.

Ms. Manning raises having Ms. Fagundes returns for the next meeting in the event there is a question asked that she has the information. Mr. Cruz echoes having Ms. Fagundes here noting her work and interest in this policy change from the start. Ms. Fagundes notes having a clear understanding and parameters around non-mandatory ridership and the registration process is the goal.

Ms. Manning asks about the potential to skew the mileage numbers for budgetary purposes. She mentions perhaps going to the quarter mile - so instead of having a 2 mile bracket, perhaps have 1.75 miles. Ms. DeLai notes concern for families submitting for an appeal for that close proximity. Ms. Manning suggests keeping that on the backburner for consideration regarding mileage shifts. Mr. Cruz notes the numbers for high school riders looking close to being able to shift and skew in regard to that consideration.

Dr. Zrike asks what the team should prepare in terms of data ahead of the next meeting. Ms. Cornell notes the absenteeism data for Ms. Manning, if there are any changes to the policy to consider after having these conversations, and bringing fiscal and budgetary considerations.

The conversation closes and Ms. DeLai and Ms. Fagundes leaves the meeting.

Review of Student Advisory Council scholarship

Ms. Cornell notes the policy should be ready for first reading and what's lingering is the information requested at the COW that Ms. Campbell would provide the full committee. Discussion around wanting more time to review this policy. The subcommittee discusses the process for reviewing this policy at the next meeting following the transportation policy discussion.

Review of Policy 6203 Policy Formulation

Ms. Cornell notes the reason for putting this policy review on the agenda for the purpose of following suit with the MASC expectations and other school districts in the surrounding areas where policies wouldn't require a 3-read process.

Other Matters to Consider

Ms. Cornell requests a motion to adjourn. Ms. Manning makes a motion. Mr. Cruz seconded. A roll call vote is made.

Mr. Cruz Yes

Ms. Manning Yes

Ms. Cornell Yes

Motion carries 3-0

The meeting adjourns at 6:13p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Jensen Frost

Executive Assistant to the Deputy Superintendent