

**Salem Public Schools
Salem School Committee
POLICY SUBCOMMITTEE
Meeting Minutes
February 9, 2022**

On February 9, 2021 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

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 January 25, 2022. Ms. Cornell requests a motion. Mr. Cruz made the motion and Ms. Manning 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

Dr. Zrike notes the continuation of work to the transportation policy. There have been suggested edits noted to share with the committee today. He also shares the urgency from the district's end to ensure three readings of the suggested edits at the regular school committee meetings for a May advertisement for the transportation department.

Ms. Fagundes shows data surrounding ridership. She notes different highlights of the ridership population in regard to Salem Academy, NLIS, SPHS, and the remaining school. Dr. Zrike notes the modes of transportation for NLIS and SPHS are not through NRT. She covers the numbers for mandatory and non-mandatory riders. Ms. Fagundes notes sixteen students who are classified as non-mandatory riders receiving transportation under one mile. Ms. Manning suggests perhaps some of the students in this category have medical needs but do not require specialized transportation. Dr. Zrike notes some may be previous Superintendent discretion.

Ms. Cornell asks if Aspen has a plug-in that's being used for transportation needs. Ms. Fagundes tells the committee she will share

4:45p-4:47p A share screen occurs with a visual of the district database which shows student information. Dr. Zrike informed Ms. Fagundes to change screens due to the sensitive information. The screen is removed.

The committee finishes reviewing the data collected and prepared by Ms. Fagundes. Ms. Cornell suggests moving onto review of the suggested edits of the policy. Dr. Zrike notes his recommended changes to the criteria for eligibility by grade level. Mr. Cruz notes different proposals within this section of suggested edits. Particularly he notes the Pre-K Students not having access to transportation, but the interest from the full committee noting that this could be something to consider when thinking equitably for students in respect for Pre-K enrollment.

Ms. Manning notes the concern of safety for pre-k aged students and the logistics surrounding seat belts, car seats, etc. Ms. Cornell also raises concern of challenges for the pre-k population. Dr. Zrike notes the limited bussing safety requirements and that car seats would not be required. He also mentions that the pre-k families are raising a need for wrap-around AM/PM services more than transportation. Ms. Fagundes notes the door-to-door service and specific bus characteristics to support the students with needs that are within that age range. Mr. Cruz notes the number of pre-k students is manageable now but as the expansion occurs, more families will enroll and more may have interest in the need for transportation.

Ms. Manning notes the concern for older students that live within the 1.5 or 2 mile radius and are therefore not mandatory riders, that need to walk unsafe zones to school. Perhaps there's a discussion around meeting with the city police and DPW leaders to discuss the routes that could be of concern for students who fall within the walking distance. Ms. Cornell also agrees that safety with respect to within mileage bussing and walking is important to consider when thinking of the eligibility categories.

Ms. Fagundes asks about collecting and storing the information regarding students living on what are being proposed as "unsafe" roads and streets. Ms. Manning notes that the intent wouldn't be looking at individual addresses and conforming to those but rather just know what areas of Salem would pose to be considered as unsafe walking spaces. Mr. Cruz notes considering the zoning of the city and preparing data and decisions based on zones.

Ms. Cornell asks if we want to keep going with the policy or review the eligibility once more. Mr. Cruz asks for clarity on the proposed mileage and how the mileage will be determined in terms of capacity and ridership needs. Dr. Zrike notes he and Ms. Fagundes will gather data to confirm what mileage will be allowed. The committee agrees to review the eligibility criteria at a later meeting.

Dr. Zrike moves along to the non-mandatory riders. Discussion is had surrounding the mileage markers suggested for students in Grade 3-5 and Grade 6-12 in connection to the category of low-income. Mr. Cruz notes the inequities that will come from not meeting the mark in term of distance. Ms. Manning notes the issue of Student A walking in cold weather missing the mileage mark by .3 miles versus the student who faces low-income living in the same distance and having transportation. Discussion between Ms. Cornell, Ms. Manning, and Mr. Cruz occurs surrounding criteria, and equities. Ms. Fagundes clarifies the impact of adding ridership with the change of mileage. Ms. Manning requests to review the data and review. Dr. Zrike notes he and Ms. Fagundes will prepare this.

The discussion around the policy continues and enters into the clarification of the language of "newcomers." He notes that newcomers are new to the country. Dr. Zrike notes the changes to be reviewed in respect to newcomers and students facing homelessness. Ms. Manning asks why the policy notes entering the United States within the last 12 months. Dr. Zrike notes, a student could come to the U.S. and enter Peabody Public Schools and then transition to Salem - but has arrived from out of country within the 12 months. Ms. Manning notes previously you were not eligible if coming from another district, Dr. Zrike clarifies if the original intent for newcomers were students arriving from another country directly to Salem. Mr. Cruz notes the previously agreed upon language included having transportation available for newcomers to the district between October and February timeframe.

The policy is viewed in screen-share mode. Edits are made among the committee to the proposed suggestions. There are some areas of recommendation needing review at a future meeting due to a request for more data surrounding the radius of mileage for transportation.

Mr. Cruz leaves the meeting at 6:09pm.

Other Matters to Consider

Ms. Cornell asks about the status of the SAC Scholarship Policy. The school committee secretary notes the steps discussed in the last COW in respect to obtaining documentation for clubs and programs who provide scholarships to their students and returning the policy to the policy subcommittee meeting for review. Together with data and SAC policy this can go forward to an upcoming COW for discussion.

Ms. Cornell notes the next steps for Dr. Zrike and team ahead of the next policy meeting in respect to gathering information and data. Discussion surrounding scheduling occurs.

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

Ms. Manning Yes

Ms. Cornell Yes

Motion carries 2-0

The meeting adjourns at 6:24p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Jensen Frost

Executive Assistant to the Deputy Superintendent