

**Salem Public Schools
Salem School Committee
Meeting Minutes
July 19, 2021**

On July 19, 2021 the Salem School Committee held its regular School Committee meeting at 7:00 PM using the Zoom platform.

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

Members Absent: Mayor Driscoll

Others in Attendance: Superintendent Stephen Zrike, Assistant Superintendent Kate Carbone, Assistant Superintendent Mary DeLai, Chelsea Banks, and Liz Polay-Wettengel

Call of Meeting to Order

Vice Chair Manning called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. Ms. Manning read the new Public Participation Policy 6409 and also explained the request for Spanish interpretation for participation.

Approval of Agenda

Vice Chair Manning requested a motion to approve the Regular Agenda. Mr. Fleming motioned and Dr. Pangallo seconded. A roll call vote was taken.

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

Motion carries 6-0

Approval of Consent Agenda

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

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

Motion carries 6-0

Public Comments

The School Committee Secretary announced that there were three public comments.

Renee Melendez, Crescent Drive asked to be recognized to speak.

Committee Members and Community:

I am here to bring attention to the agenda being taught in all the schools of Salem, and across the United States of Critical Race Theory or what others know to be “equity and inclusion or social injustice”, since many parents have a lack of awareness of what this actually means.

CRT is, in fact, teaching our children to HATE each other. It is making white people out to be “white supremacists”, when, in fact, all everyone wants to do is live in peace as a community. There are many families in Salem that are biracial, mine included; and CRT teaching is making a HUGE impact on the mental health and self-esteem of our children. You are making them question: Who they are; Are they bad people; Am I safe in my community. A point being made is, that there are oppressed people, which I do not believe, but there are, in fact, people who want or expect everything to be handed to them on a “silver platter.” To not be or feel oppressed, you have to work HARD for what you want in life. You are teaching children NOT to judge on MORAL character, but on race, sex, ethnicity, and even religion. THIS IS WRONG in all aspects. GET IT OUT OF THE SCHOOL and GET BACK ON TRACK TEACHING WHAT YOU ARE SUPPOSED TO BE TEACHING OUR CHILDREN. Stick with teaching MATH, English (ELA), Science, Social Studies (not the changing history, but what is the history there), and CIVICS (should be added) as their main studies. Leave the upbringing to the parents!

According to statistics, race, ethnicity and sex are NOT an issue among Americans and this is an AGENDA that is being FORCED upon us and taught to our children in school. This should NOT be taught there at ALL. Hate is taught at home and that is where it should be STOPPED.

When school does commence, I DEMAND that a syllabus be given to every parent, for every subject, for the entire school year in every grade; so they are aware of what exactly is being taught. When our children are being taught on computers and we do not have access to student’s actual schoolwork; we do not know exactly what is being taught; therefore, are not being made aware of teachings.

The Board of Education, The School Committee, Superintendent, Principals, and Teachers are overreaching their powers by an AGENDA and WE THE PEOPLE will not stand for it. YOU work for us. WE pay your salaries with our tax money. YOU ANSWER TO US.

Dr. Brenden Walsh, 5 West Terrace asked to be recognized to speak.

I would like to take a minute of your time to react to the effort to provide universal pre-school in Salem.

I shall not read my previously sent email to you. I hope that you will re-read it. I wish to reiterate that even universal pre-school will not “narrow the gap” of socio-economically based vocabulary differences that hamper so many children of poverty.

I wish also to remind you of the simple fact that vocabulary is too often taken for granted as the foundation stone of education. The more words a child has heard upon entering formal education the better they will do. It IS that simple. The gap between the vocabulary foundations of children of poverty and their better off peers is enormous, but not impossible to close.

Let me use a very sad recent occurrence as an illustrative analogy. A Florida Condo building recently collapsed. The problem was within the foundation of the building. All the roof repairs or even first floor improvements in the world would not have saved that building. The foundation was inadequate. Anything but a shoring up of the foundation would have been an example of “sending good money after bad.”

So it is with far too many children. Work done in upper grades (even early upper grades) is considerably more expensive and far less effective than utilizing the earliest possible intervention. Parent Child starts at age 2 and directly involves the parent, the most important person in a child's universe.

Any cost-benefit analysis applied to Parent-Child HAS TO lead you to the conclusion that it is indeed the most cost-efficient investment you can make and should be looked upon as a first priority and not "something we can do with extra money". Please do not let the opportunity pass by again as it has so often in the past.

I am more than willing to meet with any member who wishes to look more deeply into this opportunity.

Thank You.

Brendan R. Walsh, Ed.D.

Debra Turner, 1 Cherry Street has requested that her comment be read aloud.

Hello and good evening, my Salem school peeps!

I feel as if I must preface this all by apologizing that I am not my chipper, cheerful self this evening and will, unfortunately, not be able to provide any comic relief in the form of my usual self-deprecating humor or otherwise as I might have in my public comments in the past. My spirits have been dampened like the weather because we learned that, sadly, my daughter was not selected in the first round of the preschool lottery which occurred today. I have been SO psyched about the prospect of my baby girl being able to go to school this fall to join her big brother who will be starting kindergarten as well. My youngest being in school would not just delight her little heart by enabling her to join in with some big-kid cred like her older siblings, but also would enable me to get back into the workforce which I desperately hoped to do after this past year has pretty much devastated my family financially (as well as many others, I'm sure.)

At the risk of being overly candid, I'll admit that my (large) family falls into the "low-income" category this year which means that, yes, we had a 50/ 50 shot of her getting a spot. I knew this going in, but I had my hopes up and I'd just like to remind everyone involved that it can be pretty heartbreaking news to receive when we don't have the option of paying/ affording private preschool. I'm not saying that everyone on the other side of the coin would be able to afford it either, but I'll confess to my eyes welling up when I got the news. It stings. Please be gentle.

I am 100% in support of this program and am still super-duper proud that Salem even thought of it when it's not something I'd even dream of another city doing. Just felt I needed to be a Debbie Downer with the reality checks for all, to punctuate the obvious that this city has many more families like mine that might be feeling more than a little down this evening because we all could really use, and need, a program like this in a big way in Salem.

Thanks so much.

I'll try to be a little brighter with my comments next time. Go Witches

Educator's Showcase

None

Report of the Superintendent

Dr. Zrike introduced Assistant Superintendent Kate Carbone. Ms. Carbone gave an update of the Pre-K lottery. She explained that the first lottery drawing was this past Friday. There were 113 applications received, which were time stamped, for 72 open seats. She added that half of the seats were pulled on Friday. The second drawing will be on August 5th for the remaining seats. Currently, 36 seats were filled using the 65-35 ratio. She explained that this morning they

mobilized an outreach team to make calls and notify families. They first called the selected families to be sure they would take the seat. In case they were no longer interested, the open slot would be put back into the lottery. The team then reached out to those who did not get a seat, and explained to them their application will still be available for the second lottery.

Ms. Campbell spoke that although she appreciated the 65-35 ratio, she will continue to advocate for the 70-30 ratio.

a. Presentation of Superintendent's Recommendation of High School Redesign

Superintendent Zrike explained that as part of the strategic revision of the priorities for the district was the need to clarify and define what high school redesign really means to Salem. He stated that they needed to create a shared vision for the high school experience with equity at the center and to increase opportunity for all students. Dr. Zrike added that recommendations of the high school redesign were made to the Superintendent, which he plans to accept.

Dr. Zrike introduced Dr. Flores to present the recommended high school redesign. Dr. Flores began her presentation by acknowledging the students, staff, family and community partners that helped with the process of the redesign. Dr. Flores explained the goal was to develop a 2-year plan to clarify the portrait of a Salem Public Schools graduate and to clarify the high school design priorities with equity at the center across all three high school campuses, SHS, NLIS and Salem Prep. Dr. Flores outlined the process of the specific work and their two recommendations, defining the portrait of a Salem graduate and explaining the guaranteed student experiences.

The first recommendation, Portrait of the Graduate includes:

- critical thinking
- creative problem solving
- collaboration
- communication
- self-awareness
- cultural competence

The second recommendation, Guaranteed Student Experiences includes:

- four-year personalized graduation plan
- high quality social-emotional and academic learning
- credits or credentials
- participation in the arts
- participation in at least one extra-curricular activity

Dr. Flores also explained some of the barriers that need need to be addressed which include, current narrative of success, racist legacy structures that limit access, lack of opportunity for participation across or between campuses, lack of transportation to locations of extra-curricular activities, and lack of knowledge and access to arts and club activities (especially for immigrant families).

Dr. Flores concluded by stating that the next steps include review and approval of these recommendations, further planning involving leadership, stakeholders and students and implementation of the work plans.

Ms. Manning asked what grades were the students that participated in this process. Dr. Flores responded that they were 9th and 10th graders. Ms. Manning also asked about the guarantees and are they requirements? Dr. Flores responded that they are guaranteed the opportunity, but it is not a requirement.

Ms. Campbell commented that she appreciates that it is a 4 year personalized plan for every graduate and that this has a significant impact on how students see themselves in their academic trajectory and helps to keep them connected and invested in schools.

Mr. Fleming asked for an example of the legacy barriers. Dr. Flores responded that tracking, educational equity and prerequisites for advanced coursework opportunities.

Mr. Fleming also asked if there is an effort at the three high schools to help students in the cp level to overcome the prerequisites to make it to the advanced coursework. Dr. Flores responded that there is and gave as an example that they examine the prerequisites to see if they are necessary or not.

Dr. Zrike noted that the blueprint of what they are proposing has been shared with Executive Principal Glenn Burns for him to implement.

b. Presentation of Revised Strategic Plan and Metrics

Dr. Zrike stated that although he originally shared his strategic plan this past spring, he has taken the feedback that the committee provided and has revised some of the plan and has included that in the new metrics. He is asking for final approval from the Committee for these metrics.

c. Reflections on the 2020-2021 School Year and Implications for Future Work

Dr. Zrike introduced Chelsea Banks who presented reflections on the year and shared the findings of what was heard from the different stakeholders in the focus groups.

Ms. Banks explained how access to in-person instruction was increased this past year and how changes were made to meet the needs of the students. She also explained how they balanced risks, articulated a plan and prioritized students based on their needs. She added that the community came together to provide the best learning experiences for the students. Ms. Banks gave a summary of what they heard from the focus groups that included students, families and teachers, etc. With all the ideas and recommendations that were presented, they were able to determine what to maintain from this past year and ideas on how to build a better system together.

Dr. Pangallo thanked Ms. Banks for all the information that came from the focus groups and commented that she is excited to do more learning outside and hopes that moving forward we can make use of the outdoor spaces.

Dr. Zrike reminded everyone of the grand opening of Bertram Field on Thursday, July 22nd at 5:30 pm.

Report from the Student Representative - Hawa Hamidou Tabayi

Vice Chair Manning recognized Ms. Tabayi had entered the meeting at 8:15 pm. Ms. Tabayi gave a brief overview to the School Committee of what the Student Advisory Council has been focusing on and hopes to continue to work on this fall, which consists of student rights from administrators and teachers.

Old Business

None

New Business

a. Deliberation and Vote on the Revised Strategic Plan and Metrics

Mr. Fleming made a motion to accept the revised strategic plan and metrics presented by the Superintendent. Mr. Cruz seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken.

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

Motion carries 6-0

Finance Report

a. Budget Transfers

FY22 Budget Transfer Request 1 - The School Department requests the following transfer to fund the increase of Workers Compensation insurance for FY22.

Mr. Fleming made the motion and Ms. Nuncio seconded. A roll call vote was taken.

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

Motion carries 6-0

Mr. Fleming requested information for the next meeting regarding if the pricing of the Worker's Compensation insurance was competitive.

b. SY20/21 Personnel Report Summary

Mr. Cruz asked if Ms. DeLai could provide a status update on the high level positions and current searches for the next meeting.

c. SY21-22 Unfilled Positions

Dr. Pangallo asked if the part time positions could be looked at and if they could somehow be combined with another position to make it full time.

Subcommittee Reports

Ms. Nuncio gave an update on the changes that were made to the policies presented tonight. Dr. Pangallo had questions regarding Policy 5711 and 5711.01 relating to food allergies and recognizing that some medical food restrictions should be acknowledged in the policy. Also, it seems to be giving authority to the Wellness Committee for the policy rather than the Policy Subcommittee. Ms. Manning explained that most of the details are not yet in this policy and they will be meeting again in August to further discuss this with Adam Colantuoni. Dr. Pangallo also questioned why the label containers are no longer available as reasons on Policy 5709. Ms. Nuncio responded that this change was made by the Director of Nursing.

a. Policy Subcommittee

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

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

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

Motion carries 6-0

- ii. Policies for Second Reading
 - 4109 Leaves of Absence
 - 5405 Interrogations and Searches
 - 5406 Student Demonstrations and Strikes
 - 5407 Corporal Punishment
 - 5408 Student Discipline
 - 5408.01 Discipline of Students with Disabilities
 - 5408.02 Exclusion for Non-School Related Concerns
 - 5409 School Bus
 - 5410 Harassment and Violence
 - 5413 School Property
 - 5414 Vandalism
 - 5415 Bomb Threats
 - 5416 Use of Physical Restraint
 - 5501 Responsible Use of Technology
 - 5702 Availability of In School Programs for Pregnant Students
 - 5703 Immunizations of Students
 - 5705 Child Abuse and Neglect
 - 5706 Communicable Diseases
 - 5707 Student Physicals

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

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

Motion carries 6-0

- ii. Policies for Third Reading
 - 4110 Harassment and Violence
 - 4117 Nepotism
 - 4120 Responsible Use of Technology

4201 Position Control
4203 Teachers' Review of Student Files
4204 Employee Evaluation
4205 Professional Growth and Development for Staff
4301 Support Staff Positions
4302 Bus Drivers

Mr. Cruz asked a question regarding 4302 Bus Driver policy; does the contract specify that a background check be done every 3 years? Ms. DeLai responded that the contract with NRT does not specify the number of years for background checks.

Mr. Fleming requested to table Policy 4302 Bus Drivers until the next meeting.

Ms. Campbell made a motion for third reading of the policies listed above, except for Policy 4302. Mr. Cruz seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken.

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

Motion carries 6-0

School Committee Concerns and Resolutions

Ms. Nuncio would like to find out for our next meeting where we are with discussions regarding family engagement facilitators being included in the Union. Dr. Zrike responded that we are starting to engage with AFSCME in the successor contract discussions and a date has been set up with this as a topic of discussion. Dr. Zrike added that he fully expects that by the start of the school year we will be able to have a new plan in place for them to join a Union with a salary schedule attached to that.

Dr Pangallo requested for the August meeting, what the district is considering for a mask policy for the fall.

Ms. Manning asked what the District was planning to do for Spanish interpretation. She added is this something that can be resolved before the start of the school year.

Adjournment

Vice Chair Manning requested a motion to adjourn. Mr. Fleming motioned and Ms. Nuncio seconded. A roll call vote was taken.

Ms. Manning	Yes
Mr. Cruz	Yes
Mr. Fleming	Yes
Dr. Pangallo	Yes

Ms. Nuncio Yes

Ms. Campbell Yes

Motion carries 6-0. Meeting adjourned at 8:51 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Nancy A. Weiss

Executive Assistant to the School Committee & Superintendent

Approved August 16, 2021