

**Salem Public Schools
Salem School Committee
Meeting Minutes
March 15, 2021**

On March 15, 2021 the Salem School Committee held its regular School Committee meeting at 7:00 PM using the Zoom platform.

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

Members Absent: None

Others in Attendance: Superintendent Stephen Zrike, Assistant Superintendent Kate Carbone, Assistant Superintendent Mary DeLai, Liz Polay-Wettengel, Deb Connerty, Duncan Mayer, Ruben Carmona, and Samantha Ford

Call of Meeting to Order

Mayor Driscoll called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. Mayor Driscoll read the new Public Participation Policy 6409 and also explained the request for Spanish interpretation for participation.

Approval of Agenda

Mayor Driscoll requested a motion to approve the Regular Agenda. Mr. Fleming motioned and Ms. Manning seconded. The Mayor called a roll call vote.

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

Motion carries 7-0

Approval of Consent Agenda

Mayor Driscoll requested a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Mr. Fleming motioned and Dr. Pangallo seconded. The Mayor called a roll call vote.

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

Ms. Campbell Yes
Mayor Driscoll Yes
Motion carries 7-0

Public Comment

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

Lisa Warren, 205 Highland Avenue, is concerned that many teachers will not be fully vaccinated prior to returning to a full 5-day schedule for in school return at the beginning of April. She added that she would feel much more at ease if middle school students returned by the state's recommended date of April 28.

Barbara McLernon, 25 Sunset Drive, Peabody, is concerned with our student's mental health. She stated that she has not seen a plan for more school adjustment counselors as we integrate our students back to full time. She realizes that there are social/emotional learning classes in place to be done in homerooms, however, feels that our educators are not trained mental health care professionals. She is hoping there is a plan in place for more SACs district wide. Ms. McLernon also spoke regarding the Salem Teachers Union Scholarship Fundraiser.

Carly Dwyer, 7 Winter Street, is a parent of a Saltonstall 3rd grader and a former teacher and is writing in support of reopening the schools April 5th. She commented that since the beginning of the shutdown Salem Public Schools has repeatedly always put the health, safety and well being of the school community at the forefront. It is because of this record of transparency, community focused and wellness based decision making that she feels safe sending her 3rd grader back to school full time on April 5th.

Amy Lypps, 2A Woodside Street, wrote to the Committee in support of opening the schools full time in April. She explained that her 9 year old child has developed severe anxiety from this past year, from the stress of the pandemic, online schooling and the separation from her peers and she feels it would be in her best interest to return full time.

Tiffany Remy, stated her support to reopen the schools full time on April 5th. She added that she has two children at Saltonstall, one in K and one in 2nd. During the remote period of learning both of her children struggled heavily. Now they are back part time they are thriving.

Ellen Mandel -Steiner, 95 Liberty Street, North Andover, explained to the Committee that until she is fully vaccinated, she cannot return to in person teaching.

Gladys Valle, 60 Colonial Drive, Andover, stated that although remote learning has been a struggle for students, she commends the SPS community for doing everything possible to help students feel comfortable, at ease, and able to learn. However, she is concerned for the well-being of the teachers and feels they are overworked, stressed, and exhausted. She feels that reopening will further exacerbate the issue, and asked how does the school committee plan to support teachers?

Ann Berman, 1401 Crane Brook Way, Peabody asked to be recognized to speak. Ms. Berman voiced her concerns about the schools returning to in-person learning. She is worried that teachers will not be fully vaccinated before the April 5th date of returning students and this could put many at risk. She also commended the educators for the amazing job they did during such a difficult year always putting the students first.

Report from the Student Representative

Duncan Mayer stated that since the principal of the high school will be leaving at the end of this year, the Student Advisory Council has offered to help and are currently organizing the student portion of the search committee. In addition, the SAC has met with Ms. Berman, Union President, to see how they can increase student voice in the STU. Mr. Mayer also announced to the Committee that tomorrow there will be a Student Experience Group meeting. Mr. Mayer also asked a couple of questions to the Committee. First, are there any updates regarding the vaccine for teachers and what is the plan for returning all students to in-person. Mr. Cruz responded that originally teachers were in Phase 1 of the Governor's plan, but have since been moved to Phase 2 Step 2, since others have been prioritized before teachers. Mr. Mayer also asked if students will be able to stay with online learning if they chose to? Dr. Zrike responded that this would be an option for this school year. They are still in the process of sorting out the 5 day plan and are waiting for the mandates from DESE. He added that DESE is requesting that elementary up to 5th grade be back by April and the middle and high schools will be phased in later in the spring. Mr. Cruz also suggested to Mr. Mayer to set up a time that he and Ms. Campbell could meet with the SAC.

Report of the Superintendent

a. Student Spotlight - Virtual 1st Grade Highlight

Superintendent Zrike introduced the Student Spotlight, which featured a Virtual First Grade Highlight. Ruben Carmona, Principal of the Horace Mann Laboratory School and first grade teacher, Samantha Ford presented students Rowen Baker, Daisy Rodriguez and Jose De La Rosa, who wrote "how to" stories. Each student had the choice to read their story live or submit a video of them reading their story.

b. Interpreter and Translator in Education Training Workshop Participants

Superintendent Zrike acknowledged the participants who completed the second round of the Interpreter and Translator in Education Training Workshop held at UMass.

Superintendent Zrike also acknowledged Susi Hammond, Family Liaison at the Saltonstall School on her recent retirement.

c. Proposal for Returning More Students to Five Day In-Person Learning

Superintendent Zrike outlined his proposal to return more students to five day in-person learning. He began by explaining the steps the district is taking to keep students and staff safe, which included updating HVAC systems, providing safety supplies and health protocols, contact tracing, providing testing for staff and high school students in December, all district testing in

January and full K-12 student testing that launched in February. He also gave an update on participation numbers for both the student and staff testing stating that 12-56% of students are participating in testing and approximately 250-300 staff members are testing each week. In addition, there has been advocacy for the vaccine for educators and helping staff with securing appointments. Dr. Zrike also explained that the DESE student learning time requirements that had been lifted during COVID are now slowly being reinstated. Pre-Covid the requirements were 180 days (5 hours/day of instruction for elementary and 5.5 hours/day for secondary). In March 2020, those requirements were lifted and in the fall of 2020, the requirements of time were reinstated, but districts were allowed to count hybrid, in-person and remote hours as student learning time). Therefore, beginning Monday, April 5th, all K-8 students will attend either a fully in-person option or a fully remote option, eliminating the hybrid option. The plan is also to bring back the middle school students by April 28th and high school students is to be determined, with the hopes that they will be back by the end of April also. Dr. Zrike also explained that there has been a significant shift in the virus with the average daily incidence rate dropping and also there is no substantial difference in cases among students or staff with 3' vs 6' distance since schools have reopened. The Superintendent announced that families will need to select an option of either fully in-person or fully remote by Friday, March 19th. If they are not looking to make a change to their current assignment, then they do not need to respond and it will remain the same.

Dr. Zrike explained how the reopening will work. Distance in cases for instruction will be maximized, but some classrooms may be 3-6' physical distancing. All meals and mask breaks will ensure at least 6' of physical distancing. Specialists (art, music & PE) will return to in-person instruction with adjusted rotations to reduce the amount of students seen per week. Teachers will be given time to prepare their classrooms for transition the week of March 29th. And they are still finalizing updated transportation routes.

Several members asked questions, including Dr. Pangallo who asked with the schools requiring additional staff, how are we planning on acquiring the extra help. Dr. Zrike responded that we recently advertised for help with Covid testing and we did have luck with recently hiring some part-time staff. Dr. Zrike is hoping to have the same success as we did previously. Dr. Pangallo also asked questions regarding the asynchronous learning and Dr. Zrike responded that they are still working on the details. Duncan Mayer also asked several questions regarding the March 19th deadline for families sending their decisions and Dr. Zrike explained that schools have been communicating and preparing with families. Ms. Campbell asked what we could do to engage more students in the testing. Ms. Banks explained that more information is being sent home to parents with the consent form and they are also hoping to provide more information to families in school based family meetings. Ms. Campbell had additional questions regarding the 6' distance and working with small groups and Ms. Banks explained that they are still working through some details for this. In addition, Ms. Campbell asked an attendance question and how we would distinguish between a child being present in the classroom and present at home. Ms. Banks explained that Aspen has been modified to provide the distinction. Additional questions were asked of the members.

Mr. Cruz stated his support for the record for the reopening plan. He added that he is dismayed regarding the Governor's statement on vaccine distribution for educators and their unions. Ms. Manning added she wanted to bring up an issue of how teachers are going to provide additional supplies for their classrooms. Mr. Fleming asked if there has been any announcement on the availability of federal funds for the district. The Mayor confirmed that no timeline has been established yet on availability of those funds.

Old Business

a. Vote to Accept Superintendent's Goals for Evaluation

Dr. Zrike explained that he has made some changes based on feedback regarding MCAS data. Mr. Fleming made a motion to approve the proposed evaluation goals as submitted by Dr. Zrike with amendments. Mr. Cruz seconded the motion. 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

New Business

a. Vote to support the School Department's list of FY22 Capital Improvement Projects, as recommended by the Superintendent and his team. Mr. Fleming made a motion that the proposed capital projects be submitted to the City for further discussion. Mr. Cruz seconded the motion. 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

b. Vote to accept donation of fitness equipment from SoFi at Salem Station valued at approximately \$5,000 for use by the SHS Athletic Department. Mr. Cruz made a motion to accept the donation of fitness equipment from SoFi at Salem Station valued at approximately \$5,000. Mr. Fleming seconded the motion. 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

Finance Report

a. Buildings & Grounds 3-year Accelerated Improvement Plan

Assistant Superintendent Mary DeLai came before the Committee to discuss the school facilities accelerated improvement plan for 2022-2024. Ms. DeLai began the presentation by commenting that in order to address all the deficiencies, she is recommending an accelerated 3 year improvement plan. Ms. DeLai went on to explain the significant capital investments that have been made to date, which include the HVAC System repairs and improvements at all the schools, the Bentley Boiler Replacement, the ADA accessible playground at the Early Childhood, the security infrastructure upgrades at Saltonstall and Collins and the build out and reconstruction of some of the CTE classrooms. Ms. DeLai explained that while planning for the future, the need for additional staff is required. She said that our current staffing levels are significantly below the industry standards. In addition, overtime, which includes details for school events, snow and ice removal and coverage for absences and leaves, has been drastically underfunded. Ms. DeLai shared with the Committee the preventative maintenance and inspections schedule and the building repairs and improvements plan. She explained that mandatory inspections have never been accounted for and preventative maintenance could result in operational savings. Ms. DeLai also outlined the Betram Field operations and maintenance estimated costs. With the improvements made to the field, this will require additional staff to clean and maintain it.

b. FY22 Recommended School Department Capital Improvement Projects

Assistant Superintendent Mary DeLai introduced Ryan Monks, Director of Building & Grounds who presented the FY22 recommended School Department capital improvement projects. Mr. Monks began his presentation outlining the proposed and recommended building and grounds capital improvements projects for FY22. He explained that with such a large list of items (including building roofs, boilers, and generators) it is difficult to prioritize, but they are working with the Finance Department, Building & Grounds Subcommittee and Assistant Superintendent DeLai to put together a recommended list of projects that they feel fulfils the needs of FY22. Mr. Monks explained some of the building projects and their costs. Some examples are the Witchcraft Heights VCT floor tile replacement, the Horace Mann gym floor replacement, the Salem High School gym floor replacement, the Collins Middle School roof repairs and the Bentley HVAC controls project. In addition, Mr. Monks explained the need for a district security upgrade, the need for upgraded cleaning equipment, and ADA repairs and upgrades. Mr. Monks added that there are still ongoing capital projects such as the Collins office move and Salem High bathrooms that are being repaired.

Mayor Driscoll added that unfortunately not all these items will fit into the FY22 budget, but the City finance department is working with the School finance department to prioritize which projects should be included.

c. Budget Transfers

Ms. DeLai requested the following Budget Transfers.

FY21 Budget Transfer Request 17 - The New Liberty Innovation School requests the transfer be made from Contract Services in the amount of \$9,000 and Instructional Supplies in the amount of \$1,000 to Fringe/Stipends to fund stipends for Innovation Plan Renewal.

FY21 Budget Transfer Request 18 - The Saltonstall School requests the transfer be made from Contract Services to Instructional Supplies to fund materials for Literature and Math needs in the amount of \$7,000.

FY21 Budget Transfer Request 19 - The Bilingual Department requests the transfer be made from Contract Services to Instructional Supplies to fund Dual Language instructional materials for two 1st grade classrooms in the amount of \$45,000.

Dr. Pangallo questioned the transfer for the Bilingual Department and Superintendent Zrike noted that he would confirm and respond back to the Committee.

Mayor Driscoll requested an omnibus motion to approve FY21-17, FY21-18 and FY21-19 Budget Transfers. Mr. Cruz made the motion and Mr. Fleming 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

Subcommittee Reports

a. Policy Subcommittee

- i. Policies for First Reading
5213 Field Trips and Excursions

Dr. Pangallo asked if they could broaden the language and relax the restrictions in the Amusement Parks section for Policy 5213 Field Trips and Excursions before second reading.

Ms. Nuncio made a motion for first reading of policy 5213 Field Trips and Excursions. Mr. Cruz seconded the motion. 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

ii. Policies for Second Reading
3105 Budget Transfer Authority

Ms. Nuncio explained the changes that were made from the first reading. She noted that the amount was adjusted to \$15,000 and wording that Ms. DeLai had previously provided, has been added to the policy.

Ms. Nuncio made a motion for second reading of 3105 Budget Transfer Authority Policy and Ms. Manning 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

iii. Policies for Third Reading
2111 Annual State-of-the-Schools Report

Ms. Nuncio made a motion for third reading of 2111 Annual State-of-the-School Report Policy and Mr. Cruz 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

School Committee Concerns and Resolutions

Mr. Cruz made a motion to support the Superintendent's plan for reopening. Mr. Fleming seconded the motion. A roll call vote was made.

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.

Mr. Fleming reported that the Food Services Director interviews went well and stated that they are down to two finalists.

Ms. Nuncio wanted to commend Dr. Zrike and the family engagement facilitators who attended the UMass training and wanted to request a progress report on how we are doing on improving their standings.

Ms. Manning wanted to remind the public about the Budget Forum on Wednesday evening 6-7:30 pm and asked if there would be a Budget Forum in Spanish. Dr. Zrike responded that they are currently working on scheduling that.

Adjournment

Mayor Driscoll requested a motion to adjourn. Mr. Fleming motioned and Mr. Cruz 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. Meeting adjourned at 9:54 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Nancy A. Weiss

Executive Assistant to the School Committee & Superintendent

Approved April 5, 2021