

**Salem Public Schools
Salem School Committee
Meeting Minutes
March 21, 2022**

On March 21, 2022 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. Beth Anne Cornell, 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, Glenn Burns, Mario Sousa, Emily Flores, Elizabeth Rogers, Sayonara Reyes, André Fonseca, Adden Nunez, Dante Roper, Norelys Mendez Rivas, Bryan De La Cruz

Call of Meeting to Order

Mayor Driscoll calls the meeting to order at 7:00pm and requests a call of attendance. She explained the Public Participation Policy 6409 and also explained the availability of Spanish interpretation.

Attendance

The school committee secretary called the attendance.

Ms. Campbell	Present
Ms. Cornell	Present
Mr. Cruz	Present
Mr. Fleming	Present
Ms. Manning	Present
Dr. Pangallo	Present
Mayor Driscoll	Present

Approval of Agenda

Mayor Driscoll requested a motion to approve the Regular Agenda. Mr. Cruz motioned and Mr. Flemings seconded. A roll call vote was taken.

Ms. Campbell	Yes
Ms. Cornell	Yes
Mr. Cruz	Yes
Mr. Fleming	Yes
Ms. Manning	Yes
Dr. Pangallo	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 Mr. Cruz seconded. A roll call vote was taken.

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

Motion carries 7-0

Public Comments

A comment is read aloud by Lise Hanson-Damato of 53 Hathorne Street - Salem, MA 01970

"I'm writing to express my extreme disappointment with your decision to ignore parent voice when crafting the 2022-23 academic calendar. To quote another Saltonstall parent "I'm not getting over this anytime soon."

Intercession at Saltonstall was in the FALL; the break last year was in the FALL, the Wellness Day this year was in the FALL; the 2022-2023 break proposed to parents and staff was for the FALL (for which 65% of parents polled expressed support). How you took the leap from this to a break in January, I don't understand (and yes, I watched the meeting – the "logic" for this still escapes me).

To backtrack this into being called a "Covid mitigation strategy" is really disingenuous. This was never presented as a Covid mitigation strategy - It was presented to parents and staff as an opportunity for a FALL break. If this is a Covid mitigation strategy, why is Carlton allowed to opt out? Could Carlton also choose to opt out of masking? Testing? No. Of course not. Why? Because those are Covid mitigation strategies. This argument fails on its face. If you'd wanted to have an extended break as a covid mitigation strategy, my recommendation would be to include that as part of an overall long-term mitigation strategy, which this doesn't appear at all to be.

The two benefits I mentioned in my email supporting this idea last month (a break in the fall semester and the opportunity for inexpensive travel) are completely null with a January break. As Dr. Zrike pointed out, the first week in November already has two days off, so a break at that time would only mean three additional days off. This ridiculous January idea will now require five additional days off.

Finally, this decision is really salt in the wounds for Saltonstall parents. I run a group for Saltonstall parents and when this news was shared, it garnered fifty-seven comments – not a

single one that was positive. With permission, I'm sharing some quotes from that group, all from current Saltonstall parents:

"The school break conversation is really touching my sore spot about the erosion of Salts' extended school year & intercession structure. I'm sure opinions varied (and many current parents never had it) but it provided regular, predictable breaks for everyone. I find it super annoying to now be asked about where & when I want a small portion of what I used to have."

"So disappointed. This makes no sense. Sad to say but I think it's time for my family to reevaluate our options."

"We are already looking into other options as well. Especially after all of the proposed changes with all Salem schools... sad."

"Was this discussed as an option in that district survey? I thought the discussion was around bringing back intersession in Oct/Nov."

"This is ridiculous in the middle of the winter. Its always been a week.What is the reasoning behind this? Wow"

" Terrible. Its never been more then Christmas break just like everywhere else in this state for public schools. The district is at fault and needs change"

"I'm not getting over this anytime soon. Like, Huh?!?"

I am requesting that you re-visit this topic and vote to listen to both parent voice and logic, and create a fall break for 2022-2023. It is well within your purview to do so and I ask that you take steps to fix this decision, which I view as a mistake.

Thank you."

Educator's Showcase

Mr. Burns provides a quick overview of tonight's showcase from the CTE program students attending the meeting. They present about the importance of CTE programming, the skills they learn, the internships available to them, and the highlights of the programs. Mr. Sousa introduces the students: Adden (Culinary), Dante Roper (Electrical), Marisabel Pimentel, Norelys Mendez-Rivas (Medical Assisting). The students each share about the power of their trade and the impact it will have when graduating with the certifications they've received.

Mayor Driscoll thanks the students for sharing, noting the wide variety of CTE options available to students at SHS. She notes further work with Mr. Sousa and Mr. Burns to continue to grow the program for students to move forward on the path of work and career.

Mr. Cruz thanks each student recognizing what they've shared this evening. He asks about the enrollment in the CTE program and how it's grown from last year to this year. Mr. Sousa notes the numbers have increased with the help of exploratory being in- person as taking virtually was tough and not as engaging. He notes taking advantage of spreading the word to the middle school students of what programs are available at SHS.

Ms. Manning shares her gratitude for the presentation and asks about the certification the medical assisting students have and what it means, and also asks about what specific jobs they can get with the certification. Mr. Sousa shares that they are certified clinical medical assistants, they are ready to go into a doctor's office and help doctors and other medical professionals. He notes they are good paying jobs starting anywhere from \$24-\$28 an hour. He also notes it opens the door to many other medical field opportunities. Ms. Manning asks for clarity on what they are able to do in the offices. One MA student notes a medical assistant is the first person you see in the office and they can take blood, take vitals, take medical history, assist with the exam, and can also work to take appointments and discuss insurance.

Dr. Pangallo asks about barriers they've experienced or see on the horizons that the committee should be aware of. Mr. Roper speaks on behalf of the electrical program and notes the pathway from ground zero to getting a journeyman's license is blurry which could be in part due to the lack of a consistent teacher over the years. He mentions it would be important to have a blanket statement and roadmap of what needs to be finished after graduation to obtain the achievable license. Mr. Sousa notes plans to include systems and process discussion similar to Mr. Roper's concerns in exploratory for incoming students.

Mr. Sousa introduces Bryan De La Cruz (Electrical) who shares his experience in the electrical program and the importance and impact the program has had on him and what he plans for the future.

Ms. Manning asks about counseling for students within the program and moving on from the program. Mr. De La Cruz shares insight from his experience at Essex Tech and what some students have received in support for their scholarships to continuing education after graduation. Mr. Burns notes discussion about the internship coordinator building next steps for CTE programs and discussion with counselors for building awareness of these opportunities which will come from Mr. Sousa's advisory boards he's created are very robust.

Bentley Academy Innovation School proposed schedule & configuration

Superintendent Zrike, Deputy Superintendent Carbone, Principal Rogers, Mr. Fonseca, and Ms. Reyes are invited to present the proposed changes to the Bentley Academy Innovation School. As an innovation school, changes require review from the school committee and once reviewed and accepted, to be reviewed by DESE. The proposals include: shortening the school day to mimic the current schedule of Saltonstall School - noting the $\frac{2}{3}$ vote needed by staff was almost unanimous during the staff meeting recently held. The change would add before school care for

families. The second proposal presented is gradually changing the structure of BAIS to become a full Dual Language School.

Mayor Driscoll asks if Ms. Reyes would like to add to anything presented tonight. She notes the interest in Dual Language is actually higher than what figures were provided last week.

Dr. Zrike notes the importance of these shifts to the Bentley school for hours and programmatic benefits with the support of staff and family.

Mr. Cruz asks about the morning optional period and what time changes would that result in. Ms. Rogers notes it would be dependent on what time the day would begin which has not yet been determined. She mentions consideration for beginning the day at 7:45am and if that were the decided time, the morning opt-in would be about 7am. Mr. Cruz also asks if there would be a differential in teacher's contracts for the change in time. Dr. Zrike notes if a teacher were to work in the opt-in time, the district would need to figure out the rate but it would not be the same as instructional time and the anticipated coverage would come from paraprofessionals who's concern is more on the loss of time with a shorter day.

Dr. Pangallo asks what would be removed from the school day to shorten it. Ms. Rogers notes the draft of the master schedule for SY22-23 with a 7-hour day and in the there would be small chunks taken from academic blocks that currently are very long. In doing this, BAIS would still have a longer day than other elementary schools in the district. She also notes enrichment and intervention blocks would remain with the change but also shaved as needed. Dr. Pangallo also asks about the shift of Dual Language overtime and how retention for staff is being planned as upper grade level teachers will anticipate the shift in the coming years. Ms. Rogers notes conversation surrounding this concern has been had with various staff members to project what this means for the future. Ms. Campbell provides insight to how the change occurs in the Dual Language Program over the grade levels and the specifics in terms of what's needed for staffing. Dr. Pangallo asks if there is concern about what happened with the Bowditch school a few years ago and if the proposed changes are a concern. Ms. Rogers notes her own experience for her family and her professional life at Bowditch and the impact of the Dual Language Program on student success.

Ms. Cornell notes having some marketing about this program, how unique it is, and how to highlight the enthusiasm for this program change. She also asks about connecting with the general education kindergarten waitlist families. Ms. Cornell notes wanting to hear feedback and Ms. Rogers says that they are on the waitlist; they are supportive of the shift and want to be in the DLP.

Ms. Campbell shares context from the changes from the 2000s and 2010s is the increase of interest in Dual Language Programs, noting the extensive grants being provided by the state to help increase this program's efforts. She mentions marketing will now be easier with the backing of the state which wasn't available just a few years ago.

Mayor Driscoll asks about the data collected with regard to input from families. Ms. Rogers mentions the outreach right now has mostly been with kindergarten families. She mentions the school has tried to reach out many times and hopes with the proposal approval there will be a greater push. She mentions families being on the waitlist are excited for the change but otherwise, there hasn't been a huge amount of feedback. She notes previous surveys to parents show they are in support of the change of hours, and those who had concerns were worried for a morning opt-in option which has been addressed.

Report from the Student Representative - Hawa Hamidou Tabayi

Mr. Cruz notes no updates at this time and Ms. Hamidou Tabayi will be joining the committee at the next meeting.

Old Business

Dr. Pangallo notes revisiting the calendar decision should be discussed based on community feedback. Dr. Pangallo mentions her request to add the option of the extended winter break and shares an image of the increased COVID cases during the timeframe of the voted extended winter break as a reason she suggested this as an option.

Ms. Cornell recognizes the feeling of those in the community surrounding the provided survey for the option of a fall break and acknowledges the lack of survey or feedback surrounding the decision to extend winter break.

Dr. Pangallo returns to her original remark noting concern from some staff who will go multiple weeks without pay from the extension of the winter break. Dr. Pangallo wonders if there's anything to consider to aid with this concern. Dr. Zrike clarifies that the concern is mostly from paraprofessionals and other hourly employees not being paid in back-to-back weeks and discussion around paying folks during the extended break versus later in the year. This is under consideration.

Dr. Pangallo also notes the concern of families for childcare. Dr. Zrike notes he did request feedback from the community in a recent Facebook Live for the need for childcare during this time.

Ms. Manning recognizes the feedback from the community and provides insight to the numbers in regard to how many days a winter break takes in different years based on when holidays fall.

Mayor Driscoll provides appreciation for the feedback from parents noting only about 30% of the families receiving the survey completed the survey. She clarifies the results represented a fairly small percentage of the district families. She notes being mindful and thoughtful to increase time when students could be in school, noting the long stretch of summer break and perhaps finding ways to accommodate the working family and make-up for loss of learning. She mentions the list of variables for which the extended winter break is favorable.

Dr. Pangallo notes revisiting the health advisors moving between levels in regard to COVID mitigation. As a committee the decision to remove masks was made, but as we look forward -

potentially seeing another wave, we want to be able to move to different levels of mitigation as needed and respond to change. Dr. Pangallo suggests providing the opportunity for the health advisor group to be able to move through levels of mitigation as they might see fit, reinstate the mask mandate if data supports that. She notes not having to wait for a group setting with the full committee to make decisions that require quick action.

Ms. Cornell seconds that suggestion noting it isn't necessary to convene everytime a change is needed and to put trust in the health advisors to make the right call.

Ms. Manning notes she would like to see this issue scheduled for a COW to have further discussion.

New Business

Deliberation and vote on proposed schedule and configuration change to the Bentley Academy Innovation School Innovation Plan.

Mayor Driscoll requested a motion on adopting the proposed schedule and configuration change to the Bentley Academy Innovation School innovation plan. Mr. Cruz made the motion to approve the proposal and configuration plan. Ms. Manning seconded. A roll call vote was taken.

Ms. Campbell	Yes
Ms. Cornell	Yes
Mr. Cruz	Yes
Mr. Fleming	Yes
Ms. Manning	Yes
Dr. Pangallo	Yes
Mayor Driscoll	Yes
Motion carries 7-0	

Finance Report

None

Subcommittee Reports

Policy for first reading

a. 3601 Student Transportation Services

Mayor Driscoll requested a motion to move 3601 Student Transportation Services to first reading. Ms. Cornell made the motion. Ms. Manning seconded. Mayor Driscoll asks for a brief overview of the proposed changes. Ms. Cornell explains the language proposed with the last few policy meetings to align a better process in which families are considered for non-mandatory transportation registration. Mr. Cruz notes the criteria in which non-mandatory ridership will be considered and he suggests by third reading, it would be helpful to have the transportation policy change presented at a full committee meeting. A roll call vote was taken.

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

Motion carries 6-0 affirmative with 1 present/neutral

School Committee Concerns and Resolutions

None

Adjournment

Mayor Driscoll entertains a motion to adjourn. Mr. Fleming motioned and Ms. Cornell seconded.

A roll call vote was taken.

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

Motion carries 7-0

Mayor Driscoll notes an upcoming agenda item will include discussion to return to in-person meetings.

Meeting adjourned at 9:01p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Jensen Frost

Executive Administrative Assistant to Assistant Superintendent