

**Salem Public Schools  
Salem School Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
May 31, 2022**

On May 31, 2022 the Salem School Committee held its regular School Committee meeting at 5:00 PM using the Zoom platform.

**Members Present:** Mayor Driscoll, Ms. Mary Manning, Mr. Manny Cruz,  
Dr. Kristin Pangallo, Ms. Beth Anne Cornell, and Mr. James Fleming

**Members Absent:** Ms. Amanda Campbell

**Others in Attendance:** Superintendent Stephen Zrike, Elizabeth Pauley, SAC Advisor: Lori Marenda, SAC - Chair: Hawa Hamidou-Tabayi, SAC - Vice Chair: Jimena Pueyo-Garcia, SAC - Secretary: Emily Mercanti, Rehana Yusif

**Call of Meeting to Order**

Mayor Driscoll calls the meeting to order at 5:04pm and explained the Public Participation Policy 6409 and also explained the availability of Spanish interpretation.

**Attendance**

The school committee secretary called the attendance at 5:05pm.

Ms. Campbell	Not Present
Ms. Cornell	Present
Mr. Cruz	Present
Mr. Fleming	Present
Ms. Manning	Present
Dr. Pangallo	Present
Mayor Driscoll	Present

**Approval of Agenda**

Ms. Manning requested a motion to approve the Regular Agenda. Mr. Fleming motioned and Mr. Cruz seconded. A roll call vote was taken as requested by the school committee secretary.

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

Motion carries 6-0

## **Public Comments**

Ann Berman reads:

Good afternoon Mayor Driscoll, Supt. Zrike and members of the School Committee. I would first like to take a moment to thank the Salem Community for your support with our Scholarship Raffle. The awards will be presented at Friday night's graduation ceremony.

Second, on everyone's mind, is the school shooting in Uvalde, Texas. Our hearts go out to the families of the students and teachers who were directly affected as well as to those in the Uvalde community. This is scary and heartbreaking, and quite frankly, my biggest fear, and I'm sure it is the same for our administrators. Our students should be coming to school knowing that they are safe. We should not have to have drills about active shooters and intruders in our buildings. But we do have those drills and those conversations. We do it to prepare our students for the worst possible scenario. We have been doing this since the Columbine shooting in 1999. Every time this happens, we think it cannot get worse—our legislators will do something now to make a difference. But it doesn't happen and we find ourselves here again. Another tragedy in a school. Well, I have had enough. It's time to take action. We need to show the world that we are standing together, supporting each other, and that we are fed up with gun violence. Please join the members of the Salem Teachers Union on Wednesday June 1<sup>st</sup> in actions at our schools. We will be having a peaceful vigil for 10 minutes before the start of the school day at each school, to honor the victims of the Uvalde school shooting. On Saturday, June 11<sup>th</sup>, there is a March for Our Lives happening in Boston. There will be information on our Union Facebook page or you can go to [Marchforourlives.com](https://marchforourlives.com). Please join us as we march and make noise to ensure that changes are made to gun laws.

## **Discussion of Student Advisory Committee Scholarship**

Mr. Cruz explains the reason for inviting the students of the Student Advisory Council to the Special School Committee meeting to provide insight to their year on the council and their aspirations for the council moving forward. He also notes some follow-ups that he would like for the committee and the council to consider in next steps to continue to collaborate with one another.

Ms. Hamidou-Tabayi discusses the three campaigns the SAC were planning to work on but determined a more realistic approach including: restorative justice, discipline, attendance, and transportation. Their work began with collecting data to identify these are district issues and were able to narrow down their work to identify what's an issue versus what is a result of COVID-19 concerns. A work-in-process includes creating a handbook for students based on rightful discipline within the school district which was taking actual student experience into account. She welcomes the officers and advisors to fill in gaps where necessary.

Ms. Pueyo notes the work from the year before which helped to create the plan of action for the council in this school year. She notes that she and Ms. Hamidou-Tabayi were the remaining officers of last year continuing the work into this year. Ms. Mercanti also includes the issue with recruiting students so the bulk of pushing the work was under Ms. Hamidou-Tabayi, Ms. Pueyo, and Ms. Mercanti.

Ms. Cornell wonders about a Student Rights Handbook and if there was collaboration with district leadership. Ms. Pueyo notes the idea began the year prior when students felt uncomfortable with searches and racial profiling. She notes having meetings with administration but mentions in ways they were kind of an issue. The SAC also reached out to the Boston council for guidance.

Ms. Cornell also asks about how the school committee and superintendent could offer support. Ms. Hamidou-Tabayi notes one of the largest struggles has been the group and its reason to exist was confusing to some which seems to be a result of recruitment. She notes making SAC a more known group and experience for students and staff to be aware of. She mentions there isn't sustainability in the group because there hasn't been validity for the group over the time she's been in the council.

Mr. Cruz provides context surrounding the student rights handbook and how the SAC connected with the Boston Student Advisory Council during the retreat to help guide their work on this particular issue. He notes interrupted leadership in the SAC as the bylaws for the council were created ahead of the pandemic and they've been picking-up the pieces to work on their issues while working to modify their intent.

Ms. Manning asks for specific detail about the council's meeting with the school administration. Ms. Pueyo notes the meeting was specific to discipline, bias, etc. Ms. Manning wonders if in talking to the administration if data was collected. Ms. Pueyo explains the process of which the questions were asked, utilizing the testimonies to build the questions. Ms. Hamidou-Tabayi notes receiving vague data and the data they were really looking for was noted from Mr. Burns that there was no way to obtain the requested information. She also notes in many of the meetings, administrators would leave and would hinder the conversations being had.

Ms. Cornell notes wanting to help bridge the cultural and systematic issues they are taking on as a council. She mentions having more communication with the Superintendent to help guide the systems and conversations needed to obtain data and make their work heard. The members of SAC share the struggles with the student and administrative relationships in the school.

Dr. Pangallo notes the SAC seems to be collecting qualitative data and wonders if they've connected with someone to retrieve quantitative data. Ms. Hamidou-Tabayi notes she doesn't believe they've had a chance to connect and collect that kind of data. Mr. Cruz notes that one of the retreats, via the United Way, the Boston SAC was able to receive a fellow to assist with monthly training and conduct research for data. This hasn't been revisited. He also notes that consideration for frequency of meeting with the SAC should be revisited as a councilship and school committee. Ms. Pueyo notes what would be more helpful is walking the halls, sitting in classrooms, in libraries, etc. to be able to talk with the students about issues being discussed.

Mayor Driscoll notes this work will continue beyond their graduation as council as she notes she needs to depart the meeting.

Ms. Marenda notes advocating for students and notes as a staff member there are many times where there is a push for student voices to be heard when there shouldn't be as big an issue to have their voices heard and have their problems and questions addressed. She notes having clear resources available to students. Ms. Yusif notes next steps and the future for the council looks like student advocacy.

Ms. Manning wonders how the council and school committee can better connect. She notes the issue surrounding not being able to get data cannot be. The data is there and the issue is either the data doesn't exist because it's not being recorded or someone avoided giving the data and the issue should have risen to the school committee for assistance. She also mentions someone coming into the conversation about the negative relationships in administration and student relationships should be brought to the attention of the superintendent. She notes the walkthrough of the school and how everyone has their own vision of what they see and it's anecdotal for all school committee members to have that approach. The data needs to come in.

Mr. Fleming asks about the issue in recruiting students from the other two high schools and Mr. Cruz notes they were included in some ways but the students didn't feel comfortable meeting at SHS but what they opted for was having their own community block to contribute to the report for the SAC meeting, same approach for NLIS.

Ms. Hamidou-Tabayi and Ms. Mercanti responded in addition noting having the school committee be familiar faces and open the door for comfortable conversation.

Mr. Fleming notes looking at the original outline and it doesn't seem any of them can be reached and the law notes having programmatic recommendations from the SAC to the school committee. He notes having the conversations with Dr. Zrike would have resulted in delivery of data.

Ms. Cornell speaks to having student voices working in concert with administration and school committee members as a cultural shift in the years to come. Ms. Pueyo notes part of the problem is that staff and city members don't have the same outlook and don't see the need to amplify student voices which results in the backward move.

Dr. Pangallo motions to take a 5 minute recess to reconvene, Ms. Cornell seconded. A roll call vote is taken.

Ms. Cornell	Yes
Mr. Cruz	Yes
Mr. Fleming	Not Voted
Ms. Manning	Abstained
Dr. Pangallo	Yes

3 Members Affirmative, 1 Member Abstained, 1 Member with technical difficulties

The meeting resumes at 6:32pm and the SAC students and advisors have left.

## **New Business**

- ***Deliberation and vote on approval of Saltonstall Gr. 8 Canobie Lake trip, 6/9/2022***
- ***Deliberation and vote on approval of Superintendent's recommendation to appoint Assistant Superintendent of Finance & Operations***

Mr. Cruz requests a motion for approval of the Saltonstall Gr. 8 Canobie Lake trip, 6/9/2020. Mr. Fleming makes a motion, Ms. Cornell seconded. A roll call vote was taken.

Ms. Cornell                      Yes

Mr. Cruz                         Yes

Mr. Fleming                    Yes

Ms. Manning                  Yes

Dr. Pangallo                   Yes

Motion carries 5-0

Dr. Zrke requests a vote and approval for the Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations noting the long road to get to this appointment. He recommends a person who is a leader, has interpersonal skills, leadership skills, building cultural work, and someone who was a season leader in motivation and support for building strong teams with a rich background in education. He recommends Elizabeth Pauley for this position in an interim position. He notes she needs to obtain her license for this role and to continue the work and grow into the work and into the team for years to come. He notes a copy of her resume is available with work with the Boston Foundation being particularly noted. She will have a mentor for finance if needed in her journey.

Ms. Pauley provides some background noting working for the Boston Foundation and gives examples of the work done in that position. She notes working with grant-making, specifically working with a four million dollar grant. Most of her work was dealing with project management, strategizing, and grant work. Her career history includes being a classroom teacher, and she's worked in education reform and support throughout. She jumped from DESE to the Boston Foundation to support urban education which has led her to SPS. She notes historic relations to Salem, grandmother being a school teacher at Bentley along with other family members working in the community, Salem University, and Salem hospital.

Mr. Cruz asks if Mr. Fleming would like to provide any feedback as being a part of the formal search. Mr. Fleming notes the pool of candidates was very shallow and after offering the job to two different candidates who denied, Ms. Pauley was found and he concurs with Dr. Zrike that she will be a great fit for the Salem Public Schools. Mr. Fleming makes a motion to approve Ms. Elizabeth Pauley as the Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations. Ms. Manning seconded.

A roll call vote was taken.

Ms. Cornell                      Yes

Mr. Cruz                         Yes

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

Motion carries 5-0

### **Finance Report**

None

### **Subcommittee Reports**

None

### **School Committee Concerns and Resolutions**

- ***Fair Share Amendment***
- Not discussed during this meeting.

### **Adjournment**

Mr. Cruz requested a motion to adjourn. Mr. Fleming motioned and Dr. Pangallo seconded. A roll call vote was taken.

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

Motion carries 5-0. Meeting adjourned at 6:47PM.

Respectfully submitted by,

*Jensen Frost*

Executive Administrative Assistant to the Deputy Superintendent