

**Salem Public Schools
Salem School Committee
Meeting Minutes
November 1, 2021**

On Monday - November 1, 2021 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, Dr. Kristin Pangallo, Ms. Amanda Campbell, Ms. Ana Nuncio and Mr. Manny Cruz (entered at 7:04 pm)

Others in Attendance: Superintendent Stephen Zrike, Assistant Superintendent Kate Carbone, Assistant Superintendent May DeLai, Chelsea Banks, Liz Polay-Wettengel, Marc LeBlanc, Linda Farinelli, Adam Colantuoni, Charlene Moske-Weber, Glenn Burns and Andreas Kapoglis

Call of Meeting to Order

Mayor Driscoll called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm.

Approval of Agenda

Mayor Driscoll requested a motion to approve the Regular Agenda. Ms. Manning motioned and Ms. Campbell seconded. A roll call vote was taken.

Ms. Manning	Yes
Dr. Pangallo	Yes
Ms. Campbell	Yes
Ms. Nuncio	Yes
Mayor Driscoll	Yes
Motion Carries 5-0	

Approval of Consent Agenda

Mayor Driscoll entertains a motion to approve the consent agenda. Ms. Nuncio motioned and Dr. Pangallo seconded. A roll call vote was taken.

Ms. Manning	Yes
Dr. Pangallo	Yes
Ms. Campbell	Yes
Ms. Nuncio	Yes
Mayor Driscoll	Yes
Motion Carries 5-0	

Public Comments

Richard Stafford, 30 Boardman Street asked to be recognized to speak.

Under Salem's allocation of money under the American Rescue Plan Act, we are scheduled to receive approximately Nine Million Dollars (\$9,000,000.00) specifically targeted to public education. Can you please explain what steps have been taken to date to engage the school community, and the larger Salem community, in prioritizing how to spend these funds to maximize their beneficial impact on our students, their families, and our teachers over the period of time from now until December 31, 2026, when they must be fully expended. I am hopeful that the additional burdens that the pandemic has imposed, and additional skills that have had to be acquired by both students and teachers, will be recognized in a significant allocation of funds to these groups. On a slightly different matter, Bertram Field's track and turf were installed in 2014 and the manufacturers recommended assessments for repair for each surface no more than 7 years after installation. This critical \$2 million investment in Salem's sports and recreation programs will serve the community for many years if it is properly maintained. Given the turnover in the supervisory position responsible for such a review, is there a plan in place to review the condition of both surfaces at this time?

Hilary Grimes, 25 Butler Street would like to have their comments read.

I recently watched a recording of the Oct. 4th School Committee Meeting and wanted to voice my concerns about School Committee Member Jim Fleming's treatment of Student Representative Hawa Hamidou Tabayi. Mr. Fleming's conduct towards Ms. Tabayi was aggressive, unprofessional, and disrespectful. School Committee members should be fostering relationships with student representatives, not chastising them, or telling them their opinion is wrong. Ms. Tabayi responded thoughtfully and with grace, and I hope she realizes what an asset she is to Salem Public Schools. I also hope Mr. Fleming recognizes this behavior is unacceptable and shameful in an elected representative. I look forward to hearing more from Ms. Tabayi in meetings to come - please let her know that parents in the community like me respect and value her work in the district.

Sincerely, Hilary Grimes, SPS parent

Sarah Hill, 22 Amanda Way would like to have their comments read.

To the Salem School Committee,

I was appalled after watching last month's School Committee meeting where Jim Fleming publicly berated the fabulous Hawa Hamidou Tabayi. His words and actions were uncalled for and inappropriate. Mr. Fleming - shame on you. You should know better. There should be ZERO TOLERANCE for this type of behavior. How dare you speak to Hawa in such a derogatory manner. I would like to see at the very least, Jim Fleming offer a public and sincere apology to Hawa. I'd also like for him to better understand his role as a School Committee Member, which means advocating for students in ALL OF OUR SCHOOLS, not just Salem High School. Hawa you are so articulate and remained so calm and composed during Jim's atrocious outburst. I am so impressed by you - you give me so much hope for the future. Kudos to you, Hawa - thank you for taking on this important role for the district. I appreciate you so much!

Cindy Mccullough, 1000 Loring Avenue would like to have their comment read.

Parents have a choice, and you can't force anyone. You're violating their rights. I've had 3 shots. I have grandkids in the schools, and I respect my children's decisions. If you try to force parents to vaccinate their kids, be prepared of losing them in school. So, I would think twice before you try to force this on these children.

Kathleen Coates, 51 Hawthorne Street would like to have their comment read.

I am unavailable to attend tonight's public comment portion of the meeting and would otherwise be more than willing to read aloud myself, but wanted to be sure that my feedback was submitted. I am terribly disappointed in what transpired during the October 4th School Committee meeting. How Mr. Fleming spoke to our student representative was utterly out of line and frankly unacceptable. I would expect Mr. Fleming to recognize his error and apologize to his fellow board members. I have two elementary school aged daughters. If my children demonstrate ½ of the perseverance, strength, and unapologetic confidence that Hawa did that night, the world will be a better place for all. It goes without saying, Hawa deserves Mr. Fleming's apology as well. Thanks to the members of the board who recognized this as unjust and called it out publicly for what it was.

Bonnie Bain, 22R West Avenue would like their comment read.

I have seen Hawa Hamidou Tabayi's leadership in our community. I believe that protecting and uplifting her work will lay the foundations for Hawa's predecessor, and all of our students, both present and in the future. We are incredibly fortunate as a community to see her take on this challenging and nuanced leadership role with vision and purpose. We should be mindful of what is being inherited and ensure they do not carry this burden alone, as it really isn't their burden to carry in the first place! I saw some reprehensible communication from Jim Fleming that sought to reduce Hawa's role to listing off upcoming events for the committee instead of further encouraging her efforts. The approach Jim Fleming had with Hawa, both in word, tone, and body language was reprehensible and entirely inappropriate of any adult with a student, much less a sitting member of the school committee. I will not mince words - this behavior was both misogynistic and racist. I encourage the committee to take a good hard look at the challenge being faced by this student to fill a glaring need to ensure a true student voice be represented at these meetings, and to look to themselves, particularly those who have been on the committee as long as they have, and understand how they could have and should do better. Thank you for your steadfast conviction and leadership, Hawa.

Jennifer Palermo, 18 Piedmont Street would like their comment read.

Mr. Fleming's interaction with Ms. Tabayi in the 4-Oct meeting was incredibly disrespectful and just plain wrong. This is someone who is clearly out of touch with today's issues. Fortunately, we have a shining star in Ms. Tabayi. She understands the needs of students and has a bright future ahead of her. If this were a company, Mr. Fleming would be disciplined for that behaviour. Ignoring this without any consequence to him is turning a blind eye.

Susan Raynes, 20 Green Street would like their comment read.

I strongly believe that the vaccine decision must be up to the parents. We do not have long term data on the vaccines and therefore this cannot be forced on families when severe harm could

come to our vulnerable children. In addition, natural immunity should be accepted if a child has already had covid.

Robert St. Pierre, 20 Green Street would like their comment read.

I think it is absolutely ridiculous that we mandate to have children forced to be vaccinated. There is too much controversial information of what the possible effects could be with the vaccination with adults, let alone with our young children. Lets keep this decision to the parents and their family doctors.

Geoff Millar, 29 Boardman Street asked to be recognized to speak.

Mr. Millar spoke regarding the incident at the School Committee meeting of October 4th and voiced his support to the Student Representative, Hawa Hamidou Tabayi. In addition, Mr. Millar brought to the attention of the Committee that the PTA had made an endorsement on social media for a city councilor and if they are truly a non-profit, then this is not allowed and against the law.

Superintendent's Report:

Mayor Driscoll asked Dr. Zrike to give a quick update on ESSER funds in response to a Public Comment. Dr. Zrike explained that the district hosted a series of conversations regarding coming back to school from the pandemic and how we should be using resources. That input helped drive their application. Dr. Zrike added that there is still opportunity to weigh in since not all the money has been committed yet. Commitments have been made to PreK, reducing class sizes, and hiring tutors and interventionists. He also stated that they will be presenting soon to the community the use of ESSER dollars and will provide additional opportunities for people to weigh in as we head into the budget process this year. Dr. Zrike reminded the Committee that ESSER funds will last for the next 3 years. Dr. Zrike said that more information will come at a future meeting.

Mr. Cruz said that while thinking of ESSER dollars, could we get an update at a future meeting on how we are using our SOA funding?

Recognition of Student Recipients of M.A.S.S. Superintendent's Award for Academic Excellence

Dr. Zrike reminded the Committee that these awards are given to high school students who have distinguished themselves in the pursuit of excellence during their high school careers and then announced the recipient of the second academic excellence award, who is from Salem High School, is Andreas Kapoglis. Dr. Zrike read Andreas' bio and congratulated him on his accomplishments. Mr. Burns, SHS principal, also offered congratulations to Andreas.

Dr. Zrike announced that tomorrow is a professional development day for the district, except for Carlton. Ms. Carbone shared the PD plan and explained that it is school based. She added that the ECC is collaborating with Salem State University and worked with Principal Smith to develop a day of workshops for teachers and paraprofessionals.

Discussion on efforts to increase vaccination rate and the potential for a future vaccine mandate for students and staff

Dr. Zrike shared plans about expanding vaccine access. The Superintendent introduced Ms. Banks who presented the current state of the pandemic response. She stated that COVID has remained in the community even as Salem continues to increase overall vaccination rates. She explained that SPS is closely working with the Board of Health tracking COVID cases in the schools. They are continuing to work to expand testing and also maximize in-school learning with the Test to Stay program. Unfortunately, the younger residents still remain the lowest vaccinated compared to neighboring communities. She explained that they have had and are planning to have additional vaccination clinics. They are also expanding outreach, to answer questions and concerns especially as the deadline for the vaccine requirement for participation in high-respiration extracurricular activities approaches. In addition, Ms. Banks announced that SPS is partnering with North Shore Medical Center and the state to plan for 5-11 year old vaccination clinics and presented a draft of the schedule. Dr. Moske-Weber was introduced to explain that there are already several vaccines that are currently required before admission to school. Dr. Zrike added that although there is thought being given for a district vaccine requirement, there are several considerations before that can happen. First, it will need full FDA authorization and then the Salem Board of Health will need to vote to approve it. There was discussion regarding the benefits and risks for implementing a vaccine requirement and Dr. Zrike added that several other districts have already introduced vaccine requirements.

Ms. Manning asked if community partners and contacts in local churches have been considered for helping to inform families regarding the vaccine.

Dr. Pangallo explained that this vaccine requirement would only be for students aged 16 or older. Mayor Driscoll reminded the Committee this would all be pending the Board of Health approval.

Dr. Zrike discussed the possibility of a district wellness day either on November 12th or November 24th. He said this would be considered a day to disconnect and recharge across the district. This would, however, require a day to be added to the district calendar to the end of the year, so the last day of school would be moved to June 15th. He did also check with child care providers and they confirmed that they would be open to serve the families they usually serve but unfortunately would not be able to take extra families.

Ms. Campbell commented that she is in support of the Wellness Day and suggested other dates and to consider the idea of flexibility. Mayor Driscoll asked the Superintendent about timing and when a decision would need to be made. Dr. Zrike responded that this would require a vote of the Committee and made them aware that this would also extend the school calendar by 1 day. He suggested asking the community and having options for the next meeting. Several Committee members said that this should be done sooner rather than later and feel that there is a need now. The Mayor agrees and believes that if this is something we should do, we should act today. It was decided to vote to authorize the Superintendent to get feedback then make a decision. Mr. Cruz agrees this is a good idea and would vote in support of it should the motion

be made. Dr. Zrike said he could get a poll out tomorrow by ParentSquare and everyone (staff, parents and students) can vote and have input regarding which day would work best.

Ms. Campbell made a motion to authorize the Superintendent to extend the calendar as written by an additional day and in soliciting feedback determine a day to offer to students and staff whatever day is at the discretion of the Superintendent. Mr. Cruz seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken.

After additional discussion, a vote was taken for the motion made.

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

Motion Carries 6-0

Report from the Student Representative - Hawa Hamidou Tabayi

Mr. Cruz said that the Student Representative is not able to attend tonight's meeting and he would give the student report in her absence. He reported that students are scheduling meetings with Mr. Burns to discuss restorative justice and students have also raised an issue with wifi access. Students recently ran for SAC and all positions are now filled. They are continuing to outreach to other students. Dr. Zrike has been invited to meet regarding the SRO and Hawa also would like to schedule meetings with all School Committee members in order to build stronger relationships.

Old Business

None

New Business

a. Deliberation and vote of job description for Deputy Superintendent

Dr. Zrike presented a new job description for Ms. Carbone. He explained that he had already brought this to the Personnel Subcommittee. There is no change of salary or contract, just a title change. He explained that this is important since Ms. Carbone is leading more and is also designated when the Superintendent is not in the district to be in charge.

Mayor Driscoll entertains a motion to approve the job description for Deputy Superintendent Kate Carbone. Mr. Cruz motioned and Ms. Manning seconded. A roll call vote was taken.

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

Motion Carries 6-0

Finance & Operations Report

None

Mayor Driscoll asked the Superintendent to give a future update regarding the expansion of the charter school of 30 additional students.

Subcommittee Reports

Policy Subcommittee:

i. Policies for Second Reading

1101 School-Community Relations Goals

Mayor Driscoll entertains a motion for second reading of the policy 1101 School-Community Relations Goals. Ms. Campbell motioned and Ms. Nuncio seconded. A roll call vote was taken.

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

Motion Carries 6-0

School Committee Concerns and Resolutions

None

Adjournment

Mayor Driscoll requested a motion to adjourn. Ms. Manning motioned and Ms. Campbell seconded. A roll call vote was taken

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

Motion Carries 6-0. Meeting adjourned at 8:46 pm.

Respectfully submitted by,

Nancy Weiss

Executive Assistant to School Committee and Superintendent