



School Committee Meeting Materials

**Salem Public Schools
Regular School
Committee Meeting**

January 6, 2020

7:00 pm

*Ms. Mary A. Manning
Mr. James M. Fleming
Ms. Kristin Pangallo*



*Ms. Ana Nuncio
Mr. Manny Cruz
Ms. Amanda Campbell*

Mayor Kimberley Driscoll, Chair

“Know Your Rights Under the Open Meeting Law, M.G.L. c.30A § 18-25 and City Ordinance Sections 2-2028 through 2-2033”

January 2, 2020 (Date Posted)

REGULAR SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING ON JANUARY 6, 2020

Notice is hereby given that the Salem School Committee will hold a Regular School Committee meeting on **Monday, January 6, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.** The meeting will be held in the School Committee Chambers at Collins Middle School, 29 Highland Avenue, Salem, MA.

- I. Call of Meeting to Order**
- II. Consent Agenda**
 - a. Minutes of the Committee of the Whole meeting held December 14, 2019
 - b. Minutes of the Regular School Committee meeting held December 16, 2019
 - c. Approval of Warrants: 12/12/19 in the amount of \$313,881.91, 12/19/19 in the amount of \$208,940.68, and 12/26/19 in the amount of \$150,076.33
- III. Approval of the Agenda**
- IV. Public Comment #1: Questions and Comments from the Audience**
- V. Student School Committee Representative Report – Jillian Flynn**
- VI. Superintendent’s Report – Kathleen Smith**
 - a. Delayed Arrival for Salem High School for ACCESS Testing on January 14 and 15
 - b. Update on the School Committee Secretary position
- VII. Action Items: Old Business**
 - a. Deliberate and vote on the Candidate Profile for the Superintendent of Schools
- VIII. Action Items: New Business**
 - a. Deliberate and vote on the waiver of fees for the use of school facilities by the public
- IX. Finance Report**
 - a. Budget Transfers
- X. Policy Subcommittee**

- a. Deliberation and vote on the second reading of the recommendation of the Policy Subcommittee on the revisions to the following policies:

5102.03	Students Experiencing Homelessness
5204	Grading and Reports on Academic Progress
5206	Promotion, Retention, and Level Change
5207	Parent/Guardian Conferences
5208	Homework
5210	Home/Hospital Bound Instruction
5211	Home Schooling

XI. Subcommittee Reports

XII. School Committee Concerns and Resolutions

XIII. Public Comments #2: Questions and Comments from the Audience

XIV. Adjournment

Respectfully submitted by:

Kathleen Smith
Superintendent of the Salem Public Schools

Salem School Committee
Committee of the Whole - School Committee Retreat Minutes
Saturday, December 14, 2019

A School Committee Retreat of the Salem School Committee was held on Saturday, December 14, 2019 at 9:00 a.m. in Viking Hall, Room 123 at Salem State University, 352 Lafayette Street/1 Loring Ave., Salem, MA.

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

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Kathleen A. Smith, Superintendent, Dorothy Presser, Field Director of Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC), Ms. Kristin Pangallo, Member-Elect, Salem School Committee, Kate Carbone, Assistant Superintendent, Kristin Shaver, Business Manager, Deborah Connerty, Acting Executive Director of Pupil Personnel Services, and Jill Conrad, Chief of Systems Strategy

School Committee Operating Protocols and Meeting Structure

Dorothy Presser, Field Director Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC), shared a document with proposed language for the Committee's operating protocols. Ms. Presser drafted the protocols, which outline "how we govern" as a set of norms which are based on the Committee's previous discussions earlier in the fall. Members reviewed and discussed the draft. The discussion focused on wording preferences for some of the items, but in general, the group liked the concepts that were drafted. Ms. Presser will revise the draft based on suggestions and re-send to the Committee. The members agreed to rely on this draft as a starting point. The members also discussed what the appropriate place for these "norms" or operating protocols should be once finalized. Rather than have them become a policy, they agreed to adopt them as a group and put them on the website and to make them visible during meetings. While it is the responsibility of the Chair to ensure that order is kept during all meetings, it will be up to members to remind one another of their agreements and to hold each other accountable for upholding these agreements.

Ms. Manning shared an update from the Policy Subcommittee that has been reviewing and discussing different approaches to public comment during Regular School Committee meetings. Ms. Manning shared information from state law as well as Salem City Ordinance of 11/18/10, Section 28C along with language drafted by the School Committee Counsel, Colby Brunt. In essence, the Policy Subcommittee is suggesting a proposed change to how could be handled at future School Committee meetings. The change would clarify that the School Committee meetings are business meetings of the School Committee, which are held in public, and not, in and of themselves, a forum for the public. That said, the Committee would both encourage and welcome public comment, but it would be held once during the meeting, generally, at the beginning of the meeting. Members of the public who wished to address the Committee for a period of 5 minutes or less would sign-up to speak and names would be called, in order, by the Chair.

Members discussed the proposed concept and debated the value of having two separate times for public comment on their agenda. Mr. Fleming opposed the idea of eliminating the second public comment period at the end of the agenda. The majority of other members disagreed arguing that maintaining a more

structured time and opportunity for public comment at the beginning of the meeting would make it more focused and productive. The members agreed to have the Policy Subcommittee draft a new policy to make this change, which would be a revision to SC Policy #6409.

Proposed FY20-21 Instructional Technology Organizational Structure

Superintendent Smith summarized many of the challenges the district has faced over the past four years with the consolidated IT department (consolidated with the district and City). While the district has made many efforts to make this arrangement work, having the level of support and service needed to fully utilize technology tools for educational purposes has fallen short. To address this challenge in the future, the Superintendent shared a proposed plan to re-design the Information Technology function within the district that would re-claim some positions that are currently funded and managed by the City of Salem and further develop a department, over time, that would focus more on supporting instructional technology across all schools. The new department would also include a manager of state reporting and data as well as a Student Information System manager. School Committee members expressed support for this proposed plan and agreed to consider the changes during the upcoming budget planning process.

District Organizational Chart

Superintendent Smith shared an updated district organizational chart with School Committee members and discussed possible changes she may be considering for the coming year. Members shared their feedback and discussed the role of the new Superintendent coming in and how that person might want to organize the leadership structure.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the School Committee of the Whole (COW) meeting this evening, Ms. Manning motioned adjourn. Ms. Wilson seconded the motion. The motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 1:30pm.

Respectfully submitted by:

Kathleen Smith, Secretary
Salem School Committee

Salem School Committee
Meeting Minutes
Monday, December 16, 2019

A regular meeting of the Salem School Committee was held on Monday, December 16, 2019 at 7:00 p.m. in the School Committee Chambers at Collins Middle School, 29 Highland Avenue, Salem, MA.

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

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Kathleen Smith, Interim Superintendent, Kate Carbone, Assistant Superintendent, Jill Conrad, Chief of Systems Strategy, and Jillian Flynn, Student Representative

Call of Meeting to Order

Mayor Driscoll called the regular meeting of the Salem School Committee to order at 7:10 p.m.

Consent Agenda

- a. Minutes of the Regular School Committee meeting held November 18, 2019 (tabled on 12/2/19)
- b. Minutes of the Regular School Committee meeting held December 2, 2019
- c. Overnight Field Trip Request from the 24 Students of the Salem High School Harvard Model United Nations Delegation to Participate in a Four-Day Conference in Boston, MA, January 30, 2020 through February 2, 2020
- d. Overnight Field Triq Request for the Carlton Innovation School 5th graders to visit the Farm School in Athol, MA, in two separate groups from February 24, 2020 to February 26, 2020 and from February 26, 2020 to February 28, 2020
- e. Approval of Warrants: 12/5/19 in the amount of \$410,425.96

Mr. Fleming motioned to approve the Consent agenda. Ms. Campbell seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Approval of the Agenda

Mr. Fleming motioned to approve the regular meeting agenda. Ms. Campbell seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Mr. Fleming also moved to take item #VIIIb, the request from the City of Salem Department of Public Works to install a fiber optic network shelter on Salem High School property out of order. Mayor Driscoll agreed. Mr. Fleming further moved that the item be referred to the Buildings and Grounds Subcommittee. Mr. Cruz seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Discussion

Ms. Manning asked if there was a timeframe that this needed to be decided within. Mayor Driscoll responded that early first quarter would be most helpful.

Public Comment #1: Questions and Comments from the Audience

None

Student School Committee Representative Report – Jillian Flynn

None

Superintendent's Report

The Superintendent opened her remarks by explaining the small clay hearts that had been placed at each member's seat. These were made by 2nd graders at Saltonstall and also Horace Mann Laboratory

School who are focusing on spreading kindness through small works of art. They believe that through small acts of kindness, we can change perspectives, minds, and hearts.

“Witch Mix” Presentation

The Superintendent then invited Deborah Connerty, Acting Director of Pupil Personnel Services and Donna Ramsden, a School Adjustment Counselor at Salem High School and Faculty Advisor for the “Witch Mix” program to share information about the program. The “Witch Mix” program connects students who are in the substantially separate special education programs at the high school with students in other clubs and groups. The students come together to participate in structured activities together with the goal of having them form connections and friendships with one another. Parents of students who have benefited from the program spoke and shared how it helped students overcome feelings of loneliness within the school. Ms. Ramsden showed two videos that portrayed the nature of the program and shared more about the benefits of the program. The Superintendent and Mayor Driscoll thanked all of the staff members involved with creating and supporting this wonderful program.

Update on the Salem High School Redesign

Superintendent Smith then summarized the work underway on the high school redesign effort and introduced Dr. Samantha Meier to provide an update on their work. Dr. Meier invited members of her team to join her, including Andrew Bub, Graeme Marcoux, Kim McFarland, and Karyn King Fargo. She began by explaining that the turnaround plan that was developed last year remains a working document for the school, in spite of the fact that the school escaped the requirements of turnaround based on improved results last year. The high school redesign plan has four major practices that guide the work: 1) Leadership, Shared Responsibility, and Collaboration; 2) Intentional Practices for Improving Instruction; 3) Student Specific Supports and Instruction for All Students; and 4) School Culture and Climate. Each area of practice has several indicators within it. Dr. Meier and her team reviewed each of them and highlighted one indicator per practice for the presentation (details available in the presentation). All in all, the work is very much underway with multiple teams and groups working on each area of practice and indicator. Two important community-wide events that are planned include the following. All interested parties are welcome to attend: 1) a Turnaround Monitoring Night on March 25th; and 2) the Spring Convening/Showcase on April 2nd.

Student Assignment and Enrollment Update

The Superintendent invited Dr. Jill Conrad and the Parent Information Center (PIC) Team to share an update on the district’s enrollment information as well as preparations for the upcoming Kindergarten Information Night. Dr. Conrad introduced the team members – Sayonara Reyes, the PIC Manager and Student Assignment Officer and Yari Acevedo, Welcome Services and Outreach Coordinator. Ms. Reyes provided an overview of the services provided at the PIC as well as a summary of the registration and student assignment process that is followed. In addition, she shared information on the number of transactions that the PIC has processed thus far this year (over 900) including the number of new student assignments (over 252) since July.

Dr. Conrad shared the results of the parent feedback form that was distributed with all registration packets over the past year. The survey asked families to rate their satisfaction with the service and information received by the Parent Information Center as well as a few questions about the student assignment process itself. The results were very positive with respect to satisfaction with service and information and also affirmed the community’s preference for maintaining the element of school choice within the student assignment policy, although many families did indicate a preference for having more choices closer to where they live.

Dr. Conrad then provided an update on this year’s enrollment numbers for the district as well as each school. Demographic information was also shared. Information regarding students who are economically disadvantaged comes directly from the state and is not yet available on the state website. As a result, the setting of enrollment targets for Kindergarten registration and assignment is delayed until these data are published on the state’s website. Dr. Conrad reminded the Committee members of

the recent change to the Student Assignment Policy that specifies waiting until these data are available and published before setting the targets (the previous policy required that the targets be set in January). Dr. Conrad also shared information of the preparations underway for the upcoming Kindergarten Information and Expo Night which will be held on January 14th at 6:30 pm in the Collins Middle School cafeteria and auditorium.

Additional Superintendent Report Items

Superintendent Smith shared additional information about events in the community that she recently attended including an event called 50 Plus Years of Service Event for retirees to benefit the marching band attending Carnegie Hall, and the Children's Charity event. The Superintendent also shared information about the Holiday Student Art Exhibit taking place at the Salem High School on December 18-19 from 7am to 3pm.

Deliberation and vote on the Memorandum of Agreement between the Salem School Committee and the School Administrator's Association

Discussion

Mr. Fleming requested a more detailed analysis of information that show rate of increase while the students were at the former Nathaniel Bowditch school. Ms. Campbell echoed Mr. Fleming's request.

Action Items: Old Business – None

Update on the Superintendent Search Process

Mayor Driscoll stated that the item on the agenda would not be ready until January as the timeline was changed due to a snow date. At the January meeting, the search committee will present a candidate profile that the School Committee will vote on. The search committee will use this profile as a framework to identify suitable candidates for Superintendent.

Action Items: New Business

Deliberation and Vote on the Memorandum of Agreement between the Salem School Committee and the School Administrator's Association

Ms. Manning moved this item. Ms. Wilson seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Request from the City of Salem Department of Public Works to install a fiberoptic network shelter on Salem High School Property

This item was taken out of order at the beginning of the meeting. It was referred to the Buildings and Grounds Subcommittee.

Policy Subcommittee

Deliberation and Vote on the First Reading of the recommendation of the Policy Subcommittee on the revisions to the following policies:

- 5102.03 Students Experiencing Homelessness
- 5204 Grading and Reports on Academic Progress
- 5206 Promotion, Retention, and Level Change
- 5207 Parent/Guardian Conferences
- 5208 Homework
- 5210 Home/Hospital Bound Instruction
- 5211 Home Schooling

Ms. Campbell motioned to approve the First Reading of the recommendation of the Policy Subcommittee on the revisions to the policies as listed on the agenda. Ms. Nuncio seconded the motion. The motion carried.

TO: KATHLEEN SMITH, SUPERINTENDENT
FROM: SAMANTHA MEIER, SALEM HIGH SCHOOL INTERIM PRINCIPAL
DATE: DECEMBER 18, 2019

RE: DELAYED ARRIVAL FOR ACCESS TESTING ON JANUARY 14 AND 15

I am requesting that January 14 and 15 be designated as delayed openings (three hour delay) for students not participating in ACCESS testing. This practice was inaugurated in the 2018-2019 school year and allowed our English Learners to complete ACCESS testing in two days utilizing the entire staff as proctors. This process can take up to a month if students are testing during the school day using only ESL teachers to proctor, resulting in significant amounts of missed instruction time for students and staff.

I appreciate your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Samantha J. Meier, Ed.D
Interim Principal, Salem High School



Superintendent Profile Report

**Compiled from Focus Group and On-line
Survey Responses**

**Salem Public Schools
Salem, Massachusetts**

January 2020

Edward J. Collins, Jr. Center for Public Management

McCORMACK GRADUATE SCHOOL OF POLICY AND GLOBAL STUDIES

Profile Introduction

The Collins Center, on behalf of the Salem School Committee, conducted eight (8) public focus groups and discussions to solicit input from various stakeholder groups within the school district and within the community to identify a desired profile of the next superintendent of Salem Public Schools. In addition, an on-line survey, containing the same questions posed to the focus group participants, was made available to the staff, students, families and public. The focus groups took place between November 18 and December 9, 2019; the on-line survey was open for respondents from November 13 to December 3. A schedule of the focus groups and the questions asked is included in the Appendix at the end of this report.

Gathering input from members of the broader school community plays an important role in the search process. The feedback and responses provide the basis for this profile representing the perspective of the school community. This profile informs the School Committee in their decision making, as well as the Screening Subcommittee in their work to identify finalists. Potential applicants will review this report as they learn more about the position. Finally, the findings provide the person selected for the role with rich information to develop his/her initial entry plan. Agreeing to participate in a focus group or complete the online survey also causes participants to reflect and think more deeply about the position and what is important for the next superintendent to be successful.

From the outset of this search, the Salem School Committee has made it clear they wanted an open and transparent search process. These focus groups are part of that process and are one of three ways staff, students, parents/guardians and community members may be involved in the selection process. The other two ways are: 1) being selected as a member of the Search Subcommittee, and 2) meeting each finalist at a community forum and providing written feedback to the School Committee prior to the final decision being made.

Note: The responses received from the survey and focus groups are aggregated and analyzed to ascertain themes and common perceptions across all groups. We do not report the information separately for each group. The Superintendent of Schools serves and leads all stakeholders. It is the common themes across all groups that form the profile of the Superintendent of the Salem Public Schools. We do not weight the responses of one group over another, nor do we place greater emphasis on groups that had more members participating in this process. Finally, the purpose of this process is to develop a candidate profile; it is not a community needs or satisfaction survey. These data do not support such a product.

On behalf of the School Committee, we thank everyone who participated in person or on-line in making this a meaningful process and in making these data and analysis rich and helpful.

Respectfully submitted,

Edward Gotgart, Ed.D.
John R. Brackett, Ed.D.
The Collins Center for Public Management
UMass Boston

Table 1. Number of Participants in the Focus Groups and Respondents to Online Survey

		Number of Participants			
		Focus Groups	Online	Online Espanol	Total
Stakeholder Groups	Parent/Guardian	37	84	1	122
	Faculty (On-line only)	XX	13		13
	Support Staff	1	3		4
	Elementary Faculty	0	XX		0
	Middle School Faculty	0	XX		0
	High School Faculty	2	XX		2
	Administrator	7	10	1	18
	Student	14	32		46
	Community Member	3	27		30
	Total	64	169	2	235

A. DESIRED CHARACTERISTICS OF NEXT SUPERINTENDENT

PRIORITY SUPERINTENDENT CHARACTERISTICS

As presented above, we received input and responses from 235 respondents. Nearly 73% of those came from the online survey. We also read the report to the School Committee presented by Dr. Paul Dakin where he interviewed 38 individuals using similar questions as we asked in the survey and focus group. As we analyzed these data, we found a strong, consistent and pervasive message: Salem Public Schools needs a strong educational leader who is an effective communicator and has demonstrated the ability to build a sense of community both within the district and between the district and the families/community. The challenges faced in the past year have had a dramatic impact on nearly every aspect of the district. (Note: the one exception to that might be the work being done around teaching and learning in the schools and across the district.) As we looked at the characteristics presented as priorities for the next successful superintendent of schools, they could be closely tracked to the most important issues facing the new superintendent from the perspective of the respondents. The following are the characteristics most frequently mentioned across all the responses received: The Superintendent must be:

1. A strong and effective communicator who is approachable and transparent.

Being a strong communicator was the characteristic mentioned as Critically Important or Very Important by over 95% of the respondents. This is not surprising given that the most frequently mentioned priority issue which the new superintendent must address (See Section B below.) is a perceived breakdown or lack of clear, honest, and trustworthy communication between the district and all stakeholders. As an example of the feedback received, one student mentioned that for him, communication means explaining why decisions are made or actions are taken. Another respondent stated communication means to “start to change the narrative/discourse of the Salem Public Schools and current successes and opportunities need to be highlighted and celebrated.” While communication may mean different things to different people and, it is also an elusive goal; the next superintendent must be able to demonstrate that he/she has the talent for, and commitment to putting into operation a system of communication that utilizes multiple modes, and which recognizes that various populations communicate differently. Being cognizant of working parents, parents whose first language is not English, or parents who may not have email is important. Frequent communication to staff about common challenges, plans and ways to effectively help students learn is vital. It is also important to connect with and communicate with students. The superintendent must seek out and use student input and perspectives. Finally, more than simply putting into place a district communication plan, effective and interpersonal communication (including listening) must be a core inherent aspect of the leader’s DNA. Several respondents mentioned the importance of the personal side of communication using terms like “interpersonal” or “talk with, not at” or “being approachable.”

Related to a strong communicator, respondents also desired a person with excellent verbal skills (85%), and excellent writing skills (67%)

2. A person of high integrity.

The second characteristic most frequently mentioned by respondents as Critically or Very Important was integrity (95%). Most are seeking an educational leader who demonstrates strong core values and is courageous (a descriptor also mentioned by the students). Our sense is that the stakeholders perceive the superintendent role as one for which they have high regard and place great confidence. In return, they want a person who is honest, upright, principled, and has a moral compass that is compassionate and includes all students, staff and families. One comment seemed to capture this trait well, “This will be a hard job. Even for the most qualified candidate. Honesty, integrity and involving the community are what will be required to gain trust.”

3. Able to collaborate and (re)build a district culture of trust and strong relationships.

The desire for this talent in the new superintendent may be the strongest message sent by all stakeholders. Across all stakeholder groups, a lack of trust was frequently mentioned, as well as fractured relationships within and among the identified stakeholder groups. The reasons or causes are many, and in some cases it was unknown or unexplainable. Nevertheless, staff report that morale is low (note that only 15 teachers attended a focus group or completed the online survey). One teacher indicated “there is a ‘bunker mentality’ and teachers support each other and their students but don’t feel listened to or valued by district administration.” In the Dakin Report, administrators expressed concern there was a “lack of team and that decisions were made without knowledge or their input.” Parents indicate that their trust and confidence in the district is low or nonexistent. However, they simultaneously report that is not the case for their child’s school or teachers. High School students have experienced dramatic change in leadership and amongst the faculty and ask “why?” Some

students, unaware of the interim status of the current superintendent, even lamented that this search process meant that they (SPS) were changing superintendents again. It was noted by many that the relationship between the school committee and superintendent (not including the current interim superintendent) was not collaborative or mutually supportive.

Over 92% of the respondents said that experience in building a district culture of trust and strong relationships was Critically or Very Important for the next superintendent to possess, and a similar 92% said the same about the need for the superintendent to be a collaborator and one who trusts and empowers others.

4. Able to create a clear vision for education and have experience in creating a district strategy of improvement.

While the stakeholders recognize there are significant “issues” that the district must address, they also desire that the next leader have a clear vision for the education of students (92%) and have had demonstrated experience in creating a longer-term district strategy of improvement. (39%). One participant in the parent focus group stated the next superintendent needed to be a person “who will learn, then plan, then act.” Some mentioned that a strategic plan had been created and many individuals invested in its development. Yet, beyond those involved in its creation, few knew what the plan included or that the plan even existed.

5. Able to demonstrate a strong background of valuing teachers and improving teaching and learning, including being an advocate for educational innovation in the classroom.

Almost 90% of the respondents stated having experience in improving teaching and learning was a Critically or Very Important characteristic of the next superintendent. Likewise, over 76% wanted an advocate for educational innovation in the classroom. As one parent stated, “I want someone who has a track record in building academic success. This will help build back people’s confidence in the district.”

6. Able to be visible and demonstrate an ability to actively engage families and the community.

Being visible in the classrooms and schools (79%), in the community (76%), and to students was also a highly desired characteristic. Several respondents indicated that parents and community members are not valued partners in the district, yet they also indicated that they felt their child’s school was welcoming and that they were involved there. As one thinks about the talents needed to meet this desired characteristic, it may be difficult to unpack the correlation between visibility and engagement from the talents cited in #1 above—a strong and effective communicator.

OTHER DESIRED PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

- 1. Experience in a Salem-like (Gateway City) District and previous experience as a district administrator.** When asked about the importance of prior central office experience or having experience in a Gateway City, slightly more than 50% of the respondents indicated these as Critically or Very Important. However, in focus groups, prior experience as a superintendent and having served in a Salem-like district/city was frequently mentioned as highly desirable or imperative to success. Please note: We think the wording “Central Office Experience” and “Gateway City” in the survey was unclear, which resulted in a lower rating. We did observe several online survey respondents who rated these traits lower, then offered a comment indicating prior superintendent experience was desired.
- 2. Prior Teaching Experience.** This was cited by nearly 80% of the respondents as desired and important when prompted to rate this trait on the online survey. Please Note: Interestingly, in focus groups here there were no prompts, this trait was seldom mentioned.

Table 2: Focus Groups and Online Survey Results.

The number of respondents represents the number of times the characteristic was mentioned as Critically Important or Very Important on the online survey and by a focus group participant.

Critically Important/Very Important Characteristics, Skills, Experience & Values	Number of Respondents
Strong Communication - approachable & transparent	163
Integrity	158
Collaboration - empowers & trusts	158
Clear vision for education of students	154
Experience in building a district culture of trust and strong relationships	147
Demonstrated Skills in Family and Community Engagement	145
Demonstrated background in valuing and improving teaching and learning	143
Excellent Verbal Skills	139
Teaching Experience	131
Visibility in the schools and classrooms	131
Visibility in the community and at community events	127
Advocacy for educational innovation in the classroom	125
Engagement of student voices	125
Knowledge of SpEd Laws and Regulations	124
Experience in Creating a District Strategy of Improvement	117
Knowledge of Massachusetts School Law	116
Excellent Writing Skills	109
Budget/Financial Experience	104
Familiarly with ELL/SEI	97
Central Office Experience	88
Experience in a Gateway City school district	85
Secondary Experience	81
School Administrator Experience	78
Elementary Experience	71
Courage and willingness to take risk	69
Bilingual	51

B. PRIORITY ISSUES THE NEW SUPERINTENDENT SHOULD ADDRESS IN THE FIRST 6-12 MONTHS

PRIORITY ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED

While several priority issues were mentioned, we have seldom seen such clear agreement on a narrow number of the most immediate needs requiring the new superintendent's attention. (See Table 3 below.) We have separated them into four (4) issues but there is significant overlap among them.

1. Communications.

As noted in the chart below, communication was the most frequently mentioned issue to be addressed. Often it was mentioned with just the single word "communications," others were more descriptive. This issue was a primary concern across each stakeholder group. One respondent implored, "Please, please have them be strong, inclusive and communicative right out of the gate." Another identified "Professional communication among staff." Other typical comments include: "Communication with families, students and teachers." "Good decisions in the past failed and received strong reaction from parents because of lack of communication." Finally, one respondent who had the opportunity to list his/her top 3 issues, said: "1. Communication. 2. Communication. 3. Communication."

2. Culture/Morale/Trust, improvement of relationships with, and amongst, staff, administrators, and school committee; and rebuilding parent trust and confidence in the district.

Communication is often a catch-all term for not feeling involved, valued, heard, or included. With that possibility, the most important and immediate task of the new superintendent, according to those who participated in the survey and focus groups, is rebuilding a culture of trust, confidence and sense of team within the district, rebuilding positive and professional relationships with school committee, staff and administrators, gaining the trust and confidence of the families and community, and empowering, conveying trust in, and understanding the need to boost the morale of all staff. Some talked about having a common purpose that everyone can own and relate around. Several respondents said, "we need a healer." Another wrote, "We need a superintendent who will provide a supportive and nurturing environment." A teacher stated, "Each time teachers are asked for their opinion, they have ultimately been ignored/dismissed.; while others added, "We're looking for someone we can trust," and, "We need someone who will build back the confidence in the district."

3. Stability and Retention.

Stability and retention are symptoms of the issues outlined in #2 above. Recently, teacher and administrator turnover has been nearly 20% in a given year. This makes gaining momentum around improvement initiatives nearly impossible. It also negatively impacts the ability to develop professional relationships and high performing work teams (both within the schools and districts, but with the families and communities as well.) One respondent shared, "Its difficult to have any enthusiasm due to the constant turmoil and changes." Turnover at the high rates experienced creates a feeling of instability in the leaders, schools and district. There are no exit interviews to substantiate why staff left the district, but anecdotes seem to suggest it is not monetary, but rather working conditions, and a lack of relationships and a shared common purpose. The same teacher as mentioned in #2 above, went on to say, "All of the this [a list of lack of support or responsiveness] leads to teacher burn out." Maybe this statement by a student best captures the essence of this issue, "As a student, I have endured changes in administration at Collins, then at the High School, and then the former superintendent. These were all hard and gave many people distrust in the school system as well as frustration. How can one feel they have a full (sic) community when such figures

disappear, and all the friendly faces start to go? Please consider finding a superintendent who can keep the community strong and stay a permanent figure in many of the kids' lives.”

4. Safety, discipline and student behavior.

This issue was the second most mentioned priority facing the new superintendent. The issue includes the social, emotional and mental health needs of students that manifest themselves in unsafe behaviors to themselves, other students and to staff. Appropriate and effective discipline and management within the classrooms and schools were also cited. Parents added their concern for the physical safety of students and staff from outside intruders. This issue crossed stakeholder groups. Students mentioned concerns with security at the middle school and high school and student behavior. Teachers cited the paucity of resources and support available to them to work with the growing social-emotional needs of students. One parent reported a concern about safety and student behavior based on perceptions gained from others in stating, “We are a family with kids in the elementary school and we have significant concerns with the.... apparent lack of discipline in the secondary education programs.” Finally, one parent expressed his extreme concern, (he used the term fear) about the safety of his children from outside threats. He mentioned the ease in which visitors enter the schools.

Note: Safety and the growing severe social and emotional needs of students is an issue that is facing all districts in Massachusetts; it is not unique to Salem.

OTHER FREQUENTLY MENTIONED IMPORTANT ISSUES

We cite the following issues because of the frequency they were mentioned and the fact that they were cited by each stakeholder group. We do not have enough evidence to comment further on them but highlight them as areas for further investigation.

- **Student attendance and tardiness**
- **The high school. It’s reputation and image, communicating its successes, and its staff and administration stability.**

Table 3: Priority Issues Which Must be Addressed in first 6-12 Months

	Priority Issues	Number of times cited
1	Communications	57
2	Safety/discipline/behavior	43
3	Culture/Morale/Trust	38
4	Build back relationship with staff and admin	30
5	Staff retention (teachers and administrators)	28
6	Vision and Plan	23
7	Parent Trust and Confidence	20
8	Academics -test scores, excellence, expectations, instruction	18
9	The HS and HS issues	16
10	Student attendance	12
11	PPS - SpEd - ELL	11
12	Pay	7
13	Stability	6
14	School Committee - Superintendent Relations	6

C. WHAT IS SPECIAL ABOUT SPS AND MUST BE PRESERVED

When asked what was special about Salem Public Schools and must be preserved, the responses centered around five (5) aspects of the schools and district. These are:

1. Diversity of the district and community, the feeling of inclusion
2. Staff – dedicated and caring
3. Opportunities in music, the arts, ROTC, CTE, STEM, Early College programs
4. A sense of community and caring and a concern for all students
5. Unique school identities, e.g. Saltonstall, and the innovation schools (Carlton, and Bentley in process)

D. CONCLUSION

We found all respondents and participants to be thoughtful, reflective and unwavering in their desire for the next superintendent to be successful. Each expressed disappointment with the recent, very public travails that the district has faced, while also sharing a belief that “things” can, and will, improve. While the total number (235) who participated in the process, as a proportion of the entire Salem Public Schools community, is quite small, the commonality of the message was profound. The confluence of thinking and opinions about what talents and skills the next superintendent needs to bring to the job, as well as the relatively narrow perspective of the issues needing immediate attention was unique and telling. Finally, it was not surprising that there is a crosswalk between the desired characteristics and the perceived high need issues. That is, when one examines the issues needing immediate attention, the desired characteristics of the next superintendent are closely related and would be integral to addressing those needs.

In summary, the profile of the next superintendent of the Salem Public Schools would describe an individual who is an experienced district leader with strong and clear core values which include integrity and commitment to the success of all students, is identified as an effective communicator, has demonstrated the ability to build a psychologically safe working environment, and can build a sense of community both within the district and between the district and the families/community.

Caution: This profile has been developed in December 2019. It reflects the current thinking, experience and perceptions of the participants. The next superintendent must clearly be able to address ‘today’ in order to be successful and reposition the Salem Public Schools for success. However, the ultimate hiring decision must reflect a longer-term view. Public education, especially in Gateway Cities, is challenging at best and educational, organizational, economic, political, human capital needs are always evolving. This requires a strong, dynamic, instructional leader who understands systems, possesses the core value of equity of opportunity for all and a vision for the path for all students’ future success. She/he must command respect (possess a gravitas) as a champion for public education and students and be able to help the district and community see the future. Hiring a superintendent with strong communication and “healing” talents is necessary, but not sufficient. Today’s issues will give way to tomorrow, and it’s imperative the next superintendent be a learner, and leader of learners and learning, and have clear, strong core values which guide his/her actions and decision making.

APPENDIX

Superintendent Search Focus Groups Schedule			
<i>Date</i>	<i>Group</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Location</i>
November 18, 2019	Elementary faculty and staff	3:00 pm	Salem High School
November 18, 2019	Parents/Community members	6:00 pm	Collins Middle School
November 19, 2019	High School Students	12:45 pm	Salem High School
November 19, 2019	High School faculty/staff	2:30 pm	Salem High School
November 19, 2019	Bentley and Middle School faculty/staff;	4:00 pm	Collins Middle School
November 21, 2019	District/School Administrators	4:15 pm	Collins Middle School
December 9, 2019	High School Students	6:00 pm	Salem High School
December 9, 2019	Parents/Community members	6:00 pm	Saltonstall School

Focus Group Questions

1. What are the personal characteristics, skills, background experiences, and core values that the next Salem Superintendent of Schools should possess?
2. What are the three (3) most important issues you believe the new Superintendent of Schools must address in the first 6-12 months in the position?
3. What are the strengths of the Salem Public Schools that must be preserved?
4. (On-line only) Other comments you would like to share that would inform the profile of a successful superintendent of Salem Public Schools?

Students and Instruction	5000
Attendance	5100
Enrollment – Salem Residents	5102
<u>Students Experiencing Homelessness</u>	5102.03

The Salem School Committee is committed to serving all students attending Salem Public Schools including students who are experiencing homelessness. Special attention will be given to ensuring the enrollment and attendance of homeless students not currently enrolled in any district or school. Students who are homeless as defined by the McKinney Vento Act will be provided district services for which they are eligible, including special education, bilingual education, vocational and technical education programs, and school nutrition programs.

I. Definition of Homelessness

Salem Public Schools recognizes that “homeless students” are those lacking a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence. This definition shall include children and youth who are:

1. Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reasons;
2. Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
3. Living in emergency or transitional shelters;
4. Abandoned in hospitals;
5. Living in public or private places not designed for or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodations for human beings;
6. Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations or similar settings; and/or
7. Migratory youth living in conditions described in the previous examples.

II. Designation of a Homeless Education Liaison

The Superintendent shall designate an appropriate staff person to be the district's liaison for students who are experiencing homelessness and their families. The Homeless Education Liaison will:

- Work directly with school staff to identify students who become homeless during the school year;
- Assist in all aspects of immediate school enrollment when needed;
- Arrange transportation in accordance with state regulations;
- Work with other district personnel to assure that the student has equal access to attend and participate in all school courses, activities, and events;

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Students and Instruction 5000

Attendance 5100

Enrollment – Salem Residents 5102

Students Experiencing Homelessness 5102.03

- Collaborate with local service providers and refer homeless families to these agencies for the purpose of providing assistance and support;
- Provide information, education and training around issues homelessness for school personnel; and

The district's liaison will also review and recommend amendments to district policies that may act as barriers to the enrollment of students experiencing homelessness.

III. School Selection

To the extent feasible, homeless students will continue to be enrolled in their school of origin while they remain homeless or until the end of the academic year in which they obtain permanent housing. Instead of remaining in the school of origin, parents or guardians of homeless students may request enrollment in the school in the attendance area in which the student is actually living. Attendance rights by living in attendance areas, other student assignment policies, or intra and inter-district choice options are available to homeless families on the same terms as all families enrolled in the district.

IV. Enrollment

Once the enrollment decision is made, the school shall immediately enroll the student, pursuant to district policies, even if the student does not have the documents usually required for enrollment, such as school records, medical records including current immunization records, or proof of residency. Students and families should be encouraged to obtain such records, and the district liaison will assist the student and family with that process.

Records from the student's previous school shall be requested from the previous school pursuant to district policies.

Emergency contact information is required at the time of enrollment consistent with district policies, including compliance with the state's address confidentiality program when necessary.

V. Transportation

Homeless students are entitled to transportation as specified in state and federal law as well as the Salem Public Schools Transportation Policy #3601.

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Students and Instruction 5000

Attendance 5100

Enrollment – Salem Residents 5102

Students Experiencing Homelessness 5102.03

VI. Dispute Resolution

If there is an enrollment dispute, the homeless student shall be immediately enrolled in the school in which the enrollment is sought, pending resolution of the dispute. Parents, guardians or unaccompanied youth shall be informed of the district’s decision and their right to appeal in writing. The Homeless Education Liaison will facilitate the dispute resolution and appeal process. The final decision in such a situation resides with the Massachusetts Commissioner of Education.

LEGAL REF.: McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act of 2001, as reauthorized under the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA)

42 U.S.C. § 11431 et seq.

Approved: November 3, 2014

Reviewed and referred by the Policy Subcommittee on 12/10/19
First reading on 12/16/19

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The school of origin is in Salem but the homeless student is temporarily living in a different district, and the distance does not exceed one hour for those in Grades 1-12 or 45 minutes for those in Kindergarten.¶

The school of origin is in a different district but the homeless student is temporarily living in Salem, and the distance does not exceed one hour for Grades 1-12 or 45 minutes for Kindergarten.¶

The homeless student is temporarily residing within the district; in such instance transportation is provided per the Salem Public Schools’ eligibility guidelines for transportation¶

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Second Reading: October 20, 2014¶

STUDENTS AND INSTRUCTION 5000

INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM 5200

GRADING AND REPORTS ON ACADEMIC PROGRESS 5204

The Salem School Committee recognizes the responsibility of the district and schools to provide regular reports of student progress and grades. The School Committee further recognizes that these reports are a vital form of communication between the schools and parents/guardians. The School Committee also believes that all report cards and progress reports must be based upon full information, accurately and honestly report student progress toward learning goals, and maintain confidentiality.

A report depicting the student's progress will be issued periodically following an evaluation by the appropriate teacher, teachers, or other professional personnel.

Each school in the district will issue at minimum three report annually with the first being issued no later than mid-December.

The regularly scheduled conferences shall be held in December and in March after report cards have been issued and distributed to parents/guardians.

In addition to the report cards and progress reports, parents/guardians will be notified when a student's performance requires a special notification.

Major changes in the reporting system shall be preceded by a cooperative study and evaluation by representative teachers, school leaders, parents/guardians, and the Superintendent or his/her designee, who will submit the proposal to the School Committee for consideration and approval.

Approved November 16, 2015

Reviewed and referred by the Policy Subcommittee on 12/10/19
First reading on 12/16/19

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STUDENTS AND INSTRUCTION 5000

INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM 5200

PROMOTION/RETENTION/LEVEL CHANGE 5206

It is the policy of the Salem School Committee that in general, students shall be placed at the grade level to which they are best adjusted academically, socially, and emotionally. The educational program shall provide for the continuous progress from grade to grade, with students generally spending one year in each grade. There are times, however, when a student may benefit from taking more time in the same grade.

Parents will be notified about the possibility of retention through the parent/teacher conference. Before any final recommendation is made, parents will be engaged in a collaborative dialogue concerning advantages and disadvantages of the retention through the Student Support Team process. After this consultation, the Principal will make the final decision.

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The decision to retain is based on a combination of the student's daily performance, assessment data, and developmental growth as determined by the school team which will include at minimum the classroom teacher, instructional specialists (e.g. School Adjustment Counselor, Special Education Teacher, ESL Teacher, etc.), and the principal.

For any student who is retained, careful consideration will be given to what will change in the upcoming school year and what supports will be in place to address and monitor particular areas of concern.

Approved: October 19, 2015

Reviewed referred by the Policy Subcommittee on 12/10/19

First reading on 12/16/19

STUDENTS AND INSTRUCTION 5000

INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM 5200

PARENT/GUARDIAN CONFERENCES 5207

Parent/guardian and teacher conferences are held on a periodic basis as scheduled by each individual school principal. Individual conferences with teachers or the principal are available by request. The frequency of conferences shall be set in accordance with the current Collective Bargaining Agreement.

The intent of parent/guardian-teacher conferences is to share information about a student's progress in school and to partner on supporting future growth and development.

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▼ Approved October 15, 2015 Deleted: First Reading of Revision: September 8, 2015¶
Second Reading of Revision: September 21, 2015¶
Third Reading of Revision – October 5, 2015

Reviewed and referred by the Policy Subcommittee on 12/10/19
First reading 12/16/19

STUDENTS AND INSTRUCTION **5000**

INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM **5200**

HOMEWORK **5208**

The School Committee believes in the value of assigning work for students to complete outside of the classroom for the purpose of practicing skills, applying knowledge and expanding understanding. The Superintendent and school leaders will establish specific guidelines and expectations for teachers, families and students to ensure that homework supports student learning.

Legal Reference: MGL 76:5; 76:16 (Chapter 622 of the Acts of 1971)
Title VI, Civil Rights Act of 1964
Title VII, Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended by the
Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972
Executive Order 11246, as amended by Executive Order 11375
Title IX, Education Amendments of 1972
Board of Education, Chapter 622 Regulations Pertaining to Access to
E.E.O. adopted June 24, 1975, amended October 24, 1978

Approved: 1/9/06
Approved: January 2016

Reviewed and referred by the Policy Subcommittee on 12/10/19,
First reading 12/16/19

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STUDENTS AND INSTRUCTION 5000

INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM 5200

HOME / HOSPITAL BOUND INSTRUCTION 5210

In accordance with 603 CMR 28.03(3)(c), the Salem Public Schools provides an instructional program for any student who, in the judgment of the student's physician, will have to remain at home or in a hospital for medical reasons for a period of not less than fourteen days. Upon receipt of a physician's written order verifying that any student enrolled in the district or placed by the public school in a private setting must remain at home or in a hospital on a day or overnight basis, or any combination of both, for medical reasons and for a period of not less than fourteen school days in any school year, the principal shall arrange for provision of educational services in the home or hospital. Such services shall be provided with sufficient frequency to allow the student to continue his or her educational program, as long as such services do not interfere with the medical needs of the student. The principal shall coordinate such services with the Administrator of Special Education for eligible students. Such educational services shall not be considered special education unless the student has been determined eligible for such services, and the services include services on the student's IEP.

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A Home or Hospital Program is an extension of the school program in which the student is enrolled. The content of the program is the same as that of the class in which the students is enrolled. The home instructor coordinates the program with the teacher of the class that the student would be attending. The home instructor assists the student in maintaining effective progress in school subjects, and the classroom teacher assigns the actual grades. The Principal will ensure services are delivered in accordance with policy and monitor until student is able to return to school

Approved: November 2, 2015

Legal References: 603 CMR 28.00

Reviewed and referred by the Policy Subcommittee on 12/10/19
First reading 12/16/19

STUDENTS AND INSTRUCTION

5000

INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

5200

HOME SCHOOLING

5211

In accordance with the Laws of Massachusetts, Chapter 76, Sections 1, 2, and 4 the Salem Public Schools have established the following procedure relative to home schooling:

Prior to the academic year, the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) must file a written educational plan requesting home schooling. The plan should include the following: parents' names and address, student's name and grade for the upcoming school year, and the educational plan. The educational plan must be a written application, which includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- a) the course of study,
- b) the curriculum to be utilized, and
- c) the academic qualifications of the instructors;

The application is forwarded to the superintendent or assistant superintendent for approval;

Following receipt of the parents' written plan, a meeting may be scheduled with an administrator to discuss the educational plan and other related issues as they pertain to the competency of the individuals who will be serving as instructors, the curriculum to be utilized, the number of hours and days of instruction, and the proposed evaluation of the student's progress;

The Superintendent or designee shall develop a procedure to determine the process and extent to which home-schooled students may participate in a course offering or extra-curricular activity.

Following approval, the parent(s) or guardian(s) will receive a letter of approval for home schooling from the district administrator;

This procedure must be followed whether submitting an initial request for home schooling or the request is to continue home schooling for an additional year.

For pertinent information, refer to DESE guidelines.

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STUDENTS AND INSTRUCTION	5000
<u>INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM</u>	5200
HOME SCHOOLING	5211

PARTICIPATION IN INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETICS

The MIAA will permit a home-educated student to participate in interscholastic athletics if the following conditions are met:

- a) The local School Committee of a MIAA public school member institution must approve participation of home-educated students on the local high school team. The local building principal must indicate such on the annual MIAA membership form and include all home schoolers in the annual MIAA enrollment report
- b) The Superintendent or designee has approved the educational plan for the home-educated student;
- c) The principal has determined appropriate high school grade level placement (9-12) for the home-educated student in conjunction with chronological age and educational plan;
- d) The student must reside in the school district that serves the high school and must be living with his/her parents or legal guardians in the family residence;
- e) The parents of the home-educated student must submit a written request prior to the start of the academic year to the principal of the member school requesting approval for their son/daughter to participate in interscholastic athletics;
- f) The principal must be satisfied that the student meets the guidelines for athletic participation required for all other students as defined in the current MIAA blue book. This should include, but not be limited to, those rules governing transfers, academic eligibility, age requirements, and the number of consecutive seasons of athletic eligibility beyond grade 8.

Legal References: MGL 76: 1; 76:2; 76:4; 119:24
Care and Protection of Charles, 399 Mass. 324 (1987)

Approved: October 5, 2015

Reviewed and referred by the Policy Subcommittee on 12/10/19
First reading 12/16/19

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