Salem School Committee

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, October 5, 2015

A regular meeting of the Salem School Committee was held on Monday, October 5, 2015 at 7:30 p.m. in the School Committee Chambers at Collins Middle School, 29 Highland Avenue, Salem, MA.

**Members Present**: Mayor Kimberley Driscoll, Ms. Deborah Amaral, Mr. Nate Bryant, Mr. James Fleming, Ms. Rachel Hunt, Mr. Patrick Schultz, and Dr. Brendan Walsh

**Members Absent:** None

**Others Present**: Ms. Margarita Ruiz, Superintendent, Kate Carbone, Assistant Superintendent, Margaret Marotta, Assistant Superintendent, Business Manager Philip Littlehale, Director of Operations Strategies Jill Conrad and Eileen Sacco, Secretary,

**Call to Order**

Ms. Hunt called the Regular Meeting of the Salem School Committee to order at 7:30 p.m.

**Approval of the Agenda**

Mr. Fleming moved to approve the agenda as presented. Ms. Amaral seconded the motion. The motion carried.

**Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of the Regular School Committee meeting held on Monday, September 21, 2015 were presented for approval.

Mr. Fleming moved approval. Mr. Bryant seconded the motion. The motion carried.

**Questions and Comments from the Audience**

There were no questions or comments from the audience.

**Superintendent’s Report**

**Student and School Highlights**

Superintendent Ruiz congratulated all of the schools, students and parents who participated in the annual Salem Halloween Parade that was held on October 1, 2015.

Superintendent Ruiz reported that during the last two weeks she has visited all of the Salem Public Schools and stated that she was excited to see how are schools are operating and how our students are doing. She noted that she enjoyed seeing the Early Childhood Center and the students at the Horace Mann, Nathaniel Bowditch, Saltonstall and the New Liberty Charter School.

Ms. Ruiz reported that she will be making a presentation on the 2015 MCAS results for the Salem Public Schools this evening.

Ms. Ruiz reported that the Accelerated Improvement Plan (AIP) for the Salem Public Schools has been approved by DESE and it will continue to drive our education in the Salem Public Schools.

Ms. Ruiz noted that the School Committee held a retreat in July and worked on prioritizing work for the 2015-16 school year. She reported that she has prepared an update on that work to the School Committee in their packets for the meeting.

Ms. Ruiz reported that she has created a survey portal online at Survey Monkey for members of the community who have been unable to attend her community forums in person to be able to provide feedback to her on our schools.

**MCAS Data Overview - 2015**

Ms. Ruiz made a presentation on the 2015 MCAS scores for the Salem Public Schools. She reported on the following regarding the MCAS:

**District Improvement Highlights**

**SPG – Student Growth Percentile**

**CPI – Composite Performance Index**

MATH – Proficient / Advanced - increased by 5% - higher than any other year since 2012

 Warning – decreased by 5% from last year

 SGP increased by 10 points from 43 to 53 – highest since 2012

 CPI increased from 67.5 to 71.8 – highest since 2012

ELA – Proficient / Advanced – increased by 3%

 Warning – decreased by 2%

 SPG in ELA increased from 45-50 – the highest since 2012

 CPI increased from 76.1 to 77.9 – highest since 2012

Ms. Ruiz reported that the district has shown steady gains in Math and ELA in the last four years. She also noted that there have been growth in our Sub Groups data as well.

Ms. Ruiz reported that our English Language Learners showed growth as follows:

MATH – SGP increased from 49-54

 CPI increased from 41.4 to 47.9

ELA SGP increased from 53-54

 CPI increased from 46.9 to 51.8

Ms. Ruiz reported that there is good news at the school level and reported the following:

**Bates Elementary School** – Increased SGP in ELA from 30.5 to 52 and Math 60%to 68%

Increased in Proficient/Advanced in ELA from 41% to 52%

**Bentley School –** Increased SGP in Math from 65%-69% - considered a high growth rate and between 2012 and 2015 have reduced by half the number of students in the warning category in Math from 34% to 15%.

**Nathaniel Bowditch School** – Increased the CPI from 63.1 to 65.2

 Increased the SGP for ELL and ELA from 42.5 to56.2

**Carlton School** – Between 2012 and 2015 ELA CPI Increased 70.5 to 81.6 and the Math CPI increased

 62.5 to 82.8. The Carlton School has also decreased by 50% or more the number of

 Students in the warning category in both Math and ELA.

**Collins Middle School** – Increased Math CPI from 60.2 to 69.6 and doubled the percentage of students

 in the advanced category 11% to 21%. They also increased ELA SGP 37-49

 and ELL 55-64.5

**Horace Mann Lab School** – Increased ELA CPI 67.2 to 76.6 to 72.6

 Increased ELA SGP 37-49 and Math from 28-56.5

**Saltonstall School** – Performance has been consistent in 2014 and 2015 and notes that there

 was very little change in CPI. ELA 80.3 to 80.3 and Math 73.7 to 73.

 ELL Math CPI increased from 40-60.4

**Witchcraft Heights** –63% of students scored proficient/advanced in ELA – the highest in the past

 four years. Math CPI 86.2- above the district and the state averages

**Salem High School** –Increased the percentage of students in Advanced Math 31% to 44%

 Increased the percentage of students in Advanced ELA 24% to 41%

 Increased SGP for SWD in Math 39 to 70.5

Ms. Ruiz explained that we still have challenges to address and notes that the percentage of students scoring “needs improvement” has remained flat in the last four years and notes that we need to focus on instructional rigor in ELA, Math and Science. She notes that students in this category can be moved fairly quickly to “proficient/advanced with effective, rigorous instruction.

Ms. Ruiz stated that the District CPI for ELA and Math are at the highest levels in 4 years, however we are still performing lower that the state average. She also stated that some schools have SGP below 50 and are not on track to increase student growth at a rapid rate. She further notes that there are achievement gaps in our subgroups in ELA, Math and Science. She explains that our state accountability model is based on growth and performance of all subgroups in our district and we must meet sub group targets in order to increase accountability levels at schools and the district.

Ms. Ruiz explained that our hope and focus for the 2015-16 school year is that the Accelerated Improvement Plan is focused on high leverage practices and the focus will be on rigor, meeting the needs of diverse learners and effective school structures. She notes that AIP work will accelerate improvements in student performance aggregate and in subgroups.

Ms. Ruiz stated that the Bentley School is already showing good gains and they are in their first full year of charter focus in grade K-5. She also noted that the Bowditch School has new leadership with a focus on rigor and achievement and Salem Public Schools/Salem Teachers Union transformative efforts continue.

Ms. Ruiz reported that the district is providing support for school leadership and is working with school leaders to dig deeper into the data and implement the AIP initiatives. She also noted that they are working to provide teachers with professional development to increase their capacity to meet needs of all learners in their classroom.

Mr. Fleming stated that this was an excellent report noting that it was a well-balanced presentation and he feels that the School Committee should be made aware of the successes and the failures of the district and this presentation provided that.

Mr. Schultz stated that he likes the structure and support that is planned for the staff and how the schools organize their time. Ms. Ruiz stated that common planning time will allow teaches to plan together.

Mayor Driscoll stated that she is pleased that we have seen some real gains and notes that we are starting to reap the rewards of the hard work that has gone into this. She states that she is excited about the future.

Ms. Ruiz stated that they are working hard to have a higher collaboration and culture in our schools and notes that focusing on gaps and lifting the spirits of students and staff things should go well.

**Review of Initiatives and Priorities for the 2015-16 School Year**

Ms. Ruiz made a presentation to the School Committee on the priorities identified at the School Committee Retreat held in July. She updated the School Committee on initiatives that are well underway and the implementation of them and explained her proposed work plan.

Ms. Ruiz reported that her 100 day listening campaign is continuing noting she has held 11 forums and has provided an online survey for residents. She also explained her 2015-16 Superintendent Initiatives as follows:

**Creating a Culture of Learning and Collaboration Innovation by:**

* Primary frame for all of the work
* Creating new structures and opportunities for openness and collaboration
* Improve collaboration with Horace Mann Charter Schools
* Continue efforts to foster culture of innovation

**Initiate Long Term Strategic Plan for the Future of the Salem Public Schools**

* To begin in January 2016 based on entry plan findings

**Update Critical Documents and Resources**

* Update emergency preparedness procedures manual

Ms. Ruiz explained the 2015-16 Academic Initiatives as follows:

**Recruiting and Supporting School Leaders**

* New School Leaders hired for Nathaniel Bowditch, Saltonstall, and Horace Mann (interim)
* Targeted and ongoing support for all school leaders

**AIP Objectives and Priorities**

* Focus on structures
* Meeting the needs of diverse learners
* Instruction aligned with CCSS rigor

Ms. Ruiz reported that the AIP objectives are creating cohesion and notes the Summer Institute held for the Leadership Team, professional development for teachers and instructional rounds and professional development for Principals.

Ms. Ruiz explained that they will be focusing on:

**Continue Improving Educator Evaluation and Teacher Leadership**

* Increased training and supports
* Teacher Leadership initiative and ongoing support

**Ensure Teacher Qualifications and Licensure**

* Endure Salem Teachers obtain SEI endorsement by June of 2016 (Salem is a Cohort #1 district)

**Respond to CPR Findings**

* Ensure responses (Special Education, Civil Rights, and Vocational Education etc.)

Ms. Ruiz reviewed the 2015-16 Operational Initiatives that are proposed for Human Resources, Budget and Finance, and Engagement. She also reviewed the priority initiatives that are well underway for this year as follows:

* AIP Objectives and Priorities
* Ongoing Support for School Teachers
* Contract Negotiation
* Strategic Improvements in Human Resources
* Strategic Process for 2016-17 budget
* New SIS System
* Planning for the Future of the New Liberty Charter School
* CPR Corrective action steps
* SEI endorsement for teachers

Ms. Ruiz reviewed the Initiatives that are Gearing Up for 2015-16 as follows:

* Teacher engagement strategy
* Wrap up of Listen and Learn Campaign and process for long term strategic planning
* Strengthen data capacity and strategy
* Evaluation of Student Assignment Policy in preparation for Year 5
* Parent/Community engagement strategy

**Finance Report**

1. **Approval of Warrants**

September 27, 2015 in the amount of $341,726.89

October 1, 3025 in the amount of $566,850.87

Mr. Fleming moved to approve the warrant as submitted. Dr. Walsh seconded the motion. The motion carried.

1. **Budget Transfer Requests –** There were no budget transfer requests.

**Action Items**

1. Deliberation on the appointment of Dr. Brendan Walsh as the Salem School Committee delegate to the MASC Annual Meeting on November 4, 2015

Mr. Fleming moved approval. Ms. Amaral seconded the motion. The motion carried.

1. Deliberation on the approval of the Salem High School Culinary Arts Field Trip to Johnson and Wales on December 3, 2015

Mr. Fleming moved approval. Dr. Walsh seconded the motion. The motion carried.

1. Deliberation on the recommendation on Salem High School Athletic Fees and Student Activities Fees

Ms. Amaral moved to suspend the Athletic and Student Activities Fees at Salem High School for the current school year (2015-16). Mr. Fleming seconded the motion. The motion carried.

1. Deliberation on the clarification of policy 4119 ADDA Backgrounds Check (tabled 9/21/15)

Ms. Hunt explained that the policy has been revised for clarification regarding finger printing for anyone who has direct, unsupervised contact with children, noting that more details were added.

Ms. Hunt moved approval, Ms. Amaral seconded the motion. The motion carried.

1. Deliberation on the approval of the **First** reading of the recommended revision to the policies reviewed by the Policy Subcommittee in the 5000 Section of the Policy Manual

5210 Homebound Instruction

5214 Waiver of Graduation Requirements

5416 Use of Physical Restraint

Mr. Bryant moved approval. Ms. Hunt seconded the motion. The motion carried.

**Policies Recommended for Deletion**

5209 Extra Help – recommended for deletion

5401.01 Prohibition of Bullying and Cyber Bullying - recommended for deletion- duplicate policy

Dr. Walsh moved approval. Mr. Bryant seconded the motion. The motion carried.

1. Deliberation on the **Second** reading of the recommended revisions to the policies reviewed by the Policy Subcommittee in the 5000 Section of the Policy Manual:

5204 Student Progress Reports

5206 Promotion and Retention

5213 Field Trips and Excursions

5806 Student Observations

Ms. Hunt moved approval, seconded by Mr. Bryant. The motion carried.

Ms. Amaral requested that the School Committee look at transportation of students by teachers in their private vehicles with regards to the policy 5213 Field Trips and Excursions.

1. Deliberation on the **Third** and final reading of the recommended revisions to the policies reviewed by the Policy Subcommittee in the 5000 Section of the Policy Manual

5102 Enrollment of Salem Residents

5102.01 Enrollment of Non Resident Students/School Choice

5103.01 Student Assignment to Vocational Technical Programs

5103.02 Student Assignment for Transfer Students

5105 Pledge of Allegiance

5109 Emergency Closings

5114 Participation in Activities during Absence or Suspension

5115 Dismissal at Parent Request

5207 Parent Conferences

5212.01 Equal Access

Mr. Schultz suggested additional language to the policy 5212.01 Equal Access to include language “socio-economic status” to the list of protected statuses.

Mr. Fleming moved approval. Ms. Amaral seconded the motion. The motion carried.

**Subcommittee Reports**

**Policy Subcommittee**

Ms. Hunt reported that the Policy Subcommittee continues to meet on the review of the 5000 and 6000 policy series

**Personnel Subcommittee**

Mr. Fleming reported that the Personnel Subcommittee is continuing with negotiations with the Salem Teachers Union.

**Finance Subcommittee**

Ms. Amaral reported that the Finance Subcommittee met and reviewed the matter of the request for the 4th grade teacher at the Bates School. She reported that Ms. Ruiz was to check with the Principal on the status of the request. Ms. Ruiz reported that the principal has indicated that the teacher is not needed at this time.

**Committee of the Whole**

Ms. Hunt reported that the School Committee met this evening in a Committee of the Whole meeting to receive and update on the Student Assignment policy. She noted that the policy is in its fourth year and as we move into year five the School Committee is preparing to evaluate the policy regarding the equity goals and school choice. She explained that they looked at the data provided and some additional information provided. She notes that this is beginning of the process and there is a timeline for the process which will include a task for this spring. She notes that the Policy Subcommittee will be looking at this at their next meeting.

**School Committee Concerns and Resolutions**

Mr. Bryant thanked the teachers and leadership team for all of their hard work on the MCAS. He noted that the district still has a ways to go but we are making some progress and he is pleased to see that.

Dr. Walsh reported that Dennis and Patty LeVasseur hosted their annual golf tournament and they split the money raised between the Salem Children’s Charity and to the Salem Public Schools for the PBIS program.

Mayor Driscoll reported that the Bertram Field Committee has been meeting and have identified an Architect for the design of Phase II of the Bertram Field Renovations. She reported that they will be looking at the design of the concession stand, bleachers and other items that need to be addressed at the field.

Mayor Driscoll also reported that the Joint Facilities Review Team has been meeting and evaluating the space that we have and the needs and will be looking at recommendations to move forward.

**Questions and Comments from the Audience Regarding the September 21, 2015 Agenda**

Kate Casiglia of 44 Chestnut Street addressed the School Committee and thanked the Superintendent for the thoughtful presentation on the MCAS scores. She also stated that she appreciates the accessibility of the School Committee meeting materials.

**Adjournment**

There being no further business to come before the School Committee this evening, Mr. Fleming moved that the School Committee adjourn the meeting. Ms. Amaral seconded the motion. The motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

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Eileen M. Sacco, Secretary

Salem School Committee

**Approved: October 19, 2015**

**Meeting Materials and Reports**

Minutes of Regular School Committee Meeting October 5, 2015

School Committee Agenda October 5, 2015

PowerPoint Presentation on MCAS Scores

PowerPoint Presentation on Initiatives and Priorities for 2015-16

5102 Enrollment of Salem Residents

5102.01 Enrollment of Non Resident Students/School Choice

5103.01 Student Assignment to Vocational Technical Programs

5103.02 Student Assignment for Transfer Students

5105 Pledge of Allegiance

5109 Emergency Closings

5114 Participation in Activities during Absence or Suspension

5115 Dismissal at Parent Request

5207 Parent Conferences

5210 Homebound Instruction

5211 Home Schooling

5212.01 Equal Access

5204 Student Progress Reports

5206 Promotion and Retention

5213 Field Trips and Excursions

5214 Waiver of Graduation Requirements

5416 Use of Physical Restraint

5806 Student Observations

Materials Regarding Complaint Filed by Ms. Kayla Kirkpatrick