Salem School Committee

Retreat Minutes

Monday, July 11, 2015

The Salem School Committee held a retreat on Saturday, July 11, 2015 at Marsh Hall at Salem State University, Loring Avenue, Salem, MA.

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

**Members Absent:** Mr. Nate Bryant

**Others Present**: Ms. Margarita Ruiz, Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Jill Conrad, Chief of Operations Strategies and Eileen Sacco, Secretary

Dr. Conrad facilitated the retreat reviewed the goals for the retreat.

* Develop a shared vision for effective governance and management
* Establish norms of communication, interactions (e.g., meetings), and decision-making
* Identify top reform priorities for the year
* Begin development of strategic plans focused on each priorities
* Review of SPS mission and core principles (will be posted on the wall)

**Effective Governance & Management: Roles of the School Committee & Superintendent**

What is effective school committee governance? What does it look like in a district that needs to accelerate improvement?

What is effective school district management? What does it look like in a district that needs to accelerate improvement?

Brief overview and presentation

Think, Pair, Share Activity

* *PAIR: Find a partner to work with*
* *THINK: Spend approximately 5 minutes re-reading/reviewing the pre-reading material and reflecting individually on the below questions.* 
  + *What does effective governance look like to you? What does effective district management look like?*
  + *What are one or two examples of a time when you have you have experienced effective governance as a member of the Salem School Committee? How about effective district management?*
  + *How did the pre-reading material influence your thinking about effective school committee governance?*
  + *What are your aspirations for ensuring effective governance for the Salem School Committee?*
* *SHARE: When you’re ready, discuss your thoughts on the above questions with your partner. Work toward consensus, if possible. Record the responses where you have the most agreement (making note on any areas where you disagree).*

Report Out and Whole Group Discussion

**From the Field: A Governance Framework to Accelerate Improvements in SPS**

* *For each dimension, what strategies and practices of effective communications/process (currently in place) do you value or appreciate?*
* *What are your concerns about the communications dynamics in each of these dimensions?*
* *What are your recommendations to improve communications in each of these 3 areas?*

Report Out and Whole Group Discussion

**2015-16 (Draft) Reform Priorities for Salem Public Schools**

Presentation by Margarita Ruiz

Whole group discussion on priorities

**Developing a Strategic Plan based on the Draft Reform Priorities (Workshop Part 1)** (

Group A: Priorities #1 and #4

Group B: Priorities #2 and #3

Members will join one of two groups (Group A or Group B). For each priority, please identify and record:

* *Any feedback or deeper insights related to the priority*
* *Any questions you might have about this priority (or more information needed to better understand it)*
* *Suggested goals for the year*
* *Suggested strategies, initiatives, areas of work, and tasks*
* *Extra credit (if time): Possible measures of success (how will we know if we’ve reached our goals for this priority)?*

**Developing a Strategic Plan based on the Draft Reform Priorities (Workshop Part 2)**

Group A: Priorities #2 and #3

Group B: Priorities #1 and #4

Follow the same process as above, with the below additions:

* Review what the previous group has written
* Put a check mark ✓ next to any item written by the previous group that your group likes/agrees with
* Put a question mark **?** next to anything you have questions about
* Add any additional content or suggestions that your group wishes to add

**Report Out and Whole Group Discussion**

Summarize the highlights (e.g., areas of agreement) for each priority

Group discussion

Member priorities: Each member identifies her/his top 3 priorities using dot voting method

**Wrap up and Next Steps**

Discuss next steps and follow-up items

Reflection and closure

**Working Well Together: Ensuring Effective Communication, Decision-making, and Processes**

*Review and discuss guiding principles and examples from the field*

*Co-construction of a framework/model for SPS*

Brief overview and presentation

Small group activity

* *There are 3 Dimensions of effective communication: 1) Superintendent to Board; 2) Board to Board; and 3) Board to Superintendent*

The meeting was adjourned at 2:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

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Eileen M. Sacco, Secretary to the

Salem School Committee

**Meeting Materials and Reports**

**Pre-Reading**: Chapter 1: Why Boards Must Lead in McAdams, Donald R. (2006). *What school boards can do: Reform governance for urban schools*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press, pp. 5-12.