

**Salem Public Schools  
Salem School Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
February 26, 2024**

On February 26, 2024 the Salem School Committee held its regular School Committee meeting at 7:00 PM using a hybrid model.

**Members Present:** Mayor Dominick Pangallo, Ms. Mary Manning, Mr. Manny Cruz, Ms. Beth Anne Cornell, Ms. Veronica Miranda, and AJ Hoffman

**Others in Attendance:** Superintendent Stephen Zrike, Ms. Elizabeth Pauley, Ms. Ellen Wingard, Ms. Mia Riccio, Ms. Tirza Espinal, Dr. Kimberly Talbot, Mr. Marc LeBlanc, Ms. Laura Assade, Ms. Jennifer Doucette-Ly, Mr. Christopher O’Donnell, Principal Camah, and Ms. Holly O’Leary

**Call of Meeting to Order**

Mayor Pangallo calls the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and requests a call of attendance. He explained the Public Participation Policy 6409 and also explained the availability of Spanish interpretation.

**Attendance**

Mayor Pangallo recognizes the attendance with members. Mr. Cruz motions for approval and seconded by Ms. Cornell.

Ms. Campbell	Not Present
Ms. Cornell	Present
Mr. Cruz	Present
Ms. Manning	Present
AJ Hoffman	Present
Ms. Miranda	Present
Mayor Pangallo	Present

**Moment of Silence**

Ms. Cornell requests a moment of silence for former School Committee member Carl Petersen who was also a friend and colleague of Ms. Cornell’s. She notes he served on the Salem School Committee for 28 years. Mr. Petersen also served in NAFC and other leadership service positions in and out of Salem, MA.

AJ Hoffman also requests a moment of silence for a recent loss. Member Hoffman states it is time to take a look at crisis prevention more closely. We need voices to speak up and we as a body are responsible for our words and actions. Member Hoffman is asking for committee members to speak up with their voices and help our children in our community.

**Approval of Agenda**

Mayor Pangallo requested a motion to approve the Agenda. Mr. Cruz motions for approval and seconded by Ms. Cornell . A roll call vote is taken.

Mr. Cruz	Yes
Ms. Manning	Yes
Ms. Cornell	Yes
Ms. Miranda	Yes
AJ Hoffman	Yes
Mayor Pangallo	Yes

Motion Carries 6-0

### **Approval of Consent Agenda**

Ms. Miranda notes that it was brought to her attention that the February 5, 2024 School Committee meeting minutes did not reflect the approved changes of the FY 24-25 School Calendars. Ms. Miranda asked if those changes could be reflected in the Feb 5th meeting minutes. Mayor Pangallo notes he will table the approval of these minutes until the March 4th School Committee meeting.

Mayor Pangallo requested a motion to take the February 5th minutes out of the Consent Agenda. Mr. Cruz motions for approval of only items B and C in the Consent Agenda and seconded by Ms. Cornell . A roll call vote is taken.

Mr. Cruz	Yes
Ms. Manning	Yes
Ms. Cornell	Yes
Ms. Miranda	Yes
AJ Hoffman	Yes
Mayor Pangallo	Yes

Motion Carries 6-0

### **Public Comment**

The School Committee Secretary announced that there were no public comments.

### **Superintendent's Report**

- A. Superintendent's Evaluation (Strategy 2.3)
- B. New Liberty Program of Study (Strategy 1.4)
- C. Chronic Absenteeism discussion (Strategy 3.2)

Dr. Zrike notes this evening we will start with a presentation from New Liberty Innovation School. Principal Camah and Ms. Holly O'Leary presented the New Liberty Program of Study. Principal Camah begins to explain the "why" competency-based education at New Liberty. This ensures that every student has a strong foundation of knowledge and skills to build on as they progress through school and prepare for life after graduation. The "what" is the course offerings and pathways. Students demonstrating what they know and the skills that they require.

Portfolios separate our 9th, 10th, and 11th graders and the mastery is defined as demonstrating

proficiency of a skill multiple times in multiple ways. A student must complete all evidence requirements in a portfolio with high enough ratings to reach the minimum performance level required to complete their portfolio.

Ms. O'Leary notes we developed Curriculum frameworks along with competencies and skills the students work with. The New Liberty requirements are competency, skills, and learning to observe our students' growth and pathway to graduation.

Mr. Cruz asks if there will be an evaluation of the 9 school districts.

Ms. O'Leary notes the school system grants and focuses on entrance ways for each student to clear a pathway towards their goal of graduating.

Principal Camah notes New Liberty is hosting their 2nd Annual Basketball Fundraiser. We are encouraging the community to participate and we have a basketball clinic as well. There will be great entertainment as well. March 23rd at Salem High School.

#### Chronic Absenteeism discussion (Strategy 3.2)

Ms. Ellen Wingard introduces her team before presenting, consisting of Ms. Mia Riccio and Ms. Tirza Espinal. Ms. Mia Riccio offers an update on Salem Public School attendance. Chronic absenteeism is defined as missing 10% of the school year. One way where we can see the impact is the achievement scores and MCAS scores. We are back to pre pandemic levels however there is still more work to be done due to the COVID impact. Identifying root causes of absenteeism are the barriers, aversions, disengagement, and misconceptions. Phone banking helped identify the root causes for SPS staff to reach out to families. The majority reported falls within illnesses and misconceptions such as family vacations and misunderstanding of taking vacations during our calendar year.

Ms. Wingard reviews the categorized functions of school refusal behavior such as:

- avoiding general school- related to stress caused by known or unknown factors
- escape aversive social and/or evaluative situations at school
- pursue attention from significant others, such as parents
- pursue tangible rewards outside of school

Ms. Riccio notes the Attendance Officer roll is a more truancy level or residency checks. The Attendance and Outreach Specialist is involved throughout tiers of intervention along with a “warm-demander” approach. Coaching admin and attendance teams to use the student attendance monitoring system. Ms. Riccio discusses Tier 1: the Universal and Proactive approach for all students. Attendance Teams meet regularly to review student attendance data and initiatives to promote positive school culture. Also Attendance Coalition, Attendance Matters Campaign, and Parent Cafes. Tier 2 : Early Intervention is when we notice patterns. Tier 3 : Intensive Intervention such as continued work with families overtime. Residency checks,

dropout intervention and last resort being court involvement. Ms. Riccio highlights Collins Middle School for their attendance improvements and mentions Malcom Pimental, the Family Engagement Facilitator. Collins Middle School last year was at 28.6% and as of this year the rate is at 19.3%. Promoting a culture of attendance at Collins including physical and emotional health and safety, belonging, and engagement. Collins Middle School built out a new house system this year where each student and staff are connected to each house and earn house points by displaying core values throughout the day. Next steps will be increased meetings of the Attendance Teams and consider doing another phone banking event, particularly for those where the data shows need for a push.

Mr. Cruz asks how we are approaching chronic absenteeism if addiction were an example for the reasoning. Ms. Wingard notes if a student is in treatment it is an excused absence.

Ms. Cornell asks if we have alternative programming if a parent keeps their child home due to sickness. Ms. Wingard notes if a child has a fever, keep them home. If not please communicate with the school nurse on monitoring your child. Post Covid we do have a parent friendly guidance on when or when not to send your child to school. Ms. Cornell notes we currently do not have a policy on school tardiness and at some point it would be best to create a tardiness policy that would provide clarity and be beneficial.

#### **Student Representative Report**

none

#### **Old Business**

none

#### **New Business**

##### A. Deliberation and vote on approval of Superintendent's evaluation

Mr. Cruz makes a motion to table this agenda item to the March 4th School Committee meeting. Ms. Miranda seconded.

##### B. Deliberation and vote on Superintendent's annual goals

Mr. Cruz makes a motion to table this agenda item to the March 4th School Committee meeting. Ms. Miranda seconded.

##### C. Deliberation and vote on 2024-2025 enrollment targets for student assignment

Mr. Cruz made a motion to accept all enrollment targets for student assignments with the exception of no specific targets for Bentley Innovation School and Carlton was to apply to Trimester 2 and 3. Ms. Cornell seconded. A roll call vote is taken

Mr. Cruz

Yes

Ms. Manning	Yes
Ms. Cornell	Yes
Ms. Miranda	Yes
AJ Hoffman	Yes
Mayor Pangallo	Yes

Motion Carries 6-0

D. Deliberation and vote on New Liberty Program of Study - Mr. Cruz makes a motion to approve and Ms. Cornell seconded. A roll call vote is taken.

Mr. Cruz	Yes
Ms. Manning	Yes
Ms. Cornell	Yes
Ms. Miranda	Yes
AJ Hoffman	Yes
Mayor Pangallo	Yes

Motion Carries 6-0

E. Deliberation and vote to authorize Superintendent to file a Statement of Interest with MSBA for the Bates Elementary School - Mr. Cruz makes a motion to approve and Ms. Manning seconded. A roll call vote is taken

Mr. Cruz	Yes
Ms. Manning	Yes
Ms. Cornell	Yes
Ms. Miranda	Yes
AJ Hoffman	Yes
Mayor Pangallo	Yes

Motion Carries 6-0

F. Deliberation and vote on Carlton Innovation School SY 24-25 calendar - Dr. Zrike makes a note that Calrton will be starting SY 24-25 school year before Labor Day per the vote of the faculty. Ms. Manning makes a motion to approve and Ms. Cornell seconded. A roll call vote is taken.

Mr. Cruz	Yes
Ms. Manning	Yes
Ms. Cornell	Yes
Ms. Miranda	Yes
AJ Hoffman	Yes
Mayor Pangallo	Yes

Motion Carries 6-0

**Finance & Operations Report**

none

### **Subcommittee Reports**

#### A. Policies for first reading

Policy 5416 Use of Physical Restraint

Policy 2107 Decisions in Absence of Committee Policy

Policy 2108 Publication of School Committee Rules and Regulations

Relative to the Conduct of Teachers and Students

Ms. Cornell makes a motion to accept Policies 5416, 2107, and 2108 for a first read and Ms. Miranda seconded. A roll call vote is taken.

Mr. Cruz	Yes
Ms. Manning	Yes
Ms. Cornell	Yes
Ms. Miranda	Yes
AJ Hoffman	Yes
Mayor Pangallo	Yes

Motion Carries 6-0

#### B. Policies for second reading

Policy 2102 Organization

Policy 2103 Qualifications, Duties and Responsibilities

Ms. Cornell makes a motion to accept Policies 2102 and 2103 for second reading. Ms. Miranda seconded. A roll call vote is taken.

Mr. Cruz	Yes
Ms. Manning	Yes
Ms. Cornell	Yes
Ms. Miranda	Yes
AJ Hoffman	Yes
Mayor Pangallo	Yes

Motion Carries 6-0

#### C. Policy with no substantial changes

Policy 2106 Policy Implementation

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

Mr. Cruz notes the Personnel Subcommittee has their first bargaining session scheduled with the Salem Teachers Union on March 14th at 5:30pm.

### **Adjournment**

Ms. Mirand motions to adjourn and seconded by Ms. Cornell.  
Meeting adjourned at 8:30PM.

Respectfully submitted by,  
*Krista Perry*  
Executive Administrative Assistant to the School Committee & Superintendent