

**Salem Public Schools
Salem School Committee
Meeting Minutes
February 5, 2024**

On February 5, 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. Amanda Campbell, Ms. Veronica Miranda, and AJ Hoffman

Others in Attendance: Superintendent Stephen Zrike, Deputy Superintendent Kate Carbone, Ms. Elizabeth Pauley, Ms. Natalia Feliz, Ms. Ellen Wingard, Dr. Kimberly Talbot, and Mr. Christopher O'Donnell

Others in Attendance Virtually: Ms. Laura Assade

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. Ms. Cornell motions for approval and seconded by Mr. Cruz.

Ms. Campbell	Present
Ms. Cornell	Present
Mr. Cruz	Present
Ms. Manning	Present
AJ Hoffman	Present
Ms. Miranda	Present
Mayor Pangallo	Present

Approval of Agenda

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

Mr. Cruz	Yes
Ms. Manning	Yes
Ms. Cornell	Yes
Ms. Miranda	Yes
Ms. Campbell	Yes
AJ Hoffman	Yes

Mayor Pangallo Yes
Motion Carries 7-0

Approval of Consent Agenda

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

Mr. Cruz Yes
Ms. Manning Yes
Ms. Cornell Yes
Ms. Miranda Yes
Ms. Campbell Yes
AJ Hoffman Yes
Mayor Pangallo Yes
Motion Carries 7-0

Public Comment

Ms. Kerry Neenan, 330 Lafayette Street, "My name is Kerry Neenan. I'm here in support of the teachers and staff at Horace Mann Laboratory School who are here tonight to talk about inclusion efforts they've made at the school. I'm the mother of Maeve Neenan, a third grader at Horace Mann who was born with Down syndrome. Maeve is a happy, feisty, stubborn ball of personality in a tiny package. I think everyone at Horace Mann probably knows her and I've heard her referred to as "The Mayor" more than once. She loves going to school. She loves her friends, she loves working on her reading skills at school and at home, she loves art, music, and especially her PE class. A couple of weeks ago, she was so proud to show me the Husky Hero award she received at school that now has a prominent place on our wall at home. We are truly grateful that Horace Mann has created an environment where Maeve feels happy, welcome, safe, and excited to learn. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), first passed in 1975, created the statutes and regulations that gave children with disabilities the right to a free and appropriate public education. Many people have probably not read the entire act, but I think the introduction summary should be read by all teachers, staff, administrators, and committee members. IDEA says: "Disability is a natural part of the human experience and in no way diminishes the right of individuals to participate in or contribute to society. Improving educational results for children with disabilities is an essential element of our national policy of ensuring equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency for individuals with disabilities. ... Since the enactment and implementation of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, this chapter has been successful in ensuring children with disabilities and the families of such children access to a free appropriate public education and in improving educational results for children with disabilities. However, the implementation of this chapter has been impeded by low expectations, and an insufficient focus on applying replicable research on proven methods of teaching and learning for children with disabilities. Almost 30 years of research and experience has demonstrated that the education of children with disabilities can be made more effective by— (A) having high expectations for such children and ensuring their access to the general education curriculum in the regular classroom, to the maximum extent possible, in order to— (i) meet developmental

goals and, to the maximum extent possible, the challenging expectations that have been established for all children; and (ii) be prepared to lead productive and independent adult lives, to the maximum extent possible; (B) strengthening the role and responsibility of parents and ensuring that families of such children have meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children at school and at home; (C) coordinating this chapter with other local, educational service agency, State, and Federal school improvement efforts, including improvement efforts under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 [20 U.S.C. 6301 et seq.], in order to ensure that such children benefit from such efforts and that special education can become a service for such children rather than a place where such children are sent; (D) providing appropriate special education and related services, and aids and supports in the regular classroom, to such children, whenever appropriate; (E) supporting high-quality, intensive preservice preparation and professional development for all personnel who work with children with disabilities in order to ensure that such personnel have the skills and knowledge necessary to improve the academic achievement and functional performance of children with disabilities, including the use of scientifically based instructional practices, to the maximum extent possible;” Since Maeve was in preschool, we’ve always pushed to have her included with her typical peers as much as possible. Maeve’s delays don’t mean that she should be denied the opportunity to develop natural friendships with her disabled AND non-disabled peers. Even though she is not completing grade level work, it does not mean that she should not have the opportunity to learn alongside her typical peers with modified lessons. Special education is a service, NOT a place. IDEA says that the general education classroom should be the default learning environment. My full time job is working with Northeast Arc and the Northshore office of the Department of Developmental Services. I see how things are changing for adults with disabilities in regards to expectations of employment and independence, self-directed services, and creating a meaningful life. But I also still see many adults who are placed in day programs that do not push for any kind of independence. Adults who sometimes volunteer their time to keep busy because there’s an assumption they can’t maintain paid employment. And adults who still make less than minimum wage at jobs created specifically for disabled people (also called sheltered workshops) and whose families sometimes don’t want them to be paid properly because it would mean their benefits would decrease. I want Maeve to have a life that is meaningful to her. I want her to have a job she loves where she is paid and recognized appropriately. I want her to be able to live on her own if she chooses. I want her to do what makes her happy. Isn’t that what we all ultimately want for our children? Having that life requires a world that is accepting of her and that understands her strengths may not be the same as others’ but that she has value, that everyone has value in the world. And that world starts in school. The more kids are separated in school, the more it creates a divide between disabled and non-disabled kids early on. Kids are taught to be kind, to be accepting, but they often do not see how others learn differently from them. Since Maeve started Kindergarten at Horace Mann, I’ve sometimes been a broken record that creating an inclusive school community is not the same as inclusive education to me. It’s not enough that Maeve has recess and art class with non disabled peers. I want her to learn alongside them. I want her peers to see how Maeve learns differently and also to see her accomplishments. I want to limit the ways that she is “othered” or separated as much as possible. Because othering her now lays the groundwork for othering and separating her in the future and assuming she can’t accomplish

the same things, that she can't handle responsibility, she can't be independent. And this sets her up for a life as an adult where independence and responsibility are not expected of her. Where people expect her to lead a separate, less than, life. At Horace Mann, Maeve is welcomed into class with her general education peers. She has formed some friendships that I like to think benefit the other kids as much as it benefits Maeve. The teachers and therapists have been receptive to our push for inclusion and creative in the ways they've accomplished it. Her special education teacher Rachel Ellyson told us she always tells Maeve that she's in third grade now, she's a big kid and can do things herself which has helped her understand that there are the same high expectations for her as there is for everyone else. We mentioned earlier this year that we really wanted to push her reading skills and her team has included Maeve in a reading skills group that she's having great success with. She has some of her speech services pushed into the general education classroom. And Maeve LOVES her PE classes with Ann Marie O'Connor, who has worked hard to make physical education accessible for every student. I appreciate that our district administration has pushed for more education for general education teachers on inclusion. Truly inclusive education requires the general education and special education teachers to work together to modify lessons and see how kids with IEPs can still access the general education curriculum standards. I appreciate how accessible Jen Doucette-Ly is when I have questions. And I appreciate Dr. Zrike's commitment to furthering inclusion and the quality of special education services in our district. Thank you to everyone on Maeve's team at Horace Mann and to the school committee today for taking the time to let me speak about our experiences with Salem Public Schools and our hopes for Maeve's future.`

Student Showcase - Horace Mann Laboratory School

Horace Mann Laboratory School discusses the meaning of inclusion in the classroom noting that all students, no matter their race, culture, ability, gender, or learning style, are given equal access to educational opportunities where they are supported, and feel safe, valued, and respected. Such benefits of inclusion are teachers and administration seeing less absences and disruptive behaviors. For parents, they are seeing their children learning and spending much of their time in a safe and nurturing environment. Reverse inclusion is discussed as well noting this is selected students participating in lessons in substantially separate education classrooms. Effective instruction provides the students with disabilities opportunities to practice their individualized learning goals with the support of a peer model. Additional benefits include helping all students develop and practice positive interactions and develop meaningful relationships in a structured environment. This also shows students that they are all part of a community and all parts of the school are accessible to everyone. Horace Mann's vision is that with authentic inclusive education students do not have to "fit into" the preexisting conditions of the class. Rather, environments are designed to provide the support and structure that every student needs to succeed.

Superintendent's Report

- A. Recognition of SPS' representative to Project 351 (Strategy 3.4)
- B. Superintendent's Evaluation (Strategy 2.3)
- C. Superintendent's Goals for 2024-25 (Strategy 2.3)

D. Updated data for 2024-2025 Enrollment Targets for Student Assignment (Strategy 4.1)

Dr. Zrike begins by recognizing the SPS representative to Project 351. Project 351 is a nonprofit organization that develops a new generation of community-first service leaders through the yearlong engagement of an eighth grade Ambassador from each of the 351 cities and towns in Massachusetts.

Dr. Zrike reviews his Goals for the 2024/2025 school year. Goal #1 will be to build and maintain a district-wide culture of universally high academic expectations for every learner. Goal #2 will be to elevate the voices of students and parents to tap in their funds of knowledge and prepare them to take action and lead.

Dr. Zrike reviews goal #3 to fully implement and report on the district's progress toward its strategic priorities, initiatives and goals.

Dr. Zrike discusses the updated data for 2024-2025 Enrollment Targets for Student Assignments. A review of the Carlton Kindergarten Trimester Enrollment Breakdown Based on Low-Income Status is discussed. Important notes were Salem did see a slight increase in low-income students in the last year. Available seats for our pre-kindergarten program will be assigned to the ratio that we established in advance of the 23-24 school year.

Student Representative Report

Ms. Natalia Feliz notes there still is a challenge for student engagement and is open to any and all suggestions from School Committee members moving forward.

Old Business

none

New Business

A. Deliberation and vote on approval of superintendent's evaluation

B. Deliberate and vote on 2024-2025 enrollment targets for student assignment - A motion is made to schedule a Committee of the Whole meeting to further discuss. Motion made by Mr. Cruz and seconded by Ms. Cornell. A roll call vote is taken.

Mr. Cruz	Yes
Ms. Manning	Yes
Ms. Cornell	Yes
Ms. Miranda	Yes
Ms. Campbell	Yes
AJ Hoffman	Yes
Mayor Pangallo	Yes
Motion Carries 7-0	

C. Deliberate and vote on approval of the SY24-25 calendars. The approved changes to the FY 24-25 calendars, with the exception of Carlton Innovation School, were:

- move the 1st day of school for grades 1-12 from 9/3 to 9/4 due to the primary election
- move 1st day of school for PK/K from 9/5 to 9/9 due to above
- move 2/26 half day PD to 3/5 due to vacation week the previous week
- move last day of school for grades 1-12 from 6/17 to 6/18 due to moving of 1st day

Motion made by Mr. Cruz and seconded by Ms. Cornell. A roll call vote is taken.

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

Motion Carries 7-0

D. Deliberation and vote on approval to accept the donation from Pabich Family to the CTE program at Salem High School. Motion made by Mr. Cruz and seconded by Ms. Cornell. A roll call vote is taken.

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

Motion Carries 7-0

Finance & Operations Report

Ms. Pauley notes that the Saltonstall School has requested several transfers from an unused personnel line. Each transfer included in the packet for review is within the same cost center and is less than \$15,000 (the threshold for School Committee approval). However, the total being transferred out of a single budget line is \$25,000; because this exceeds the threshold, this suggests the need for School Committee approval.

Subcommittee Reports

A. Policies for first reading

Policy 2102 Organization

Policy 2103 Qualifications, Duties and Responsibilities

Ms. Cornell makes a motion to accept policies 2102 and 2103 for a first reading. Ms. Campbell seconded. A roll call vote is taken.

Mr. Cruz	Yes
Ms. Manning	Yes
Ms. Cornell	Yes
Ms. Miranda	Yes
Ms. Campbell	Yes
AJ Hoffman	Yes
Mayor Pangallo	Yes
Motion Carries 7-0	

B. Policy with no substantial changes

Policy 2105 Evaluation of the Superintendent

Ms. Cornell makes a motion to accept policy 2105 with no substantial changes. Ms. Campbell seconded. A roll call vote is taken.

Mr. Cruz	Yes
Ms. Manning	Yes
Ms. Cornell	Yes
Ms. Miranda	Yes
Ms. Campbell	Yes
AJ Hoffman	Yes
Mayor Pangallo	Yes
Motion Carries 7-0	

School Committee Concerns and Resolutions

none

Adjournment

Ms. Cornell motions to adjourn and seconded by Ms. Campbell. A roll call vote is taken.

Ms. Cornell	Yes
Mr. Cruz	Yes
Ms. Manning	Yes
AJ Hoffman	Yes
Ms. Miranda	Yes
Ms. Campbell	Yes
Mayor Pangallo	Yes
Motion Carries 7-0	

Meeting adjourned at 8:45PM.

Respectfully submitted by,

Krista Perry

Executive Administrative Assistant to the School Committee & Superintendent