

Salem School Committee
Committee of the Whole Meeting Retreat Minutes
Saturday, January 12, 2019

A Committee of the Whole (COW) School Committee Retreat of the Salem School Committee was held on Saturday, January 12, 2019 at 8:00 a.m. at Salem State University, Marsh Hall, Room 210, 352 Lafayette Street, 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: Margarita Ruiz, Superintendent, Kate Carbone, Assistant Superintendent, Jill Conrad, Chief of Systems Strategy, Kristin Shaver, Business Manager, School Principals including: Bethann Jellison (Carlton), Leanne Smith (Witchcraft Heights), Matt Condon (Collins Middle School), Michael Lister (Saltonstall), Ruben Carmona (Horace Mann), Brian Edmunds (Salem Prep), Marlena Afonso (Bentley Academy Charter), Jose Muñoz (Bates), and Jennifer DeStefano (Salem High School)

Welcome, Introduction, and Team Builder

Mayor Driscoll welcomed and thanked everyone for coming and explained that the purpose of the meeting is to share and outline priorities and challenges in relation to the budget, including the budget planning process. Superintendent Ruiz welcomed and thanked everyone for attending. Everyone introduced themselves, their roles, and school name. Everyone participated and shared in a team-building activity. Members fully engaged in discussion with each other on their motivation to work in Salem, serve Salem students, and shared their personal connections and experiences with everyone aloud.

Review Agenda and Meeting Norms

Members reviewed the agenda and discussed the usefulness of meeting for increased communication, to share ideas, feedback, and insight to serve common goals.

Journey Together

Members engaged in discussion regarding effective communication and process of grounded collective priorities as well as leader input that assist in guiding Principals with budget needs. Members shared ideas and continued to talk about the budget and budget process.

Review and Discussion of the Financial Landscape of the Salem District Review Timeline for the 2019-20 Budget Planning Process

Members took a few minutes to review the presentation of the Salem financial landscape that show information on the comparison of Salem's financial data, a look at the numbers in terms of funding for Salem, some comparative data with Salem Public Schools and other districts. Ms. Shaver walked everyone through the presentation. Ms. Shaver explained there are two pieces to school spending: the Foundation Budget that Massachusetts defines as the minimum level of spending needed for a school district. The other is Net School Spending, which is what the local municipality spends above the foundation level. The local city or town has to meet a certain level but can exceed it, if they choose. The City of Salem currently contributes a significant amount above the required Net School Spending each year yielding the highest per pupil spending rate compared to other urban "Gateway City" districts across the state. Ms. Shaver shared further details and continued to walk members through the presentation.

Mayor Driscoll explained that the Foundation Budget formula, used by the state, has been under discussion for several years in terms of its representation of adequate level of spending across the state. This formula might be addressed by the legislature this year. Ms. Driscoll talked of the usefulness and importance of being informed on funding, formulas, and how they function. Ms. Shaver talked of what the actual foundation budget is based on,

provided by the state for FY18, and continued to walk members through the presentation. Members asked questions and engaged in discussion.

Break (15 Minutes)

Members took a 15-minute break

FY20 Budget Process

Superintendent Ruiz highlighted the pillars of the strategic plan and the priority investments associated with each pillar of the strategic plan. Planned investments include the priorities of competitive teacher salaries, libraries, the addition of instructional and collaborative time in all schools, redesign work, materials for program of studies, and continuation of the 1-1 technology initiative as well as taking the digital literacy skills from the DESE framework to figure out in which grade level and content areas they fall in the work towards building 21st century skills for Pre-K through 12th grades – a key aspect to infuse technology throughout to modernize the district and bring it to the next level. Ms. Ruiz continued to share highlights of the four pillars that include strengthening leader opportunity pipelines, increasing strengthening coaching capacity, giving teachers opportunities, and thinking differently about teacher leadership opportunities that help advance the academic school agenda. The framework also includes competitive salaries for attracting talent, continuing to strengthen equity practice throughout the district, in terms of engaging families and students. Superintendent Ruiz continued to highlight additional priorities of the four pillars of the strategic plan that include a focus on the needs of Building and Grounds.

Superintendent Ruiz explained the budget timeline where they begin budget collaboratives very soon. This would be the first opportunity that Principals will have to come to the table with those ideas, best thoughts on the needs of their schools and their priorities to advance academic outcomes. A second round of budget collaboratives would be held in mid February. A third round of budget collaboratives, with a full review of the budget with the Finance Subcommittee, would be held in March. The final draft of the budget would be prepared from mid to late March. Superintendent Ruiz continued that budget hearing is typically held in early to mid April. The School Committee approves the budget by early May and the City Council votes on it in June. Members shared feedback, input, and expectations. Members continued to engage in discussion.

Discussion of Hiring Process and Timeline for Executive Director of Pupil Personnel Services (PPS) and Principals

Superintendent Ruiz passed out a 2019-2020 Principal Hiring Process handout with the timeline and process for the Executive Director of Pupil Personnel Services (PPS) and walked members through the steps/information. Ms. Ruiz shared that she has a meeting with SEPAC (Special Education Parent Advisory Council) on February 12, 2019. The selection of the Screening committee would be concluded by February 25, 2019. The Screening committee group would be formed by the 27th. Members engaged in discussion. Superintendent Ruiz explained that two focus groups would be conducted to gather information on the kind of leader that people are looking for as the Executive Director of Pupil Personnel Services (PPS), to gather a profile for the candidate. One focus group would be with parents and the other with staff. The application deadline would be March 1st, 2019. Superintendent Ruiz talked about the Principal hiring process. School Committee members agreed with Superintendent Ruiz that she would share (once the School Committee has all applicants' information) which candidate she would have called in for an interview. Ms. Ruiz continued to talk about the steps of the Principal hiring process. Members discussed ranking and agreed there would be no ranking on the hiring process.

Wrap Up and Next Steps

Superintendent Ruiz explained that the first meeting of the screening committee for the Pupil Personnel Services position would be held on March 1st. The job description would be posted as soon as possible. This would be the orientation meeting for that group where they review the process, the candidate profile that emerged out of the focus groups, the dates, and discuss possible interview questions. Ms. Ruiz said they would compile a profile that the School Committee would accept on March 11, 2019, as a result of the focus group. The Screening committee would begin to screen resumes on March 14, 2019 and finalize the interview questions. The initial candidate interviews, with the Screening Committee, would be held by the School Committee between the 19th and the 21st. The Screening Committee identifies and forwards candidates by the 21st to the Superintendent as first initial batch of finalists.

An extensive reference check of each candidate is ongoing. The performatives of the semi-finalists that the Screening Committee sent to the Superintendent would be conducted on the week of the 25th. Superintendent Ruiz continued that the performatives would be conducted on the week of March 29, 2019 and the Superintendent would make her recommendation to the School Committee on that same week. Members asked questions, shared concerns, and engaged in discussion.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Committee of the Whole (COW) School Committee Retreat, Mr. Cruz motioned to adjourn. Ms. Nuncio seconded the motion. The motion carried. The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by:

Angelica Alayon, Secretary
Salem School Committee

Meeting Materials

School Committee Retreat Facilitator's Agenda

Financial Landscape of Salem Public Schools 2019-20 School Year (Presentation)

FY20 Budget Process (Presentation)