

**SALEM BOARD OF EDUCATION
SALEM, CONNECTICUT**

MINUTES OF AUGUST 14, 2023 REGULAR MEETING

PRESENT: Sean Reith, Tiffany Cunningham, Kelly Francis, Ryan Little, Sue Spang, Jen Rucci, Christina Fontaine, LaVan Norwood, Dan Marsh

ADMINISTRATION: Brian Hendrickson, Superintendent; Kim Gadaree, Business Manager; Kim Gritman, Director of Student Services; Dan Driscoll, Principal; Megin Sechen, Assistant Principal

VISITORS: Jonathan Chechile, Veronique Chechile, Tori Getty, Heather Meisenzahl

I. CALL TO ORDER - Meeting was called to order at 6:59 p.m. by Chairman, Sean Reith.

Additions to the agenda:

MOTION: To add item VIII.B. Discussion and Possible Action item regarding request from home school students to participate in extra-curricular activities.

Made: Sean Reith

2nd: Sue Spang

Vote: All in Favor

MOTION PASSED

II. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

The public comment portion of the meeting is a time for members of the audience to address the Board of Education to express opinions concerning the educational program or other topics within the purview of the Board. The public is advised that any discussion of specific Board employees will not be allowed. The Board will listen to remarks but discussion and Board action is limited to agenda items only. When making a comment, please use the microphone and state your name and address.

- Jonathan Chechile, 244 Hartford Road – Requested his homeschooled daughter be able to participate in Orchestra and Choir this year.

IV. COMMUNICATIONS

- Several communications from Maggie and Jason Candage to BoE regarding decision to homeschool children and Jill Lecy to BoE regarding strategic plan.

V. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Approve Minutes of the July 17, 2023 Special Meeting

B. Superintendent's Staffing Report

- Accepted the resignation of Kim Carlone, Gr. 7/8 Math Teacher, effective June 27, 2023.
- Accepted the resignation of Heather Armstrong, Gr. 6 Math/Science Teacher, effective August 22, 2023.
- Accepted the resignation of Melissa Quinn, Special Education Teacher, effective July 28, 2023.
- Accepted the resignation of Dan Pegnataro, Gr. 5 Math/Science Teacher, effective August 2, 2023.
- Accepted the resignation of Sarah Bonney, Grade 1 Teacher, effective August 11, 2023.
- Appointed Sorada Malawaijjan as Cafeteria Aide effective SY2023-24 at an hourly rate of \$17.01.
- Appointed (re-hired) Lisa Przybyl as Cafeteria Aide effective SY2023-24 at an hourly rate of \$17.46.
- Appointed Lea Poresky as PT Interventionist Support Tutor (0.62 FTE) effective SY2023-24 at an hourly rate of \$26.62.
- Appointed Vanessa Mitchell to the position of Daily Building Substitute Teacher at a daily rate of \$115.00 August 21, 2023 - October 17, 2023.
- Appointed Vanessa Mitchell to the position of LTS Grade 3 Teacher effective October 18, 2023 through the end of SY2023-24 at a daily rate of \$273.40 (BA/Step 1 rate).
- Appointed Sheila Miller as Health/PE Teacher (0.50 FTE) effective SY2023-24 at a salary of \$35,642.00 (MA/Step 8).
- Appointed Joanna Priest as Grade 6 Math/Science Teacher effective SY2023-24 at a salary of \$93,552.00 (MA/Step 12).
- Appointed Kevin Orenstein as Grade 7/8 Math Teacher effective SY2023-24 at a salary of \$93,552.00 (MA/Step 12).

- Appointed Anette Haylon as Grade 5/6 Special Education Teacher effective SY2023-24 at a salary of 62,515.00 (BA/Step 8).
- Appointed Lynn Siniscalchi as Tutor effective SY2023-24 at an hourly rate of \$26.62.
- Appointed Danyel Ferrari as Gr 5 Math/Science Teacher effective SY2023-24 at a salary of \$50,853.00 (BA/Step 1).

MOTION: To approve the consent agenda items as presented.

Made: Sue Spang
 2nd: Jen Rucci
 Vote: All in Favor
MOTION PASSED

VI. SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

A. District Updates

- Kim Gritman, Director of Student Services reviewed her 100-day entry plan.
- Megin Sechen, Assistant Principal gave an update on curriculum instruction.
 - Summer time professional development offered to eligible teachers with 100% attendance regarding the science of reading. Collaboration between teachers and administrators was highlighted as large contributing factor to successful and meaningful professional development offerings.
 - Special thanks to the hard work of Heather Meisenzahl for her efforts in writing curriculum and developing professional development workshops regarding the science of reading
 - Increased instructional time in Language Arts and Math in grades 5/6 from 48 minutes to 90 minutes daily
- Dan Driscoll, Principal updated the Board on the following:
 - Roof project has been completed.
 - Special thanks to Howie Houser and custodial staff for getting the building ready for first day of school on August 28th.
 - Welcome back letter regarding the opening of school sent to parents at 5pm on August 14th.
 - Highlights on new hires who are coming to the district with years of experience and special focus on areas of need.
 - Reviewed new hire orientation day and collaboration that occurred with current staff on how to build upon the orientation process to increase effectiveness and efficiency.
- Superintendent Hendrickson updated the Board on the following:
 - Reviewed the communication sent out to parents on August 11th regarding the new hires within the district highlighting years of experience and connections to Salem.
 - Reviewed opening of school information.

VII. BUSINESS MANAGER REPORT

A. Action Item: Approve Expenditure Report, Line Item Adjustments and Monthly Grant Spending Report

Notification from Kevin Chambers (State of Connecticut) reporting that because there was no dip in the ECS funding to Salem School this year they were out of compliance for MBR. A special appropriation from the town will need to be made by June 30th 2024 for \$22,657 or Salem will receive a reduction of \$22,657 from ECS funding for 2024/2025 school year. Chairman Sean Reith will send official notice of this to Chairman Skip Dickson of the Board of Finance.

MOTION: To approve the Expenditure Report, Line Item Adjustments and Monthly Grant Spending Report, as presented.

Made: Ryan Little
 2nd: Kelly Francis
 Vote: All in Favor
MOTION PASSED

VIII. DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

A. Kindergarten Staffing Model

MOTION: To reduce kindergarten staffing model from 3 kindergarten teachers to 2 in accordance with policy for class sizes.

Made: Sue Spang

2nd: Ryan Little

Vote: In Favor: RL, SS, SR, JR,
KF, LN, CF, DM

Opposed: TC

MOTION PASSED

Tiffany Cunningham reported that she feels the class size policy is too high and would like to see smaller class sizes and therefore is opposing the reduction from 3 to 2. Jen Rucci wanted to highlight that this kindergarten team is comprised of very talented and highly valued teachers who have consistently done excellent work. LaVan Norwood supports the idea of transitioning one of these teachers to add increased support for math as this has been a highlighted area of need within the school. Kelly Francis ultimately supports the decision due to reallocation of certified teacher to an area of need. She also stated that military orders are coming out soon and could impact the number of enrolled kindergarten students. Ryan Little reports that not only do we have highly effective kindergarten teachers but also very talented assistants who are full time in each Kindergarten classroom which helps to support a slightly larger class size. Sean Reith pointed out that he supports following the policy as a fiduciary responsibility and to be appropriately allocating staff to areas that are needed. Kindergarten enrollment is currently at 37 students.

B. Request for Allowing Homeschool Students Participate in Orchestra and Choir

This request has been tabled until the September 11th meeting. Board members stated their concerns for liability insurance not covering a homeschool student as the insurance policy only covers enrolled students. Many board members stated they wanted to investigate participation in after school extra-curricular activities but were concerned about disruption of students coming in and out of school and want to avoid an “ala carte” approach to education. The CIAC does not allow homeschool students to participate in interscholastic activities. East Lyme has a policy that states home schooled students are not allowed to participate in any school-based functions. The Board tasked Superintendent Hendrickson and Kim Gadaree in looking into additional insurance for covering homeschool students participating in non-sport related extracurricular activities and the cost associated with that. Superintendent Hendrickson will also reach out to CASBO to see if any school districts in the State of Connecticut allow for homeschool students to participate in school-based activities.

IX. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS/ANNUAL MANAGEMENT PLAN REVIEW

A. Long-Range Educational Planning Subcommittee

MOTION: To approve the strategic plan with amendments of moving school climate initiative to first priority, add verb “provide” to item number 11 and add an appendix with graph of SBAC scores by cohort.

Made: Tiffany Cunningham

2nd: Dan Marsh

Vote: All in Favor

MOTION PASSED

B. Personnel Subcommittee

Sue Spang reported that the subcommittee recommended the reduction of the kindergarten section due to the enrollment of 37 students.

C. Policy Subcommittee

Jen Rucci reported that the next meeting is scheduled for August 21, 2023 at 2:00 pm.

2nd Reading: #9160 Student Representation to the Board of Education

MOTION: To approve policy #9160 Student Representation to the Board of Education.

Made: Sue Spang

2nd: Jen Rucci

Vote: All in Favor

MOTION PASSED

D. Budget/Finance Subcommittee

E. Curriculum Ad-Hoc Subcommittee

Kelly Francis reported that the next meeting is scheduled for August 28, 2023 at 6:00 pm.

F. Annual Management Plan

The annual management plan was reviewed.

X. PUBLIC COMMENT

The public comment portion of the meeting is a time for members of the audience to address the Board of Education to express opinions concerning the educational program or other topics within the purview of the Board. The public is advised that any discussion of specific Board employees will not be allowed. The Board will listen to remarks but discussion and Board action is limited to agenda items only. When making a comment, please use the microphone and state your name and address.

- Jonathan Chechile, 244 Hartford Road: Willing to help with efforts the Board is taking to make the decision regarding participation in extracurricular activities by his homeschooled student.

XI. AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT REGULAR MEETING – September 11, 2023

- Front Entry Appearance and Safety Hazards

XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

A. DISCUSS LEGAL UPDTAE AND STRATEGIES REGARDING PENDING LITIGATION FROM FORMER CERTIFIED STAFF MEMBER/UNFAIR LABOR PRACTICE COMPLAINTS

MOTION: To enter executive session at 9:00 pm regarding legal update and strategies regarding pending litigation from former certified staff member/unfair labor practice complaints inviting Superintendent Brian Hendrickson and Business Manager Kim Gadaree.

Made: Jen Rucci
2nd: Kelly Francis
Vote: All in Favor
Motion Passed

Exited Executive Session at 9:25 pm.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: To adjourn at 9:49 p.m.

Made: Jen Rucci
2nd: Sue Spang
Vote: All in Favor
Motion Passed

Meeting adjourned at 9:49 p.m.