



# SALEM SCHOOL DISTRICT

200 Hartford Road, Salem, CT 06420

December 6, 2024

Dear Salem School Community,

We recognize that the recent staff turnover within our district has understandably raised concerns among parents, staff, and community members. We want to directly address this situation and provide helpful context, while also outlining the steps we are taking to ensure stability and the continued success of our students.

While teacher turnover is a growing trend across the state, in Salem it has been driven by several factors including retirements, career advancements, personal reasons, and unfortunate instances of serious misconduct, some of which involved investigations by the Department of Children and Families (DCF) and the State Police. It is also important to note - for context - that staff turnover is not a new issue for our district. During the previous superintendent's tenure, the district experienced significant turnover, including 20 certified staff positions in the first three years. This turnover included the departure of all three district administrators.

We also recognize that open communication is key during this period of transition. From September 2021 to the present, 28 certified staff members and 2 administrators have left the district. The most common reasons include retirement and participation in the Board's Early Notification of Retirement Incentive, a program that, although new to Salem, is used widely across CT districts to assist with budget planning, (10, 33%), resignations due to misconduct or performance issues (6, 20%), leaving for other districts offering higher pay or shorter commutes (7, 23%), professional advancement from teacher to administrator (1, 3%), termination (1, 3%) family obligations or health-related reasons (1, 3%), and leaving the education industry altogether (4, 13%). It is clear that not all reasons for turnover are within the district's control; however, the administrative team and the Board of Education have data that allows reflection of contributing factors that are within our control such as the initiative for early retirement notification incentive. This awareness provides opportunity for re-evaluation of the continuance of those efforts in the future.

We want to reassure everyone that we fully understand the importance of maintaining stability and consistency in our staff to create the best possible learning environment and student outcomes for our students. And we are very fortunate to have a talented, caring and capable staff. Our focus has been and will continue to be on maintaining a work environment where staff feel supported, valued, and engaged. The administration has worked diligently to foster a culture of accountability, professionalism, support, and transparency. We believe these efforts will reduce undesired future turnover. In order to retain quality staff we will continue to look to enhance professional development opportunities, advocate to remain competitive in compensation packages, and provide additional resources to support teacher well-being.

It is also important that we consider school climate data which demonstrates significant improvements in key areas, such as staff satisfaction and engagement. For a comprehensive review of the staff climate data over the years, which the Board reviews regularly, please [click here](#).

Together, we will continue working toward our shared goal of providing the highest quality education to all of our students and ensuring Salem remains a great place to teach, learn, and grow.

Thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,

Sean Reith  
Chairman, Salem Board of Education

Brian Hendrickson  
Superintendent of Schools