

**Minutes of the Regular Session
of the Salem School Committee
Monday, August 18, 2025
Rm. 227, 29 Highland Ave.
Hybrid Meeting**

Members Present: Mayor Dominick Pangallo, Vice Chair Cruz, Beth Anne Cornell, AJ Hoffman and Veronica Miranda

Others in Attendance: Superintendent Stephen Zrike, Deputy Superintendent Carbone and Assistant Superintendent Pauley

Members Absent: Amanda Campbell and Mary Manning

Call of Meeting to Order

Mayor Pangallo called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm and informed the public that the docket contains the public participation procedure and how to access Spanish interpretation.

Approval of Agenda

Member Cornell made a motion to approve the agenda. Member Miranda seconded and it was so VOTED. Motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Approval of Consent Agenda

1. Approval of Minutes of Regular School Committee Meeting held on July 28, 2025
2. Approval of FY25 Warrants:

1. 07/30/2025 - \$112,359.13
2. 08/06/2025 - \$16,694.25
3. 08/13/2025 - \$86,629.33

Approval of FY26 Warrants:

1. 07/24/2025 - \$264,258.70
2. 07/31/2025 - \$535,415.12
3. 08/07/2025 - \$363,263.83
4. 08/14/2025 - \$419,275.34

Member Cornell made a motion to approve the consent agenda. Member Miranda seconded and it was so VOTED. Motion passed unanimously.

Student Representative Report

There was no report.

Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Zrike welcomed the teachers and students who will be returning to school the following week.

1. Update on Back to School (all priorities)

Superintendent Zrike presented a brief back to school update. Deputy Superintendent Carbone; Assistant Superintendent Pauley; Executive Directors Lowe, Doucette-Ly, Wingard and LeBlanc; Director of Human Resources, Dr. Conrad; and Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Engagement Director, Laura Assade also presented back to school updates.

In response to Vice Chair Cruz, Deputy Superintendent Carbone said that the goal of 80% proficiency in foundational skills by 2029 for the PRISM (Partnerships for Reading Success — Massachusetts) grant was set by the Massachusetts Department of Secondary and Elementary Education (DESE). Interim goals can be set by the district. In response to another question, Deputy Superintendent Carbone said that the after-school PreK program is offered in-house in every building on a sliding scale and it includes partners that offer yoga, sports, art, etc.

Vice Chair Cruz also asked about how opportunities for staff to get licensed is being communicated. Dr. Conrad said Human Resources and principals provide this information. A network of support through various pathways is also being built to help in this effort. Vice Chair Cruz requested an update on the number of staff on waivers and those who are pursuing the different pathways.

Member Cornell requested to have the Director of Extended Academics & Enrichment Services, Taylor MacDonald, present to the School Committee an update on the Student Voice Project. In response to a question from Member Cornell, Superintendent Zrike said that the Carlton Innovation School does not yet have a digital learning specialist because this position was going to be phased in at the different schools. In response to another question, Assistant Superintendent Pauley said that the food program is fully funded using federal funds primarily as well as state funds. Member Cornell asked how screening for children aged between 3-5 is done. Executive Director Doucette-Ly responded that it was offered in two rounds last year to gauge their readiness for school and any needs for extra support. This year, there will be three rounds of screenings. In response to Mayor Pangallo, Executive Director Doucette-Ly said that the screenings are open to any child between the ages of 3-5 in Salem.

Superintendent Zrike commented that the School Committee has to work on the competency determination again for the school district. A policy change regarding this matter was made in the spring but there have been updates to the requirements from DESE. The policy needs to be reviewed to incorporate the changes by December 31st.

2. Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) Update

Superintendent Zrike said the final design is scheduled for December 2025. The district needs to provide feedback to the MSBA on the educational program. The debt exclusion

vote is scheduled for some time in May 2026. The Building Committee is in the process of selecting a construction firm for the project.

5. Finance and Operations Report

Assistant Superintendent Pauley provided her report in the earlier portion of the meeting.

Subcommittee Reports

1. Finance Subcommittee

No report at this time.

2. Personnel Subcommittee

No report at this time.

3. Building and Grounds Subcommittee

Member Miranda said that the subcommittee met in early August to review the facilities rental form. The form was modelled after the Framingham Public Schools' template.

4. Curriculum Subcommittee

No report at this time.

5. Policy Subcommittee

No report at this time.

Motions and Resolutions

Announcements

Member Miranda brought up the matter of receiving a letter from the Hall of Fame earlier in August. Superintendent Zrike said the letter was about including teams for consideration for the Athletic Hall of Fame and this was referred to the Hall of Fame Committee. The Hall of Fame Committee had a meeting the previous week and they indicated that they are interested in including the teams but needed more time to vote before referring it to the Policy Subcommittee.

Adjournment

Vice Chair Cruz made a motion to adjourn at 8:08 pm. Member Miranda seconded and it was so VOTED. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by,

Shirley Doria

Executive Assistant to the School Committee & Superintendent