

**Minutes of the Regular Session
of the Salem School Committee
Monday, February 9, 2026
Hybrid Meeting**

Members Present: Mayor Pangallo, Vice Chair Cornell, Yamily Byas, AJ Hoffman, Veronica Miranda and Meg Stott

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

Members Absent: 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

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

Public Comment

There were no public comments.

Approval of Consent Agenda

1. Approval of Minutes of the Regular School Committee Meeting held on January 26, 2026
2. Approval of Minutes of the School Committee Retreat held on February 2, 2026
3. Approval of FY26 Warrants:
 1. 1/22/2026 - \$797,458.14
 2. 1/29/2026 - \$685,395.35

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

Student Representative Report

Student Representative Sula said that Salem High School (SHS) has restarted the Science Experiential Learning program. The students also began a podcast with some of the school staff to talk about the different opportunities offered. Student Representative Sula added that it is Career and Technical Education (CTE) month at SHS where students have opportunities to explore future careers.

The Student Advisory Group will be working on creating an inclusive space for new students who enroll throughout the year. Superintendent Zrike added that the Marine Corps Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (JROTC) and Director of Extended Academics & Enrichment Services, Ms. Taylor MacDonald are rolling out a leadership seminar run by a professor from the Harvard School of Education for 15 high school students.

Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Zrike introduced Mr. Michael Collins, educator at Witchcraft Heights Elementary School and his students who were present at the meeting. Mr. Collins said that the students present are 3rd, 4th and 5th graders. Mr. Collins continued that in preparation for the students' visit to the Edward M. Kennedy Institute for the Senator for the Day! event, they were at the meeting to obtain first-hand experience on how a committee or council operates. Mr. Collins said that their student council has 23 members composed of eleven 5th graders, eleven 4th graders and one 3rd grader. They meet once a week and discuss many topics.

Superintendent Zrike mentioned that the following week is February vacation and that there will be vacation academies for PreK, Elementary and Middle School levels.

1. 2026-2027 Salem Public Schools New Liberty Innovation School (NLIS) and Proposed Sarah Parker Remond Elementary School Calendar (Strategy 4.2)

Superintendent Zrike said that the calendars for New Liberty Innovation School (NLIS) and the Proposed Sarah Parker Remond Elementary School are ready for a vote from the School Committee. Superintendent Zrike added that the Proposed Sarah Parker Remond Elementary School has a two-week break in December in their calendar.

2. Future of NLIS and Salem Prep High School

Superintendent Zrike presented the slides on the future of NLIS and Salem Prep High School (SPHS).

In response to a question on why the SPHS needs to be on the portfolio, Superintendent Zrike said that at this point, it would be disruptive to students and staff. Superintendent Zrike added that there has been no strong recommendations for any plan for the school as yet. Superintendent Zrike also highlighted the need for more conversations on the types of programs offered and also that it might not be financially in the district's best interest to dissolve the school as some of the students have very specific needs.

Member Miranda requested data on where the students from NLIS live. In response to Member Stott, Superintendent Zrike said that at their current location, the NLIS and SPHS students do not co-mingle a lot as they do not share educators or resources although they do have the same entrance. There are 27 students enrolled at SPHS and 60 at NLIS. Member Stott requested a polling of students' interest in participating in programs at SHS.

3. Carlton and Saltonstall Merger Update

Superintendent Zrike presented the update on the merger.

In response to Mayor Pangallo, Deputy Superintendent Carbone said that the merged school need not use the same type of curriculum for different subjects. The innovation plan will hopefully be completed before the end of this school year so that the school can have some working teams over the summer and give enough time for educators to prepare for any changes to the curriculum.

In response to Vice Chair Cornell, Deputy Superintendent Carbone and Superintendent Zrike said in terms of representation and inclusion, more folks have been invited to participate in the innovation and transition committees. Superintendent Zeike added that both committees have been getting the message out to all the stakeholders about everything that is being done. Member Miranda said that feedback was received from a parent that more lead time and deeper outreach was needed. Superintendent Zrike appreciated the feedback and said that the district will strive to do better in terms of getting more voices. Deputy Superintendent Carbone said that there might have been over-reliance on the google form for invitations to be on the committees and that more outreach could be done.

4. Superintendent Evaluation

Superintendent Zrike provided a summary of his evaluation and mentioned that it will be uploaded to the website later in the evening. Superintendent Zrike will be submitting his goal assessment as soon as it is completed.

Vice Chair Cornell will be coordinating the evaluation of the Superintendent. Vice Chair Cornell will be sending templates and examples to the rest of the School Committee for the evaluation process by the beginning of next week. Superintendent Zrike added that previous years' evaluations are already on the website.

5. Finance and Operations Report

Assistant Superintendent Pauley reminded everyone about budget season. Assistant Superintendent Pauley continued that during the last few weeks, the district has been preparing for and starting to engage with public stakeholder groups. A lot of analysis was done during the school reconfiguration process.

The first budget public forum will be online on February 11 at 6:30 pm to gather feedback on budget priorities. The second public forum will be held on February 25 at 6:30 pm and the SHS Library and on February 26, there will be an online budget forum for staff at 3:45 pm. Assistant Superintendent Pauley said that in addition to the forums, the district is reaching out to different advisory groups such as the English Learner Parent Advisory Council, Special Education Parent Advisory Council, Superintendent's Parent Advisory Council and the Student Advisory Group.

Assistant Superintendent Pauley added that comments, questions and reminders from the public about the budget can be emailed to spsbudget@salemk12.org.

Mayor Pangallo mentioned that earlier in the evening, there was a special meeting to set the groundwork around the current fiscal year budget process, Chapter 70, and the context of the school department's budget relative to the entire city's budget.

Subcommittee Reports

- 1. Finance Subcommittee**
No report at this time.
- 2. Personnel Subcommittee**
No report at this time.
- 3. Building and Grounds Subcommittee**
No report at this time.
- 4. Curriculum Subcommittee**
No report at this time.
- 5. Policy Subcommittee**
No report at this time.

Motions and Resolutions

- 1. 2026-2027 Salem Public Schools New Liberty Innovation School (NLIS) and Proposed Sarah Parker Remond Elementary School Calendar**

Member Stott questioned the benefit of having a separate calendar for the Proposed Sarah Parker Remond Elementary School as there are additional costs primarily for transportation as well as that it might be confusing to have one school which has different days from the rest of the district. Member Stott mentioned that it should be a continued conversation topic. Member Miranda expressed similar concerns and said that some of the aspects of the calendar seem better than the district calendar. Member Miranda also questioned if feedback from staff is solicited when creating the calendars.

Superintendent Zrike said feedback from staff who are part of the Teacher Advisory Group was received as well as a conversation with the Salem Teachers Union (STU) President about the calendar. Other than the Parent Advisory Council, not much feedback from families was received because everyone's schedules are different and it is difficult to arrive at a consensus. Superintendent Zrike added that it would be preferable to have the entire district on the same calendar to minimise cost and avoid confusion as many families have children in multiple schools as well. Superintendent Zrike continued that the best time to adjust the calendars is when the innovation plan expires in two years time.

Member Miranda inquired about the cost involved with having the different calendar.

Superintendent Zrike said that he would obtain the data. In response to Vice Chair Cornell, Superintendent Zrike said that families would like to have the calendar confirmed earlier rather than waiting for a few more weeks to know when the first day of school would be.

Vice Chair Cornell made a motion to approve the 2026-2027 Salem Public Schools New Liberty Innovation School (NLIS) and Proposed Sarah Parker Remond Elementary School calendars. Member Stott seconded and it was so VOTED. Motion passed with 5 votes in favor, 1 against from Member Miranda and 1 absent.

2. Naming of Saltonstall/Carlton Building to Sarah Parker Remond Elementary School - Second Reading

Member Stott inquired about adding “Innovation” to the school name because the word was added to the Bentley school name when it became an innovation school. Member Stott added that it would also indicate to incoming families that it is an innovation school. Member Miranda suggested not to include innovation in the name because certain aspects of the innovation plan might want to be spread throughout the district. Member Cornell mentioned that it is important how the school name is called as well as the pronunciation. Member Hoffman agreed and said that the full names of schools should be used. Member Byas commented that her son who is a current Carlton student has already been taught the pronunciation of the new school name at school and has been practicing it at home.

Vice Chair Cornell made a motion to approve the amended name of Sarah Parker Remond Innovation School for second reading. Member Miranda seconded and it was so VOTED. Motion passed unanimously.

3. School Committee Norms

Member Miranda said that at the recent School Committee retreat, norms were proposed for the School Committee. Member Miranda read the norms which consisted of *Lead with Respect and Civility, Ensure Equitable Participation, Communicate Transparently and Prepare Thoughtfully, Practice Humility and Accountability, Build Trust Through Clear Processes* and *Strengthen Collaboration with Administration*.

School Committee members thanked Member Miranda for raising this matter and Mayor

Pangallo commented that these norms will be sent to the staff and members of the different boards and commissions in the city with the suggestion that they consider something similar.

Vice Chair Cornell made a motion to adopt the School Committee norms. Member Miranda seconded and it was so VOTED. Motion passed unanimously.

4. School Committee Calendar Topics for 2026

Vice Chair Cornell made a motion to adopt the proposed school committee calendar topics for the 2026 calendar year. Member Stott seconded for discussion.

Member Stott mentioned that there will need to be some flexibility as matters which not on the list may arise. Member Hoffman commented that the discussion about School Resource Officers (SRO) needs to be earlier in the year. Mayor Pangallo agreed that flexibility is important.

Vice Chair Cornell made an amended motion to adopt the proposed school committee calendar topics for the 2026 calendar year with the understanding that items may be shifted or prioritized. Member Miranda seconded and it was so VOTED. Motion passed unanimously.

Announcements

Vice Chair Cornell said that the School Committee monthly newsletter was discussed at the recent retreat with the purpose of improving transparency and communication. The newsletter will not be overly detailed. Topics that would be highlighted are initial conversations about moving the NLIS and Salem Prep High School, innovation plan preparation and process, budget, norms, calendar of School Committee topics and the upcoming topics for the following month.

Mayor Pangallo said that there will be a meeting with the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) on February 25th for the finalization of the reimbursement rate and the construction costs. The MSBA funding will increase to about 46% for the project which is a \$208 million grant from the State. Mayor Pangallo added that the project roadshow continues with conversations with the Salem Common Neighborhood Association last weekend and a presentation for the Collins Middle School PTO next month. Mayor Pangallo continued that the "Mobile Mayor's Office" would be held on February 17th at Witchcraft Heights Elementary School to engage directly with the community.

Superintendent Zrike announced that Design Day which was supposed to be held on February 7th will be rescheduled after the February break due to the inclement weather. Member Miranda wished everyone Happy Black History Month.

Adjournment

Vice Chair Cornell made a motion to adjourn at 8:09 pm. Member Miranda seconded and it was so VOTED. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by,

Shirley Dorai

Executive Assistant to the School Committee & Superintendent