

**Minutes of the Regular Session
of the Salem School Committee
Monday, March 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

Adelaide Solomon-Jordan

Ms. Solomon-Jordan said that the naming of the school after Sarah Parker Remond is exciting for the descendents of the family. Ms. Solomon-Jordan continued that this has been overdue acknowledgement for the Remond family.

Approval of Consent Agenda

1. Approval of Minutes of the Regular School Committee Meeting held on February 9, 2026
2. Approval of Minutes of the Special School Committee Meeting held on February 9, 2026
3. Approval of Field Trip to Canobie Lake Park, NH for Carlton 4th and 5th grade students on June 12, 2026
4. Approval of FY26 Warrants:
 1. 2/5/2026 - \$269,696.23
 2. 2/12/2026 - \$721,736.70
 3. 2/19/2026 - \$287,184.66
 4. 2/26/2026 - \$723,326.10

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

Student Representative Report

Student Representative Sula was unable to attend the meeting. Superintendent Zrike said he had his last meeting with the Student Advisory Group and they discussed a later start time at Salem High School which would require further conversations as it would affect other activities and traffic among other things. Other items discussed included dinner options, budget, welcoming newcomer students and superintendent transition. Assistant Superintendent Pauley and Director of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Engagement, Laura Assade would continue working with the students. The students also discussed the upcoming elections for the Student Advisory Group and revising their by-laws. Superintendent Zrike said that it would be good if the School Committee members could attend the meeting with the Student Advisory Group which takes place on the first Monday of every month from 1:00 - 2:30 pm.

Superintendent's Report

1. Future Location of New Liberty Innovation School and Salem Prep High School

Superintendent Zrike presented the slides about the recommendation of moving the New Liberty Innovation School (NLIS) and Salem Prep High School to the Carlton building for the 2026-2027 school year.

In response to Member Byas whether this move would be permanent, Superintendent Zrike said that his recommendation is for the next school year but that the School Committee would need to discuss long-term plans. Superintendent Zrike added that there are conversations about moving NLIS to Salem State University but the resources needed are unavailable at the moment. Superintendent Zrike continued that moving NLIS and Salem Prep High School to the Carlton building would mean a savings of \$330,000 on the lease of the mall space and that there is an urgency to move. In response to Member Stott, Assistant Superintendent Pauley said that there is a financial advantage and programmatic advantage for the move.

Superintendent Zrike said that there needs to be a conversation about the alternative programs throughout the course of next year because the needs of students have shifted and continue to shift, and that there is no alternative program at the middle school level.

2. Essex North Shore Agricultural and Technical School Agreement

Superintendent Zrike presented slides on the Essex North Shore Agricultural and Technical School (Essex Tech) agreement.

In response to Vice Chair Cornell, Superintendent Zrike said that Essex Tech has moved to a non-weighted lottery system for the first time for student enrollment. Superintendent Zrike continued that Essex Tech serves 17 communities and Salem has 52 seats which is about 10%. Essex Tech set the Salem student enrollment target based on how large Salem is relative to the other 16 communities. Superintendent Zrike said that there has been a decline of students from Salem who have enrolled at Essex Tech. Historically, there have been lots of inequities as the demographics of Salem students going to Essex Tech was not reflective of the overall population in terms of multilingual

students, students with disabilities and low income students. Mayor Pangallo commented that the lottery number of about 52 seats is a minimum and not a maximum, making this problematic from a financial planning standpoint because it is difficult to predict how many students would be going to Essex Tech. Superintendent Zrike explained that if the district is not part of a regional agreement, the students can only go to vocational schools in programs not offered by the district. Superintendent Zrike said that it is a little unusual that Salem has its own programs and is part of a regional agreement.

Vice Chair Cornell inquired about the potential of adding programs at the new high school when it is built. Superintendent Zrike said that the district would need to apply to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) in order to do so. If it is a program that is offered at Essex Tech, their approval is also needed. Vice Chair Cornell requested data about the programs that Salem students are enrolled in at Essex Tech.

Superintendent Zrike proceeded to share some slides about the 2024-2025 high school graduation rates. In response to Member Miranda, Superintendent Zrike said that knowing the students by name, providing individual attention to students to reengage them, having support programs, mindset and culture shifts around expectations for students has helped with the improvements in graduation rates.

3. Health Grant Update

Deputy Superintendent Carbone introduced Executive Director of Student Support Services, Ellen Wingard, Executive Director of Academics, Sonia Lowe and Health Coordinator, Alyssa Smith Irving, who presented slides about the health grant.

In response to Member Stott, Ms. Wingard said that the telebehavioral contract usage which was 200 is on track with the anticipated number. Ms. Wingard said that referrals can be made by the School Adjustment Counselors and City Connects Coordinators but since July 2025, families can also self-identify. The service is insurance-based but families who are underinsured or do not have insurance, can access the service *pro bono* based on the Cartwheel Health Services contract. The district has partners in the community for in-person services. Ms. Wingard continued that for the first two years of the contract, the number contracted for was 250 and the district just barely reached that number, so the number was adjusted to 200 because that was what the district could afford based on the grant and the district was not reaching the 250 target. In order to expand the services, more funds would need to be secured.

In response to Member Miranda, Ms. Wingard explained that the grant helps to pay for the extra funds that Cartwheel needs to recruit therapists, case manager who works with the district, rapid access, professional development, parent workshops and consultation for psychiatric issues. Ms. Wingard added that they generally do not do individual telebehavioral health for students below third grade but they do provide parent guidance. Member Miranda was curious about what the community wants or

parent workshops requested. In response to another question from Member Miranda, Ms. Wingard said that there is a list of therapy providers in the area on the website and that when families express a need, the district helps to match them with the right organization. As to the question about whether the 21st Century program interns are paid stipends, Ms. Lowe responded that the interns are paid stipends of \$16/hour. Member Hoffman thanked the district for this work that helps families.

Member Cornell requested data on the demographics of students and families who are accessing the service. Ms. Wingard said that she would obtain the data which is available through the dashboard. In response to Mayor Pangallo, Ms. Wingard said that DESE chose Lighthouse Wellness and Health Education Consulting as well as the Walker School as vendors to help support the work. The Walker School helps support newcomers and students experiencing homelessness whereas Lighthouse is supporting comprehensive health and physical education.

4. Superintendent Evaluation

Superintendent Zrike provided his assessment of goals for the last school year. Vice Chair Cornell said that the evaluations from almost all of the School Committee members have been collected and it will be presented at the next School Committee meeting.

5. Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) Update

Superintendent Zrike said that the MSBA and the Carlton/Saltonstall merger updates will be provided at alternating School Committee meetings. Superintendent Zrike announced that he will have a meeting with Spanish speaking families at Saltonstall and Carlton on Thursday, March 12th. Superintendent Zrike added that on February 25th, the MSBA Board voted to approve Salem High School project to replace the existing high school. The next step is the debt exclusion vote to fund the project scheduled for May 5, 2026.

6. Finance and Operations Report

1. Budget Transfer Request

Assistant Superintendent Pauley requested approval to transfer \$3,594.00 between cost centers for NLIS.

2. Budget Update

Assistant Superintendent Pauley said since the last School Committee meeting on February 9th, three public budget forums were held. Budget presentations were also held with the Special Education Parent Advisory Council, English Learner Parent Advisory Council, Superintendent's Parent Advisory Committee, Student Advisory Committee and the Superintendent's Teacher Advisory Committee. The district is compiling and answering the questions posed by the attendees at the forums so that it can be posted online for those who could not attend. The district is still accepting questions, comments and feedback at spsbudget@salemk12.org. A final round of meetings are being scheduled for the Finance Subcommittee, principals and department heads. A proposal will be

presented to the School Committee on April 6th and the Public Budget Hearing will be held on April 13th.

Superintendent Zrike spoke about Design Day scheduled for March 14th. Superintendent Zrike also did a shoutout to the Boys Basketball Team, Drama Program, Alexia Coleman and Grant Dwyer.

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.

Superintendent Search

- 1. Process and Timeline**
Mayor Pangallo presented slides on the superintendent search process and timeline. Mayor Pangallo added that there will be a page on the website at salemk12.org/search which will contain the information about the superintendent search. Mayor Pangallo mentioned that the plan is to find the next leader of the Salem Public Schools before the start of the next school year.

Member Stott expressed concern over the tight timeline but was confident that these dates can be met. Mayor Pangallo acknowledged the quick timeline but noted that it is worth the effort to do it now instead of waiting for one and a half years. Mayor Pangallo said that there is a lot happening in the district and the ownership of these projects should not be for an Interim Superintendent. Vice Chair Cornell noted that the Collins Center managed the superintendent search well based on their work when Superintendent Zrike was hired. Member Cornell added that the search is guided by the School Committee but owned by the search firm, helping to engage all community stakeholders. Mayor Pangallo said that William Lupini from the Collins, Jr. Center for Public Management was present at the meeting to answer questions and his contact information could be provided to the School Committee members.

Motions and Resolutions

1. Appointment of Interim Superintendent

Mayor Pangallo said that the appointment of the Interim Superintendent would be for the rest of the school year and thanked Deputy Superintendent Carbone and Assistant Superintendent Pauley for stepping up on short notice.

Mayor Pangallo continued that the amendment to the contract agreement is for Deputy Superintendent Carbone to be the Interim Superintendent effective March 27th, 2026 through July 31st, 2026, at which point Ms. Carbone shall return to the position of Deputy Superintendent unless the parties agree to an extension of the agreement. Ms. Carbone is subject to the supervision and direction of the School Committee and shall receive an annualized salary of \$245,000 prorated. Upon execution of the agreement as of August 1st, 2026, Ms. Carbone shall be paid in accordance with the terms of the original contract.

Vice Chair Cornell made a motion to appoint Deputy Superintendent Carbone as Interim Superintendent and to ratify the Interim Superintendent contract. Member Miranda seconded and it was so VOTED. Motion passed unanimously.

2. Ratification of the Interim Superintendent Contract

Addressed in the previous section.

3. Appointment of Interim Deputy Superintendent

Mayor Pangallo said the amendment to the contract agreement is for Assistant Superintendent Pauley to be the Interim Deputy Superintendent effective March 27th, 2026 through July 31st, 2026, as of August 1st, 2026, Ms. Pauley shall return to the position of Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations unless the parties mutually agree to extend the agreement. Subject to the supervision and direction of the Superintendent, Ms. Pauley shall serve the duties of the Interim Deputy Superintendent for the term of the agreement and shall receive an annualized salary of \$205,000 prorated to the start date upon execution of the agreement.

Member Miranda made a motion to appoint Assistant Superintendent Pauley as Interim Deputy Superintendent and to ratify the Interim Deputy Superintendent contract. Vice Chair Cornell seconded and it was so VOTED. Motion passed unanimously.

4. Ratification of the Interim Deputy Superintendent Contract

Addressed in the previous section.

Deputy Superintendent Carbone said that Assistant Superintendent Pauley and herself are looking forward to serving in the roles and have already started to transition. Deputy

Superintendent Carbone thanked Superintendent Zrike for leaving the district on solid footing and said that together as a team, the district will move forward. Deputy Superintendent Carbone added that the number one goal is to ensure that all students and staff have a smooth, productive and joyful end of the school year. Deputy Superintendent Carbone thanked the School Committee for entrusting them with this important work.

5. Formation of Ad-Hoc Superintendent Search Subcommittee

Mayor Pangallo clarified that the vote is to form the subcommittee and that the appointment of members is at the discretion of the Chair.

Vice Chair Cornell made a motion to form the Ad-Hoc Superintendent Search Subcommittee. Member Miranda seconded and it was so VOTED. Motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Pangallo appointed Members Byas, Hoffman and Miranda to the Ad-Hoc Superintendent Search Subcommittee.

6. Formation of Superintendent Screening Committee

Mayor Pangallo said that the specific number of the Superintendent Screening Committee members and the process for selecting them is going to be at the recommendation of the ad hoc committee but that this is a vote to establish it and charge it with the responsibility of screening the applicants for the selection of finalists for the School Committee's consideration.

Vice Chair Cornell made a motion to form the Superintendent Screening Committee. Member Byas seconded and it was so VOTED. Motion passed unanimously.

7. Retain Collins, Jr. Center for Public Management as Search Consultant

Vice Chair Cornell made a motion to retain the Collins, Jr. Center for Public Management as Search Consultant. Member Miranda seconded and it was so VOTED. Motion passed unanimously.

8. Naming of Saltonstall/Carlton Building to Sarah Parker Remond Innovation School - Third Reading

Vice Chair Cornell made a motion to name the Saltonstall/Carlton Building to Sarah Parker Remond Innovation School for third reading. Member Miranda seconded. It was opened for discussion.

Member Miranda raised concerns about adding the word innovation to the name of the schools as it sends a signal that this school is somehow better than the others. Member Miranda continued that as a district, innovation is being piloted across all schools and that adding the word innovation takes away from the purpose of this renaming, which is

to honor Sarah Parker Remond. Over time, long names often get shortened and the school might end up being simply called the Innovation School. Member Miranda added that innovation status is a governance structure and it does not require the word to be in the name, and school models may evolve over time but Sarah Parker Remond's legacy will remain meaningful for generations. Member Miranda supported naming the school as the Sarah Parker Remond School.

Vice Chair Cornell said that the innovation status is not a permanent status as the School Committee votes on the status every few years. Vice Chair Cornell added that it does not make sense to change the names of the other schools that have had the word innovation in their names but that the district should stop institutionalizing the word innovation in a building name because it is not permanent.

Member Hoffman said that if the school name was written multiple times in a document, an abbreviation could be used.

Member Miranda made a motion to amend the name of the Saltonstall/Carlton Building to Sarah Parker Remond School for third reading. Vice Chair Cornell seconded and it was so VOTED. Motion passed unanimously.

9. Relocation of New Liberty Innovation School

Vice Chair Cornell made a motion to relocate the New Liberty Innovation School to the Carlton building at 10 Skerry Street, Salem. Member Hoffman seconded and it was so VOTED. Motion passed unanimously.

10. Relocation of Salem Prep High School

Vice Chair Cornell made a motion to relocate the Salem Prep High School to the Carlton building at 10 Skerry Street, Salem. Member Hoffman seconded and it was so VOTED. Motion passed unanimously.

11. Budget Transfer Request

Vice Chair Cornell made a motion to approve the budget transfer request. Member Hoffman seconded and it was so VOTED. Motion passed unanimously.

Newsletter Items

Vice Chair Cornell proposed to update the community on the Sarah Parker Remond School, graduation and dropout rates improvement, process as well as timeline for the superintendent search and announcement about the Interim Superintendent and Interim Deputy Superintendent. Superintendent Zrike suggested adding the New Liberty Innovation School and Salem Prep High School relocation.

Announcements

Member Miranda said that she met with the administration and educator leaders about creating a school community safety team as some other districts have already or are in the process of creating one as well. Creating a school safety team is a first step to bringing more people into this collective work in ensuring that students and families feel supported. Member continued that some students and families live in fear every day. Creating a safe school and learning environment is critical. Member Miranda added that the district is fortunate to have educators who are interested in organizing around this effort. The school safety team's purpose is to educate about the challenges and opportunities in the community, prepare to respond to federal agents agencies near schools, provide support to families who have been impacted by surges, raids, detentions, deportation and harmful actions in the community as well as to organize school communities to defend themselves in cases of future escalations by the federal government.

Member Stott volunteered to be the point person on the School Committee to receive comments or concerns about problem areas caused by snow. Member Stott added that hopefully the City Council will be having an ad hoc meeting to review the priority routes and locations for snow removal as we are concerned about students safely getting to school in modes of transportation other than cars. Member Stott will pass along the comments and concerns to the City Council but added that anyone is welcome to reach out directly to City Council as well.

Adjournment

Member Hoffman made a motion to adjourn at 8:51 pm. Member Vice Chair Cornell seconded and it was so VOTED. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by,

Shirley Dorai

Executive Assistant to the School Committee & Superintendent

Attachments: Superintendent Goals
Memorandum of Agreements