

Sarah Parker Remond School

School Design Update

03/20/2026

Today's Update: Sarah Parker Remond School community, we are excited to share this update with you about work on the school design that the planning team has been doing, including parents, educators, and staff. This school design will be the basis for the school's innovation plan, which you have probably heard about. You'll see details here about the vision and programming that will inform the design of our new school!

Innovation Team Recap: Five Meetings

- Jan. 29, 5:30-7:00
- Feb. 10, 5:30-7:00 – *cancelled due to snow*
- Feb. 26, 5:00-8:00
- March 10, 5:30-7:00
- March 30, 5:30-7:00
- April 13, 5:30-7:00

What's at the center of our new school design?

There are three main concepts that the team is focusing on, to build on the legacies of our two merging schools and to create an exciting new one. They are:

1. Continuous progress through a new "Core + More" approach
2. Community-embedded learning experiences connected to academics
3. Multi-age experiences for students that are thoughtfully crafted

What is the "Core + More" Concept?

The overall idea for our academic program is to establish a strong foundation for all of our students, with supplemental individual resources. In other words, the "Core" is a strong base of teaching and content, using the best materials (called "High-Quality Instructional Materials") that challenge all students so that they can meet learning standards. A "mastery-based" approach is central to this method, which is a way of teaching that is organized around students' demonstration of concepts in depth, focusing specifically and rigorously on individual topics and skills until they are internalized and students feel fluent with them.

We also plan to intentionally design our schedule, select materials, and grading so that students always have the chance to stretch their knowledge and skills, in areas where they are ready to go beyond the Core. The "More" part is the chance for students to get individually-tuned academic work and support that is supplemental and personally relevant. To honor each child's readiness and ensure consistent progress for all students, we envision this extra component occurring during a Continuous Improvement block that is set aside in the schedule. Teachers will use diagnostic data and individual or small-group instruction to ensure that students get what they need out of that time, be it acceleration or support in areas where they may be struggling.

The Sarah Parker Remond School will have the chance to lead Salem Public Schools in this approach, and the district will support the learning of educators as they build the new model.

What do we mean by “Community-Embedded” learning experiences?

The resource-rich location of the Sarah Parker Remond School provides unmatched opportunities for students to connect their learning to the physical space and history of Salem and beyond. Students across grade levels will have extended learning experiences in the community that give them a chance for engagement in relevant, real-world problems that require them to combine building and applying both knowledge and skills, reinforced by reflection.

Community-embedded learning is always intended to be an academic experience: it’s not just a field trip, it’s a field trip connected to either historical research, mathematical problem-solving, or scientific data gathering...maybe even gathering plant specimens.

What is the vision for multi-age experiences?

We believe that multi-age experiences develop important social emotional competencies like empathy and self-awareness that students will carry with them after their time at Sarah Parker Remond School. The feeling of inclusivity and “being known” can be supported through structured multi-age activities, like community circles, mentoring programs, buddy classrooms, community meetings and celebrations, and more. At Sarah Parker Remond School, this kind of experience will be part of the plan, not an occasional add-on.

What happens next?

- End of March: The Innovation Prospectus reviewed by a Screening Team
- April-May: The Prospectus fully developed into the Innovation Plan
- Mid-May: Innovation Plan presented to School Committee
- End-of-May: School Committee holds a hearing and votes on the Innovation Plan

In case you missed it: Sarah Parker Remond

On January 26, the Salem School Committee voted to name our new school for Sarah Parker Remond. Born 200 years ago this June, in Salem in 1826, she was an internationally renowned abolitionist and is a standout figure in Salem’s history. She advocated for enslaved Africans before, and newly freed people after, the U.S. Civil War. A staunch activist who gave her first public address against slavery at age 16, Sarah Parker Remond is the first woman and person of color to be recognized with a school name in Salem.

