

**Minutes of the Regular Session
of the Salem School Committee
Monday, April 6, 2026
Hybrid Meeting**

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

Others in Attendance: Interim Superintendent Carbone and Interim Deputy Superintendent Pauley

Members Absent: Yamily Byas 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

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

Public Comment

Jamie Navins, Salem High School (SHS) Educator and Parent

Ms. Navins supported the investment in the new building for SHS but said that the success of SHS depends on more than just a new building as it also depends on strong leadership. Ms. Navins continued that SHS Principal Glenn Burns has dedicated many years to Salem Public Schools (SPS) and has played a central role in positioning SHS as one of the 57 schools of recognition in the state, while also contributing to Salem becoming the number one academically performing public school district among Massachusetts gateway cities. Ms. Navins added that Principal Burns is currently in his second year of a doctoral program in leadership at Vanderbilt University and holds a Superintendent licensure certification. Ms. Navins mentioned that Principal Burns has already received both formal and informal interest from other districts due to the success at SHS. The educator stated that it cannot be assumed that commitment alone will be enough to keep Principal Burns without providing opportunities for growth and leadership. The educator urged the School Committee to carefully consider the impact Principal Burns has had, not only on SHS, but on the district as a whole. The educator also urged the School Committee to consider questions such as what has been done to create measurable positive change; how has leadership decisions improved outcomes for students; evidence of strategies that are effective and sustainable; and how trust and accountability within a district can be built. The educator said that the students, staff and community deserve leadership that delivers real results and this needs to be kept at the center of the School Committee's decision-making process.

Tracy Kapantais, President of AFSCME (American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees) Local 294

Ms. Kapantais said that AFSCME Local 294 represents bus drivers, monitors, facilities employees, food and nutritional services employees, as well as clerical staff employed by the district. Ms. Kapantais requested that the FY27 budget include custodial staff, especially a senior custodian, head cook, and food service workers for New Liberty Innovation School and Salem Prep High School at the Carlton building. Ms. Kapantais also requested a school year clerk for the Collins Middle School since the school currently has approximately 750 students and there is only one front desk clerk to handle all clerical matters for the school. Ms. Kapantais also pointed out that the meeting agenda for the evening did not indicate that the meeting was also being held in person and there was no address provided.

Approval of Consent Agenda

1. Approval of Minutes of the Regular School Committee Meeting held on March 23, 2026
2. Approval of Minutes of the School Committee Workshop held on April 1, 2026
3. Approval of FY26 Warrants:
 1. 3/19/2026 - \$711,518.55
 2. 3/26/2026 - \$607,041.31

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 said that the Student Advisory Group had their first monthly meeting with Interim Deputy Superintendent Pauley and Interim Superintendent Carbone. The students worked on the upcoming student elections taking place the following month for a new chair, vice chair, secretary and other positions. They also discussed how to encourage more students to join the Student Advisory Group and possible new projects for the coming year. The project for this year is inclusion of incoming students at SHS. Student Representative Sula also mentioned the SAT, PSAT, S.H.E.L.L. (Salem High Educator Learning Lab) We Talk About It Podcast, senior awards, John and Abigail Adams Scholarship as well as Advanced Placement tests. Vice Chair Cornell mentioned that Student Representative Sula will be participating in the Honors College at UMass Amherst.

Superintendent's Report

Interim Superintendent Carbone thanked principals and executive team members who were present for helping draft the budget proposal. The first round of the registration for next year's early education classes, which includes Preschool, PreK and Kindergarten was completed early last week. Notifications went out on March 31st to families as required by the policy. Interim Superintendent Carbone said that there are 315 new students registered and this is an increase as last year at this time, there were 298 new students, and 221 students the previous year. This signifies an increase in the number of families that are registering early. Of the 315 students, 188 were Kindergarteners, 93 PreK students and 34 Preschoolers. Interim Superintendent Carbone gave a shout out to the strong outreach from the Family Welcome Center. Interim

Superintendent Carbone mentioned the Early Education Expo in January, school tours at each of the elementary schools in March, outreach registration sessions in the community hosted by the Family Welcome Center and the Early Education team's ongoing outreach at community-based child care centers as playing an important role as they created a sense of belonging right from the start.

Interim Superintendent Carbone said that this is the first year where schools were open on Good Friday and that school leaders as well as staff did a really great job readying their school communities to manage complex staffing and coverage scenarios. Families could request to have their students' absence for the religious observance of Good Friday to be considered an excused absence. Interim Superintendent Carbone highlighted student talent demonstrated through district-wide musical showcases.

1. Initial Budget Presentation

Interim Superintendent Carbone and Interim Deputy Superintendent Pauley presented slides on the FY27 preliminary budget.

In response to a comment from Student Representative Sula, Interim Superintendent Carbone said that she is a huge fan of the coaching model, having launched that in the district and that the district will be really thoughtful in how the work of the multilingual coaches will be redistributed. Interim Superintendent Carbone added that the work of the multilingual coaches are a little further from the student experience as it involves coordinating testing and the seal of biliteracy. Interim Superintendent Carbone clarified that at present, not every school has a multilingual coach as the coaches have been shared across the schools for a few years. Interim Deputy Superintendent Pauley mentioned that the district is committed to the coaching model and continues to look for ways to ensure support for all students, embedding the work across all faculty and Central Office.

Member Miranda questioned the per pupil spending and Interim Deputy Superintendent Pauley said that the pupil spending appears in the elementary schools. Interim Deputy Superintendent Pauley added that the non-personnel spending was adjusted using more of a per pupil formula which is being piloted this year but it was not included in the presentation. Interim Deputy Superintendent Pauley added that the information can be provided.

Member Miranda also wanted a better understanding for themselves and for the public on how each school's budget is determined. Interim Deputy Superintendent Pauley said that staffing is based on the students and programs in a building. The non-personnel figures have been mostly a roll forward from the previous year. Interim Deputy Superintendent Pauley added that the district has attempted to pilot a formula this year that accounts for the students in the building in the non-personnel category.

Vice Chair Cornell commented that while personnel is 78% of the budget, it does not take into account the 8% increase in health insurance costs which is borne by the City, and so

the City's appropriation is actually much greater than the 4.5% increase. Vice Chair Cornell inquired about Salem High School's percentage of the \$1.7 million electricity cost. Vice Chair Cornell also inquired if the costs for the Collins Middle School is due to an expected increase in enrollment. Interim Deputy Superintendent Pauley responded that the costs are not based on increased enrollment. The projections are based on rolling forward enrollment assuming zero loss because some students will leave but no attempts have been made to project the number of students who will be enrolled. Interim Deputy Superintendent Pauley commented that 14 positions have been added to serve students. Interim Deputy Superintendent Pauley acknowledged the City's contribution towards employee health insurance and capital request costs.

Mayor Pangallo commented that in addition to the health insurance and capital request costs, the City also makes debt payments for the previous year's capital which is not reflected in the City's contribution figures. In response to a question about the declining enrollment of multilingual learners from Mayor Pangallo, Interim Deputy Superintendent Pauley said that the state has seen a decline in students overall and in low-income students but that it is more mixed in terms of multilingual learners for gateway cities.

Mayor Pangallo requested the cost drivers for transportation as this was not included in the presentation. In response to Mayor Pangallo, Interim Superintendent Carbone said that the transitional kindergarten teacher and paraprofessional positions will be funded through a grant and will be located at the Bates Elementary School.

Member Miranda inquired how the gap left by the loss of family engagement facilitators would be addressed. Interim Deputy Superintendent Pauley said that between FY25 and FY26, the number of family engagement facilitators decreased from eight to five. The schools have had to find a way of doing the tasks of the family engagement facilitators. Interim Deputy Superintendent Pauley continued that the work that family engagement facilitators do should be owned by every educator which is to build strong relationships with families and community. The tasks around attendance and calling families would need to be figured out. Interim Deputy Superintendent Pauley said that the district is trying to minimize reductions of student facing positions given the change made last year and therefore the family engagement facilitators positions were not as student-facing as some of the other positions. The plan going forward is to reduce the family engagement facilitators from five to two who will be at Family Welcome Center. Interim Deputy Superintendent Pauley also mentioned that family engagement facilitators can apply for a potential vacancy in the ParentChild+ program.

Interim Superintendent Carbone said that families want to engage with their child's teacher and the district has built capacity through interpretation and translation services. Interim Superintendent Carbone added that the district would try to find ways for the staff in these positions to find other positions. Conversations with principals around absorbing some of the responsibilities of the family engagement facilitators is on-going especially around school tours. Interim Deputy Superintendent Pauley said that members

of the public can provide comments or feedback through spsbudget@salemk12.org and the public budget hearing.

Vice Chair Cornell said that the district has not had a third party auditor audit Central Office positions in the last four years. Interim Deputy Superintendent Pauley mentioned that on Page 53 of the proposed budget book, it lists the number and percentage of Central Office staff by department. Vice Chair Cornell asked for the breakdown of employees in the Central Office, district-wide and school. In response to Mayor Pangallo, Interim Deputy Superintendent Pauley said that the new positions added are all school based.

2. Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) Update

Interim Superintendent Carbone said that there was an Open House on March 29th at SHS with about 30 people in attendance. Members of the building committee were present to talk about the building project, including information about the current condition of the facility, facts about the projected costs of the project were detailed as were costs related to bringing the building to code which would need to happen if a new building were not built. Interim Superintendent Carbone thanked the building committee and School Committee members who supported the event and the community members who attended. Slides from the presentation can be found on the district's web page through the building project quick link that's on the homepage. Two more follow-up presentations have been scheduled.

Mayor Pangallo added that there are additional public presentations coming up for several neighborhood associations as well. Mayor Pangallo thanked the Salem High School students who led the tours at the Open House and SATV for filming the presentation which will be available on the website. There is a link on the building committee website to submit questions . If you have a question that's not addressed in the presentation, uh you can just click on contact contact us on the salemma.gov/salehighschool page.

3. Finance and Operations Report

No report at this time.

Subcommittee Reports

1. Finance Subcommittee

No report at this time.

2. Personnel Subcommittee

No report at this time.

3. Building and Grounds Subcommittee

In response to Member Miranda, Interim Deputy Superintendent Pauley said that the

subcommittee met recently to declare surplus the spaces that the district currently lease or license. The reason for doing this is so that a request for proposal can be done for the spaces occupied at the Collins Middle School, Salem High School and Horace Mann Laboratory School occupied by the Boys and Girls Club, Angela's Preschool and Daycare as well as Pathways. Interim Deputy Superintendent Pauley continued that two out of the three spaces have agreements that have expired. Member Miranda said that the subcommittee would like to recommend that the spaces be declared as surplus.

4. Curriculum Subcommittee

No report at this time.

5. Policy Subcommittee

No report at this time.

6. Ad-Hoc Superintendent Search Subcommittee

Member Hoffman said that at the last meeting on March 25th, the subcommittee worked on the applications for the applicants to fill out to participate on the Superintendent Screening Committee. The deadline for the application was April 6th. Member Hoffman reminded the community that there's a community survey online at salemk12.org for input. Member Hoffman added that the Collins Center had informed the subcommittee that this was the first time in 17 years that they'd had a posting that had been translated in other languages. Mayor Pangallo commented that the application for the Superintendent Screening Committee can be extended for a day or two if the link had already stopped working. Member Miranda announced that there is a meeting on April 9th.

Motions and Resolutions

1. Declaring Spaces as Surplus at Collins Middle School, Salem High School and Horace Mann Laboratory School

Member Miranda made a motion to declare spaces as surplus at Collins Middle School, Salem High School and Horace Mann Laboratory School. Member Cornell seconded and it was so VOTED. Motion passed unanimously.

Newsletter Items

Vice Chair Cornell said that the newsletter topics will be addressed at the next regular meeting of the School Committee.

Announcements

Member Miranda encouraged everyone to apply to be on the Superintendent Screening Committee and that the link will be reactivated again with the deadline extended. Member Hoffman said that April 11th is NAGLY's (North Shore Alliance for GLBTQ+ Youth) Red Party which is the biggest fundraiser for the year as it supports LGBTQ youth. Mayor Pangallo invited everyone to get tickets on the school's website for the Collins Middle School production of James and the Giant Peach on April 9-11, 2026. Thursday and Friday evening and Saturday afternoon.

Adjournment

Vice Chair Cornell made a motion to adjourn at 8:32 pm. Member Miranda seconded and it was so VOTED. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by,

Shirley Dorai

Executive Assistant to the School Committee & Superintendent