

**Minutes of the FY27 Public Budget Hearing
of the Salem School Committee
Monday, April 13, 2026
Rm. 227, 29 Highland Ave.
Hybrid Meeting**

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

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

Members Absent: Mary Manning

Call of Meeting to Order

Mayor Pangallo called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm and informed the public that the docket contains the public participation procedure and how to access Spanish interpretation.

Move to Open the Public Hearing on the FY27 Budget

Member Miranda made a motion to open the Public Hearing on the FY27 budget. Vice Chair Cornell seconded and it was so VOTED. Motion passed unanimously.

Public Comments

Ann Berman, Salem Teachers Union (STU) President

Ms. Berman recognized that the district tried to save as many jobs as possible. Ms. Berman was concerned about what would happen to many essential positions which are currently grant funded when the grants expire. Ms. Berman said that proactive planning is needed if the Chapter 70 formula is not fixed next year, as well as taking into account that three unions will begin negotiating soon. Ms. Berman continued that it will take everyone from unions, school committees, families and community members to advocate for revising the formula. Ms. Berman expressed concern about the cutting of the family engagement facilitator positions because they have very specialized skills that educators do not have. Ms. Berman added that the union can support when the budget has to be presented to the City Council and advocate for more funding. Ms. Berman said that the union will be advocating for chapter 70 forums and job actions not against any district but working with the state house to fix the formula.

Arabelis Luciano, Family Engagement Facilitator for Carlton Innovation and Saltonstall Schools
Ms. Luciano handed out some information from the Family Engagement Facilitators to the School Committee members. Ms. Luciano spoke about the proposed budget budget cuts and the impact on Family Engagement Facilitator positions. Ms. Luciano said the role is not an extra position. It is an essential success of students, families, school communities and is directly related to the strategic plan, specifically priority #3 centering belonging and priority #4

strengthening foundation. Ms. Luciano continued that Family Engagement Facilitators serve as a critical bridge between home and school as they not only impact access to students' education but also increase caregiver participation in community events. The role is deeply tied to equity and inclusion. Family Engagement Facilitators are often people of color and bilingual which allows them to connect with families in ways that are culturally responsive and linguistically accessible. Ms. Luciano added that eliminating or reducing this position would not just be a budget decision but it would be a step backwards in our commitment to equity, inclusion, and family participation.

Katherine Jahl, Educator at Collins Middle School

Ms. Jahl, who lives in Salem, spoke on behalf of her multilingual students and families. Ms. Jahl said that because of what is happening in the country, many of her students and their families feel very scared to leave their homes. Ms. Jahl loves that Salem Public Schools in general is very inclusive and cares deeply about families. Ms. Jahl expressed concern that the budget cuts are directly aiming at multilingual educators, students, and family engagement facilitators. Ms. Jahl highlighted that it is unfortunately starting to send an unintended message to a group of people that already feel very ostracized by a country.

Erika Clifford, Parent Teacher Committee (PTC) President at Horace Mann Laboratory School

Ms. Clifford said that the proposed changes will impact the effectiveness of the Family Engagement Facilitator role because what makes this role effective is not just the tasks, but its relationships. Ms. Clifford proceeded to give the example of the impact of the Family Engagement Facilitator at Horace Mann on students and families. Ms. Clifford continued that when these positions are moved out of schools and into the Central Office, we move them from the place where trust is built, where students are, where families are, and where the daily interactions happen. Without proactive personal outreach, access becomes complicated for multilingual families. It becomes easier for families to become disconnected. When vulnerable families cannot come to the school, the Family Engagement Facilitators go to the families. Ms. Clifford added that strong family engagement is a key part of keeping students connected to a school and improves attendance. Ms. Clifford said that if these changes are going to move forward, the district needs to consider how to preserve what makes this role effective.

Move to Close the Public Hearing on the FY27 Budget

Vice Chair Cornell made a motion to close the Public Hearing on the FY27 budget. Member Miranda seconded and it was so VOTED. Motion passed unanimously.

Adjournment

Member Cornell made a motion to adjourn at 6:19 pm. Member Miranda seconded and it was so VOTED. Motion passed unanimously..

Respectfully submitted by,

Shirley Dorai

Executive Assistant to the School Committee & Superintendent