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SALEM HIGH SCHOOL



Alumni & Friends

Newsletter

July 2026

An NBA Title and Other Awards; A Commencement Speech to Remember; and Thriving Artists

Salem High School alumni continue to be seemingly everywhere and doing great things.

Recent honors have been abound and local artists -- musical and fine arts -- are thriving:



- **Rick Brunson '91**, an assistant coach with the New York Knicks, captured the NBA Championship June 13, defeating the San Antonio Spurs in five games.
- **Sandra Castillo '11** received the Shine Award from Latinos for Education.
- **Max Beauregard '23**, who recently capped his junior year at Salem State, was named to Eastern Division of the College Band Directors National Association's Intercollegiate Band.
- **Cynthia Nina-Soto '99**, local realtor and educator, delivered a commencement speech to remember at the New Liberty Innovation School Class of 2026 graduation.
- **Vicky Ortega '08**, a local artist, has her work featured prominently at the Punto Urban Art Museum.

We continue to receive updates noted in our Alumni News & Noteworthy section below. Please continue to share your news with us at publicrelations@salemk12.org.

Once a witch, always a witch.

Donate to Salem Public Schools

Salem Public Schools accepts donations online and the area of your choosing. Alumni and friends of Salem Public Schools can navigate to the City of Salem donations page and complete the short form to submit a donation.

Donate Now:

1. At the Unipay home page, type Salem
2. Select 'City of Salem Donations'
3. From the left menu, select 'School Donations'

In the dropdown option, donors can choose from several categories:

Early Literacy Initiatives | College & Career Success | STEM | Middle School Innovation | Athletics | Fine & Performing Arts | Educator Supplies & Materials | Wherever Most Needed | Your choice

Every donation, however small, helps Salem Public Schools achieve the four core principles of its Strategic Plan: Elevate learning, empower educators, center belonging and strengthen its foundation.



Donate to Salem Public Schools

A New Era: Salem School Committee Appoints Thomas Welch as Superintendent

Dr. Thomas Welch was appointed as the Superintendent of Salem Public Schools Wednesday, July 15, at a special meeting of the Salem School Committee.

Pending the terms of a three-year contract, Dr. Welch will begin his role in August, the exact date yet to be determined.

"Salem was fortunate to have three incredibly strong finalists for this important role," said Mayor **Dominick Pangallo**, chair of the School Committee. "I am incredibly optimistic about the future

path for Salem Public Schools under Dr. Welch's leadership. He brings the qualifications, the commitment to equity and academic excellence, and – above all – the values that will ensure that the positive trajectory of Salem's schools will continue forward."

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Rick Brunson '91 Lifts NBA Championship Trophy with New York Knicks



Rick Brunson '91, an assistant coach with the New York Knicks, won the NBA Championship on June 13, defeating the San Antonio Spurs in five games. An assistant coach since 2022, Mr. Brunson's son, Jalen, was named the Finals Most Valuable Player. The Brunsons became the first father-son duo in NBA history to reach the Finals and win a title together with the same franchise and [appeared on CBS Mornings](#) to discuss their relationship and how they got to that moment.

In early July, SHS boys basketball coach **Tom Doyle '90**, along with sons **Ethan '21** and **Jack '23**, reconnected with Brunson (and Knicks President **Leon Rose**) snap a few photos with the Larry O'Brien Trophy.

Jalen Brunson on why he hugged Spurs head coach first after Knicks win, his bond with his dad



Cynthia Nina-Soto '99 Delivers New Liberty Innovation School Commencement Speech

Keep showing up.

That was the message made abundantly clear to the New Liberty Innovation School Class of 2026 by **Cynthia Nina-Soto '99**, Wednesday, June 3 at its graduation ceremony at the Peabody Essex Museum. Ms. Nina-Soto, owner of Nina-Soto Realty, also taught her [Real Estate 101 course](#) to New Liberty last fall, and narrated the NLIS Class of [2026 Commencement highlight video](#), produced by **Ryan Saint Fort**.



"Your future is not determined by where you started," she said. "How you show up matters, during the easy moments, but difficult ones too. Success comes and goes, but character follows you everywhere you go."

[Continue Reading](#) | [Watch the NLIS Commencement Highlight Video](#)

New Liberty Innovation School 2026 Commencement Video



Sandra Castillo '11 Named Recipient of Latinos for Education Shine Award

Sandra Castillo, a grade 6 mathematics teacher at Collins Middle School, was among 57 Latino educators presented with the Shine Award Wednesday, June 24, at the fifth annual Latinos for Educators Shine Awards ceremony at the Massachusetts State House.

A member of the Salem High School Class of 2011, Ms. Castillo was honored alongside **Ana Brea**, a Spanish language educator at Salem Academy. She was nominated by Salem State Representative **Manny Cruz '10** (7th Essex District).



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CBS Boston | Exploring the Punto Urban Art Museum in Salem, Massachusetts

In a vibrant Salem neighborhood, public art transforms everyday streets into a living museum at the [Punto Urban Art Museum](#). Host **Rachel Holt** explores this open-air gallery, where more than 75 large-scale murals celebrate culture, community, and the power of art to tell stories beyond the walls of a traditional museum.



Among the artists featured included **Vicky Ortega '08**, as well as several familiar faces among the vibrant murals in the Point Neighborhood.

[Watch the Feature](#)

The Salem Patch | Max Beauregard '23 Joins CBDNA Eastern Division Ensemble

Max Beauregard, a baritone saxophone player from Salem, was among three Salem State University music majors who joined the Eastern Division of the College Band Directors National Association's Intercollegiate Band this spring after being nominated, auditioning and being accepted to the ensemble.



[Continue reading at The Salem Patch](#)

CTE Students Tour New Balance Strider Hotel Project with Alumnus Noah Robelo '18

Salem High School Career Technical Education (CTE) students got the chance to see what goes into building a hotel just outside of Boston Friday, Apr. 17. Students experienced walking the New Balance Strider Hotel Project escorted by SHS Alumnus **Noah Robelo '18**. Everything from crane picks on to the roof, to hot works and fire watches, students saw a number of trades in action: carpenters, drywallers, electricians, glazers, crane operators, riggers, and welders all of whom worked in conjunction with the Boston Police Department and the Boston Fire Department.



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Keeping the Beat: Jabari Tovar '16 on Music, Mentorship and Community

When **Jabari Tovar '16** (Salem High School Class of 2012) enrolled at Salem State University, he was focused on becoming a stronger musician, not teaching. A lifelong Salem resident, he chose the university for its vibrant, familiar community.



"I had no intention of pursuing music education," he says. As a music student, Tovar concentrated on developing his skills as a percussionist. Much of his pre-college experience was rooted in drumline performance, but through applied percussion lessons with **Abraham Finch** in the music and dance department and the Salem State Percussion Ensemble, his musicianship expanded.

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Salem News | City of Salem honors late Veteran Sgt. Ahearn '37 with city square

A little rain couldn't dampen the enthusiasm of a crowd of relatives, veterans and city officials who spent Memorial Day morning dedicating two city squares in honor of two of the city's World War II heroes – Sgt. **Dean Ahearn '37** and Sgt. **William Anthony "Boley" Kielbasa '36**.



Mental Makeover 'The World Needs You Here Walk' Slated for Sunday, Aug. 2

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THE WORLD NEEDS YOU HERE WALK

SUNDAY AUGUST 2, 2026

SALEM COMMON SALEM, MA

FOR MENTAL HEALTH, MENTAL WELLNESS, & SUICIDE PREVENTION

Vendors, speakers, food & ice cream, games, raffles, and more for all ages!

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**MENTAL
MAKEOVER**

 **befree**

College Corner



Isabella Cunha '23



Walbee Pierre '23



Chris Qirjazi '23

Thirteen Former Witches Expected to be on NCAA Rosters This Fall

Thirteen former Salem High School athletes -- including four freshmen -- are expected to be on NCAA rosters this fall, led by five former Witches on the Curry College football roster:



[Samantha Agno '25](#) | Soccer, Salem State University

[Isabella Cunha '23](#) | Soccer, Wentworth Institute of Technology

[Malcolm Edwards '24](#) | Soccer, Fitchburg State University

[Elvis Espinal '26](#) | Football, Curry College

[Oscar Fernandez '26](#) | Football, Husson University

[Shane Field '24](#) | Football, Curry College

[Walbee Pierre '23](#) | Soccer, Framingham State

[Albert Pujols '24](#) | Football, Curry College

[Chris Qirjazi '23](#) | Soccer, Saint Michael's College

[Javien Ramos '25](#) | Football, Curry College

[Elizabeth Reid '26](#) | Soccer, Elms College

[Eli Vasquez '24](#) | Football, Curry College

[Brooks Workman '26](#) | Cross Country/Track & Field, Pomona College

Alumni News and Noteworthy

Doyle '23 Named to MASCAC Baseball Second Team, Spring All-Academic Team

Jack Doyle '23 was named Doyle, a junior on the Salem State baseball team, was named to the Massachusetts State College Athletic Conference (MASCAC) Second Team. Doyle helped lead the Vikings to a 21-17 record (16-8 MASCAC--runner-up) and enjoyed multiple career-highs including at-bats (114), hits (34), home runs (one), RBIs (24), batting average (.298), on-base percentage (.380), and slugging percentage (.395). Defensively, he had a career-high .925 fielding percentage, where he assisted on 58 plays this year.



Doyle, alongside women's basketball standout **Amayah McConney '23**, was named to the MASCAC Winter-Spring All-Academic Team, which honored student-athletes who earned a 3.20 cumulative or semester-based grade point average during the semester.

Kianny Mirabal-Nunez, a sophomore outfielder on the Salem State softball team, played in 22 games with 11 runs. The Vikings went 27-13 and 12-4 in the MASCAC (third place)...**Jayden Benson '25**, a freshman defenseman on the Salem State men's lacrosse team, saw action in 12 games for the Vikings, who went 8-7 in the spring...**Faith Sanchez-Schroeder '25** saw action in 17 games (four starts) with the Albright College softball team (14-26), and highlighted with eight runs and two stolen bases...**Jonathan Wasserman**, a junior on the Worcester State golf team, played in four tournaments this spring, highlighting with a 79 at the WSU Rich Korzec Memorial Invitational.

Raphy Medrano, SHS Class of 2011, ran the 2026 Boston Marathon on Monday, Apr. 20 in 3:43.44. Mr. Medrano, who raised more than \$9,800, ran the marathon representing the Greg Hill Foundation which raises money to improve the lives of families touched by tragedy. [Donate to Mr. Medrano's cause here](#).



Presley Shairs '22 Named Salem High School Assistant Volleyball Coach

Presley Shairs '22 was named the assistant volleyball coach at Salem High School, Interim Director of Athletics **Angie Giancola** announced recently. A captain in both her junior and senior seasons, Ms. Shairs moved on to a four-year career at Salem State University and finished her career ranked second among all-time leaders in kills. As a senior, she registered team-highs of 2.8 kills and 0.5 blocks per game. Ms. Shairs also coached four seasons with Avidity Volleyball Club where she continues coaching today.



Josh Bent '18 Named Lead Tech Support Analyst at Salem Public Schools

Josh Bent (New Liberty Innovation School '18) was recently named the Lead Technical Support Analyst at Salem Public Schools, and is responsible for inventory management for SPSIT devices in to ensure the District has enough devices as well as parts for repairs for the entire district. He is also responsible for training, providing technological help at the Central Office level, and ensuring SPSIT technicians have everything they need to best serve the District.



Salem High School Alumni

<https://spssalemhs.salemk12.org/about/alumni/>

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