

Minutes of the Regular Session
of the Salem School Committee
Monday, September 22, 2026
Rm 227, 29 Highland Avenue

Members Present: Mayor Pangallo, Vice Chair Cornell, Yamily Baez, AJ Hoffman, Veronica Miranda and Megan Stott

Other in Attendance: Superintendent Welch, Deputy Superintendent Carbone, Assistant Superintendent Pauley and Student Representative Finn Billings

Members Absent: Mary Manning

Call the Meeting to Order

Mayor Dominick Pangallo called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. Attendance was taken, noting one member participating remotely. Due to remote participation, all votes were conducted via roll call. Also noting for attendees that the agenda packet outlined instructions for public participation as well as details for accessing Spanish language translation services.

Approval of Agenda

A motion was made by Member Hoffman and seconded by Member Stott to approve the agenda as presented.

- Member Stott: Yes
- Member Baez: Yes
- Member Cornell: Yes
- Member Hoffman: Yes
- Member Miranda: Yes
- Chair: Yes

Outcome: Motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment

Public comments were invited both in person at 29 Highland Avenue and remotely via Zoom, but no community members came forward or requested to speak during this session.

Approval of Consent Agenda

A motion was made by Member Hoffman and seconded by Member Stott to approve the agenda as presented.

- Member Stott: Yes
- Member Baez: Yes
- Member Cornell: Yes
- Member Hoffman: Yes
- Member Miranda: Yes

- Chair: Yes

Outcome: Motion passed unanimously.

Approved items included the minutes from the September 8, 2026 School Committee, Approval of Field Trips: Salem High School, Music Program to WDW Imagination Campus, Orlando, Florida on May 20-24, 2027 and Colorguard & Percussion to Salem NH, on March 6, 2027. Salem High School Cross Country Team to Bob Glennon Invitational in Falmouth, MA October 10-11, 2026. ROTC to Newport, RI 10/1-10/4 for Basic Leadership Training

Approval of FY26 Warrants:

1. 9/09/2026 - \$20,474.15
2. 9/16/2026 - \$8,652.00

Approval of FY27 Warrants:

1. 9/10/2026 - \$742,435.14
2. 9/17/2026 - \$427,081.52

Student Representative Report

Mr. Billings presented the Student Representative Report covering the following topics:

- **Member Recruitment:** Current student representatives met during lunch/crew periods to draft a recruitment survey for prospective student board members across the district.
- **Bylaws Revision:** Discussion on updating outdated bylaws to establish clear frameworks (e.g., GPA requirements, defined roles). Committee members suggested consulting the Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC) for guidance rather than recreating frameworks from scratch.
- **Student Priorities:** Member Cornell expressed interest in gathering student feedback on standards-based grading. Other topics raised included school scheduling and student support needs.
- **Superintendent Meetings:** Student representatives will begin monthly meetings with Dr. Welch on October 8th (recurring on Thursdays).

Superintendent's Report

Dr. Welch presented the Superintendent's Report, highlighting key updates and district initiatives:

A. Announcements & Recognitions

- **Hispanic Heritage Month:** Celebrations run Sept 15 – Oct 15 across schools, including special cultural lunches (empanadas, quesadillas, locally sourced salsa) and a family culture night at Bentley School.
- **Induction Coach:** Welcomed Cynthia Paris as the new Superintendent Induction Program Coach.

- **Listen & Learn Sessions:** Upcoming sessions scheduled at Horace Mann, New Liberty Innovation School, Witchcraft Heights, and Collins Middle School.
- **Special Olympics National Banner:** Salem High School received national recognition from Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools (one of 17 in MA, 288 nationally).
- **Latino Excellence Award:** Jocelis Uribe (Sarah Parker Remond School) to be honored at the State House by the MA Black and Latino Legislative Caucus.

B. 2026–2029 Strategic Plan & Innovation Agenda

The leadership team provided a detailed presentation on the four core pillars of the 2026–2029 Strategic Plan:

- **Elevate:** Focuses on instruction, implementing a daily instructional cycle across all classrooms, deeper learning, and future-ready pathways (e.g., potential offshore wind/clean energy pathways leading to 2030).
- **Empower:** Focuses on adult workforce development, educator diversity, leadership growth, and clear career pipelines (e.g., Registered Teacher Apprenticeship Program / RTAP, parent-to-paraprofessional pathways).
- **Belong:** Centers on collective trust, inclusive communities, authentic family engagement goals for all staff, safety, and developing an alumni network.
- **Strengthen:** Focuses on operational excellence, equity-driven internal systems, continuous learning (Research-Pilot-Reflect-Refine), and strategic resource allocation.

Next Steps: Final metrics and accountability dashboards will be presented on October 5th, with a vote on the plan anticipated at a subsequent meeting.

C. School Consolidations & Relocations Update

- **Sarah Parker Remond School:** Current enrollment is 442 students. Staffing merger resulted in 19 fewer positions and \$1.4M in salary savings, while adding two additional educators and an associate principal. Traffic and safety improvements (bump-outs, crossing guards, speed bumps) were completed prior to the start of school.
- **Carlton Site (New Liberty & Salem Prep):** Current enrollment is 53 at New Liberty and 16 at Salem Prep. Relocation out of the mall saved \$332,000 in lease costs and provided access to standard school amenities (gym, cafeteria, operational elevator).

D. Finance & Operations Update:

Transportation Update

- **Healey Bus Company Partnership:** Performance in on-time arrival has improved, with fewer late buses noted in the opening weeks.
- **System Consistency:** Measures implemented to ensure the same bus and driver cover assigned routes daily, improving tracking capability on the Stopfinder app.
- **Route Adjustments:** Structural delay fixes were executed for routes serving New Liberty, the Early Childhood Center (ECC), and YMCA after-school programs.

- Safety Exercises: Student bus evacuation drills are scheduled for November in coordination with school safety teams.

Subcommittee Reports

1. Finance Subcommittee
Nothing to report
2. Personnel Subcommittee
Nothing to report
3. Building and Grounds Subcommittee
Nothing to report
4. Curriculum Subcommittee
Nothing to report
5. Policy Subcommittee
Nothing to report

Motions and Resolutions

A. Policy 1408: Protect Act Policy

- Motion under Policy 6205: Member Stott moved (seconded by Member Miranda) to temporarily suspend the three readings requirement for immediate adoption of Policy 1408 as amended. Motion carried unanimously.
- Discussion: Committee Member Cornell raised concerns about voting on an edited version that was not previously published in the public packet. Members Stott and Pangallo clarified that the body retains full authority to make floor amendments to noticed policies under Policy 6205 without requiring additional readings.
- Motion for Adoption: Member Stott moved (seconded by Member Hoffman) to adopt the revised Policy 1408 (Protect Act). Motion carried unanimously.

B. Policy 5711 ADF: Revised Wellness Policy

- Motion to adopt Policy 5711 ADF for its third reading moved by Member Cornell, seconded by Member Miranda. Motion carried unanimously.

C. Policy 5709: Revised Medication Administration Policy

- Motion to adopt Policy 5709 for its third reading by Member Cornell, seconded by Member Scott. Motion carried unanimously.

Newsletter Items

Member Cornell will include recap of previous items, including the superintendent entry plan, the Protect Act, savings figures related to school mergers and moves, and an update on the strategic plan overview.

Announcements

- Voter Registration: Final day to register to vote for upcoming elections is October 24.
- Mayor's Night Out: Scheduled for Friday, offering discounts, free parking, and museum admissions for Salem residents.
- Haunted Happenings Grand Parade: Scheduled for Thursday, October 1 at 6:00 PM with the theme "Old School Halloween."

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Member Cornell, seconded by Member Hoffman, and unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted by,

Hadee Benoit

Interim Executive Assistant to the School Committee