Minutes of the
Salem School Committee Retreat
Thursday, March 3, 2026
Rm. 227, 29 Highland Ave.

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

Others in Attendance: Superintendent Welch, Deputy Superintendent Carbone and Assistant Superintendent Pauley

Members Absent: None

1. Call the Meeting to Order

Mayor Pangallo called the meeting to order at 5:05 pm.

Superintendent Welch did a team activator activity where members shared stories and learning moments.

2. Review of School Committee Norms

Member Miranda revisited the School Committee norms that were established in spring 2026. Member Hoffman commented that the School Committee is modelling these norms. Members agreed that there are no changes needed for the norms.

3. Listening Campaign and Family Engagement

Superintendent Welch reviewed the schedule for the listening sessions and family engagement activities. Superintendent Welch added that the goal is the introduction of the strategic plan. The strategic plan will be presented at the September 22, 2026 School Committee meeting.

4. Discussion of Vice Chair Term

Vice Chair Cornell requested feedback from the School Committee about decreasing the term of the vice chair which is 4 years. Mayor Pangallo commented that Policy #6301 and #6302 of the School Committee policy manual address this matter.

School Committee members proceeded to discuss if the 4 year term should be decreased to 2 years. Concerns were raised about placing presumptive constraints on future School Committees. A suggestion was made to obtain examples from the Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC) about what is being practiced at other districts.

Member Stott commented that one of the more recent policies discussed at the Policy Subcommittee was the organizational meeting which is held annually at the first meeting in January. Members agreed that this matter can be revisited at that meeting.

5. Discussion and Planning of 2026-2027 School Committee Agenda

School Committee members discussed the initial draft plan for the agenda topics.

Clarification was made that the October 19th budget conversation related to a check-in on the current budget where the October 1 enrollment data will be available as well. Members requested a regular update about the Sarah Parker Remond, School, New Liberty Innovation School and Salem Prep High School as they have moved to new locations. Members suggested that this topic and the new high school building update can be done in alternate months.

Discussion topics requested by members included innovation plan; 10 year vision; disparity in terms of achievement gaps, discipline, students with disabilities, etc.; data collected by the Director of Data Analysis and Research; artificial intelligence; technology; and supports received by high school students for post secondary education including first generation students going to college.

Comments provided included that discussion on technology would need to be earlier in the fall as it was also a topic requested by parents; information need to be provided to the School Committee members ahead of time before meetings; information about who to contact and a reasonable time for responses should be provided to families; the need to discuss a topic in more than one meeting; members to provide their questions ahead of time to administration; members to be provided with background or historical information; one-to-one conversations between administration and a member of the School Committee; agenda items to be tied to strategic plan; and regular report on progress.

6. Discussion of Strategic Plan

Superintendent Welch introduced the strategic plan draft and informed the School Committee that this is an opportunity for them to provide feedback.

Assistant Superintendent Pauley explained the strategic and innovation plan. Heidi Guarino, EdLab Strategies provided the steps taken over the past year to create the strategic plan draft. The feedback from School Committee members included focusing on inclusive classrooms, preparing students for post-secondary or college trajectory; expansion of career and technical education programs as well as hands-on learning; emphasizing “joy” in learning; adding the 10 year vision; taking note of trends that could affect the vision such as declining birth rates and constraints on funding or resources; diversifying funding sources; revisiting the logo; progress in diversifying the workforce and pathways; incorporating time to collaborate between schools; mental health; skill sets for students and educators; clarity on who needs protecting and why; alternative to restorative justice practices; support for parents; equity; anti-bias and anti-racist training; interrogating own beliefs; guardrails for piloting and innovation; school start times; focus on arts; building maintenance; and students rating educators.

7. Adjournment

Vice Chair Cornell made a motion to adjourn at 8:07 pm. Member Miranda seconded and it was so VOTED. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by,
Shirley Dorai

Executive Assistant to the School Committee & Superintendent