

APPROVED



Salem Academy Charter School

Minutes

Education Committee Meeting

Date and Time

Tuesday October 21, 2025 at 8:00 AM

The Salem Academy Charter School Education Committee will meet via Zoom.

Zoom Link: <https://salemacademy.cs.zoom.us/meeting/register/cdZuSnk9TEOYHKDV23at2Q>

Committee Members Present

Amy Stewart (remote), Domina DiBiase (remote), Drea Jacobs (remote), Melissa Lassen (remote), Rich Cowdell (remote), Sabrina Williams (remote), Stephanie Callahan (remote)

Committee Members Absent

None

Committee Members who left before the meeting adjourned

Amy Stewart, Melissa Lassen

Guests Present

Fallon Burke (remote)

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

B.

Call the Meeting to Order

Rich Cowdell called a meeting of the Education Committee of Salem Academy Charter School to order on Tuesday Oct 21, 2025 at 8:07 AM.

C. Approve Minutes

Amy Stewart made a motion to approve the minutes from Education Committee Meeting on 09-16-25.

Domina DiBiase seconded the motion.

The committee **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

Sabrina Williams	Aye
Stephanie Callahan	Aye
Melissa Lassen	Abstain
Amy Stewart	Aye
Drea Jacobs	Aye
Rich Cowdell	Aye
Domina DiBiase	Aye

II. Education Committee Reports

A. MCAS & Accountability Results

Drea Jacobs reviewed the MCAS and Accountability results with the committee, highlighting key data points from the state report. The state evaluates schools across multiple categories, including Achievement, Student Growth, High School Completion, Progress Toward English Proficiency, Chronic Absenteeism, and Advanced Coursework Completion.

Salem Academy was named a School of Recognition for making substantial progress toward state targets and met the Education Committee goal of increasing the number of accountability measures met by at least 15%.

Drea explained the breakdown of data, noting that the left column in the state report represents all Lower School (LS) students, while "LS LP" refers to the lowest-performing students who have been enrolled for at least two years. The right column represents the Upper School (US) as a whole, and "US LP" reflects its lowest-performing subgroup.

Highlights include:

- Chronic Absenteeism: Salem Academy exceeded the target for the overall LS and met the target for the US, with US LP students also exceeding expectations. LS LP students remain an area for growth.
- ML Performance: Multilingual Learners in the LS exceeded their targets.

- Achievement and Growth: Salem Academy outperformed both district and state averages in the percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations, improving from below the state average last year.
- Notable Gains:
 - 6th Grade Math: +21 percentage points (from 20% to 41%)
 - 8th Grade: +16% in ELA, +15% in Math, +11% in Science
 - 10th Grade Math: +12% increase
 - Student Growth Percentiles (SGP) rose in 6 of 8 assessments, including a 20-point increase in 10th Grade Math (from 52 to 72).
 - Both 7th and 10th grade cohorts demonstrated high growth in English and Math.

The Advanced Placement target was not met due to smaller junior and senior class sizes and fewer AP courses being offered during the 2023–2024 school year.

Amy Stewart left at 8:39 AM.

B. LS MTSS Updates

Sabrina Williams updated the committee on the implementation and progress of MTSS in the Lower School. The 7th and 8th grades each have a 52-minute MTSS block, while 6th grade has two blocks totaling 104 minutes. The first 10 minutes of each block are dedicated to social-emotional learning (SEL) and small-group check-ins (groups of 12–17 students).

In literacy, students participate in independent reading and a guided skills activity. In math, the block begins with SEL and transitions into two rounds of skills-based activities.

Strengths: The committee noted that the structure successfully balances academic rigor with SEL integration. The format is consistent and student engagement has been strong, with students able to choose their own independent reading books—creating positive attitudes toward MTSS.

Areas for Growth:

- Maintain the current structure while improving consistency in weekly planning uploads.
- Make the MTSS blocks more data-driven by systematically using Q1 data, MCAS scores, and MAP testing results to inform instruction.

The next step is to deepen the data-driven approach to MTSS. The initial focus has been on establishing a strong structure and getting students invested in the process, which will now serve as the foundation for more targeted intervention and progress monitoring.

C. US MTSS Updates

Melissa Lassen provided an update on MTSS implementation in the Upper School. The focus this year is on incorporating both skills-based learning and enrichment opportunities within the academic support blocks. Due to increased course differentiation, particularly among juniors and seniors, it has been more challenging to design consistent, grade-wide content for 11th and 12th grades. The 9th and 12th grade teams have been intentional about integrating trauma-informed practices into their Academic Support blocks.

Currently, MTSS runs twice per week—on A days at the end of the day (35 minutes) and Friday mornings (35 minutes). Both time slots present unique challenges: students experience fatigue at the end of the day, while attendance can be inconsistent on Friday mornings.

Staff response has been mixed. While teachers appreciate the emphasis on skill development over content review, some have noted the need for more time to balance both skill-building and targeted content support. The committee discussed continuing to refine scheduling and instructional design to maximize engagement and impact. Melissa Lassen left at 9:06 AM.

III. School Council

A. School Council Updates

The committee is still in the process of confirming the members of the School Council. Drea Jacobs will continue outreach to finalize representation from staff, students, and caregivers. The Board will continue to identify and nominate potential community members to serve on the council.

IV. Education Committee Goals

A. Progress Toward Committee Goals

The committee successfully met its goal related to accountability measures, achieving targeted improvements across key state indicators. With this milestone accomplished, the committee will begin developing new accountability and performance goals for the 2026 cycle at next month's meeting.

V. Other Business

A. Reach the Beach Update

Fallon Burke provided an update on the Reach the Beach campaign. The school successfully met its fundraising goal of \$25,000.

VI. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 9:09 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Fallon Burke

Documents used during the meeting

None