

APPROVED



Salem Academy Charter School

Minutes

Governance Committee Meeting

Date and Time

Friday November 14, 2025 at 8:00 AM

The Salem Academy Charter School Governance Committee will via Zoom.

Zoom Link:<https://salemacademy.cs.zoom.us/join/92123456789>

Committee Members Present

Edward Aroko (remote), Jeff Whitmore (remote), Steve Palmer (remote)

Committee Members Absent

Kara McLaughlin, Stephanie Callahan, Toyuwa Newton

Committee Members who left before the meeting adjourned

Edward Aroko

Guests Present

Fallon Burke (remote), Rich Cowdell (remote)

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

B.

Call the Meeting to Order

Jeff Whitmore called a meeting of the Governance Committee of Salem Academy Charter School to order on Friday Nov 14, 2025 at 8:03 AM.

C. Approve Minutes

II. Governance

A. Prospective Trustee Interviews

The Governance Committee conducted two prospective trustee interviews: Imelda Barnhurst and Blake Cullimore. Both candidates bring distinct strengths aligned with current board needs in facilities, finance, and community engagement.

Candidate: Imelda Barnhurst

Background & Interest in SACS

Imelda Barnhurst is a licensed architect and principal of her own firm. She learned about Salem Academy through The Boston Club and expressed strong interest in serving on a charter school board as a way to give back to the community and support young people's advancement. Having grown up in Woburn, left the region for Iowa, and returned to Massachusetts in 2009, she has deep roots in the area and a longstanding commitment to volunteerism.

Relevant Experience & Skills

Imelda has extensive experience in facilities design, project management, and assessing buildings with constrained resources—expertise directly aligned with the committee's needs as SACS navigates long-term facilities planning. She has participated in finance committees and has familiarity with nonprofit governance, although this would be her first full board appointment.

Board Commitment & Philanthropy

Imelda confirmed she can meet all board expectations, including regular attendance and committee participation. She is prepared to make a personally meaningful financial contribution and noted that she recently engaged in philanthropic training through The Boston Club.

Committee Interests

She is particularly well-suited for the Facilities Committee, where her architectural expertise would be highly valuable.

Additional Notes

Imelda plans to attend the November Board meeting and may have follow-up questions afterwards as she considers next steps.

Candidate: Blake Cullimore

Background & Interest in SACS

Blake Cullimore brings significant experience from the charter school finance and capital markets sector. For the last 10–15 years, he has worked with a national portfolio of more

than 90 charter schools, advising on growth, facilities, and long-term financial planning. His personal connection to Salem Academy is strong: his daughter is a current SACS student, and his son previously attended Pioneer Charter School of Science, giving him a comparative understanding of different school models.

Blake reached out proactively to explore service opportunities, citing a desire to contribute to the Salem community and to support the school that serves his family.

Relevant Experience & Skills

Blake's professional background equips him with deep expertise in school finance, capital planning, and national best practices. He regularly supports schools navigating complex fiscal and facilities decisions and would bring substantial strategic insight to the Board. He previously served on a finance committee at a Montessori school, though professional conflicts prevented him from accepting a board role at that time.

Board Commitment & Philanthropy

Blake confirmed he can meet all board obligations, including committee work. He expressed openness to serving where most needed but is an especially strong fit for the Finance Committee. He is also willing to stretch himself in areas like Development. Blake committed to making a personally meaningful philanthropic contribution.

Committee Interests

Primary interest: Finance

Secondary openness: Development (willing to engage despite less direct experience)

Additional Notes

Blake asked thoughtful questions about governance challenges, mission alignment, and long-term board needs. He emphasized that he hopes to contribute meaningfully while also learning from seasoned trustees, as this would be his first full board appointment.

B. 2026 Board Slate Development & Planning

Edward Aroko left at 8:30 AM.

The committee did not discuss the 2026 Board Slate.

C. Trustee Recruitment

The committee did not discuss trustee recruitment, other than interviewing the prospective candidates listed above.

D. 2026 Goal Setting

The committee did not discuss 2026 goal setting.

III. Other Business

A. Development Update

Fallon asked the committee to stay tuned for more details about GivingTuesday on 12/2/25.

IV. 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 9:17 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Fallon Burke