

APPROVED



Salem Academy Charter School

Minutes

Education Committee Meeting

Date and Time

Tuesday February 10, 2026 at 8:00 AM

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

Zoom Link: <https://salemacademy.cs.zoom.us/j/9876543210>

Committee Members Present

Domina DiBiase (remote), Drea Jacobs (remote), Rich Cowdell (remote), Sabrina Williams (remote), Stephanie Callahan (remote)

Committee Members Absent

Melissa Lassen, Sarah Morrill

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 Feb 10, 2026 at 8:06 AM.

C. Approve Minutes

Domina DiBiase made a motion to approve the minutes from Education Committee Meeting on 12-16-25.

Stephanie Callahan seconded the motion.

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

II. Education Committee Reports

A. Charter Amendment Request — Updated Expulsion Policy

Stephanie Callahan updated the committee that Salem Academy received notice from DESE requiring updates to the school's expulsion policy to ensure alignment with state guidelines. The proposed changes are primarily technical in nature, and the team will review the guidelines again to determine if any additional revisions are needed.

The committee discussed a vote to authorize the Executive Director to make the required edits. Domina made a motion to postpone the vote, which was seconded by Stephanie. The committee agreed to defer action at this time, with the procedural edits to be brought forward for a vote at the full Board meeting.

B. 2026-2027 School Calendar

The committee discussed the proposed 2026–27 school calendar but did not take a final vote at this time. A key consideration for the upcoming year is the late timing of Labor Day, which impacts the start and end of the school year.

Three options were presented to the Instructional Leadership Team, balancing either fixed calendar dates or maintaining a consistent cadence (e.g., starting two Tuesdays before Labor Day). It was noted that Salem Public Schools (SPS) will start four days later than the 2025–26 school year, in part by shortening Winter Break, whereas Salem Academy has traditionally maintained a full two-week Winter Break.

The committee reviewed the following options:

- **Option A:** Start two full weeks before Labor Day and end on June 17 (before Juneteenth)
- **Option B:** Start on Monday, August 24 and end on June 18
- **Option C:** Start one week before Labor Day (August 28) and end on June 24

The committee discussed the tradeoffs between earlier and later start dates. Starting earlier allows for an earlier end to the school year but may increase the risk of student absenteeism, particularly when SACS begins significantly earlier than neighboring

districts. A later start provides alignment with local districts and offers additional time for summer planning, onboarding, and staff preparation, which is especially valuable this year.

Based on attendance data and operational considerations, Stephanie Callahan, Drea Jacobs, and Rich expressed a preference for a variation of Option C, emphasizing reduced absenteeism risk and the benefit of extended summer preparation time. The group discussed using Labor Day as a consistent anchor for determining the start date moving forward.

Next steps include presenting the options to the CTLs for feedback. The committee voted to recommend a calendar approach that begins one week before Labor Day, with a final decision to be made at a future meeting.

C. 2026 Committee Goals

The committee discussed proposed goals for 2026. The primary academic goal is to increase overall accountability performance by 10%, from 62% to 68%, across all accountability measures for both the Lower and Upper Schools. This includes key indicators such as achievement, student growth, graduation rate, advanced coursework (AP), and chronic absenteeism.

The committee also discussed a goal related to Trustee Recruitment, recognizing the importance of continued Board development and engagement.

Domina DiBiase made a motion to approve the 2026 Education Committee Goals.

Drea Jacobs seconded the motion.

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

D. LS School Updates

Sabrina Williams provided Lower School updates to the committee. Interim Assessments were administered both right before and immediately after Winter Break. MAP data continues to be used to identify skill gaps, while Interim Assessments measure progress toward benchmarks and standards. Based on early indicators, the team is hopeful that students will demonstrate growth across all grades on upcoming state assessments.

As a next step, each teacher completed a data analysis document following the Interim Assessments, identifying “glows and grows.” At this time, teachers are not sending these data analysis summaries home to families.

Sabrina also shared recent and upcoming Lower School happenings, including Winter Trips at the end of January, National Junior Honor Society (NJHS) Kindness Month, and the REACH Wall. Q2 Celebrations took place on February 14 and were offered both in person and virtually for families. Interim Assessment #3 will serve as a mock MCAS, and

Content Retreats are ongoing. The team also reviewed mid-year survey data related to school culture.

E. US School Updates

Drea Jacobs provided Upper School updates in Melissa Lassen's absence. Upper School Winter Trips took place on February 10, 2026. The 9th grade is currently completing the mid-year REACH survey.

Looking ahead, AP Interims are beginning for Upper School students. These include full-length practice exams, and all teachers will engage in data analysis following the assessments. Additionally, a College Board AP professional development session is scheduled for March 6, 2026, for all AP and pre-AP teachers.

F. Q2 Academic Report

Drea Jacobs presented the Q2 Academic Report and shared that the Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) is actively working to analyze the data.

Winter MAP Data included a newly added midyear checkpoint to better track student progress. In Math, the data shows a continued trend of growth in the Middle School, with 8th grade demonstrating particularly strong performance in its third year of implementing the Eureka Math Squared curriculum. However, there are notable areas of concern in High School math, particularly in grades 9 and 10, where targeted supports have been put in place.

In English, particularly in reading and language, the data indicates limited growth at the High School level, which remains an area of focus.

The committee also reviewed chronic absenteeism data. The Lower School is on track to meet its goals, while the Middle School is close. The High School remains significantly below target. The school is proactively tracking students with 10+ absences, rather than waiting until the 18+ threshold, to intervene earlier.

Midyear survey data was also discussed. In the area of Safe & Supportive, the Lower School results are slightly below target, and Sabrin

III. Other Business

A. Development Update

Fallon Burke reminded the committee that the early bird discount for Gala tickets is valid through Friday, February 13th.

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 9:09 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Fallon Burke

Documents used during the meeting

- LS Updates x Academic Comm SY25-26.pdf
- Academic Report 2.5.26.pdf