

APPROVED



Salem Academy Charter School

Minutes

Governance Committee Meeting

Date and Time

Friday May 8, 2026 at 8:00 AM

The Salem Academy Charter School Governance Committee will via Zoom.

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

Committee Members Present

Beth O'Donnell (remote), Jeff Whitmore (remote), Rich Cowdell (remote), Steve Palmer (remote)

Committee Members Absent

Stephanie Callahan

Committee Members who left before the meeting adjourned

Beth O'Donnell, Steve Palmer

Guests Present

Fallon Burke (remote), Mike Mizzoni (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 May 8, 2026 at 8:02 AM.

C. Approve Minutes

Rich Cowdell made a motion to approve the minutes from Governance Committee Meeting on 04-10-26.

Beth O'Donnell seconded the motion.

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

II. Governance

A. Board Self-Evaluation

Mike Mizzoni from BoardOnTrack joined the Governance Committee to review the results of the Board Self-Assessment. The Board utilized the BoardOnTrack assessment tool and achieved a 100% completion rate.

Mike emphasized that the assessment is not intended to label boards as “good” or “bad,” nor is it a reflection of whether trustees are newer or more experienced. Rather, the tool is designed to measure progress along a “path to excellence” and benchmark charter school boards nationally. He noted that most boards initially score around a Level 2 out of 5, while Salem Academy’s Board currently scores at a Level 4.

The committee discussed the importance of first acknowledging areas where the Board and Executive Director scored highly before identifying opportunities for growth. Mike encouraged the Board not to interpret lower scores as prescriptive action items, but instead to identify approximately three key areas for focus moving forward. He noted that one of the most valuable aspects of the assessment is its ability to:

- Celebrate strengths and accomplishments
- Highlight opportunities for growth
- Identify areas where the Board may lack shared understanding or where perceptions differ between the Board and Executive Director

During discussion, Beth noted that some lower responses may reflect trustee experience levels, particularly for recently onboarded members who may not yet be familiar with all Board responsibilities, such as voting on the audit. The committee discussed the potential value of creating a concise “Board Responsibilities and Voting Overview” as a refresher tool for trustees.

The committee also discussed ways to strengthen Board communication and education. Mike highlighted that high-functioning boards often include committee updates that not only summarize current work but also preview upcoming decisions or responsibilities.

Strategic Board education opportunities were discussed as well, including short recorded videos or summaries to accompany lengthy materials such as the annual audit report.

Mike identified development and Board education as areas that stood out for further consideration, while acknowledging that Salem Academy may intentionally approach development differently than some other schools.

The committee discussed the possibility of tasking committees with further analysis of specific assessment themes to help inform priorities and work for the next school year.

Next Steps: Mike recommended introducing the assessment findings to the full Board at the May meeting, focusing on the purpose and intended use of the report. A more in-depth discussion would then take place in June after trustees have had time to review the results.

Steve Palmer left at 8:42 AM.

B. Board Job Descriptions

The committee continued its review of the Board and committee chair job descriptions and discussed feedback received from committee chairs.

Rich Cowdell, Chair of the Education Committee, recommended removing language related to assessment tools and updating references across all committee descriptions to emphasize maintaining compliance with the bylaws.

Chris Graham, Chair of the Finance Committee, recommended adding language related to participation on the Foundation Board Investment Committee. He also suggested incorporating language about collaboration between the Finance and Facilities Committees related to capital improvements and the Shetland Park redevelopment. The committee ultimately agreed to keep the language broader by referencing collaboration with other committee chairs “as needed.”

Laurie Kennedy, Chair of the Development Committee, did not have additional feedback on the draft descriptions.

Domina DiBiase, Chair of the HR Committee, provided feedback regarding the listed annual meeting expectations and questioned whether the stated time commitments should also explicitly account for monthly committee meetings.

C. 2026 Committee Goals Progress

The committee did not discuss progress toward goals.

Beth O'Donnell left at 9:02 AM.

III. Other Business

A.

Development Update

Fallon Burke updated the committee on the REACH for College Gala and Annual Fund progress. Preliminary totals indicate that the Gala raised approximately \$66,000, and the Annual Fund has reached \$133,000.

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

- Salem Academy Assessment Report.pptx
- SACS_Board_Job_Descriptions_and_Time_Estimates_4.10.26.docx