

Special Meeting  
South Orange-Maplewood  
Board of Education  
February 16, 2016

A Special Meeting of the Board of Education of South Orange-Maplewood was held in the District Meeting Room at the Administration Building, 525 Academy Street, Maplewood, New Jersey, on February 16, 2016.

Board President Elizabeth Baker called the meeting to order at 6:40 p.m.

Adequate written notice of this meeting of the South Orange-Maplewood Board of Education was sent to the Township and Village Clerks, the Libraries, The Star Ledger, the News Record and all schools.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL: Present: Ms. Baker, Mrs. Daugherty, Ms. Jones, Ms. Maini, Mr. Sabin, Ms. Smith, Mrs. Wright

Absent: Mrs. Lawson-Muhammad, Ms. Pai

7 VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT

MOTION made by Mrs. Daugherty, seconded by Ms. Jones to recess to Executive Session to discuss recent litigation, Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying (HIB) and personnel matter. Motion unanimously approved at 6:44 p.m.

***Board recessed to executive session at 6:44 pm  
Board reconvened in public session at 7:45 pm***

***8 voting members and one student representative present***

Present: Ms. Baker, Mrs. Daugherty, Ms. Jones, Ms. Kambili, Ms. Maini, Ms. Pai, Mr. Sabin, Ms. Smith, Mrs. Wright.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION - Dr. Ramos

Dr. Ramos and members of the Strategic Steering Committee presented a Powerpoint presentation on Strategic Direction, which outlined the 12 steps of strategic planning and addressed the following topics:

- Why do we need a Strategic Plan?
- Action Planning Teams
- Action Planning Process
- Strategic Direction - Communications
- Maximizing Academic Excellence: seat time
- Maximizing Academic Excellence: learner centered
- Maximizing Academic Excellence: Creating a Well -Balanced Plan
- Maximizing Academic Excellence: Checks and Balances and Pacing
- Approval of the Strategic Direction  
[presentation on file in Board Secretary's Office and on district website]

**Mrs. Lawson-Muhammad arrived at 8:15 pm  
9 voting members and one student representative present**

Discussion following the presentation included the following topics:

- Defining the phrase "learning centered"
- The Board's role in the strategic plan and reporting progress to Board committees.
- Strategic plan is a multi-year plan compared to the prior structure of multi-year goals. A plan gives direction.

The Board of Education weighs in at various points in the development process.

HEARING OF INDIVIDUALS AND DELEGATIONS

<u>NAME</u>	<u>Topic - Strategic Direction</u>
Claire Licht MMS Student	Spoke about the mixed results of learner centered environments. Exceptional teachers already employ multiple methods of teaching including learner-centered methods. Need to find balance of different teaching methods which good teachers already do.
Ingrid Wickelgren Maplewood	Sought clarification on definition of learner centered, Dr. Stornetta described individualized learning which requires a customized curriculum for each student and the student. Clarification would be helpful.
Sabine Hack South Orange	Concerned about implementation in an environment that has gone through multiple changes in the past few years. Suggested the Board consider pilot programs so that implementation is a thoughtful process.
Scott Golodner Maplewood	Feels the strategic direction is vague. There is no mention of levels, which has been important to the district for many years. What will be the impact on levels and what other changes are included in the strategic direction.
Melanie Hochberg-Giger Maplewood	Expressed concern that the strategic direction does not capture thoughts from the Education Summit and that the Mission Statement does not mention academics. Student centered learning was not a topic introduced at the Summit.
Morgan Hillis Maplewood	Concerned that implementing the Strategic Plan August 2016 is too soon. Asks that the Board slows the process, identify deficiencies associated with schools and how plan will address these issues. The mission statement should be amended to refer to academic excellence and rigor.

Sean Butkus Maplewood	Appreciates opportunity to be on an action committee but would have liked to be on the curriculum committee. Indicated that there are strong advocates for change on the implementation teams.
Mark Lowenthal Maplewood	Impressed with presentation and is inspired, but is concerned about the pace and schedule and what he's read on learner centered environments.
Shannel Roberts Maplewood	Concerned that there is no mention of Seth Boyden in the Strategic Direction. Attended the Summit about reinvisioning Seth Boyden and would like to see this program addressed.
Susan Lopez Maplewood	Shared concerns brought up by previous speakers regarding learning centered instruction and also the transparency of the process.
Marian Raab South Orange	Asks the board to slow down and listen to the concerns of everyone who spoke tonight. She is uncomfortable with the idea of private funding for public education.
Steve Latz Maplewood	Feels the strategic plan is a reasonable approach, but isn't the culture for transforming schools. The strategic plan is missing an environmental scan to identify what the issues are and get community buy-in to address problems. Also commented on the need for the budget to align with legal mandates and priorities.

Board discussion following the hearing of individuals and delegations included the following comments and questions:

- How will implementation of the strategic plan be different from International Baccalaureate Program implementation?
- This is not the strategic plan but an outline, it is a strategic direction.
- Should Board members be part of Action Teams?
- The need for student, parent and teacher forums as part of the process and questioned why Board student representatives are not on action teams.
- Strategic plan process should not be rushed and needs to be transparent.
- Need a glossary for terms such as learning centered environment.
- Items from Education Summit were discussed and boiled down. Took a lot of work and was done by consensus by the Strategic Committee.

ITEM FOR ACTION

MOTION made by Mrs. Daugherty seconded by Ms. Pai, that the Board of Education approves the following:

3378. WHEREAS, the South Orange Maplewood School District is engaged in a Strategic Planning process which involves a 12 step process including (1) collecting data, (2) synthesizing data, (3) creating strategic direction, (4) communicating strategic direction, (5) identifying action planning teams, (6) training the action planning teams, (7) action team meetings to develop implementation steps, (8) Action Plan Strategies presented to and accepted by the Strategic Direction Committee, (9) Action Plan Strategies presented to and approved by the Board of Education, (10) implementation schedule creation, (11) implementation, and (12) feedback and monitoring of implementation;

AND WHEREAS, the Strategic Planning process has progressed through the development of a Strategic Direction which has been communicated to the Board of Education;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Board of Education accept the Strategic Direction document and approve the continuation of the Strategic Planning process;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Board of Education authorize the development of specific action plans for each strategy as the next phase of creating the Strategic Plan.

ROLL CALL: Motion 3378, passed. YES: Ms. Baker, Mr. Bennett, Mrs. Daugherty, Ms. Jones, Mrs. Lawson-Muhammad, Ms. Pai, Ms. Smith, NO: Mrs. Wright

HEARING OF INDIVIDUALS AND DELEGATIONS

<u>Name</u>	<u>Topic</u>
Elisa Malespina South Orange	Commented that strategic direction is more than just two words and needs clarification. The concerns raised by the public need attention.

Future Meetings

The Board of Education will hold a Community Forum at 7:30 pm on Monday, March 7, 2016 in the District Meeting Room, 525 Academy Street, Maplewood, NJ 07040 to discuss the 2016-17 preliminary budget. No action will be taken.

The Board of Education will meet in Closed Session on Monday, March 21, 2016 at 6:30pm in the Superintendent's Office to discuss personnel and legal issues, negotiations and other matters to be announced at a later date. Immediately following the Closed Session, the Board of Education will meet in Public Session at 7:30pm in the District Meeting Room, 525 Academy Street, Maplewood, NJ. Action will be taken.

Motion made by Ms. Smith seconded by Mrs. Daugherty, that the Board of Education will meet in Executive Session prior to the March 21, 2016 Public Meeting to discuss personnel matters, legal matters, Special Education matters, negotiations, security and other matters, the nature

of which will be made public at a future date. No action will be taken.  
Motion unanimously approved.

MOTION made by Mrs. Daugherty, seconded by Ms. Smith, that the Board of  
Education adjourn. Motion unanimously approved at 10:18 p.m.

---

Cheryl Schneider, Board Secretary