

Special Meeting
South Orange-Maplewood
Board of Education
August 26, 2021

A Special Meeting of the Board of Education of South Orange-Maplewood was held using the online video conference platform on August 26, 2021.

Board President Thair Joshua called the meeting to order at 6:32 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 Star Ledger, the News Record, TAPintoSOMA.net, villagegreennj.com and the District website.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL: Present: Board Member Bergin, Board Member Cuttle
Board Member Joshua, Board Member Maini,
Board Member Malespina, Board Member Sabin,
Board Member Winkfield, Board Member Wright

Absent: Board Member Siders (joined at 6:59 p.m.)

EIGHT VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT

Board President Joshua welcomed new Business Administrator/Board Secretary Mr. Eric Burnside.

BOARD PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT

The School Board meeting is a business meeting in public not a meeting with the public. Oftentimes it may appear to members of our audience that the Board of Education takes action with very little comment and in many cases a unanimous vote. Before a matter is placed on the agenda at a public meeting, the Administration has thoroughly reviewed the matter with the Superintendent of Schools/Chief School Administrator (CSA). If the Superintendent of Schools/Chief School Administrator is satisfied that the matter is ready to be presented to the Board of Education, it is then referred to the appropriate Board Committee. The Members of the Board Committee work with Administration and the Superintendent to assure that the members fully understand the matter. After the committee discusses the matter, it is presented to the full Board for discussion before any action is taken. Only then, is it placed on the agenda for action at a public meeting.

Motion made by Board President Joshua, seconded by Board Member Cuttle to allow distance participation in tonight's Special Board Meeting.

Motion passed 8 yes, 0 no.

HEARING OF INDIVIDUALS AND DELEGATIONS

NONE.

ITEM FOR ACTION

Motion made by Dr. Taylor, seconded by Board Member Sabin that the Board of Education approves the following:

4191. Reject all bids received August 19, 2021 for Building Additions and Renovations at South Mountain and South Mountain Annex Schools. The bids received exceed the project budget and therefore are rejected.

Motion 4191 passed. YES: Bergin, Cuttle, Joshua, Maini, Malespina, Sabin, Winkfield, Wright NO: None

Motion made by Board President Joshua, seconded by Board Member Malespina to move to the Board Retreat to discuss Board and District Goals.

Motion unanimously approved.

BOARD RETREAT

DISCUSSION

Board President Joshua and Board Members began the Retreat by briefly discussing the process to revise Board Goals. Charlene Peterson, NJSBA Field Representative provided Board President Joshua with comments from the July Board Retreat. These comments were reviewed by the Executive Committee to identify recurring themes. Board Member feedback from the July retreat will be incorporated into revised Board Goals.

Board Member Malespina left the meeting at 6:57 p.m.

7 VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT

Board Member Siders joined the meeting at 6:59 p.m.

8 VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT

SOMSD DISTRICT GOALS 2021-2022

Board President Joshua presented a Powerpoint presentation on District Goals for the 2021-2022 school year. The presentation outlined the following:

- Themes for Goals by Committee
 - o Personnel Themes
 - Rewriting Job Descriptions
 - Diversity Hiring
 - Staff Retention
 - Targeted Professional Development on anti-bias and anti-racism in education.
 - o Policy Themes
 - Elementary Integration - Technical
 - Middle School Integration - Technical
 - District Integration - Adaptive
 - o Finance (Facilities & Technology) Themes

- Support the current and prospective needs associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Regular monitoring and reporting on elementary school construction projects.
- Further develop and finalize secondary school construction planning.
- Consolidation of classroom applications in use throughout the district
- Use data to support budget development; identify inequities in allocation of resources
- o Curriculum and Instruction Themes
 - Teaching and Learning/Student Achievement
 - High Expectations and Rigorous Instruction
 - Inclusive Curriculum and Assessment
- o Other Topics
 - Alternative School
 - Discussion on development of action plans to reflect how district plans to hit the goals
- o Next Steps
 - Board
 - Continue discussion on topics raised tonight
 - Refine themes discussed this evening into draft goals for discussion at September committee meetings
 - Post committee meeting - revise to final draft
 - Vote on at September 20th general meeting

HEARING OF INDIVIDUALS AND DELEGATIONS

Tyrone Jean

I am highly concerned that all children are being forced to wear face coverings for the entire school day. What is the psychological damage of teaching children to fear one another, and to prohibit them from seeing facial expressions? What effects does masking wearing for long periods of time have on immune system for young children, and forcing them to breathe through sweat, spit, dirt, and bacteria rags all day? 480 kids died from the flu in the 2018-2019 season. That is more deaths than COVID- 19 had in the past year and a half in kids aged 0-18. Why haven't we forced masks on children in previous flu seasons? The death rate of COVID-19 for children is nearly ZERO percent, 0.008% to be exact. With the vaccine ready and available for adults and older children, we should give parents the choice to send their children to school with a mask, or not. There will be many children who feel uncomfortable with mask wearing all day. It is cruel and unnecessary to force all children to wear masks for the entire day. This is not for protection, this is child abuse. Please provide students and parents with the choice to do what is best for their child.

Future Meetings

The Board of Education's Curriculum & Instruction Committee, which is a committee of the whole, will meet in public on Tuesday, September 14, 2021 at 5:30 pm utilizing an online video conference platform.

The Board of Education will meet in Closed Session on Monday, September 20, 2021 at 6:30 pm in the Superintendent's Office, 525 Academy Street, Maplewood, NJ, as well as using the online video conference platform 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 7:30 pm in the District Meeting Room, 525 Academy Street, Maplewood, NJ in person and utilizing an online video conference platform which will include Hearing of Individuals. The community can view the meeting by following the steps which will be listed on the agenda. If there are members of the community who would like to attend the meeting in person, please note that masks and social distancing are required in accordance with the guidance received from the local DOH and the CDC. Action will be taken.

Motion made by Board President Joshua, seconded by Board Member Sabin, that the Board of Education will meet in Executive Session prior to the September 14, 2021 Public Meeting to discuss personnel and legal issues, negotiations and other matters, the nature of which will be made public at a future date. Motion unanimously approved.

Motion made by Board President Joshua, seconded by Board Member Cuttle to adjourn to Executive Session. Motion unanimously approved at 8:05 p.m.

Eric Burnside, Board Secretary