

Special Meeting
Policy Committee
South Orange-Maplewood
Board of Education
February 8, 2022

A Special Public Meeting of the Board of Education of South Orange-Maplewood was held utilizing the online video conference platform on February 8, 2022.

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 Joshua,
Board Member Malespina, Board Member Siders,
Board Member Telesford, Board Members Vadlamani,
Board Member Wittleder, Board Member Wright,
Student Rep. Noah Morros

Absent: Board Member Winkfield (joined at 6:38 p.m.)

Motion made by Board President Joshua, seconded by Board Member Siders to allow distance participation in our monthly Regular Board Meeting.

Motion passed 8 yes, 0 no.

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.

Superintendent's Update

We want to acknowledge that we are aware of the Governor's recent announcement that he will be sunseting the school mask requirements in the state of NJ on March 7th. Have heard from a few family members, parents and constituents who have varying views on this and what this means for our District. Our message right now is that we started our mask mandate prior to the Governor's statewide mandate and we continue to work with our departments of health and members of health and wellness sub-committee on these types of topics and we are very scientific in reviewing the available data and including our local CALI score for our county and will be doing so before any change will be made to our current mask mandate. We will keep everyone updated on that very important topic before any changes are made.

PUBLIC SPEAKS HEARINGS AND INDIVIDUALS

None.

***Board Member Winkfield joined the meeting at 6:38 p.m.
NINE VOTING MEMBERS AND ONE STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE PRESENT***

POLICY COMMITTEE OVERVIEW PRESENTATION - Ms. Susie Budine

This evening we wanted to share an overview of a document we have been working on. The Policy Committee has been working on procedures for policy review. This is an overview of where we are in the process. This is a working document. We expect to continue to make revisions and changes to this process as we go but we wanted to share with you where we are right now.

The Presentation included the following:

- Overview
 - The District utilizes the company Strauss Esmay to help us with policy for policy and regulation consulting services. Strauss Esmay develops policy manuals based on state and federal laws and informs districts when policies need to be updated through periodic alerts that we receive.
 - The Policy chair will forward Strauss Esmay alerts to Committee chairs to review for their policy series with their SLT Liaison.
 - A list of all policies/regulations are maintained on the [Policy Tracking](#) spreadsheet to keep track of what's been reviewed, what up for review, what's been approved.
 - The Policy Committee will select policies in need of review on a monthly basis.
(Note: Currently, there is a backlog of missing and out of date policies.) We're working diligently on this.
 - Policies will be reviewed based on the "Policy Management" schedule.

- Policy Management Process
 - Review missing policies on a regular basis;
 - Review mandatory/mandated policies on an annual basis or or as when Strauss Esmay notifies us. They may notify us that a policy needs to be reviewed due to legislative code.
 - All other policies should be reviewed every 5 years;
 - Policy committee works with other committee chairs to ensure the board policies are up to date and reviewed regularly;

- Board Committee Policy Assignment - Each committee has a set of policies that they provide feedback on based on their area of specialty.
 - Executive Committee
 - 0000 Bylaws
 - 1000 Administration
 - Curriculum & Instruction
 - 2000 - Program
 - 5000 - Students
 - Personnel
 - 3000 Teaching Staff
 - 4000 Support Staff
 - Finance, Facilities & Technology
 - 6000 Finances
 - 7000 Property
 - 8000 Operations
 - Policy
 - 9000 Community

- Selection of Policies for Review
 - Policy committees selects and sends policies to the committees each month for review.
 - The Committee receives feedback from each committee and the prepares policies for first reading at the next Board Meeting.
 - Policies will be prioritized based on:
 - Policies enacted due to the Governor's Executive Order
 - QSAC policies
 - Missing Policies
 - Mandated Policies out of Compliance
 - Other Policies out of Compliance

- Policies identified by the Board members or administration (may be elevated in priority depending on circumstances)
 - Mandated Policies in Compliance
 - Other Policies
- Policy Review Process
 - PDF copies of each policy, including the recommended changes by Strauss Esmay are forwarded to the appropriate Board Committee.
 - Committees review the policies at their committee meetings and discuss suggested revisions or changes
 - Feedback is then provided in the form of comments on the document
 - Committee chairs or Committee SLT Liaison forwards feedback to Policy Chair, Policy SLT Liaison and Policy administrative support within 24 hours after the committee meeting.
 - Administrative support will prepare edited policy, if applicable for review by the Policy Committee.
 - Edits to the policy documents are made by Confidential Secretary to the Superintendent.
 - Policy Committee will review the proposed revised
 - Policy Committee may seek additional feedback or information from sources such as:
 - Original Reviewing Committee
 - Other Board Committees
 - District Counsel
 - Research related to policies in other Districts or the NJSBA version of the policy
 - Policy committees makes any additional revisions they feel are necessary.
 - Once the policy committees feels the policies are up to date and reflect the District goals, they are placed on the agenda for 1st reading at the next scheduled Board of Education meeting.
 - After the first reading, board members will email the policy chair with their additional comments, questions, edits (if applicable)
 - At the next Policy Committee meeting, all feedback received will be reviewed.
 - If a policy requires further edits/legal review that cannot be completed in time for the monthly BOE meeting, the policy can be pulled to be presented at a later date. Note: Pulled policies start the cycle over: Assignment of policy to the appropriate committee for review
 - Policy Committee review and revision
 - Submit for 1st reading and then 2nd reading prior to approval
 - If a policy does not need further edits /review, then the policy can be added to the BOE agenda for 2nd reading/Board approval.

- District Administrative Action on Approved/Adopted Board Policies
 - o District includes approved/adopted policies in BOE meeting newsletter outlining highlights and important pieces of information for the administration implementing the policies.
 - o Administration places policy on website where they can be actively viewed
 - o Update master policy review chart
 - o Administration reviews and updates regulations (if applicable)
 - o Regulation updates will be tracked on the Policy Tracking spreadsheet;
 - o Policies can be found the district website
<https://www.somds.k12.nj.us/board-of-education/policies/>

The presentation is the working version of our process that we follow to make sure we are keeping our board policies prioritized, have them in an organized manner, are following through the review process, that we are getting feedback from everyone that we should be getting feedback from and that we are getting it back in an organized and timely manner to make sure we stay on top of policy review.

Board Member Susan Bergin

Thank You for the presentation, I want to let the full Board ask questions and refine it in any way because the only way for the Board to stay on top of policies is for the full Board to take ownership of the polices for their sections. That is part of the reason we are doing this. There was a period of time where there wasn't a policy committee on the board and the board got far behind in the polices and we really need everyone's help to catch up because Strauss Esmay sends these changes on a rolling basis. We hope that writing this document will help get everyone on board, clarify everyone's roles and improve the communication and the feedback from the committees. Some things go into the minutes of the committees - but the policy committee doesn't see the minutes of those committees until the day of the board meeting so it cannot be considered for the things that are up then. If anyone has any suggestions on how to improve the process, this would be a good time.

Board Member Arun Vladamani

Are there any penalties for not updating mandated compliance required policies?

Superintendent Ronald Taylor

That would come in our NJQSAC review. The NJQSAQ review is the District wide review on a 3-year cycle for districts around the State. It was postponed due to COVID. When they come, they check all of our policies to make sure we have updated all our mandated policies. It takes points away from the governance portion of our NJQSAC review.

Board President Thair Joshua

Please outline the prioritization list so that if we have 10 policies that fit within that same bucket, how does prioritization happen then?

Board Member Bergin

What I've tried to do each month is a mix of things that require a lot of work and things that are more standard from Strauss Esmay, so that we have the time to put the thought into the things that require a lot of work. That doesn't always pan out. One way to keep things moving is to start the process earlier, not the month that we think that it's going to be first read but before that to get things out to the committees to give them time to plan and to work things into their committee schedules as well. We do have a lot of mandated policies that are outdated. We also have a lot that may not have been readopted recently but may not have had changes from Strauss Esmay, so those would be a lower priority.

Susie Budine

Next are the Board policies that are up for second read. We will first go through the second read policies to see whether there are any comments or revisions to take into consideration and then we will go to first read.

The Board discussed the following policies for second reading

- 2421 Career & Technical Education
- 3142 Non-renewal of Non-Tenured Teaching Staff Member
- 3221 Evaluation of Teaching Staff Members Excluding Teachers and Administrators
- 3222 Evaluation of Teaching Staff Members, Excluding Teachers and Administrators
- 3223 Evaluation of Administrators, Excluding Principals, Vice Principals, and Assistant Principals
- 3224 Evaluation of Principals, Vice Principals, and Assistant Principals
- 4146 Non-renewal of Non-Tenured Support Staff Member
- 4219 Commercial Driver's License Controlled Substance and Alcohol Abuse

Policies in the process of being prepared for first reading:

- 0156.1 Board Representatives
- 2415.04 Title 1 - District-wide Parental Involvement (M)
- 2422 Comprehensive Health and Physical Education (M)
- 5519 Dating Violence at School (M)
- 7436 Drug Free Workplace (M)
- 8330 Student Records (M)
- 9130 Public Complaints and Grievances

Strauss Esmay Policy Alerts

- Policy Alert 226/January 2022 has been shared with Board Committees. The committee breakdown is as follows:
 - Bylaws: EXEC
 - 1000 Administration: EXEC
 - 2000 Program: C&I
 - 3000 Teaching Staff Members: PERSONNEL
 - 4000 Support Staff: PERSONNEL
 - 5000 Students: C&I
 - 6000 Finances: FFT
 - 7000 Property: FFT
 - 8000 Operations: FFT
 - 9000 Community: POLICY
 -

Individual Policy Discussion

Policy 2421

Board member and administration discussion on Policy 2421 Career & Technical Educational on whether to provide more information to parents about vocational technical opportunities including actively advertising those programs.

Possible recommendation is that language be added to the policy that the "District communicate annually the options for these programs and the administration will facilitate the communication.

Question of how many or percentage of students are affected by this program/policy. The administration will provide this information.

Policies 3142, 4146 no discussion.

Policies 3221, 3222, 3223, 3224 no discussion.

Policy 4219 no discussion.

Policies for reading discussed.

Policy 0156.1

Discussion on having Board members represent a particular school could represent an ethical challenge. Policy brought forward to Executive Committee and recommendation is for the policy to be repealed. Policy 0156.1 does appear in Strauss Esmay.

Policy 8330

Language added for students to be able to change their names for student records if they so choose for students that are LGBTQ Student current & former students). Recommended language: "The Board of Education of the South Orange Maplewood School District aligns with and fully supports the New Jersey Department's effort to create an inclusive environment in which transgendered and gender nonconforming students feel safe and supported and to assure that each school provides equal educational opportunities for all students in compliance with NJAC 6A:7-1.1 et seq. This includes all applicable legal rights for current and former students regarding the topic of student records of any kind, including, but not limited to names on report cards, transcripts, gender, rosters, etc."

Reference in the policy that the Board adopts the regulation should be removed from the policy.

Policy 2415.04 no discussion.

Policy 2422

This policy should be pulled from the agenda for more discussion. Board members can provide feedback in advance to get this ready for first reading.

Additional discussion regarding the appropriate age for consent from grades 6-12 to PreK-12.

Policy 5519

This policy will not be ready for first reading; policy needs to be reviewed by the Sexual Taskforce. Other concerns are whether this policy is outdated and is only relevant to students that are dating and whether there are components covered by Title IX or other policies.

Policy 7436

Clarity that it is the Superintendent who reports to law enforcement and not the Board. Discussion on how this policy applies to contractors/contracted employees.

Policy 9130

Discussion brought forth to ensure we have a policy in place due to the recent challenges concerning books and materials and other information brought forth in the State of New Jersey. Strauss Esmay has not updated this policy.

Add in "Asian American" bill 'AAIP' of an example, which was just approved.

Citations should also be updated and be put in order.

Strauss Esmay Alert Information Alert - Each chair and liaison and should go through the alert review the information and pull out the information pertinent to their committee and send comments to the policy committee for feedback.

The meeting turned over to Vice President Bergin.

- Old Business
 - Request from the Executive Committee to write a mission statement. Board Member Bergin drafted a mission statement but thinks it is best to discuss it next month at the regular Policy Committee Meeting.
- New Business - None

FUTURE MEETINGS

The Board of Education will meet in Closed Session on Thursday, February 24, 2022 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

Motion made by Board President Joshua, seconded by Board Member Wittleder, that the Board of Education will meet in Executive Session prior to the February 24, 2022 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.

HEARING OF INDIVIDUALS AND DELEGATIONS

Shannon Cuttle

Previous public committee meetings, for example the Curriculum and Instruction Committee as a whole have not had public speaks. Could you please explain to the public the difference with the public special meeting that is not a meeting of the whole but a special public meeting of a committee meeting.

Motion made by Board President Joshua, seconded by Board Member Wittleder to adjourn to Executive Session to discuss personnel, legal issues and negotiations. Motion to adjourn to Executive Session Unanimously approved at 8:14 p.m.

Eric Burnside, Business Administrator