

Special Meeting
Board Retreat
South Orange-Maplewood
Board of Education
July 21, 2022

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, as well as utilizing the online video conference platform on July 21, 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 posted on the District website.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL: Present: Board Member Bergin, Board President Joshua,
Board Member Siders, Board Member Telesford,
Board Member Vadlamani, Board Member Winkfield,
Board Member Wittleder, Board Member Wright

Absent: Board Member Malespina

EIGHT VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT

Motion made by Board President Joshua, seconded by Board Member Siders to allow distance participation for this Special Board meeting - Board Retreat. Motion passed unanimously.

BOARD PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT

The school board meeting is a business meeting in public and 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 then shared with the other Board members for consideration. Only then is it placed on the agenda for Board discussion and action at a public meeting.

HEARING OF INDIVIDUALS AND DELEGATIONS

The following SOMEA members spoke about retroactive payments due to staff: Shira Lincoln SOMEA VP, Clair Sinclair, Randy Post, Leah Vandoornik, Matt Borkowski, Lynn Stradford and Amanda Mazzarella.

Community Member Lillian Harris spoke about courtesy bussing and communication to families.

Dr. Taylor thanked the individuals who spoke for sharing their personal stories and while he is unable to speak about negotiations and personnel matters, he reassured everyone that their voices have been heard and that conversations on how to resolve the matter will happen.

Board President Joshua thanked Mr. Bonds and Mr. Myers for all they have done over the last year to make hybrid Board meetings possible for everyone.

BOARD RETREAT

DISCUSSION

Charlene Peterson, Field Representative for New Jersey School Boards Association facilitated the Board Retreat. The Retreat focused on the Board Self-Evaluation as outlined below. Board Members were placed in break out groups of threes and were given particular standard areas to review how the Board evaluated itself in this area and the comments provided. Board members were instructed to note positives, areas of improvement and solutions. Board Member reconvened as one group and shared their thoughts.

- Governance Leadership Culture
- Protocols to Facilitate Governance Leadership
- Overview of Board Self-Evaluation 2022
 - Board to Value - Chart I
 - Board to Individual - Chart II
 - Current year vs Prior year - Chart III
 - Quantification of Relative Value for the following standards: Planning, Policy, Student Achievement, Finance, Board Operation, Board Performance, Board/Superintendent Relationships, Board/Staff Relationships, Board and Community Relationships
 - Summary

HEARING OF INDIVIDUALS AND DELEGATIONS

None.

NEW BUSINES

Board Member Wittleder shared with the Board that the transportation financials will not be available to the Board today as planned, but will be available tomorrow during a special FFT Committee Meeting. Asked if the financials will be made available before tomorrow's FFT meeting so that committee members will have the chance to review the information in advance.

Board Member Wittleder also inquired about retroactive payments that were spoke about during the Hearing of Individuals and Delegates.

Dr. Taylor responded that Mr. Burnside will provide answers to her questions during the FFT Committee Meeting tomorrow.

Future Meetings

Board President Joshua made the following motions seconded by Board Member Siders :

The Board of Education will meet in a Special Public Meeting on Monday, August 1, 2022, at 6:30 pm in the District Meeting Room, 525 Academy Street, Maplewood, NJ, as well as using the online video conference platform, which will include Hearing of Individuals and Delegations and a public discussion on transportation services to students for the upcoming school year. Immediately following the Public Session, the Board of Education will move to go into closed session for the Board Retreat, in person and utilizing an online video conference platform for a District Goal Setting Retreat, and to discuss matters within the attorney-client privilege along with pending and threatened legal matters. The Board of Education will thereafter return to public session, where action may be taken, before it adjourns its meeting. Motion unanimously approved.

The Board of Education will meet in Public Session on Thursday, August 25, 2022 at 6:30 pm in the District Meeting Room, 525 Academy Street, Maplewood, NJ. Immediately following the opening of Public Session, the board will move to go into a Closed Session in the Superintendent's Office, 525 Academy Street, Maplewood, NJ, as well as using an online video conference platform to discuss personnel, matters within the attorney-client privilege, legal, negotiations, and other matters that may arise and require discussion, to be announced at a later date. Immediately following the Closed Session, the Board of Education will meet in Public Session (estimated to be 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. Action will be taken. Motion unanimously approved.

MOTION made by Board President Joshua, seconded by Board Member Siders that the Board of Education adjourn to Executive Session. The Board will not return to Public Session. Motion unanimously approved at 9:36 p.m.

Eric Burnside, Board Secretary