

Special Meeting
Retiree Recognition
South Orange-Maplewood Board of Education
June 5, 2023

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 June 5, 2023.

Board President Kaitlin Wittleder called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Board Member Duvall Wilson, Board Member Eckert,
Board Member Gifford, Board Member Malespina,
Board Member Telesford (6:32 p.m.), Board Member Vadlamani,
Board President Wittleder, Student Representative Morros

Absent: Board Member Winkfield

EIGHT VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT

Pledge of Allegiance

NOTICE OF THE MEETING

Please take notice that adequate notice of this meeting has been provided in the following manner:

- A. That written notice was sent from the Office of the Secretary of the Board at 11:00 a.m. on May 31, 2023.
- B. That said notice was sent via email to Maplewood and South Orange Township Clerks and the Editors of the News Record, Star Ledger, and the Village Green.

Board President Wittleder

Tonight's meeting is truly special. We are here this evening to honor our incredible education educators. Thank you to those of you who have joined us this evening. The board is thrilled to celebrate you and the positive impact you've made on the lives of our students and their families.

On Behalf of the Board of Education, we would like to thank Noah Morros and Vanessa Previlon for their dedication and service to representing the needs of their student body over the past few years. It has been a pleasure to know them and work with them. Congratulations Noah and Vanessa, you will be greatly missed and we cannot wait to see what your next chapter will bring.

Student Representative Update - Noah Morros

I'm sitting here tonight honored to give my last ever Student Representative Report. This all started in June of my sophomore year where I decided to run for a spot vacated at the time by my AP US History Teaching Assistant Lily Forman, who is now at Stanford doing amazing things. She was the first to talk to me about what the role was and what it entailed. This position felt different than what was being offered in our school student council, not a president or a treasurer but a representative of those that I went to class with every single day. It was a chance to make change at the district level or fight for those who didn't have a voice and from start to end that has been my goal over the last two years and I can only hope that I did that successfully.

I will be forever grateful for how much I learned from my time sitting right here at this table. How our educational policy is made and edited, the impact of community input, but most importantly the value of public education. The fact that our community chooses who sits on this Board is important. Every voter in our town has a say somewhat in how our district operates, whether it's at the ballot box or sitting right there in that chair as I've seen for many hours over the last two years during public speaks. I chose to attend a public university over smaller private universities because of how much this role has taught me about the value of public institutions.

I want to thank Dr. Taylor who even in moments when I've been very critical of the district, has always stuck by my and Vanessa's side, offering his time and email inbox at any time of the day to meet or answer our questions or concerns. It is valuable to have a Superintendent who is this open to student input, yes publicly here when the cameras are on and when the newspaper people are ready to write articles but privately too. He's been there every step of the way for the last two years for Vanessa and I. He truly cares about our input. It's not just for show, he really truly means it.

I also wanted to pass that message along to the Board because I know that we all have our disagreements, maybe with each other on the Board but I think it is important to recognize for everybody here and watching at home and in the audience that everyone is here because they care a lot. They are doing what they think is best for the Board and I feel honored to have been a part of that over the last two years and I want to say thank you for I never felt neglected one time over the last two years. When I first came onto the board everyone was very welcoming and I've now seen almost two boards and every Board Member that has come on has always been very welcoming to student input from Vanessa and I.

I want to recognize my parents for all of their support. Every single meeting regardless of how late they go, they always stay up and watch them. I don't know if they know just as much about the school district as me or anyone else sitting on the Board. So, I just want to say thank you to them and thank you to all of you guys in the community

and the student body for giving me the opportunity to sit up here for the last two years, I learned a ton and hopefully represented them to the best of my ability.

HONORING RETIREES

Tonight, we are honoring 17 retirees who have contributed a total of 360.8 years of service to our school district. Dr. Taylor welcomed the retirees, their families and spokespersons. Each retiree was recognized, thanked for their years of service and given the opportunity to speak about their time in the District.

Attending Retirees

Jean Gaillard-Johnson	Spokesperson Laura Swyberius
Cheryline Hewitt	Spokesperson Frank Sanchez
Caralyn Moore	Spokesperson Dr. Ronald Taylor
Martha O'Connor	Spokesperson Malikah Majeed
Stacey Padalino	Spokesperson Mary DeSarno
Ulrike Wiede	Spokesperson Dr. Jane Bean-Folkes

Non-Attending Retirees

Gerald Archibald	Stacey Robinson
Dr. Janet Bustrin	Amy Singer
Beatrice Greenberg	Bernadine Smith
Line Marshall	Mark Terenzi
David Mastrodonato	Faraja Thompson
Mark Richman	

Board President Wittleder

On behalf of the South Orange Maplewood Board of Education we would like to express our heartfelt gratitude and appreciation to a group of extraordinary Educators who have dedicated their lives to educating the young minds of our community. We gather here today to bid farewell and extend our deepest thanks to our beloved teachers who are embarking on a new chapter in their lives, retirement. May this new chapter of your lives be filled with joy, fulfillment and the opportunity to pursue additional passions. Take this time to reflect on the incredible accomplishments you have achieved and the lives you have touched. Please know that your contributions have not gone unnoticed; they have positively influenced the trajectory of countless lives leaving an indelible mark on generations to come. We are forever grateful for the immeasurable impact each of you have had on our students and the South Orange Maplewood School Community as a whole. Thank you for your exceptional service and unwavering dedication to our students and their families. You will all be greatly missed.

Board President Wittleder made a motion seconded by Board Member Malespina to take a brief 10-minute Recess so the Board can properly acknowledge and congratulate our Educators. Motion unanimously approved.

Board recessed at 7:24 p.m.
Board reconvened at 7:40 p.m.

HEARING OF INDIVIDUALS AND DELEGATIONS

Thank you for coming in-person and dialing-in by phone this evening. The South Orange - Maplewood Board of Education certainly respects that you've taken the time out of your busy day to address the Board at tonight's meeting. We value public involvement in our school district, and we are eager to hear what you have to say. The board does have time limits by policy, and it will be enforcing those to enable as many people to speak as possible this evening. Each individual will be given three minutes to speak, please do your best to stay within the time afforded to you. The first public comment period is usually limited to one hour and the second public comment period may be limited to thirty minutes. All input shared with the Board of Education is taken very seriously, and will inform future deliberations and work by the Board of Education and its committees.

Community Member and former Board Member Shannon Cuttle expressed heartfelt thanks and congratulations to the retirees and student representatives.

ITEMS FOR ACTION

Motion made by Dr. Taylor, seconded by Board Member Malespina to move resolutions 4469-4471A-C for discussion and voting:

4469. Acknowledgement of First Read Policies:

1. Policy 7440 Security on School Premises
2. Policy 8420 Emergency and Crisis Situations
3. Policy 8600 Transportation

4470. WHEREAS, The South Orange Maplewood School District values nurturing learning and teaching environments; supports and respects educators as trained professionals; and is committed to ensuring that all students can thrive regardless of their ZIP Code, color, or background;

WHEREAS, The South Orange Maplewood School District supports education that values honesty about who we are; integrity in how we treat others; and courage to do what's right by listening to, learning from, and respecting diverse viewpoints;

WHEREAS, The South Orange Maplewood School District values our educators, who through pedagogically sound, age-appropriate curricula and teaching standards help students understand our collective past, spark curiosity and critical thinking, and prepare all students to meet the challenges of our multicultural present and future;

WHEREAS, the State of NJ outlines curriculum and teaching standards that deliver high-quality curricula that teach the

full sweep of U.S. history, and equip teachers and students to develop their understanding of the world and their ability to make meaningful change in it;

WHEREAS, many communities across the country have faced misguided attacks on the instruction occurring in schools, when they are simply teaching the full truth of our country's history in accordance with district and state curriculum standards through research-tested pedagogical approaches;

WHEREAS, studies show that students enrolled in Black and ethnic studies courses that include the experiences and narratives of Black, Indigenous and other People of Color (BIPOC) and LGBTQ+ people, honor their cultural assets, and provide students with tools to critique inequality, develop strong relationships with teachers, and gain benefits in terms of school engagement and persistence in academic attainment;

WHEREAS, a diverse faculty and staff reflective of the demographics of the community, country, and world, provides significant value to Black, Indigenous and other People of Color (BIPOC) students, white students, educators, school staff, and administrators;

WHEREAS, continuing professional development and guidance for educators that is culturally responsive, anti-bias, anti-racist, and includes historically excluded perspectives enables educators to foster safe school spaces and promotes academic attainment for students;

WHEREAS, the South Orange Maplewood School District will center educational equity, by building a shared understanding of U.S. history and actively engaging students, educators, and families, thereby ensuring that all students have what they need to thrive and succeed academically;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED on June 5, 2023, by the Board of Education of the South Orange Maplewood School District, that the District stands steadfast in its commitment to foster an inclusive, culturally-responsive educational environment where every student, educator, and community member is treated with dignity and respect, and condemns racism, sexism, and all forms of bigotry in our schools and community;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that South Orange Maplewood School District stands behind its curricular materials, which meet NJ Academic Standards, and that the District further shall:

1. Stand by the right of our students to learn – and our expert educators to teach an inclusive curriculum that covers our country's whole history and encourages students to think critically and develop their own views and voice about current events;

2. Support culturally-responsive education that centers students' diverse history, cultures, families, and communities, thereby allowing students to see themselves reflected in the classroom, have strong relationships with their educators, and understand the world in which they live;
3. Support the study of the social, political, economic, and historical perspectives of our nation's diverse racial and ethnic groups, which helps foster cross-cultural understanding among all students, and aids students in valuing their own cultural identity while appreciating the differences around them;
4. In partnership with educators, students, and the community, review the District's current curriculum in order to ensure it reflects the true history of this nation and the world we live in, and works to dismantle systemic racism and racial inequity in our schools;
5. Move forward with creating and implementing Black Studies and Ethnic Studies courses in all high schools;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the South Orange Maplewood School District stands behind educators who teach District curricula and NJ academic standards in a truthful way that represents the full scope of this country's history and present reality and that the District further shall:

1. Support and defend educators' use of teaching materials that incorporate diverse perspectives that represent and acknowledge the experiences of all students;
2. Ensure that individual educators who teach NJ academic standards are not punished for teaching accurate information;
3. Honor the training, expertise, and professional judgment of its educators, and respect pedagogical approaches that engage students around difficult questions in an inclusive, critical, and age-appropriate way;
4. Commit to dedicating time in schools for ongoing professional development, culturally responsive training, book studies, celebrations of diversity that center people of color, critical conversations among staff and students, and establishing community partnerships to support this work;
5. Put in place practices that will lead to a more diverse workforce, consistent with the District's commitment to a diverse faculty and staff that reflects the demographics of the community, country, and world, and thereby provides significant value to students of color, white students, and all in our community;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the South Orange Maplewood School District commits to educational equity and that the District further shall:

1. Reject the idea that educational equity is a zero-sum proposition in which some students lose opportunities to help

- other students succeed, and instead, work to provide all students with a world-class education;
2. Ensure safe, welcoming, and effective schools, in which every student – regardless of their race, gender, zip code, language, country of origin, religion, sexual identity or orientation, ability or disability, or family’s income – has a chance at academic success;
 3. Ensure learning environments are free from discrimination, harassment, and identity-based bullying, consistent with Policy 5512 Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying;
 4. Support, review, and revise the District’s policies, programs, educational materials, teaching approaches, and resources to ensure educational equity;
 5. Review and assess the District’s discipline practices to determine if there is evidence of racial bias in discipline enforcement; and
 6. Work to meet students where they are – academically, emotionally, and physically – and implement trauma-informed disciplinary practices in schools, particularly in communities in which students’ families have been disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic due to health disparities.

4471A. Rescinds the award of the paraprofessional services contract to Essex Regional Services Commission on May 25, 2023 resolution #4462AC.

4471B. Rescinds the rejection of all bids for paraprofessional services on May 25, 2023 resolution#4462AB.

4471C. Awards the contract for paraprofessional services to ESS Support Services, LLC of Berwyn, Pennsylvania as the lowest responsible bidder at the following hourly rates:

- Hourly Permanent Paraprofessional I \$29.55
- Hourly Permanent Paraprofessional II \$31.05
- Diapering Stipend (per diem) \$8.37

Attorney Patrick Carrigg provided background information for resolutions 4471A-C.

ROLL CALL: 4469, 4470, 4471A-C PASSED YES: Duvall Wilson, Eckert, Gifford, Malespina, Telesford, Vadlamani, Wittleder, Wright NO: None

Board President Wittleder made a motion, seconded by Board Member Eckert to adjourn to Executive Session to discuss the Black Parents Workshop (BPW) Settlement. The length of the Executive Session is estimated to be about 60 minutes, after which the board will reconvene and immediately adjourn. Motion unanimously approved.

Board Members adjourned to Executive Session at 8:06 p.m.
Board Member Malespina left the meeting at 8:06 p.m.
Board Members reconvened at 9:28 p.m.
Seven Voting Members Present

FUTURE MEETINGS

Board President Wittleder made the following motions seconded by Board Member DuVall Wilson:

The Board of Education will meet in a Special Public Session on Monday, June 19, 2023 at 6:00 pm at 525 Academy Street, Maplewood, NJ and will immediately adjourn to go into Executive Session in person as well as using an online video conference platform in the Superintendent's Office to discuss the Chief School Administrator (CSA) evaluation/negotiations. No action will be taken.

The Board of Education will meet in Public Session on Thursday, June 22, 2023 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, 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 optional in accordance with the guidance received from the local DOH and the CDC. Action will be taken.

The Board of Education will meet in a Special Public Session on Tuesday, June 27, 2023 at 6:30 pm at 525 Academy Street, Maplewood, NJ and will immediately adjourn to go into Executive Session in person as well as using an online video conference platform in the Superintendent's Office to discuss the Chief School Administrator (CSA) evaluation. No action will be taken.

Motion made by Board President Wittleder, seconded by Board Member Eckert to adjourn. Motion unanimously approved at 9:30 p.m.

Eric Burnside, Board Secretary