

Special Meeting
Fergus Implementation Committee
South Orange-Maplewood
Board of Education
October 30, 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 October 30, 2022.

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(6:43 p.m.), Board Member Malespina
Board Member Telesford, Board Member Vadlamani,
Board Member Winkfield, Board President Wittleder,
Board Member Wright (6:39 a.m.)

Absent: None

NINE 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 9:30 a.m. on October 16, 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 shared the purpose of tonight's first Fergus Implementation Special Committee meeting. The purpose of this committee is to assist the Board in its oversight role to ensure the District's compliance with the Black Parents Workshop settlement. During the three-year monitoring phase. The objective of the committee is to ensure that all of Dr. Fergus's recommendations from the Equity Audit report are implemented by August 2026. Please note tonight's presentation from the District will include:

- The District's three-year vision of implementation of Dr. Fergus's recommendations
- The timeline and sequencing of priorities of Dr. Fergus's recommendations
- The funding commitments tied to each of the recommendations and what the budget implications would look like over the next three school year

- A list of responsible parties within the district who will be responsible for ensuring the 23 recommendations are being implemented within the designated timelines.

After the District's presentation we will have one Hearing of Individuals and Delegations and then the board will adjourn the public meeting to go into Executive session.

RUTGERS REPORT IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Dr. Kevin Gilbert, Asst. Superintendent of Access and Equity presented the Rutgers Report Implementation Plan. The report detailed the following:

- Fergus Recommendations Guided Philosophy (page 8 of Equity Audit)
- Curriculum and Instruction Recommendations
- Intervention Recommendations
- Develop Pedagogical Capacity with an Equity Lens Recommendations
- Intentional Integration
- Curriculum and Instruction Recommendations
- Parent Involvement
- Math Course Selection
- Interventions/I&RS
- Recommendation # 2/3/4: Review the I&RS Process
- Development of Pedagogical Capacity with an Equity Lens
- Teacher Knowledge Assessment
- Teacher Empathy
- Curriculum Audit
- Hiring Teachers of Color
- Affinity Spaces
- Intentional Integration Initiative

Discussion following the presentation included the following comments/questions:

- Board Member Wright - Could you define S.M.A.R.T. goals and the goals being presented in fact S.M.A.R.T.?
 - S.M.A.R.T. goals have to be Specific, Measurable, Actionable, Relevant, and Timely; after in consultation with Senior Leadership meet the specific marks when discussing S.M.A.R.T. goals;
- Board Member Eckert - In the DRAFT presentation shared with the Board, there were budgetary line items; it would be helpful to the board in understanding the budgetary needs in a more detailed format moving forward. Also, related to the Intentional Integration, we are viewing this through a "Dr. Fergus lens" as you work with the III team please discuss weighted factors which has also been brought up in FFT. Distance should also be weighted as we've seen from transportation this year (an operational

perspective) including the financial impact of the Intentional Integration Initiative that go along with the recommendations that the District is currently working with; that work should include Town officials to see the patterns over the next three years;

- Board Member Duvall Wilson - Happy to see the S.M.A.R.T. goals; in the first year there are a lot of "to-dos" and some of those seem to build on other goals, other action items. It would be helpful for the board to see time stamps in year one especially for Curriculum and Instruction priorities. Specifically, if there are certain things in each recommendation that need to be done before another recommendation item it would be helpful to the board if we knew some of the internal action items and could be discussed in the standing committees.
- Board Member Duvall Wilson shared that she would like to learn more about the stage integration priorities for South Mountain and Seth Boyden.
- Board Member Duvall Wilson highlighted slide 52 of the presentation which shared representation of key performance indicators when it came to the percentage of teachers that needed to have a certain level of teacher knowledge assessments. She would like to see percentages like that for some of the other goals for example, tracking low-track students who are to receive high quality instruction - how is that being tracked in a percentage standpoint? Does that mean that 50% of students are getting C+ and above, or B and above on their grades by the end of year one? Having a better understanding of student success metrics will be helpful.
- Board Member DuVall Wilson - Teacher Empathy - Helping teachers with the social emotional mindset of students, what is being done to support teachers with their emotional mindset? That was included previously in the SEL report from June. There is going to be a big shift for teachers and when the District is thinking about retention of all teachers on being able to evaluate and understand some of their emotional needs in order for them to feel they're equipped to support students in this pathway.
 - Inside of the Workforce Diversity Plan that is currently ongoing; the District plans to include adult well-being.
- Board President Wittleder noted that there are quite a few priorities that need to be implemented in year one. It seems that some of these recommendations are underway, specifically IR&S. How is Senior Leadership feeling?
 - Senior Leadership is committed to getting this work done. Between the first Dr. Fergus report and this current report it has been six years. There is a sense of urgency amongst Senior Leadership Team, there was a lot of detail in year one. Some of these include getting things done as quickly as well as maintaining fidelity realizing that this work will take three-five years. Our students are our priority.

- Board President Wittleder liked the idea of the choice Matrix that will be piloted first and just measure to ensure that it is working so that there isn't any bias when completing this work. Also, it would be helpful to have year one breakdown of budgetary needs and can it be shared with FFT.
- Board Member Gifford enjoyed the slide on parent engagement, what will the district do to ensure that there is parent engagement moving forward?
 - Ann Bodnar highlighted her time as principal at Clinton, when families were dropping off or picking up, it would give administrators a chance to catch up with families while giving support to the students (having them in the library) and discuss any concerns or updates
 - Another thing that the District is looking at is the possibility of purchasing software that is for our multilingual families. This would allow the person speaking into the software to translate what is being said in the family's native language. We are also looking at purchasing earbuds (similarly what is shared at the UN) for translation purposes; it is being piloted at the high school's guidance office. We are using ARP monies for this. If this works we can begin using this in other schools.
 - We are also considering using teachers that speak family's native language to translate.
 - We are working on doing more parent outreach in the high school and will branch out to schools in the District. It was also noted that this year each school building had to have a family engagement goal as part of their three goals.
- Board Member Telesford - Looking at the action plans year one, steps 1-5 fall under the umbrella of our different committees, would it be possible to have a breakdown of those action plans and what committee they would fall under?
- Board Member Vadlamani - Going back to the Intentional Integration recommendations - it states that the pattern of average household income and parental education level should be examined over time. Can the Intentional Integration Plan be sustained?
 - If the housing patterns and the education level changes it could, depending on what data pans out. It could have an effect on whether the District could attain the Intentional Integration Goal. The District is going to have to look at this further and discuss further with both townships. This also needs to be discussed with the consultant The Alves Group.

- It was noted that during the FFT committee meeting the demographer shared that as housing developments are completed this could potentially impact the lower SES families.

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 community members spoke in support of MAPSO Freedom School: Jacob Chaffin, Stacey Lawrence, Ingrid Hill, Chris Duran

NEW BUSINESS

None.

Future Meetings

Board President Wittleder made the following motions seconded by Board Member Eckert:

A meeting of the Board of School Estimate will be held on Tuesday, November 28, 2023 at 6:00 pm at the South Orange Maplewood Board of Education Administration Building, 525 Academy Street, Maplewood, New Jersey; for the purpose of discussing funding for the remaining projects in the District's Long Range Facility Plan. Action may be taken.

The Board of Education will meet in Public Session on Thursday, November 30, 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.

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion made by Board President Wittleder, seconded by Board Member Eckert that the Board of Education adjourn to Executive Session to discuss matters of attorney client privilege and Personnel the length of the executive session is estimated to be about 60 minutes after which the public meeting of the board shall adjourn. The Board will not return to Public Session. Motion unanimously approved at 7:34 p.m.

Eric Burnside, Board Secretary