

Special Meeting
Fergus Implementation Committee
South Orange-Maplewood
Board of Education
February 6, 2024

A Special Meeting of the Board of Education of South Orange-Maplewood was held utilizing the online video conference platform on February 6, 2024

Board President Qawi Telesford called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL: Present: Board Member Callahan, Board Member Duvall Wilson, Board Member Meyer, Board Member Sackett-Gable, Board President Telesford, Board Member Vadlamani, Board Member Wittleder

Absent: Board Member Eckert, Board Member Gifford

SEVEN VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT

Pledge of Allegiance

NOTICE OF THE MEETING

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 2:19 p.m. on January 31, 2024.
- B. That said notice was sent via email to Maplewood and South Orange Township Clerks and the Editors of the News Record, Star Ledger, TapintoSOMA and the Village Green.

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.

DISCUSSION

Acting Superintendent Dr. Kevin Gilbert provided an update to the Board and the public on the ongoing meetings and discussions with Dr. Fergus, the Monitoring Plan with Judge Wallace and the Black Parents Workshop (BPW), Assignment of Recommendations to Committees and the

Intentional Integration and Student Enrollment in Advanced Courses.
The update included the following:

DISTRICT UPDATE ON MEETINGS WITH DR. FERGUS

Dr. Gilbert shared the following from the Fergus Recommendations Guided Philosophy which is what he uses to reference when having these discussions with Senior Leadership: "Within SOMSD, the norms of white and affluent families have historically dominated the culture of the school. It is recommended that the district undertake a systematic push toward re-norming their school policies, pedagogy, and curriculum toward more culturally responsive and inclusive norms. In particular, centering the needs of Black and Latinx populations, and Free Reduced Lunch eligible families in the school district's programming. This shift will take time and all stakeholders will be impacted. Therefore, in the interim, it is crucial that the district also create spaces where all families, students, and educators can process these changes. Families who have typically had access to the most resources will struggle to adjust to a system that is more equitable; families who have typically been overlooked may struggle to build trust. Both will need spaces where they can ask questions of district leaders and build an understanding of the new district systems and policies. These spaces and family education mechanisms will need to look different according to the stakeholder group they serve. Issues of language, timing, location, and presenters should be considered in planning these supports. BIPOC students and teachers will also need affinity spaces where they can receive support."

- The District continuously is working on centering the work the District is doing to implement Dr. Fergus recommendations specifically around the District's black, Latinx, free & reduced students, and our special education students.
- The District is also working on providing spaces and opportunities for families to engage with the District and have an open dialogue regarding the importance of our Equity work includes the recommendations put forth by Dr. Fergus.
- It was noted that the recommendations are intended to focus on activities to continue the movement of the District towards being integration-ready in target areas for the next 3 - 5 years.
- The District is assembling a 3-5-year plan for implementing the recommendations outlined by Dr. Fergus and his team.
- At the next quarterly meeting, the plan will be presented to share the strides the District has taken to start implementing the recommendations.
- Dr. Gilbert provided a breakdown of which committee will be responsible for each recommendation.

Curriculum and Instruction Recommendations (C&I Committee)

The C&I Committee will be responsible for overseeing the following recommendations (they will review all recommendations but it was noted that these seven recommendations are pertinent):

1. Prioritize material and verbal messaging regarding math growth mindset

2. Foster heterogeneous student collaboration in math instruction
3. Ensure that low-track students receive the high-quality instruction that they need to be successful in math
4. Create a clear plan and timeline to identify high-achieving students from under-represented backgrounds for higher-track math courses
5. Create enrichment and acceleration opportunities
6. Increase accessible and equitable parent involvement
7. Revisit the choice policy for math course selection

These recommendations will be updated periodically and be shared with the board.

Intervention Recommendations (Special Education AdHoc & C&I Committee)

The Special Education AdHoc and C&I Committee will be responsible for overseeing the following recommendations:

1. Development of a district-wide tiered system of support that includes defining academic and behavioral tiers available and processes for utilization
2. Extensive review of the I&RS Implementation Process Guide in order to address inconsistencies and redundancies
3. Develop a list of tiered interventions for academic behavioral support
4. Develop tools and protocols for the operation of intervention team meetings

These recommendations primarily review the I&RS system, supports, and procedures that the district has been implementing to ensure that all students feel successful. Dr. Gilbert noted that Dr. Fergus' report asked how the district's intentional integration is integrating not only students but also academic support and services throughout all schools. These recommendations help integrate the work that the district is doing within the school buildings.

Develop Pedagogical Capacity with an Equity Lens Recommendations

These recommendations focus on developing a pedagogical capacity with an equity lens. Several of these recommendations have been distributed throughout the committees:

1. Develop and implement a professional development series that focuses on the continued development of cross-cultural capacity in order to replace bias-based beliefs such as color blindness, deficit thinking, and racial discomfort. (Personnel & C&I Committees)
2. Continuous assessment of educator knowledge on intervention support systems, curriculum, and instruction improvements. (C&I Committee)
3. Through professional development, build teacher empathy for all students. Events such as the middle school Challenge Day create humanistic bonds between teachers and students. (C&I Committee)

4. Conduct a curriculum audit of courses in humanities, English-Language Arts, and history using a culturally responsive protocol to determine where more inclusive materials and pedagogies are needed. (C&I Committee)
5. Hire more Black teachers/teachers of color and create affinity spaces to support those teachers to increase retention. (Personnel Committee)
6. Build on the successes of affinity spaces for students of color such as MAC scholars. (C&I Committee)
7. Provide affinity spaces for BIPOC students across school levels. (C&I Committee)

The district will update the board on the progress of these recommendations at the next quarterly meeting.

Intentional Integration (FFT Committee)

The FFT Committee will be responsible for overseeing the following recommendations:

1. Further modeling of integration in which factors with the greatest skewed patterns are weighted more intensely over other factors. For instance, household income and parent education could be weighted more than race/ethnicity.
2. The pattern of average household income and parent educational level should be examined over time in order to understand whether the III plan can be sustained.
3. A staged integration that prioritizes Seth Boyden and South Mountain over the next several years.
4. Review pre-COVID quarantine school years (i.e., 2018-19, 2017-18) to understand these withdrawal patterns.
5. The III plan needs to parallel an integration of academic support services.

Some of these recommendations may overlap into other committees but FFT will oversee and walk us through where the district is with these particular recommendations.

Update Since November 27, 2023

Dr. Gilbert shared an update that highlighted what the District has done since the previous Fergus Committee meeting:

- The District met with Dr. Fergus on the following dates:
 - December 12th
 - January 5th
 - February 2nd
- The District meets monthly with Dr. Fergus to go through the recommendations. The first visits have primarily focused on assisting the District with a good strategy to implement the recommendations.
- The District met with the Alves Group to discuss the plan regarding the unpairing of Delia Bolden and Marshall Elementary
 - Unpairing Town Hall meeting is scheduled for February 15th

- Dr. Fergus and the Alves Group are scheduled to meet on February 27th
- The following information was shared with Judge Wallace for his review on January 29, 2024.
 - Rutgers Report Implementation Plan Presentation-October 30, 2023
 - Rutgers Report Implementation Plan Presentation-November 27, 2023
 - The Rutgers Report (Fergus Recommendations) Implementation Plan
 - Suspension and Expulsion Information
- The Infrastructure Questions were reviewed:
 - What committee/group is the work sitting with?
 - What is the framework we are using to support the work?
 - What system and documentation do we need to create to ensure integration of goal?
 - What is the data that will be used to guide the goal?
 - What is the professional learning that needs to happen?

Mrs. Waibel, Director of Access and Equity shared what was discussed with Dr. Fergus during his visits to the District. The District has met with Dr. Fergus regularly this year. We've discussed starting the work and what we've delved into. We are building the plan and have discussed what the district has done over the past six to eight months. We want to ensure we are rolling out the initiatives properly and what will that look like? We've discussed Dr. Fergus' vision of what that would look like for the district. We've discussed individual goals, for example:

- We did an overview of the I&RS process - and discussed the next steps so that we can identify if Dr. Fergus' vision aligns with the district's vision and collaborate in that direction.
- Discussed building an infrastructure to do the work and what that will look like.
- The district is committed to solidifying the work in every goal that we are working on and also identifying where there is a crossover because many of the goals are interwoven.
- Several math goals overlay on top of each other.
- The I&RS goals each one of them interacts with each other so instead of duplicating the work we want to make sure we are merging the work and moving forward.

Mrs. Waibel shared that there was a discussion regarding integration and what that will look like along with some questions that the district is working on with the Alves group. The questions that we discussed surrounding the building of infrastructure were really helpful. We started to discuss the five questions that we need for every single goal in order to make sure it works.

- We identified who the work is sitting with and what specific committee or several committees. Is it a committee in a school, is it our coaches? Who is the work laying with?
- What is the framework that we're working with; by framework, we're really talking about several different things:
 - Who or what is the research behind what we are doing?

- What is the latest I&RS and multi-tiered support research that is happening right now?
- What is the system that may need to adjust and what does that adjustment look like, how are we doing that?
 - Do we need to create a manual? Do we need to create a system? Is there something procedural that we need to adjust in our practice that is going to support this work?
 - What data are we going to use to guide this work? There is a lot of numbers data in education but also what is the qualitative data that we need to gather from families, teachers, administrators, and students to move forward with this work?
 - What does professional learning look like for teachers if there are different programs we're considering moving forward with? Do our coaches need a set of professional learning that might stem from the framework that we are embedding into the system? Do our administrators need that professional learning and what does that look like? How are we giving the professional learning - will it be embedded over the year is it embedded in the coaching structure? Those have been meaningful as we are reviewing year one because we are doing some minor adjustments to ensure all of that is being put into place.

Dr. Gilbert noted that because there is a lot of infrastructure that needs to be put into place, we are also working with a mitigation strategy to ensure that we are meeting the needs of our students, particularly our students of color, special education students, and others that were highlighted in Dr. Fergus' report. This has been almost six years in the making and we do know that building infrastructure takes time. Putting things in place to try and narrow gaps, we want to ensure that what is put in place is sustainable in the work that we are doing to narrow those gaps. We know that time is of the essence and we want to make sure we try to meet the needs that generated the reason why Dr. Fergus had to complete his equity audit. We want to have our attention focused on trying to narrow some of those gaps and start working to build the equity that the audit report presented.

Questions/Comments included but were not limited to the following:

- Board Member Wittleder: Who in the holds the responsibility of going through the infrastructure questions and making those determinations?
- The internal team members are as follows: Dr. Gilbert, Mrs. Waibel, Mrs. Correa, Mrs. Budine, Mrs. Bodnar. ASCA and SOMEA members will also be included and be a part of the Fergus Implementation team. Within our plan we are discussing ways to engage a large number of stakeholders; especially as we build out more specifics to the individual goals within the plan.
- Board Member Duvall Wilson: Will there be a recap shared with the board perhaps in a Friday packet for example?
- We can make that available to the board in their weekly packet.

- Board Member Vadlamani: You shared information with Judge Wallace on January 29th can you please share with us what the feedback was from Judge Wallace?
- Dr. Gilbert: After the meeting with Judge Wallace in December; Judge Wallace shared that he was "happy". What Judge Wallace got regarding suspensions was not what he wanted. He was specifically looking for data that was broken down demographically by schools which is on our website; we then sent it to him. To date, Judge Wallace has been pleased with our progress. Mr. Rubin and I are scheduled to meet soon to discuss when our next meeting with Judge Wallace, myself, Dr. Fergus and representatives from BPW will be. I may take a team with me to that particular meeting.
- Board Member Callahan: One thing that I am thinking about is the data that we would be using over time to guide the work and the professional learning. As we are rolling out these plans how are you goal setting with your school teams, and school leaders in terms of knowing that we are making small achievable goals. Could we have some insight into that component knowing the goal is "X" how are we breaking micro goals down and also the degree to which we are monitoring accountability carrying out some of the plans at the school level?
- Ms. Waibel: The first thing that we started doing this year is providing professional learning to every school on the various teams that they're working with (climate team, equity team, skip committee, and I&RS team within the schools). Providing the entire team with professional learning opportunities that are going to be in those spaces. When we ask where does this work lie? Some of this work is going to lie on the District level between the coaches and the supervisors, but a lot of the work is going to filter down to the schools, and so we wanted places and spaces for that work to continue but also in the way the framework will allow.

So, for example, we are in the process of doing street data which is qualitative data. What does that look like in our equity teams so that when we say we're doing this work can you gather feedback, the team will know how to collect the data, read it, and analyze the information. I think that is going to be really helpful and I also think it will help build out the goals.

There will be a lot of branches of professional learning. For example, we talked about I&RS goals; we've already done professional learning for our administrators. We did a fishbowl and we demonstrated that isn't enough because now we want to make sure that our teachers understand that process. Having a multi-leveled approach to that professional learning is going to allow the school teams to continue to move the work because you're right, if it exists in those rooms (spaces) by itself nothing changes. We are supporting and planning out all of the professional learning. I would say for the accountability piece we are focused on looking at systems and procedures, checking in on how that is going and following each piece systematically if it's a systems change. We would like all our schools to be on the same page for example, if we are on step one,

all schools should be on step one. That is why we're building in that systems process as one of our five questions.

- Board President Telesford: You spoke about building a system and documentation to ensure that you are able to reach your goal; I'm assuming that has to do a lot with infrastructure data. Do you know/have an idea of what kind of system you plan on using? When do you hope to have that system up and running to sustain this project, this type of work?
- Ms. Waibel: I really think it depends on what goal we're talking about as to what that kind of data looks like. For example, I&RS is a system of data with excel spreadsheets that is being filtered by Director Correa and her amazing work which we saw at a C&I committee meeting a few weeks ago. Yet, growth mindset is going to be a lot of individual interviews with teachers and students. That system is going to look very different than the numbers that are in I&RS. Each system is going to be built a little bit differently based on the nature of the goal. I am hoping over the next few months we'll be able to iron that out. Some of them are already being put in place and others we are still working on.
- Board President Telesford: As a follow-up are there plans to make templates for some of this work? So that a lot of this is going to be building up and then once you have an idea of how to measure it you're going to want to go back to that and keep looking at our progress; I think that may be helpful.
- Ms. Waibel: That's part of the process and the data collection; what does this data look like? I will give you an example that doesn't have to do with the plan. Our climate teams have a whole system in place on looking at that data and when they do that. When does that happen each year? What does that look like? The same is going to be true for putting these procedures in place whether it is growth mindset or professional learning. After building this new professional learning series; what is that data going to look like? What are we sending out to teachers after they attend a workshop? How are we parsing that out and who's looking at that data? All of this is going to be part of that system. We are going to do this each year but it is going to be after professional development, or after coaching sessions? I believe it is going to be super individualized to the goal.
- Board President Telesford: It would be great to have a similar calendar to the academic calendar with all the dates of what the district is doing a temperature check on or looking at.
- Ms. Waibel: Ok, this will be documented.
- Board Member Meyer: Dr. Fergus mentioned in the report that this plan is going to require a three to five year endeavor. We also know that we are talking about a settlement which we have three years to complete. In looking at that and in the conversations we've had with Judge Wallace, what is the expectation as far as deliverables at the end of the three years versus the larger plan?

- Dr. Kevin Gilbert: The plan and the approach is that by the end of year three we need to have the deliverables to show significant movement in the areas of concern. Years four and five are more on monitoring our success rate and hopefully seeing how we've been able to embed those changes. Our target is three years, that's what we've been mandated through the lawsuit to at least begin showing the significant gains or the significant narrowing of the gaps that precipitated the lawsuit in and of itself to begin with. It will not be solved in three years, but it should show that we've made significant progress towards the type of equity that we believe is necessary to fulfill the obligations of what we've been mandated to do. The data committee discussing how to put this data together and have it presented in a user-friendly manner.
- Board Member Wittleder: One of the priorities that Dr. Fergus shared with us was a heavy concentration on getting I&RS running efficiently and it sounds like that work has started and progressed quite a bit. Do we have the professional development on the calendar yet for walking teachers through the I&RS process? I understand that administrators were walked through the process across the 10 schools. When will that work trickle down to the teachers and is there a timeline in mind of when we feel everything is going to be operating at a really high level and that supports are going to be accessible and robust for students?
- Kerri Waibel: Right now, our next step is to train the administrators, and we started moving through the committees. Our next step is going into the I&RS meetings and identifying the systems and the processes to see how that is going. After that, it is talking to the teachers and the professional learning piece. A larger conversation needs to be had because you're not only talking about how to fill out IR&S forms which has been done for years. We're talking about tiered instruction and supporting tier one so that everyday classroom instruction. Our coaches are already working on that which is ongoing. The greater push will be in September which will be a deeper focus on that tier one instruction - which is ongoing. Right now, our focus is continuing to push into those IR&S meetings and making sure that the new process is fruitful.

Intentional Integration & Student Enrollment in Advanced Courses

Dr. Kevin Gilbert shared an update on Intentional Integration and Student Enrollment in Advanced placements. The enrollment data is broken down demographically and by gender; giving a preliminary update on our enrollment in those advanced classes, enrollments in schools, as well as the Intentional Integration Initiative (III) data. There will be a more expansive discussion about the year three Intentional Integration Initiative in the future, this was preliminary information.

The presentation included the following:

- SOMSD Intentional Integration Journey
 - Important Dates

- Modified Berkeley Model and Algorithm (Alves Group): Variables for Student Placement:
 - Parental Education Level
 - Parental Income
 - Sibling Preference
 - Proximity
- Intentional Integration K Enrollment for 2021-22 SY, 2022-2023 SY, 2023-24 SY
- Grade K Student - Year over Year III Enrollment (in percentage)
- Intentional Integration 1st Grade Enrollment for the 2022-23 SY, 2023-24 SY
- Grade 1 Student - Year over Year III Enrollment (in percentage)
- Intentional Integration 6TH Grade Enrollment for the 2022-23 SY, 2023-24 SY
- Grade 6 Student - Year over Year III Enrollment (in percentage)
- How to Calculate a Risk Ratio
- Course Enrollment at Maplewood Middle School, South Orange Middle School and Columbia High School
- Advanced Math Courses at Maplewood Middle School, South Orange Middle School and Columbia High School
- Advanced Math Course Risk Ratio

Questions/Comments included but were not limited to the following:

- Board Member Sackett-Gable: I was thinking specifically about the decline in AP students that happens during the year for most demographic groups between September and June. We know that students may start in an AP class at the high school but may not be in the AP class at the end of the year for various reasons. It is great that the district has included some proactive supports this year like AP core program. For those of you that not familiar with it, it is a study group for students who want to improve their academic progress in AP classes and they meet weekly. Is there any anecdotal data about the usage or effectiveness of this program? It would be valuable if we were eventually able to correlate student participation to retention in the AP classes. This information could assist with future planning, the frequency of the offering, its structure and so on.
- Dr. Gilbert: I will have a discussion with Ms. Bodnar and Dr. Correa to see specifically where we can or if we've done any checking to see what that data looks like. What I can say is that part of that came out in Dr. Fergus' report; students stated *that they didn't feel like they had the support in the advanced classes that they needed*. We are trying to course correct that.
- Board Member Duvall-Wilson: I understand there will be a presentation on the Intentional Integration Initiative, later on. Could you share a general summary on your thoughts overall on the balance and if you are happy with how things looked? If there are things that you want to investigate further? As a South Mountain parent, I kept looking at the South Mountain data and noticed that there are some numbers skewed for white students and I know anecdotally black parents are concerned about their children being

around other students of color. Just curious on your initial thoughts.

- The intersection of gender, I noticed that the business class had a very small percentage of female students; so, I am curious if there is going to be any analysis or support from a gender standpoint? We noticed that there's a proportionate imbalance when it comes to males and females in that class. I wonder if there's a reason why and if that could be looked into.

- Dr. Gilbert: In regards to your first question regarding South Mountain, one of the recommendations from Dr. Fergus was to do some intentional integration at both South Mountain and Seth Boyden; the two schools continue to be the outliers of the spectrum. South Mountain continues to be highly concentrated with white students and Seth Boyden continues to be highly concentrated with black students. We are seeing with the integration numbers that is showing some improvement, although it isn't happening at a faster rate. We spoke with Dr. Fergus about this. Race is not a factor in the algorithm and that limits the amount of intentionality we can do for obvious reasons. There have been Supreme Court cases and all kinds of things that say that you are not to use race as a determining factor. Not having that factor removes a lot of the intentionality we can do to make sure we are being intentional about racial integration. Our algorithm is strictly focused on socioeconomic status. We know from our various reports proximity is in our algorithm which means that is a factor. We know some of the recent reporting from housing in our two towns have shown unfortunately a decrease in the number of families of color who are moving in these areas now. I am not an expert but I can state that those factors could probably be weighing heavily into why we may not see significant movement in those particular numbers. That is something that we will be discussing with the Alves group and Dr. Fergus to see what their thoughts on that topic may be to provide a more definitive answer.

Mrs. Waibel spoke a little about her work with our equity teams around street data and that qualitative approach in terms of using those data sets within our schools to actually analyze just those concerns you have. What we want to do is drive that into our schools; when they're having these conversations. What does the true scale of integration look like in our buildings? One of those things we hope that they scrutinize is the enrollment, not just by race but also by gender, as well as using that street data concept that helps drill down getting to root causes to why you see such a gender gap in some of our particular classes.

- Board Member Callahan: I think we've talked before about intentional physical placement as one thing but also the fact that we also need to be critically looking at intentionally creating the space for what it looks like to effectively integrate. What resources are we directly providing to teachers, leaders and community leadership at schools to get that welcoming safe space where kids feel empowered to sign up and take these classes at the degree to which we could potentially think to include the research that Ms. Waibel discussed earlier to ground the mindset? We could

potentially make these adjustments so that this could be integrated into school-based family learning nights so that parents are also getting some insight into what is informing these decisions.

- Dr. Kevin Gilbert - Those are all top of mind and unfortunately, we don't have anyone from our Curriculum and Instruction Department with us tonight. We'll make a note to make sure that when we meet again we will talk a little bit about the growth mindset work that we've been doing as well as address some of the other concerns.
- Board Member Wittleder - Looking at the percentage of black students that were enrolled in kindergarten, and first grade in addition to South Mountain there was a significant drop in enrollment at Tuscan. I believe that last year was around 11% and this year it's at 7%. I know that there is probably a logical explanation from an algorithm standpoint, for why that dropped, I just want to reiterate and ensure that this goes back to the Alves Group and Dr. Fergus in relation to what happens to students of color who are now entering environments where they may be the only ones because at Tuscan if 7% of kindergarten students enrolled are black at the school level, what is it at the classroom level? These are things that concern me because we have heard accounts of isolation and feeling that they're a black student and maybe the only ones in a classroom. Integration is supposed to benefit all students. If there are things that are unavoidable because we can't factor in race when we're making these choices, what could be done at the school level so that the classroom environment is more inclusive and everyone feels like integration is working for them? I just wanted to reinforce that.
- The other question I had is tied to one of our Board goals. Dr. Fergus' recommendation of parental involvement. I would love to hear if it's something that is on the agenda for future follow-up. How are we doing things differently, how does the district plan to involve parents in the math course selection process for this upcoming school year? Dr. Fergus had listed some specific examples and wanted to even organize things that targeted underrepresented students and their families to engage them in this process well in advance. Is this something that is being flagged for the 24/25 school year?
- Dr. Gilbert: When we reintroduced the implementation plan on October 30th in each of those areas, there is a component of how we engage with the families or in many other areas that is a crucial piece to this because in this growth mindset piece he was very specific about. It's not just the growth mindset of our students but it's also the growth mindset of our teachers and families. We will be intentional about outlining what that engagement looks like and getting that necessary feedback before we put anything final on paper. I've heard the message loud and clear; people want to be involved, they want to know what's going on. We intend to meet them with that particular standard. I believe that when we talk about growth mindset which we'll do at the next Fergus Committee meeting, we'll make sure our team talks about their plans for what family engagement looks like specifically.

- Board President Telesford: After considering the total number of black students, you arrived at a fraction of some kind. Next, you looked at the fractions of all the other students and calculated the ratio between those two fractions. At that point, you could say that one of the fractions is 0.9 and the other is 7, and that's when you have something that will have a higher ratio, so those that are above one, indicating that a much higher percentage of black students are taking regular math. This is qualitative data, and it looks at the middle school as a whole or certain grades because, in my opinion, there are two ways to go about this. The first is by talking to families and students about middle school math classes. How would you approach them? Another aspect of the study involves observing elementary schools during the transition period of fifth to sixth grade when parents assist their children in selecting their classrooms. What are the potential tactics that the district could employ to examine both of these populations?
- Dr. Gilbert - You're exactly right. I think we can't examine this without looking at what's happening in fifth grade and what's happening in that move into sixth grade because that's something that we're trying to analyze. Dr. Fergus recommended in his report that even though we're seeing this in our middle schools the proactive approach is to see what's happening before those students even get to middle school and a lot of that work has to be done in our elementary areas. To do that we have to do work on that end as well as mitigate what we see happening inside of the middle school. To answer your question yes, we are looking at that and that is part of the strategy going forward.
- Board Member Duvall Wilson: Dr. Gilbert, you shared previously that the Alves group will be meeting with the transportation department. I am curious if that meeting has been scheduled yet?
- Dr. Gilbert: That meeting will be scheduled at a later date; the first meeting will be with the Alves Group and Dr. Fergus and then the meeting with the Alves group and our transportation department will be scheduled. I've already spoken with our Transportation Supervisor, Mr. Ford and he is aware that this will be happening shortly.

HEARING OF INDIVIDUALS AND DELEGATIONS

Antoine Green inquired about funding for initiatives mentioned in tonight's presentations.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

Future Meetings

Board President Telesford made the following motions:

A meeting of the Board of School Estimate will be held on Tuesday, February 13, 2024 at 5:00 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 will be taken.

The Board of Education will hold a public Board Retreat on Thursday, February 22, 2024 at 6:30 pm at 525 Academy Street, Maplewood, New Jersey and immediately adjourn to go into a Board Retreat in person and utilizing an online video conference platform for NJSBA Board Training. Action will not be taken.

The Board of Education will meet in Public Session on Thursday, February 29, 2024 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 made by Board President Telesford, seconded by Board Member Meyer that the Board of Education adjourn. Motion unanimously approved at 8:03 p.m.

Eric Burnside, Board Secretary