

South Orange-Maplewood
Board of Education
Reorganization Meeting
January 2, 2025

A Reorganization 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 January 2, 2025.

Board Secretary Imani Moody called the meeting to order at 6:36 p.m.

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 2:30 pm on January 5, 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.

Pledge of Allegiance

ELECTION RESULTS

November 2024 election results for the South Orange Maplewood Board of Education as reported by the Essex County Board of Elections for the three individuals elected are as follows:

Candidate	Votes
Jeff Bennett	9,562
Deirdre Brown	10,251
Bimal Kapadia	8,587

OATH OF OFFICE

Mr. Moody Administered the Oath of Office to the elected Board Members: Jeff Bennett, Deirdre Brown and Bimal Kapadia. [The signed Oaths of Office are on file in the Board Secretary's Office.]

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Mr. Moody provided a brief explanation of the process for the election of officers and called for nominations for President of the Board of Education.

Board Member Eckert nominated Board Member DuVall Wilson. There were no further nominations for President.

ROLL CALL for Board Member DuVall Wilson as President: YES: Bennett, Brown, Callahan, DuVall Wilson, Eckert, Gifford, Kapadia, Meyer, Sackett-Gable, NO: None

Board Member DuVall Wilson was elected President and assumed the Chair.

Board President DuVall Wilson made the following comments:

Thank you to my board colleagues for voting me as this year's President. Serving you, our district, and this amazing school community is an honor. When I decided to run for the Board of Education in 2022, I was inspired by the opportunity to join a group of volunteers passionate about education. I aspire to contribute to the collective effort to help our school district Thrive, but this isn't just about me. It's about all of us as a team. I want to shout out this amazing group of board members who will continue to be a great support system for our superintendent and the district. We are strong, and I want to remind the community why.

- ❖ Bill, our SOMA historian, was born and raised here and ran for the BOE as a high school senior at Columbia High School. Before we were running mates, we were strangers who unknowingly chose to run with a shared vision. Your expertise in renewable energy and construction is invaluable, and I know it will positively impact our oversight in FFT and the long-range facility plan.
- ❖ Bimal, your optimism and drive as an entrepreneur and communications professional are great additions to the Board. You have already positively impacted your community through volunteerism, sports, and advocacy for the Arts. Joining the Board is a natural progression in your commitment to children.
- ❖ Deirdre, when I read your professional title, I knew you were destined for the Board. As an Assistant Director at the U.S. Government Accountability Office, a nonpartisan Congressional agency that makes fact-based policy recommendations. Policy work is one of our most important jobs. You will keep us accountable, and I can't wait to see you in action.
- ❖ Elizabeth (Liz), I never thought I would meet another person who loves thorough note-taking as much as I do; but seriously, your background in Social and Behavioral Science, plus social-emotional learning, has greatly contributed to your work as a Special Services Committee Chair, and it deserves praise. Your efforts exemplify your passion for helping students.

- ❖ As the 2023 FFT chair, I quickly realized that our data wiz and factfinder Jeff would be sending me many long-form emails about transportation data. I look forward to having your analytical brainpower contribute to our efforts this year.
- ❖ Regina, what would we do without your eagle eyes and ability to keep track of all things. You are a hard worker who deserves public praise. As a great leader on personnel as chair, and continually active behind the scenes, you excel at tracking our progress on goals and holding us all accountable.
- ❖ Shayna, you jumped right into the C&I chair role effortlessly and have done a wonderful job. I love how you pair your experience as a former district teacher with the oversight role of a Board member, always contributing curiosity and insight balanced with camaraderie.
- ❖ Will, whom many did not doubt would one day join the Board with his ongoing presence at all the meetings, kept the policies rolling as policy chair and added more communication measures to further explain state-mandated changes to fellow Board members. His background in law and special education brings great insight to much of our work.

Again, thank you all. It is going to be a productive year and I look forward to working with all of you to get the work done.

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.

Board President DuVall Wilson called for nominations for 1st Vice President of the Board.

Board Member Callahan nominated Board Member Meyer. There were no further nominations for 1st Vice President.

ROLL CALL for Board Member Meyer as 1st Vice President: YES: Bennett, Brown, Callahan, DuVall Wilson, Eckert, Gifford, Kapadia, Meyer, Sackett-Gable, NO: None

Board Member Meyer was elected 1st Vice President.

Board President DuVall Wilson called for nominations for 2nd Vice President of the Board.

Board Member Gifford nominated Board Member Eckert as 2nd Vice President. There were no further nominations for 2nd Vice President.

ROLL CALL for Board Member Eckert as 2nd Vice President: YES: Bennett, Brown, Callahan, DuVall Wilson, Eckert, Gifford, Kapadia, Meyer, Sackett-Gable, NO: None

Board Member Eckert was elected 2nd Vice President.

HEARING OF INDIVIDUALS AND DELEGATIONS

SOMEA President Rocio Lopez addressed the Board.

ITEMS FOR ACTION

Motion made by Board President Duvall Wilson, seconded by Board Member Eckert to move resolution 4609-4610 for discussion and voting:

4609. Approves the following Reorganization Appointments for the 2024-2025 school year:

1. Confirm Reorganization Appointments:
 - a. 4699N approved on 12/19/24,
 - b. 4686E approved on 11/21/24,
 - c. 4649Y items 1-5 approved on 8/29/24 and;
 - d. 4610 items 1-4, 6-10, 12-24, 26-41, approved on 5/30/24
2. Accept the By-Laws, Policies, Rules and Regulations
3. Adopt the Code of Ethics
4. Adopt the Public Meeting Calendar for 2025 per attached
5. Adopt the following newspapers and electronic news media for legal advertisements, the publication of Board meetings and other obligations: The Star Ledger, News Record, TAPintoSOMA.net, villagegreennj.com, northjersey.com, Bergen Record, or the New York Times.

4610. Approves the Board of Education Committee Liaisons for the 2025 calendar year as presented.

ROLL CALL: Motion 4609-4610 PASSED YES: YES: Bennett, Brown, Callahan, DuVall Wilson, Eckert, Gifford, Kapadia, Meyer, Sackett-Gable, NO: None

HEARING OF INDIVIDUALS AND DELEGATIONS

None.

FUTURE MEETINGS

The Board of Education will meet in Public Session on Thursday, January 30, 2025, at 6:30 pm in the District Meeting Room, 525 Academy Street, Maplewood, NJ. Immediately following the opening of the 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 DuVall Wilson, seconded by Board Member Callahan to adjourn. Motion to adjourn unanimously approved at 7:08 p.m.

Imani Moody, Board Secretary