

Special Meeting
Budget Workshop
South Orange-Maplewood
March 13, 2025

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 March 13, 2025.

Board President Nubia DuVall Wilson called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m.

ROLL CALL: Present: Board Member Bennett, Board Member Brown,
Board Member Callahan, Board President DuVall Wilson,
Board Member Eckert, Board Member Gifford,
Board Member Kapadia, Board Member Meyer,
Board Member Sackett-Gable

Absent: None

NINE 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 2:30 pm on January 3, 2025.
- 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.

SOUTH ORANGE-MAPLEWOOD BOARD OF EDUCATION RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING EXECUTIVE SESSION

WHEREAS, while the "Sen. Byron M. Baer Open Public Meetings Act" (N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 et seq.) requires all meetings of the South Orange Maplewood Board of Education to be held in public, N.J.S.A. 10:4-12(b) sets forth nine (9) types of matters that may lawfully be discussed in "Executive Session," without the public being permitted to attend, and

WHEREAS, the Board has determined that one (1) issue is permitted by N.J.S.A 10:4 - 12 (b) to be discussed without the public in attendance and shall be discussed during an Executive Session to be held on Thursday, February 27, 2025 at 6:30 PM, and

WHEREAS, the nine (9) exceptions to open the public meetings set forth in N.J.S.A 10:2-4(b) are listed below, and next to each exception is a box which will be marked when the issues to be privately discussed fall

within that exception, and after each exception is a space where additional information that will disclose as much information about the discussion as possible without undermining the purpose of the exception shall be written:

X "(1) Any matter which, by express provision of Federal law, State statute or rule of court shall be rendered confidential or excluded from public discussion." The nature of the matter, described as specifically as possible without undermining the need for confidentiality, is attorney/client privilege and personnel.

X "(4) Any collective bargaining agreement, or the terms and conditions of which are proposed for inclusion in any collective bargaining agreement, including the negotiation of terms and conditions with employees or representatives of employees of the public body."

WHEREAS, the length of the Executive Session is estimated to be seventy-five (75) minutes after which the public meeting of the Board shall reconvene and proceed with business where formal action will be taken.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the South Orange Maplewood Board of Education will go into Executive Session for the above-stated reasons only; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board hereby declares that its discussion of the aforementioned subject(s) will be made public at a time when the public's interest in disclosure is greater than any privacy or governmental interest being protected from disclosure.

Motion made by Board President DuVall Wilson, second by Board Member Eckert to adjourn to Executive Session. Motion unanimously approved.

Board Members adjourned to Executive Session at 6:33 p.m.

Board Members reconvened at 7:32 p.m.

BOARD PRESIDENT UPDATE

Board President DuVall Wilson acknowledged the hard work of the Superintendent, Business Administrator, and Assistant Business Administrators, Central Office Administrators and School Principals who have all been hands on deck for weeks to engage in an audit, rebuild our district budget and prepare the 2025-26 budget with looming tight deadlines and deficits to close while also forecasting for the future. All of this with two new Business Administrators who have not even been here for six months yet. A big thank you to their unwavering dedication thus far.

Board President DuVall Wilson reminded the community that tonight, the Board will vote to allow the district to send the preliminary budget to the County Executive Superintendent, so that the County Executive Superintendent can address any issues that the district may need to address. This process is required; until then, the district and the board will continue to review the budget, address concerns, make adjustments, and provide recommendations to

ensure the budget aligns with our goals and priorities. Budget adoption is scheduled for April 24, 2025.

2024-2025 PRELIMINARY BUDGET

Business Administrator Imani Moody and Superintendent Jason Bing presented the Tentative Budget for the 2025-2026 School Year. The presentation included the following:

- Budget Development Process
 - Budget Collaboration
 - Small Group Board Meetings
 - Board Meetings
 - Board Committee Meetings
 - Community Conversations
 - Budget Advisory Committee Meetings
 - Surveys
 - District Correspondence
 - Advocacy in Trenton
 - Ongoing Town Halls
 - Town Committee Meetings
- Projected Revenue
- Enrollment
- Expenditures
- Tax Impact
- Budget Calendar
- Salaries, Benefits and Contract Services
 - Budget for Salary increases by projected rates consistent with current negotiations
 - Increases in projected Health Benefits costs of 17%
 - Increases of 27% in utilities costs
 - Increases of 15% in Insurance costs
 - Increases of 5% in custodial
 - Based on visible trends, exploring adjusting language in current contracts and other vendor options
- Tuition
 - Increases in projected costs for Special Education Out of District Placement tuition.
 - Projections are based on anticipated demand for services following thorough review of projected needs
- Transportation
 - Increase funding in transportation for anticipated in growth in current contract costs of 3.57%
 - Review and explore options of employing a hub system to enhance efficiency and increase route timeliness
 - Re-evaluation of all in-district routes to explore opportunities to refine travel routes, optimize bus sizes, and optimize capacity utilization
- Expenditures vs Revenue

- Budget Challenges
 - Increase funding in transportation for anticipated in growth in current contract costs of 3.57%
 - Review and explore options of employing a hub system to enhance efficiency and increase route timeliness
 - Re-evaluation of all in-district routes to explore opportunities to refine travel routes, optimize bus sizes, and optimize capacity utilization
 - Reduction of Expenses and Increasing Revenue assisted in offsetting the deficit
- Estimated School Tax Impact
- 2025-26 Bond Issuance
- Budget Highlights
 - \$2.5 Million maintenance reserve use for one-time projects
 - Re-prioritized additional projects to future BOSE bond issuances
 - Restructuring/Redistributing vendor contracts
 - Did not budget for unfilled vacancy positions where demand is not present
 - **No reduction in staff**

[presentation on file in Board Secretary's office and on the district website]

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

Community member Carrie addressed the Board.

ITEMS FOR ACTION

Motion made by Board Secretary Moody to move resolutions 4735A-C for discussion and voting. Motion unanimously approved.

4735A. Approves the Preliminary Budget for the 2025-2026 school year

in the amount of:

	2025-2026 Total Expenditures	Less: Anticipated Revenues	Tax Levy
General Fund	171,465,152	29,684,622	141,780,530
Special Revenue	11,219,775	11,219,775	0
Debt Service	13,033,043	7,976,461	5,056,582
Total	195,717,970	48,880,858	146,837,112

Be it resolved that the Board approves & authorizes the application to the Commissioner of Education to increase the General Fund tax levy for the 2025-2026 school year by \$850,325 for an enrollment adjustment.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the South Orange Maplewood Board of Education authorizes the Business Administrator to submit the 2025-2026 Preliminary Budget to the County Superintendent for review and approval.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the South Orange Maplewood Board of Education in accordance with the N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7.3(a), establishes a maximum travel expenditure for the 2025-2026 school year not to exceed the amount of \$200,000.

4735B. BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Board of Education authorize the following Club(s), Parent Organization(s) and PTA(s) be covered as additionally insured under the District's NJSIG policy for the 2024-2025 school year.

Parent Organization

Muslim Arab Student Union (MASU)

4735C. Approves the attendance and related travel and/or workshop expenses for the following work-related events:

EMPLOYEE	WORKSHOP/CONFERENCE	DATE(S)	LOCATION	ESTIMATED COSTS
Olivia Cruz Central Office	I&RS to MTSS	3/26/25	Virtual	\$125.00
Rebecca Milligan Central Office	I&RS to MTSS	3/26/25	Virtual	\$125.00
Total				\$250.00

ROLL CALL: Motion 4735A-C PASSED YES: Bennett, Brown, Callahan, DuVall
Wilson, Eckert, Gifford, Kapadia, Meyer, Sackett-Gable,
NO: None

FUTURE MEETINGS

The Board of Education will meet in Public Session on Thursday, March 27, 2025 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 DuVall Wilson, seconded by Board Member Kapadia to adjourn. Motion to adjourn unanimously approved at 8:53 p.m.

Imani Moody, Board Secretary