

Regular Meeting
South Orange-Maplewood
Board of Education
December 18, 2025

A Regular 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 December 18, 2025.

Board President Nubia DuVall Wilson called the meeting to order at 6:37 p.m.

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

Absent: Board Member Brown, Board Member Kapadia

SEVEN VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT

Pledge of Allegiance

Columbia High Varsity Strings performed

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, December 18, 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, HIB reporting, and Litigation Status Report.

WHEREAS, the length of the Executive Session is estimated to be sixty (60) 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 Meyer to adjourn to Executive Session. Motion unanimously approved.

Board Members adjourned to Executive Session at 6:55 p.m.

Board Members reconvened at 8:03 p.m.

Student Representatives joined the meeting

7 Voting Members Present

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion made by Board President DuVall Wilson seconded by Board Member Callahan to approve the minutes of the following meetings: November 19, 2025 Special Meeting; November 20, 2026 - Executive and Regular Board Meetings. Motion unanimously approved.

BOARD RECOGNITION AND APPRECIATION FOR BOARD MEMBER SERVICE

RECOGNITION OF BOARD MEMBER BILL GIFFORD

Former Board Member Johanna Wright and Assemblyman Chigozie Onyema honored Board Member Bill Gifford.

Former Board Member Wright

Titles do not guarantee values. That is why it is truly special to sit here tonight recognizing someone who represents the very best of what public education can inspire. Tonight, we honor Bill Gifford, a former student of this district, a husband, father, son, valued colleague, friend, and dedicated public servant.

Bill's journey is one that comes full circle this evening. As seniors in high school, Bill and his best friend, now a New Jersey State Assemblyman, Chigozie Onyema, ran for seats on the South Orange Maplewood School Board because as students, they were already paying attention. They saw how decisions were made and who paid the price when adults were protected over children. Even then,

they knew not everyone who serves on the Board of Education serves students. Seeing both of them continue their commitment to service is a powerful reminder of why this work matters. Years later, Bill came home as an adult to raise his children in this community and once again, he chose service over silence. That kind of commitment to place, people, and principle is rare and beautiful and he didn't change his name.

During his time on the Board of Education, Bill brought thoughtfulness, integrity, and a student-centered perspective to every discussion. He consistently advocated for equity, academic excellence, and responsible stewardship of our resources. Bill took on work that isn't flashy, but is essential. First, he streamlined our policy review and editing process, addressing years of outdated and neglected policies which helped bring the district into compliance just in time for our QSAC review. That is governance. That is accountability.

Secondly, an advocate for Vocational and Technical Education, in his very first year, he requested that the district partner with Mike Schloff, Founder of Maplewoodshop, to bring meaningful hands-on learning back to our students. That vision became reality when the launch of a secondary woodshop program in the fall of 2023, providing real skills, dignity, and pathways for students.

Thirdly, Bill brought his professional expertise in green energy and solar power directly into his role as Finance Chair this year. For the first time, this district is incorporating environmental sustainability into its fiscal strategy, not as a slogan. There's a plan, ESIP, Energy Saving Improvement Plan, which will include LED lighting upgrades, solar panel installation, and HVAC improvements. That is smart stewardship of taxpayer dollars and responsible planning for our students' future.

At a time when some decisions have prioritized the wrong people, Bill consistently prioritized students. What made Bill especially impactful was his ability to listen. Listen to students, families, staff and fellow Board Members and to lead with both conviction and collaboration. Our district is stronger because of his service. We are grateful for your service. We're proud of your accomplishments and excited to see what's next for you.

I want to thank your beautiful wife, Lily, your wonderful children and family for sharing you with all of us. Thank you for giving back to this place that helped shape you and for reminding us what is possible when former students return as real standing leaders. So, to those who laughed years ago, I ask you plainly, who's laughing now?

Assemblyman Chigozie Onyema

I read somewhere, that as iron sharpens iron, so does one person sharpen the other. Bill, I've known you for almost 30 years of my life and in that entire time, it's been iron sharpening iron. Mrs. Wright talked about the school board election where we ran together in 2005, but really our sort of political journey begins much before that. I remember when you took a Sociology class with Mr. Rodriguez. I can still remember being in my bedroom and you telling me about the things you were learning in Mr. Rodriguez's class. So, the following year, I took Sociology with Ms. Cooper. For me it was an opportunity to join in the studying that you were doing, to be in solidarity, to be in partnership with

you on your political journey, on what became our political journey. In 2004 you ran for the school board. We didn't run you ran. I remember watching you when you ran thinking what does a school board do? Over time I learned that; by the time we ran together, I learned that the school board is where important decisions were made about the future of our young people. So, I joined you in that struggle in 2005.

We've known each other so long that you're like family to me. You're one of my brothers and family is heavy on my mind today. Some of you may know that my father passed away almost 6 years ago but he was born 73 years ago today. Today's my father's birthday. When I gave my father's eulogy, I said that he was my hero, but not the perfect kind. In fact, he was always imperfect. But what mattered was he was always there. He always tried. He always got better and most times he got it just right. You are an always person, brother. You are always in a struggle; you're a long-distance runner. Often times, we think about what it means to be a hero and heroes for me aren't like these fits and starts of bravery. Heroism is about persistence. You've been in this struggle for a long time because you are persistent and for that, you're a hero. As this chapter closes, another one is beginning and I'm excited to see what comes next for you. And I'm mostly looking forward to writing it together, brother. Congratulations on an excellent term.

Bill Gifford

It's hard to sum up one's tenure on the South Orange Maplewood Board of Education. At times, especially during our meetings, serving can feel like an eternity. Yet, it also feels like yesterday that Nubia, Regina, and myself were elected and sworn in just as new Board Members will be next month. I wish them luck and pray for their success. A sincere amount of passion and time goes into being on the Board. From campaign season to getting behind the horseshoe and doing the actual work, you quickly learn change does not happen fast and it takes time and coalition building to accomplish real progress. With the plethora of problems the district faces every day, it's a struggle at times to recognize the achievements we have made, but there are a few that I would like to mention.

One of my biggest initiatives coming onto the Board three years ago was to provide students alternative pathways so that we are not just focusing on college but trades as well. Luckily for us, one of our community's residents is Mike Schloff, the founder of Maplewoodshop, who runs a hands-on woodworking education company. Working with Mike, I'm happy to report that the district has slowly brought back woodshop, with Maplewoodshop initially serving as a pilot in the middle schools. Now, under Superintendent Bing's direction, we have increased Maplewoodshop usage, moving it to Columbia High School as a pathway for construction and carpentry.

Another issue that I'm proud to say that we made progress on is the effort to install solar on our schools as a way to save money on energy costs and provide students exposure to renewable technologies. When I first joined the FFT (Finance, Facilities and Technology) Committee 3 years ago and brought up solar, I was quickly shut down and told we are in the middle of executing the Long Range Facilities Plan. Today, no longer on the sidelines, our Business Administrator is actively exploring a Solar Energy Savings Improvement Plan (ESIP) and will identify candidate facilities for future installation.

That said, the main reason I ran for the Board as a high school student and again as a parent in the district was to push efforts to close the racial achievement gap. On this issue, I take little pride as it seems we are stuck in the same place we were more than 20 years ago. I applaud Superintendent Bing for taking a more collaborative approach to working with the Black Parents Workshop as the monitor, Judge Wallace seems pleased with our latest efforts. Nevertheless, according to our latest New Jersey school performance report, white students are graduating at a rate of 96% within their cohort, while black students are currently at 79%. According to NJSLA, Algebra 2 end of course assessments, 75% of our white students met or exceeded expectations compared to 36% of our black students. In Language Arts, white students had a proficiency rate of 85% and our black students had 50%. As for discipline, in the 23-24 school year, of the 24 out of school suspensions, 20 were black students. That's not to say the Administration is not currently doing everything possible to reverse this trend. As Board Members, we see this Administration's dedication poured into solving these problems. I hope going forward, the Board and Administration are bold enough to assess things as they are and make the necessary changes where needed, no matter how loud the public outcry may be.

I leave this Board incredibly hopeful. Last week, I visited the Fifth Model Gary Convention in the Columbia High School library where students commemorated the groundbreaking 1972 National Black Convention held in Gary, Indiana. This event centers student voices and allows them to grapple with the many challenges faced by black and brown communities. In the time I spent there, I saw students imagining a more equitable world and strategizing ways to arrive there. This work supported by the likes of MAPSO Freedom School and Mac Scholars are as important as the work we do in this building. So, for myself, it is clear there is no lack of potential from our students. It is up to us, the adults, to figure out the best way to support them.

SUPERINTENDENT BING

Stating it's been a pleasure to work with Mr. Gifford would be an understatement. He brings a certain energy to a room that is warm and engaging; he makes it very easy to be yourself. So not only is he an advocate for all students he is just a passionate person. Something I envy of him. So, I want to thank him for all his hard work. Board Members dedicate hours and hours and days and days and weeks and weeks and months and months. It is a tedious position and he has put his time, sweat, and equity into these kids. A huge thank you to Board Member Gifford.

RECOGNITION OF BOARD MEMBER REGINA ECKERT

Board President Nubia DuVall Wilson honored 2nd Vice President Regina Eckert.

It is with great honor that I speak on behalf of my amazing friend and teammate, 2nd VP, Regina Eckert. I could not have gone on this journey without your wisdom, wit, tenacity, and support. I'm so proud to be celebrating you tonight. Regina is a type of leader who prefers to be behind the scenes rather than in the spotlight. As such, I want everyone to know that Regina is one of the most dedicated and hardest-working people I've ever met. I could not have had a better 2nd VP this year.

For three years, Regina has been the chair of the Personnel Committee where she brought her years of experience in Human Resources and Education. It is one of the committees that is exposed to some of the most confidential district information and Regina always managed the oversight of that confidentiality with hypervigilance. Regina has been a steadfast advocate for our teachers and their morale. She pushed for the district to move beyond exit interviews and implement stay interviews to improve retention and further understand teachers' needs. Her advocacy influenced staff surveys and the ongoing stay interviews that Human Resources conducts today, helping strengthen our approach to teacher morale and retention across the district.

In 2023, Regina was our biggest advocate for student hardship transfers, ensuring that policy 5124, Internal Student Transfers, was updated to enable families placed by our Intentional Integration initiative to have their real world challenges addressed. It took a year, working in partnership with the district and the Board. But by the end of 2023, we had an updated policy. Her vigilance with this effort continued in 2025 and we updated this policy again to ensure the district was evaluating hardship transfer requests effectively. Thank you, Regina, for your contributions to an effort that has aided many families.

Regina's critical thinking, eagle eyes, and problem solving skills were integral to our budget process each year. She spoke out often requesting that our budget cuts and RIFs in 2024 would not negatively impact student classroom experiences. She held the district accountable to being transparent on our deficits and financial challenges. Even on the EWG campaign trail, Regina advocated for a more thorough audit of our finances. She took her budget oversight role as a Board Member very seriously, and I learned a lot from her thoughtful questions and analysis.

Some may not know that Regina is a sports fanatic, but I learned that quickly when it was time to support our girls' softball team and all athletes by voting on Ritzer Field. I know many have different opinions on turf. But aside that, we can all appreciate Regina's unwavering dedication to this project. Don't be surprised if you see some pro-turf public speaks from her at future board meetings next year as we look to move ahead on this vital project that is going on seven years past due.

Regina was also on our negotiations committee two years in a row, which we all know is not a cakewalk, but Regina took it in stride. In 2024 and 2025, she participated in many long meetings, missing bedtime with her kids, and eating late night meals here in this building. I want to make sure the community knows how committed Regina was to the two-year process to finalize our teachers contract and give them competitive wages.

Regina, I'm going to greatly miss our partnership and work ethic we shared over the years. Whenever I needed someone to talk things out with, when I was overwhelmed, you were there. When I needed someone to remind me to delegate tasks when I'm busy, you called and asked, "What do you need from me this week?" You were always ready and willing to be there for me, the Executive Committee, and the Board. I wish that everyone could have witnessed your work ethic and service behind the scenes. You are a force. I know our friendship will carry on after our Board service, but I'm going to miss working so closely with you. We have barely gone a day without speaking by phone, email, or text

since August 2022. Thank you again for your great service to this community, and I wish you all the best in your next chapter.

2nd Vice President Regina Eckert

Tonight, is bittersweet. It marks the end of my three-year term on the South Orange Maplewood Board of Education. The second most challenging and rewarding role I've ever had coming in just behind being a parent, this work challenged me and pushed me to grow in ways I didn't expect. I did not always get everything right, but I always showed up, asked questions and led with care. I learned not to shy away from moments when things did not go as planned or when I made a mistake, but to acknowledge it and stay committed to doing better. That is a lesson I learned early in my career and one I carried with me into this role. And through it all, I was reminded again and again why this work matters so deeply.

As I come to the close of my three-year term, I want to share a few thank yous. First, to my family, Alex, Lucas, and Damian. You made the biggest sacrifice. This role didn't just ask something of me; it asked something of you. Thank you for your patience, your flexibility, and for supporting me through long meetings, late nights, and the many moments when Board work took precedent over dinner, bedtime, or being at the sidelines at your games. To my fellow board colleagues, past and present, we did not always agree, and that is part of the job. But I'm especially grateful to those who are willing to collaborate, engage in civil discourse, listen to different perspectives, and then move forward together. Some decisions were easy, many were not, and I trust that future Boards will continue to lead with respect, curiosity, and a shared commitment to our students.

I also want to acknowledge our teachers and staff, the backbone of this district. Any progress we talk about only happens because of the work you do every single day in the classrooms, in the hallways, and schools across this district. Your dedication to our students is what moves this district forward. To Superintendent Bing and the central office staff, it's been a pleasure getting to know you and working alongside many of you over the years. There is still a lot of important work ahead and I believe that with stronger systems, clear communication, and data driven approaches, the district can continue moving in a positive direction for all of our students.

To friends, neighbors, and community members, thank you for trusting me. I knew when I stepped into this role that the work wouldn't always be easy or popular and that I might vote in ways some of you did not agree with, but you trusted that I was doing the work, asking the questions, weighing the information, and making decisions with students at the center, and that trust meant everything to me.

Finally, and most importantly, to our students. You are the reason we are all here. From the student performances that open our Board meetings to the artwork lining the hallway outside these doors to the many times students stepped up to advocate for themselves at public speaks. Whether it was to save a journalism class, call for better safety at Columbia High School, present a traffic safety proposal that went on to win a competition or push for safer, more accessible playing fields. Add to that the musicals, the art shows, and everything in between. These are the moments that reminded me again and again why I sat up

here for three years. I'm so incredibly proud of the work that we took on together, strengthening teaching and learning in the early years through new elementary ELA and math curricula, supporting the Intentional Integration Initiative by reinstating transportation and making pragmatic empathetic adjustments to the transfer policy and doing the necessary hard work to put our district on stronger footing for the future.

As I step away, my hope is simple. That this Board continues to focus on what matters most, our students. Our students are extraordinary, they are watching and they deserve our best every single day. I'm so grateful for the chance to have been part of this work and this community and I know I'll carry it with me long after tonight.

SUPERINTENDENT BING

I've been very lucky here. I've had the pleasure of working with wonderful people on very difficult and challenging issues. People who do not always agree but can agree to disagree, which is how consensus and effective districts move forward. I value your opinion. I have often gone to you when challenges arise, and I will continue to value your words and opinions.
Thank you.

RECOGNITION OF BOARD PRESIDENT NUBIA DUVALL WILSON

2nd Vice President, Regina Eckert honored Board President Nubia DuVall Wilson.

Leadership is bringing out the very best versions of your team. Nubia, you did exactly that. You stepped into the role of Board President at a moment when this community needed reassurance that this Board could function, collaborate, and communicate with integrity and you delivered from the start. You recognized that everyone on this dais brings different strengths, perspectives, and lived experiences. You brought those voices together in service of strong governance, thoughtful policy, and a district that put students first.

You lead with empathy. You listen. You don't shy away from hard conversations. Your leadership changed how we work together. You raised the bar for communication, strengthened trust, and helped this Board show up as a team, even when the work was hard and behind the scenes. You were often the person checking in, following up, and making sure everyone felt heard, even when we did not agree.

Your advocacy around mental health and survivors of abuse has been deeply impactful. By sharing your lived experience with courage and honesty, you reminded us that our decisions are not abstract. They shape real lives, and that perspective brought humanity into this work in a way that truly mattered. I learned a lot watching how you led in these moments, especially when things were uncomfortable or emotionally hard. Your background in communication strengthened not only this Board but also the district's relationship with the community. You pushed us to be clearer, more transparent, and more accountable, and that will last well beyond your term.

Over the course of your term, your impact showed up in very real ways. This is just a snippet of it, but in 2023, I was extremely proud to work beside you on the C&I (Curriculum & Instruction) Committee to push for a stronger elementary reading curriculum, and as FFT chair that year, you ensured careful oversight of hazardous route evaluations, always centering student safety. In 2024, you worked with some fellow Board colleagues to draft and pass a resolution supporting statewide funding for the New Jersey Anti-bullying Task Force, a clear statement of our values, and in 2025, after about 14 months of negotiations, you helped bring the SOMEA contract across the finish line. While the Ritzer project didn't quite get there this year, the foundation you helped build positions the district and the next board to move forward and finally break ground in 2026.

Nubia, thank you for your leadership, courage, friendship, and heart. This district is stronger because of the time and care you gave, and while your seat on this side of the horseshoe may be ending, the impact of your work will continue to show up where it matters most, in classrooms, hallways, and in the daily experiences of students who feel safer and better supported because you were here. You reminded us again and again that this work is about real children and real families, and that how we lead matters just as much as what we decide. Thank you for keeping students at the center of everything you did.

BOARD PRESIDENT NUBIA DUVALL WILSON

Thank you to all who are here tonight to send Regina, Bill, and me off as we end our three-year term on the Board of Education. I also want to thank and acknowledge my family: my husband, Chris, my daughter, Ella, who's in seventh grade, and my son, Luke, who's in fifth grade. Luke gave me a huge hug when I told him, a couple of days ago, that tonight was my last Board of Education meeting. He then reminded me that I spent half of his years in elementary school on the Board. That feels like an eternity to a child and to me, too. Before I continue, I want to acknowledge my father, a civil rights activist, musician, and visual artist, Thomas "Taiwo" DuVall, who passed on March 31st, almost a month before finalizing the teacher's contract. Although he died at 91 with dementia, his memories were strong when I was a child. I grew up listening to my father's stories about living in DC during segregation, experiencing racism, joining the movement with Malcolm X in Harlem, and on and on. He loved his stories. I learned so much from him about activism, the power of my voice, and standing up for what is right. I'd like to believe he is proud of my accomplishments as a Board of Education member.

I want to acknowledge the Executive Committee members. First Vice President Will Meyer and Second Vice President Regina Eckert. I aspired to preside over a Board that was calm, functioned well, reflected the strengths of each member, and pushed our district forward in a number of ways that positively impacted our students. To you both, thank you for working with me to make those goals a reality.

Bimal, Deirdre, and Jeff, I'm sad that I will not be here for your second and third years, but I know you will do well. Each of you have a number of strengths from data analysis and critical thinking to in district parenting experiences that make you huge assets to our Board, to our Board service and district goals. I cannot wait to watch you from the other side of this horseshoe continue to make a difference.

Liz and Shayna, it's been a pleasure working with you these past two years. Thank you for leading your committees with such dedication and focus. As the most senior people left on this board, along with Will, your experiences as chairs and additional NJSBA training you received this year will continue to be an asset. Will, thank you for your ongoing support, work, and work ethic as my 1st VP. You were really a great team member on this journey. Our collaborative partnership and daily conversations allowed us to be a strong team. Although we had differing opinions at times, we were always able to have a professional dialogue that enabled us to find paths forward and that continue to drive positive outcomes. And I'm very proud of that.

To my running mates who formed EWG in 2022, Regina and Bill, thank you for accepting me into your world so that we could go on this journey together. As Bill has said many times, we submitted our petitions unbeknownst to one another, and then came together thereafter. Bill, I remember when we first chatted on the phone about aligning. I don't think you were too into that idea at first, but that's okay. It all worked out. You've been determined to serve on the Board since high school, and I was so inspired by that. I'm proud of all your Board service work, being policy chair at a time when we were greatly behind in our policies, advocating for Voc-tech, and your work on the FFT committee. All that you did was no easy task, and I'm so happy that you tried a third time to get on the Board; your leadership was greatly needed. Thank you, Regina; your friendship and support this entire term have meant so much to me. I could not have done this without you, and thank you for believing in me when I decided to ask for Board support to be president this year. Your savvy, high attention to detail, and sensibility will be hard to replace.

Mr. Bing, I remember the weekend the Board spent interviewing multiple applicants in 2024. When I heard you speak and present to us, I knew you were the one. I don't know how you managed this role, with nine different bosses, three of whom changed annually. It sounds insane, but you were exactly what this district needed when you arrived, and you continue to show it daily, even on the best and most challenging days as you lead this unique school district. Thank you for your steadfast dedication to our community. I will miss collaborating with you.

A huge thank you to our hardworking Senior Leadership Team and central office staff. I want to say thank you to Mr. Adedoyin, Ms. Bodnar, Dr. Correa, Dr. Waibel, Ms. Gesumaria, Dr. Gilbert, Mr. Moody. Mr. Draper Ms. Cuadrado, Ms. Bragg, Mr. Bonds and Mr. Morgan. Our Board and Superintendent would not be successful without your wisdom, support, creativity, problem solving, and passion to help us drive positive outcomes for our students and staff. Thank you to our amazing teachers and school administrators who help educate our bright students. Our student representatives Pen and to Scarlet, I'm so impressed with you and how you are advocating for students. I thank you so much for your work thus far.

I'm more comfortable sharing the successes of others than myself, but I will briefly share that I am very proud of my work on the hazardous routes evaluation and policy, reinstating courtesy transportation to support our integration initiative, passing policy 4281, Inappropriate Staff Conduct, which requires reporting on alleged misconduct if a student might have been subject to child abuse or neglect by school staff or leader, advocating for a new phonics-based

ELA program which launched I Ready Magnetic Reading and pushing forward on the Ritzer Field development to support our athletes. As I exit the Board of Education, a reminder to our current and future Boards: keep collaborating together to make a difference. I am proud of what we all accomplished together, and I wish the board much success in 2026 and beyond.

SUPERINTENDENT BING

The beauty of the relationship between a Board President and a Superintendent is that it is a challenging position that often requires a lot of support. Whether she was holding me up or I was holding her up, it somehow always worked out for the best for the kids, which really is what it comes down to.

Board President DuVall Wilson made a motion seconded by Board Member Eckert for a 5-minute recess. Motion unanimously approved.

**Board Members recessed at 8:48 p.m.
Board Members reconvened at 9:03 p.m.**

BOARD RECOGNITIONS - Penuel Shapiro

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| Donna Friedrich Vanessa LaForest Seth Boyden Elementary School | <p>We want to send a shout-out to Ms. Donna Friedrich and Ms. Vanessa LaForest for leading our excellent 5th-grade Safety Patrol students in celebrating Ruby Bridges National Walk to School Day! The morning kicked off with a wonderful community walk to school, made even better by joining forces with the fantastic Seth Boyden Bike Bus. Later that afternoon, all grades attended a truly inspiring school assembly.</p> <p>Our 5th graders did an incredible job, sharing heartfelt poems and uplifting words of inspiration to honor Ruby Bridges' immense bravery and courage. We would like to give a special commendation to Mrs. Friedrich and Mrs. LaForest for their genuine dedication and commitment to making this important day an annual, meaningful tradition here at Seth Boyden. Thank you for inspiring our students!</p> |
| Katelyn Chan Ms. Meng Columbia High School | <p>Congratulations to Katelyn Chan, who received the Youth Leadership Award at the New Jersey Chinese Teachers Association Award Presentation Ceremony on December 13. Nominated by Ms. Meng, Katelyn was honored for her exceptional leadership and dedication to promoting Chinese language and culture. As Co-President of the Chinese Honor Society at Columbia, she has demonstrated strong organizational and collaborative skills, including co-chairing the</p> |

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| | <p>annual induction ceremony and leading peers in recognizing academic excellence and cultural learning.</p> <p>We also congratulate Ms. Meng for being nominated for the 2025 NJCTA Educator of the Year award. Ms. Meng proudly represented Columbia High School and the SOMSD Chinese teaching team at the NJCTA ceremony.</p> |
| Columbia High School Band Members | <p>We are proud to recognize CHS students who were selected to the 2025-2026 North Jersey Area Symphonic Band after competitive auditions held on December 6th. Their selection reflects months of hard work, dedication, and commitment to their music.</p> <p>Congratulations to: Kaya Masucci playing English Horn; Julien Khaw-Briot playing clarinet; Luke Witt on the tuba; Ella Levy playing the timpani; and Max Ginsberg as battery percussion.</p> <p>We would also like to recognize sophomore Levi Vitale, who demonstrated strong musicianship and effort throughout the process.</p> <p>These students will represent Columbia High School as members of the ensemble, and their first concert will be on January 17th at Mount Olive High School.</p> <p>The Columbia High School band program is full of talent, and we extend our thanks to the band families and music educators who have supported our classmates.</p> |
| Ms. Karissa Handler Columbia High School | <p>Congratulations to Ms. Karissa Handler on being named the 2026 New Jersey Counselor of the Year by our state's School Counselor Association. On behalf of the students of Columbia, we are proud to recognize Ms. Handler for the care, dedication, and leadership she brings to our high school community.</p> <p>Ms. Handler is known by students for always being there and making sure her students feel supported. From creating opportunities such as college visits and the Perseverance Breakfast to expanding support for multilingual learners and assisting with the CHS Yearbook, her work</p> |

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| | has made a difference in students' lives. Ms. Handler is being honored for what her students experience every day: a counselor who truly believes in them and helps them succeed. |
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STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE UPDATE -

Student Representatives Scarlet Storgov and Penuel Shapiro discussed a structured plan for a student administrative support and Internship Program at Columbia High School. The goal of the program is to strengthen school operations while giving students meaningful, real-world experience and is intended to be mutually beneficial for students and administrators.

Departments would select small groups of motivated students for department-specific, project-based roles. Project-based assignments will reduce oversight and increase focus and efficiency as well as allow exploration of overlooked areas such as communications, event coordination, and fundraising. The program can start as a small pilot program to maintain control over scope and expectations before expanding.

Benefits for departments:

- o Advance initiatives often deprioritized due to time/staff limits
- o Increase operational efficiency without hiring new staff
- o Improve consistency and follow-through on long-term projects
- o Prevent staff from being stretched too thin

Benefits for Students:

- o Real exposure to administrative work
- o Application of individual strengths to meaningful projects
- o Early insight into career paths
- o Increased independence through supervised project ownership
- o Highlights the value of leveraging students' strengths, especially in modern communication and technology.

This Internship Program will create a unique and innovative program for the district.

Student representative Storgov also provided a brief update on developing a stronger communications policy focused on appropriate channels for teacher-student communication and timely responses from teachers to students.

SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE

NEW JERSEY COUNSELOR OF THE YEAR

Superintendent Bing congratulated Ms. Karissa Handler on being named the 2026 New Jersey Counselor of the Year by New Jersey School Counselor Association. Ms. Handler supports students in grades 10-12 with academic planning, college and career readiness, and social emotional growth. She is known for expanding access to college opportunities, creating meaningful student recognition programs, and ensuring families feel supported and included. Ms. Handler will now advance to the national selection process as New Jersey's nominee for the 2026 National School Counselor of the Year. We hope to congratulate her next

summer, but for now we want to give her a round of applause for the being the New Jersey Counselor of the Year.

- Columbia High School Principal Frank Sanchez praised Ms. Handler for her exceptional counseling work, highlighting her support of students aiming for top universities, her efforts to ensure students' basic needs are met through partnerships with the Achieve Foundation, and her leadership in organizing college visits. He emphasized that students trust her as a key adult in their lives and congratulated her as a valuable asset to the school.

COLUMBIA HIGH SCHOOL'S CHINESE PROGRAM

Mr. Bing announced that Columbia High School's Chinese program has been recognized at the national level as an outstanding Chinese program. In just eight years, this program has grown from a small grant funded initiative into a strong district supported program serving more than 600 students in grades 6-12. Thanks to Ms. Meng, our dedicated world language teachers, and the leadership of Dr. Robles-Fernandez, students are gaining meaningful language skills, cultural understanding, and opportunities that extend beyond the classroom.

- *Ms. Meng - I truly appreciate the invitation to the Board meeting for recognition of our achievement. This outstanding award reflects not only the strengths of the Chinese language program but also the district's dedication to global education, cultural understanding and academic excellence. Our achievement would not be possible without the strong support of the Board, the district, school administrators, the dedication of this team and most importantly the enthusiasm and engagement of the students and the parents who bring the language and culture to life every day. We look forward to continuing this meaningful work to sustain the healthy and long-term development of the Chinese program and to contribute to the diverse culture of the school district and the community. Chinese Program teachers Jennifer Mui, Xueyin Li, Chia-Chi Chiang, Mei Weaver and Vince Chen introduced themselves.*
- *Principal Sanchez - This program launched in 2017, and it is impressive that none of the dedicated educators involved come from elementary schools. The existence of a nationally recognized, award-winning program starting in sixth grade is a testament to their hard work. We thank Dr. Robles for starting this program. I appreciate how connected the students are to their teachers in any world language program no matter the language. The Chinese program, in particular, stands out for its diversity and showcases the beauty of Columbia High School. I also want to emphasize the valuable opportunities this language program provides. We have welcomed Chinese scholars and hosted Taiwanese students, and we hope to offer our students opportunities to travel abroad as well.*

Mr. Robles, Supervisor of World Language, and some Senior Leadership Team members are exploring a dual-language program for the South Orange Maplewood School District. They visited West Windsor and Dover School Districts to observe kindergarten and first-grade Spanish-immersion classrooms. This work builds on the success of our Spanish and Chinese programs. Thanks to both programs for engaging students and fostering interest in culture and languages.

Mr. Bing also provided updates on the following:

- Collaboration with SOMA Shares to expand food pantries to all district schools
- Policies 2312 Class Size and 9320 Cooperation with Law Enforcement
- Development of career pathways at Columbia High School to produce a workforce that is ready as soon as they graduate high school. Programs will include:
 - Health Sciences (In Partnership with Rutgers University)
 - Aviation
 - Tomorrow's Teachers (In Partnership with Ryder University.
 - Carpentry and Construction (expansion of the current woodworking program with Maplewoodshop)
 - Business Marketing
 - Computer Science
 - Environmental Science
 - CAR TAP (through a partnership with NJ Coalition of Automotive Retailers)
 - Supply Chain Management
- Transportation Action Committee
- Children's Cabinet meeting
- Budget

BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR'S UPDATE – Mr. Moody

Business Administrator Imani Moody presented Bridging the Gap: SOMSD's Path from Fiscal Cliff to Financial Sustainability. The presentation focused on the following:

- ❖ Our Current Financial Reality: Understanding the Fiscal Cliff
- ❖ How Did We Get Here? The Path to Our Current Position
- ❖ Reserve & Revenue Projections
- ❖ Strategic Transformation: Bringing Services Back In-District
- ❖ Immediate Action Plan: Cost Control & Efficiency Measures
 - Changing Organizational Behavior
 - Zero Based Budgeting
 - Monitoring Billing
 - Quarterly Projections
 - Enhance awareness of Financial Reports
 - Optimize throughout the year
 - Memorialize actions taken in SOP documents to guide multi-year impact
 - Known Savings: \$2M+ Immediate Impact
 - Preschool Bussing
 - Health Insurance Change
 - Additional Cost Control Measures
 - Budget Freeze
 - Reduce OOD Placements
 - Optimize 6th Period
- ❖ Environmental Sustainability as Fiscal Strategy
 - Energy Savings Improvement Plan (ESIP)

❖ Roadmap to Success: KPIs and Timeline for Financial Stability

Mr. Moody also provided an update on the Ritzer Field Project timeline and the 2026-2027 Budget Calendar.

BOARD PRESIDENT'S UPDATE - Nubia DuVall Wilson

Board President DuVall Wilson highlighted the following District and Board milestones of 2025:

- The 2025-2026 school year budget included no reductions in force.
- SOMEA and ASCA contracts were settled this year with SOMEA in particular having one of the best salaries in the county.
- Freshman Academy was reimagined and relaunched this year to better support our 9th graders.
- The district transitioned to a new health insurance plan, to save money and prevent some financial burdens for next year.
- Continued efforts to finish the two 2019 LRFP capital projects.
- Implemented our K-9th grade phone ban to further prevent distractions in the classroom and on school grounds. Tonight, we are accepting \$28,257 in grant funds from the NJDOE Phone Free Schools program to support those efforts. Funds can only be used for phone storage solutions that enable secure restriction of student access such as Yondr pouches.
- Five-year Strategic Plan community sessions scheduled for the evenings of March 16th, April 15th and May 11th. This will enable the district and the community to have a clearer picture of the 26-27 school year budget as well as the forthcoming three years.

BOARD PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT

HEARING OF INDIVIDUALS AND DELEGATIONS

Community Members Nicole Burns, Daniel Kaplan, Kelly Moore, Rocio Lopez, SOMEA President, Rebecca Scheer, Zach Kerns and South Orange Village Mayor Sheena Collum addressed the Board.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Committee Meeting Minutes are available on the district website.

ITEMS FOR ACTION

Motion made by Board Secretary Moody to move resolutions 4888-4900 for discussion and voting.

The Superintendent recommends that the Board of Education approve the following personnel fiscal resolutions.

4888A. APPOINTMENTS

(This employment is conditional and subject to the disclosure requirement; pending compliance with NJ Public Law 2018, Chapter 5)

| NAME | ASSIGNMENT | EFFECTIVE DATE | ACTUAL SALARY |
|----------------------------|---|------------------------------|---------------|
| Amboise-Etienne, Bervelyne | School Psychologist SB/MAR - 1.0 FTE | 1/26/26 or sooner 6/30/26 | \$100,292 |

| | | | |
|--------------------|---|--------------------|----------|
| Gess, Christina | BCBA (non NJDOE Certified) DIST - 1.0 FTE | 1/20/26 6/30/26 | \$81,932 |
| Seddon, Michael | Maintenance (Electrician) DIST - 1.0 FTE | TBD 6/30/26 | \$82,905 |

4888B. LEAVE REPLACEMENT APPOINTMENT

(This employment is conditional and subject to the disclosure requirement; pending compliance with NJ Public Law 2018, Chapter 5)

| NAME | ASSIGNMENT | EFFECTIVE DATE | ACTUAL SALARY |
|------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Little,* Maia | T Physical Ed. SB - 1.0 FTE | 1/5/26 3/20/26 | \$66,100 |

* Pending receipt of NJ Certification

4888C. TRANSFERS/REASSIGNMENTS

| NAME | OLD ASSIGNMENT | NEW ASSIGNMENT | EFFECTIVE DATE |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------|--|-------------------|
| Burns, Nicole | S4/11, Secretary MONT - 1.0 FTE | S4/11, Secretary (Facilities) DIST - 1.0 FTE | 1/5/26 |
| Mitchell, Michelle | S4/12, Secretary CHS - 1.0 FTE | S4/12, Secretary (SPED) DIST - 1.0 FTE | 1/5/26 |

4888D. STIPENDS

| NAME | ASSIGNMENT | EFFECTIVE DATE | ACTUAL SALARY |
|-----------------------|--|--------------------|-------------------------|
| Hollaway, Danyelle | Cheerleading (Winter) CHS - 1.0 FTE | 12/1/25 2/28/26 | \$5,531 |
| Irby-Hill, Lynn | ASPIRE Institute DIST - 1.0 FTE | 1/5/26 6/30/26 | \$10,000 (pro-rated) |
| Thomas, Jennifer | Safety Patrol TUS - 1.0 FTE | 9/1/25 11/10/25 | \$3,386 (pro-rated) |
| Picillo, Nicholas | Asst. Coach JV, Wrestling CHS - 1.0 FTE | 12/1/25 2/28/26 | -\$5.614 |

4888E. SALARY ADJUSTMENTS

| NAME | ASSIGNMENT | EFFECTIVE DATE | ADJUSTMENT | ACTUAL SALARY |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------|--|--|----------------------|
| Banner, Abiodun | Asst. Principal CHS 1.0 FTE | 11/3-11/26/25 (7 days) 11/3-11/26/25 (8 days) | \$37.50 (per day) \$50.00 (per day) | \$262.50 \$400.00 |
| McCormick, Philip | Asst. Principal CHS 1.0 FTE | 11/3-11/26/25 (7 days) 11/3-11/26/25 (8 days) | \$37.50 (per day) \$50.00 (per day) | \$262.50 \$400.00 |

| | | | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Obwoge, Lamech | Asst. Principal CHS 1.0 FTE | 11/3-11/24/25 (7 days) | \$37.50 (per day) | \$262.50 |
| | | 11/3-11/24/25 (5 days) | \$50.00 (per day) | \$250.00 |
| Sanchez, Frank | Principal CHS 1.0 FTE | 11/3-11/26/25 (7 days) | \$37.50 (per day) | \$262.50 |
| | | 11/3-11/26/25 (6 days) | \$50.00 (per day) | \$300.00 |
| Fein, Suzanne | T SPED MM - 1.1 FTE | 11/17/25 6/30/26 | +\$11,237.60 (pro-rated) | \$126,614 (pro-rated) |
| Bethea, Sabrina | Clerical Aide TUS - 1.0 FTE | 11/13-11/18/25 (15 hours) | \$14.78 (per hour) | \$221.70 |
| Williams, Christine | Clerical Aide CLIN- 1.0 FTE | 10/27-11/20/25 (28.5 hours) | \$15.41 (per hour) | \$439.19 |
| Toledo, Maria | Clerical Aide MAR - 1.0 FTE | 11/21/25 (8 hours) | \$10.69 (per hour) | \$85.52 |
| Cadorette, Catherine | Clerical Aide SB - 1.0 FTE | 10/29-11/5/25 (39.40 hours) | \$10.69 (per hour) | \$421.19 |
| Cadorette, Catherine | Clerical Aide SB - 1.0 FTE | 4/1-6/4/25 (14 hours) | \$7.81 (per hour) | \$109.34 |

4889A. APPOINTMENT OF SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS FOR THE 2025-2026 SCHOOL YEAR AT \$175/DAY

NON-DEGREE AND STATE SUBSTITUTE CERTIFICATE

1. Anderson, Tonika
2. Duvalier, Cory
3. Williams, Kendra

4889B. APPOINTMENT OF OUT OF DISTRICT COACHES FOR THE 2025-2026 SCHOOL YEAR

| NAME | ASSIGNMENT | CONTRACT YEAR | STIPEND |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------|---------|
| Bender, Lawrence | Girls Varsity Wrestling Head Coach | 12/2025 2/2026 | \$7,905 |
| Bender, Lawrence | Boys JV Wrestling Coach | 12/2025 2/2026 | \$5,490 |
| Cooper, Denard | Freshman Boys Tennis Coach | 3/2026 6/2026 | \$3,811 |
| Earle, Chenae | Girls Flag Football Coach | 3/2025 6/2025 | \$7,780 |
| Green, Kevin | JV Football Coach | 9/2025 11/2025 | \$6,566 |
| McCombs, David | JV Football Coach | 9/2025 11/2025 | \$6,566 |
| Nicolas, Jahleel | Boys JV Wrestling Coach | 12/2025 2/2026 | \$5,490 |
| Rubenstein, Philip | Freshman Boys Basketball Coach | 12/2025 2/2026 | \$3,749 |
| Alves-Filho, Jennifer | Softball JV Coach | 3/2026 6/2026 | \$5,614 |
| Downey, Ryan | Boys Varsity Lacrosse Coach | 3/2026 6/2026 | \$7,890 |

| | | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------|---------|
| Hildebrand, Christopher | Boys JV Lacrosse Coach | 3/2026 6/2026 | \$5,614 |
| Pappalardo, Christopher | Boys JV Lacrosse Coach | 3/2026 6/2026 | \$5,614 |
| Rothenberger, Nicole | Freshman Softball JV Coach | 3/2026 6/2026 | \$3,811 |
| Smith Clifford | Varsity Softball Head Coach | 3/2026 6/2026 | \$7,891 |

4889C. APPOINTMENT OF VOLUNTEERS FOR THE 2025-2026 SCHOOL YEAR

| NAME | ASSIGNMENT |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------|
| *Richards, Kayann | Girls JV Indoor Track & Field |
| Millard, Elizabeth | Tuscan Elementary Parent Volunteer |

**Pending criminal history clearance*

4890A. Approves the attached list of students who are scheduled to attend Out-of-District tuition supported programs for the 2024-2025 school year. [list on file in Board Secretary's office]

4890B. Approves the attached list of students who are scheduled to attend Out-of-District tuition supported programs for the 2025-2026 school year. [list on file in Board Secretary's office]

4891A. Receives and accepts the following financial reports:

1. November 2025 Board Secretary's Report
2. November 2025 Treasurer Report
3. November 2025 Transfer Report
4. November 2025 Expense Account Adjustment Analyses
5. Check Register 427625-427860 in the amount of \$8,521,932.88
6. Check Register 200930-200934 in the amount of \$4,515,956.26
7. Check Register 200935-200938 in the amount of \$2,405,736.13
8. November 2025 Payroll Register in the amount of \$7,959,905.85

4891B. Certify the Board Secretary's Monthly Financial Report.

4891C. Approves the attendance and related travel and/or workshop expenses for the following work-related events:

| EMPLOYEE | WORKSHOP/CONFERENCE | DATE (S) | LOCATION | ESTIMATED COSTS |
|--------------------------------------|--|-------------------------|----------------------|-----------------|
| Beth Barry Central Office | NJASBO Purchasing Workshop | 3/31/26 | Whippany, NJ | \$213.80 |
| Dallas Duffey Columbia HS | Designing Thinking Math Classrooms (Two-Day Intensive) | 1/21/26 & 2/18/26 | New Brunswick, NJ | \$364.88 |
| Marcia Hicks Columbia HS | A Dream Deferred Conference | 3/16/25- 3/18/25 | Philadelphia, PA | \$1,995.36 |
| Taliah Joyner-Isibor Montrose ECC | Handle with Care Training | 1/12/26 | Wayne, NJ | \$405.00 |
| Sandra Klemser Central Office | 56 th Annual NJ Pupil Transportation | 3/25/26- 3/27/26 | Atlantic City, NJ | \$1,092.60 |

| | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|-------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| | Conference & Equipment Show | | | |
| James Manno Columbia HS | The Jewish Federation Study Tour | 1/25/26- 1/29/26 | Tel Aviv, Israel | \$0.00 |
| Philip McCormick Columbia HS | The Jewish Federation Study Tour | 1/25/26- 1/29/26 | Tel Aviv, Israel | \$0.00 |
| Paul Morgan Central Office | The Briefings: A National School Safety Symposium | 4/13/26- 4/15/26 | Glen Elyn, IL | \$1,928.06 |
| Ramon Robles-Fernandez Columbia HS | Language is Power | 2/8/26 2/12/26 | Chicago, IL | \$3,231.97 |
| Julie Skrivanic Columbia HS | Designing Thinking Math Classrooms (Two Day Intensive) | 1/21/26 & 2/18/26 | New Brunswick, NJ | \$386.03 |
| Kendra Wolsky Central Office | Rutgers Routing and Scheduling | 1/13/26- 1/29/26 | Online | \$575.00 |
| Kendra Wolsky Central Office | Rutgers Fleet Management | 4/12/26- 5/6/26 | Online | \$483.00 |
| Total | | | | \$10,675.70 |

4891D. Approves the use of the following vendors in excess of the \$53,000 for the 2025-2026 school year:

4891E. Approves the use of the following vendors in excess of the \$53,000 for the 2025-2026 school year:

| VENDOR NAME | PRODUCT | TYPE OF VENDOR |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Michael J. Alves | SES Implementation | Other |
| Troller | Electricians | Co-op |
| White Rock | Roof Repairs | Co-op |
| Millennium Communication Group, Inc. | Cabling | State Contract |

4891F. Approves submission of the one-year preschool operational plan for the 2026-2027 school year, as required by the Division of Early Childhood Education in the New Jersey State Department of Education. Projected enrollment is a total of 451 students who will participate in the District's Pre-School Program in 2026-2027.

4891G. Accepts equipment donations to the SOMSD Physical Education & Health Department (value \$4,969.75) and the Athletics Department (value \$1,389.00) from the SOMA Basketball Boosters organization.

4891H. Approves a Speech-Language Pathology Clinical Externship/Student-Teaching Placement agreement for college students in the related degree program. The agreement is effective for the period January 1, 2026 through June 30, 2026.

4891I. Approves a Clinical Affiliation Agreement with Emerson College

for the purposes of providing supervised, practical learning experiences for students of Emerson in connection with a Speech-Language-Hearing program. The agreement is effective for the period December 19, 2025 through December 18, 2026.

4891J. WHEREAS, N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-11 et seq. and N.J.S.A. 40A:11-11(5) authorizes contracting units to establish a Cooperative Pricing System and to enter into Cooperative Pricing Agreements for its administration; and

WHEREAS, the Morris-Union Jointure Commission, hereinafter referred to as the "Lead Agency," has offered voluntary participation in the Cooperative Pricing System for the purchase of goods and services;

Whereas, on December 18, 2025 the governing body of the South Orange Maplewood Board of Education of Essex County, duly considered participation in a Cooperative Pricing System for the provision and performance of goods and services relating to technology, professional development and staffing.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED as follows:

TITLE

This RESOLUTION shall be known and may be cited as the Cooperative Pricing Resolution of the Morris-Union Jointure Commission Board of Education.

AUTHORITY

Pursuant to the provisions of N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-11 et seq., *N.J.S.A. 40A:11-11(5)* and N.J.A.C. 5:34-7.1 et seq., the Board Secretary of the Board of Education is hereby authorized to enter into a Cooperative Pricing Agreement with the Lead Agency on the Board's behalf.

CONTRACTING UNIT

The Lead Agency shall be responsible for complying with the provisions of the Public School Contracts Law (N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-1 et seq.) and all other provisions of the revised statutes of the State of New Jersey.

EFFECTIVE DATE

This resolution shall take effect immediately upon passage.

4891K. Approves Engineering & Design Services for Improvements at Ritzer Field as submitted by Spiezle Architectural Group at a cost of \$309,700.00.

| | |
|---|---------------|
| • Survey | \$ 26,900.00 |
| • Environmental Related Services | \$ 17,500.00 |
| • Stormwater Related Services | \$ 22,000.00 |
| • Permitting Services | \$ 24,000.00 |
| • Documents, Bidding, Construction Administration | \$ 219,300.00 |

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Board President, Superintendent and Board Secretary are authorized to execute and deliver any necessary contracts and reports on behalf of the Board.

- 4891L. Approves the following change order to the contract with Paul Otto Building Company for Renovations to South Orange Middle School.

| Contractor | Change Order # | Amount |
|------------------------|----------------|------------------------------------|
| Paul Otto Building Co. | 7 | \$30,296.69 (contract increase) |

- 4891M. Approves payment to South Orange Performing Arts Center (SOPAC) in the amount of \$32,000.00 for Arts in Education performances and residencies for the 25-26 school year.

- 4891N. Accepts NJDOE Phone-Free Schools Program Grant funds in the amount of \$28,257.02.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the budget is increased by this amount and the Superintendent or his designee is authorized to administer it.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Board President, Superintendent and Board Secretary be authorized to execute and deliver any necessary contracts and reports on behalf of the Board.

- 4891O. Accepts a donation to the Parenting Center in the amount of \$500.00.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the following budget is increased and the Superintendent or his designee is authorized to administer it:

| | | |
|----------------|------------------|----------|
| 20-019-200-890 | Parenting Center | \$500.00 |
|----------------|------------------|----------|

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Board President, Superintendent and Board Secretary are authorized to execute and deliver any necessary contracts and reports on behalf of the Board.

4892. Adopt the following revised curricula:

| Resolution Number | New/ Revised | Department | Subject |
|-------------------|--------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| 4892-1 | New | Fine Arts K-12 | Computer Graphics 2 |
| 4892-2 | Revised | PE/Health/Nursing | Mental Wellness |
| 4892-3 | Revised | PE/Health/Nursing | Advanced Nutrition |
| 4892-4 | Revised | PE/Health/Nursing | Post-High School |
| 4892-5 | Revised | PE/Health/Nursing | Romantic Relationships |

| | | | |
|---------|---------|---------------------|--|
| 4892-6 | Revised | PE/Health/Nursing | Relationships |
| 4892-7 | Revised | PE/Health/Nursing | Advanced Fitness |
| 4892-8 | Revised | Social Studies K-12 | Grade 1 Social Studies |
| 4892-9 | Revised | Social Studies K-12 | Grade 3 Social Studies |
| 4892-10 | Revised | Social Studies K-12 | Grade 4 Social Studies |
| 4892-11 | Revised | Social Studies K-12 | Grade 5 Social Studies |
| 4892-12 | Revised | Social Studies K-12 | Grade 6 Social Studies |
| 4892-13 | Revised | Social Studies K-12 | Grade 7 Social Studies |
| 4892-14 | Revised | Social Studies K-12 | Grade 9 Social Studies |
| 4892-15 | Revised | Social Studies K-12 | Grade 10 Social Studies |
| 4892-16 | Revised | Social Studies K-12 | Human Behavior |
| 4892-17 | Revised | Social Studies K-12 | AP Psychology |
| 4892-18 | Revised | Social Studies K-12 | AP US History |
| 4892-19 | New | STEM 9-12 | AP Cyber Security |
| 4892-20 | New | STEM 9-12 | Digital Cinematography for TV Production |
| 4892-21 | New | STEM 9-12 | AP Macroeconomics |
| 4892-22 | Revised | STEM 9-12 | Algebra 1 |
| 4892-23 | Revised | STEM 9-12 | Algebra 2 |
| 4892-24 | New | STEM 9-12 | Cyber Security |
| 4892-25 | Revised | STEM 9-12 | Physics |
| 4892-26 | Revised | STEM 9-12 | Pre-Calculus |

| | | | |
|---------|---------|-----------|-----------------------------|
| 4892-27 | Revised | STEM 9-12 | Statistics |
| 4892-28 | Revised | STEM 9-12 | Calculus HN |
| 4892-29 | Revised | STEM 9-12 | AP Biology |
| 4892-30 | Revised | STEM 9-12 | Marketing |
| 4892-31 | Revised | STEM 9-12 | Organic Medical Chemistry |
| 4892-32 | New | STEM 9-12 | Environmental Earth Science |

4893. Orders the transfer or removal of the students identified below.

| <u>NJ State ID #</u> | <u>School</u> | <u>Grade</u> |
|----------------------|---------------|------------------|
| 1501679174 | CHS | 10 th |
| 7380636071 | CHS | 10 th |
| 9816972074 | MMS | 8 th |
| 3506926172 | MMS | 8 th |

4894. Hereby affirms the HIB investigations reported to the South Orange/Maplewood School District for the month of November 2025.

4895A. Adopt Policy 0174 Legal Services.

4895B. Adopt Policy 1636.01 Notification of Promotion, New Job, and Transfer Opportunities.

4895C. Adopt Policy 5339.01 Student Sun Protection.

4895D. Adopt Regulation 9320 Cooperation with Law Enforcement.

4896-1. Approves the first reading of Policy 2314 Class Size.

4896-2. Approves the first reading of Policy 5512 Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying.

4896-3. Approves the first reading of Policy 9320 Cooperation with Law Enforcement Agencies.

4897A. Approves the settlement agreement for Student ID #2340563253 and authorizes the Board President to execute the settlement agreement.

4897B. Approves the settlement agreement for Student ID #1093220372 and authorizes the Board President to execute the settlement agreement.

4897C. Approves the settlement agreement for Student ID #8200790396 and authorizes the Board President to execute the settlement agreement.

4898. Approves the addition of the following class field trip destinations based upon the attached "Statements of Assurance."

| DESTINATION | CITY | STATE |
|------------------------------------|-------------|-------|
| LBT Marine Education Field Station | Beach Haven | NJ |

4899. Approves the Nursing Services Plan for the 2025-2026 school year in accordance with the N.J.A.C. 6A:16-2.2-11(b).

4900. WHEREAS, the Board of Education of the School District of South Orange & Maplewood is committed to strengthening democratic participation and promoting electoral processes that reflect the full range of community preferences; and

WHEREAS, New Jersey school districts strive to ensure that local board of education elections provide fair opportunities for all candidates and enable voters to express nuanced preferences in multi-candidate, multi-seat contests; and

WHEREAS, all school districts in New Jersey are required to use an electoral system known as "Plurality Block Vote" or "Plurality At-Large," where every voter may make as many votes as there are seats to be filled, those votes are unranked, and the candidates with the most votes win.

WHEREAS, in such elections—particularly where several candidates compete for multiple at-large seats—the current Plurality Block Voting structure can amplify small differences in voter support in ways that do not always reflect the broader distribution of community sentiment or the relative strength of individual candidates; and

WHEREAS, these structural features may inadvertently favor tightly grouped voting patterns and limit mechanisms through which voter preferences can be expressed or aggregated to achieve more equitable representation; and

WHEREAS, Ranked Choice Voting (RCV)—a system in which voters may rank candidates in order of preference and votes are counted in an "instant-runoff" or Single Transferable Vote process—has been demonstrated in other jurisdictions to support majority-backed winners, reduce vote-splitting among similar candidates, and allow proportional representation in multi-seat elections; and

WHEREAS, Multiwinner RCV can democratically accommodate an electoral field of any size, without dilution effects; and

WHEREAS, research from states and municipalities implementing RCV shows that voters report high satisfaction with the process, greater clarity in expressing preferences, and confidence that election results more accurately reflect community priorities; and

WHEREAS, New Jersey currently does not provide statutory authority for school districts to adopt RCV for local school board elections, nor do districts have the flexibility to request such a system even where community dynamics may suggest its potential benefits; and

WHEREAS, The Delegate Assembly is the official policymaking body of the New Jersey School Boards Association; and

WHEREAS, Education-related policies resulting from prior Delegate Assembly and Board of Directors actions are codified in the NJSBA's Manual of Positions and Policies on Education; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the South Orange-Maplewood Board of Education proposes the following new policy language for adoption by the Delegate Assembly and inclusion in NJSBA's Manual of Positions and Policies on Education:

The NJSBA supports allowing, but not requiring, districts to use Ranked Choice Voting in school board elections.

BE IT RESOLVED, that this resolution be placed on the agenda for consideration at the May 16th, 2026, Delegate Assembly. Adopted at a regular meeting of the South Orange-Maplewood Board of Education on December 18th, 2025.

ROLL CALL: Motion 4888A-E, 4889A-D, 4890A-B, 4891A-O, 4892, 4893, 4894, 4895, 4896, 4897, 4898, 4899, 4900 YES: Bennett, Callahan, DuVall
Wilson, Eckert, Gifford, Meyer, Sackett-Gable NO: None

HEARING OF INDIVIDUALS AND DELEGATIONS

NONE.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

Future Meetings

The Board of Education will meet in Public Session and hold its annual Reorganization Meeting on Monday, January 5, 2025, at 6:30 pm in the District Meeting Room, 525 Academy Street, Maplewood, NJ as well as using the online video conference platform. 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 suggested in accordance with the guidance received from the local DOH and the CDC. Action will be taken.

Motion made by Board Member President Duvall Wilson, seconded by Board Member Sackett-Gable to adjourn. Motion to adjourn was unanimously approved at 10:47 p.m.

Imani Moody, Board Secretary