

South Orange-Maplewood  
Board of Education  
Reorganization Meeting  
January 5, 2026

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 and via an online video conference platform on January 5, 2026.

Board Secretary Imani Moody called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

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.

ELECTION RESULTS

November 2025 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:

<b>Candidate</b>	<b>Votes</b>
Meredith Higgins	8,788
Malini Nayar	9,162
Paul Stephan	8,459

OATH OF OFFICE

Mr. Moody Administered the Oath of Office to the elected Board Members: Meredith Higgins, Malini Nayar and Paul Stephan. [The signed Oaths of Office are on file in the Board Secretary's Office.]

ROLL CALL: Present: Board Member Bennett, Board Member Brown, Board Member Callahan, Board Member Higgins, Board Member Kapadia, Board Member Meyer, Board Member Nayar, Board Member Sackett-Gable Board Member Stephan

Absent: NONE

*NINE VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT*

## ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Board Secretary Moody called for nominations for President of the Board of Education.

Board Member Sackett-Gable nominated Board Member Meyer. There were no further nominations for President.

ROLL CALL for Board Member Meyer as President: YES: Bennett, Brown, Callahan, Higgins, Kapadia, Meyer, Nayar, Sackett-Gable, Stephan NO: None

Board Member Meyer was elected President and assumed the Chair.

Board President Meyer made the following comments:

*Thank you to my fellow Board Members. I am deeply grateful for this vote of confidence and trust. It really is an honor and a tremendous responsibility to serve as President of our Board of Education and I look forward to facilitating productive governance among our nine members, partnering with and supporting Superintendent Bing and his talented staff including all of our amazing teachers and working to ensure an excellent education for all our kids.*

*I learned today that January is School Board Recognition Month. Serving on the Board is both a serious duty and an incredible privilege. Board Members are community members who've committed their time and effort to serving as stewards of this district, overseeing our superintendent and strengthening the school system we cherish. To do that, each volunteer member contributes long hours, often multiple nights a week, juggling work and family life, missing bedtimes, and fielding concerns from community members at coffee shops, school pickup lines, and on social media. It is a big commitment, and we all fought for the chance to do it.*

*I am really, truly grateful to be working with this specific, talented, and devoted group of Board Members. We come from different backgrounds, experiences, and worldviews, and each of us has ties to different segments of our community. In fact, I did the math here; seven out of the nine of us ran against one or the other in a prior Board of Education election. Despite these differences, I'm pleased to say I respect and actually genuinely like each person here. I believe we have a strong foundation of common purpose. We know how tough our annual elections are, and to be honest, we should all be doing better in that regard, but the principles that unite us here far outweigh those that divide us.*

*This does not mean we will always agree on how to achieve this shared vision. Each person here is obligated to follow the courage of their convictions in every vote we take, and I know they will do so. But we also know that we were each sent here by the electorate and our neighbors to do this work together, and we share a responsibility to serve our entire community. I trust that each member here is prepared to work together in good faith, strengthening our relationships and governance, and focusing on practical solutions to the challenges before us. Because*

*those challenges are serious. Our charge this year is to oversee our district through a difficult fiscal climate and ensure that we continue to provide a rigorous education to all students, nonetheless, to budget our resources responsibly while not sacrificing academic excellence or student supports, and to stay true to our promise of ensuring real equity and diversity in all of our classrooms. I know that our district leadership is prepared to meet this goal, and that this board is ready to give them the tools and oversight they need to make it happen.*

*Finally, we are a community that values diversity and belonging. I feel confident that each and every person sitting on this dais holds those views. The belief that every child and every family should feel welcome and safe in our schools, regardless of race, religion, nationality, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, socioeconomic status, family structure, or any other characteristic that could stand in the way of making someone feel they belong here. That commitment extends to our immigrant families, our Jewish families, our Black families, our families of trans youth, our special education families, every family in our community, and not every Board President sitting in their reorganization meeting this evening could say that about their Board and their leadership. I'm proud that I can, and I look forward to working with each of you in the year ahead to make these commitments a reality every day.*

Board President Meyer called for nominations for 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President of the Board.

Board Member Bennett nominated Board Callahan. There were no further nominations for 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President.

ROLL CALL for Board Member Callahan as 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President: YES: Bennett, Callahan, Higgins, Meyer, Nayar, Sackett-Gable, Stephan NO: Brown, Kapadia

Board Member Callahan was elected 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President.

Board President Meyer called for nominations for 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President of the Board.

Board Member Brown nominated Board Member Nayar as 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President. There were no further nominations.

ROLL CALL for Board Member Nayar as 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President: YES: Bennett, Brown, Callahan, Higgins, Kapadia, Meyer, Nayar, Sackett-Gable, Stephan NO: None

Board Member Nayar was elected 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President.

#### HEARING OF INDIVIDUALS AND DELEGATIONS

Shira Lincoln, Vice President of SOMEA, warmly welcomed new Board members and thanked them for their willingness to serve, shared her appreciation

for their commitment and dedication, and that she looks forward to working together to support a positive and successful school year.

ITEMS FOR ACTION

Motion made by Board Callahan, seconded by Board Member Sackett-Gable to move resolutions 4901-4902 for discussion and voting:

4901. Approves the following Reorganization action items for the 2025-2026 school year:

1. Confirm Reorganization Appointments:
  - a. 4840L approved on 08/28/25, and
  - b. 4800 items 5-16, 18-50 approved on 05/08/25
2. Appoint Henry Bottiglierie as the District Health and Safety
3. Officer.
4. Appoint Henry Bottiglierie as the Integrated Pest Management Coordinator, AHERA Coordinator and Asbestos Management Officer.
5. Appoint Henry Bottiglierie as the Right to Know Officer.
6. Appoint Henry Bottiglierie as the Indoor Air Quality Officer.
7. Appoint Tiffani Reneau as Assistant Board Secretary and authorize her to sign checks, notes, drafts, bills of exchange, acceptance, undertakings or other orders for the payment of money in the absence of the Board Secretary.
8. Accept the By-Laws, Policies, Rules and Regulations
9. Adopt the Code of Ethics
10. Adopt the Public Meeting Calendar for 2026 per attached
11. 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.

4902. Approves the Board of Education Committee Liaisons for the 2026 calendar year as presented.

ROLL CALL: Motion 4901-4902 PASSED YES: YES: Bennett, Brown, Callahan, Higgins, Kapadia, Meyer, Nayar, Sackett-Gable, Stephan  
NO: None

Adjourn

Motion made by Board Member Sackett-Gable, seconded by Board Member Callahan to adjourn. Motion to adjourn unanimously approved at 7:01 p.m.

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Imani Moody, Board Secretary