

Regular Meeting  
South Orange-Maplewood  
Board of Education  
January 29, 2026

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 and via an online video conference platform on January 29, 2026.

Board President Will Meyer called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

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

Absent: Board Member Bennett, Board Member Brown

***SEVEN VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT***

Pledge of Allegiance

NOTICE OF THE MEETING

Adequate notice of this meeting has been provided in the following manner:

- A. That written notice was sent from the Office of the Secretary of the Board at 7:58 a.m. on January 6, 2026.
- 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, January 29, 2026 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 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 Member Sackett Gable, second by Board Member Higgins to adjourn to Executive Session. Motion unanimously approved.

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

***Board Members reconvened at 8:01 p.m.***

***Board Members Bennett, Brown and student representatives joined the meeting  
9 Voting Members Present***

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion made by Board Member Bennett seconded by Board Member Higgins to approve the minutes of the following meetings: December 18, 2025 - Executive and Regular Board Meetings. Motion unanimously approved.

BOARD RECOGNITIONS - *Penuel Shapiro*

NAME/SCHOOL	RECOGNITION
Fibers and Design Students Columbia High School	<p>Congratulations to the Columbia High School Fibers and Design students on their recent exhibition in the CHS Domareki Gallery that concluded this month. Guided by Ms. Murphy, students demonstrated strong craftsmanship and creativity through collaborative fiber art, tapestries, handmade garments, and detailed decorative pieces, along with interactive elements that invited visitor participation.</p> <p>The exhibit titled "Connections" explored the idea that people need one another by bringing many individual works together into a shared experience.</p>

<p>Walter Bolin Maplewood Middle School</p>	<p>Congratulations to Walter Bolin, a sixth grader at Maplewood Middle School, on <u>their</u> impressive magic performance at the Maplewood Memorial Library on January 13. Walter presented their show, "Almost Impossible," to a packed Vic DeLuca Community Room, with staff bringing out extra chairs and floor seating to accommodate the enthusiastic crowd.</p> <p>Walter showcased a variety of classic magic tricks, including cups and balls, rope magic, linking rings, card tricks, sponge monkeys, and Rubik's cube illusions, while inviting volunteers of all ages to participate. Thank you to the Maplewood Memorial Library and the many community members who attended the memorable performance.</p>
<p>Francie Christensen Columbia High School</p>	<p>Congratulations to Columbia High School student Francie Christensen on being selected for the 2026 Emerging Artists Exhibition presented by the Art Administrators of New Jersey (AANJ). Christensen's artwork, "Sarah," will be featured this February at Kean University as part of a juried statewide exhibition showcasing just 44 high school artists.</p> <p>Following judging, select students may will advance in consideration for the AANJ Emerging Artists Achievement Award and the New Jersey Governor's Award in Arts Education later this spring.</p> <p>Great job Francie!</p>
<p>Winter Sports Columbia High School</p>	<p>Boys fencing surpassed last season's win total and girls fencing improved their winning percentage by 10%.</p> <p>In ice hockey, Christian Sherman reached a major milestone with his 200th career point on January 28. Swimming continues</p>

	<p>to deliver with strong records (boys 7-1, girls 6-2).</p> <p>The boys indoor track team captured the 2026 Essex County Championship, and girls indoor track team earned multiple county medals.</p> <p>Boys wrestling is one win away from a non-losing season, and girls wrestling made history with the program's first-ever win.</p> <p>Well done to all of the student-athletes this season.</p>
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STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES UPDATE

Student representatives Scarlet Strogov and Penuel Shapiro provided the following updates concerning the Student Internship Program and concerns related to the new bell schedule, as detailed below.

Student Internship Program

- Program has launched and is off to a good start. The first project has been completed showing promising results.
- Students were selected based on strong performance in classes and clubs and paired with department heads to complete meaningful projects.
- There is strong interest from Athletics, Communications and Human Resources departments.

Student Concerns

- Scarlet and Penuel will meet with Maplewood Middle School students to gather and relay concerns.
- Columbia High School draft schedule includes a proposed single 55 minute lunch period.
  - Concerns about long lunch lines and students who rely on the school for lunch not receiving meals.
  - Ensuring all students have time and space to eat.
  - Proposed solution: pre-order grab-and-go system to reduce congestion in the lunchroom.
- Block Scheduling
  - The Neurodivergency Club expressed concerns that the rotating drop-block schedule will cause stress to students and could be harder to manage. Plan to involve guidance department to support student transition.

Superintendent Bing proudly recognized Scarlet Strogov for an exceptional academic accomplishment that reflects the very highest level of scholarship. Scarlet's 20-page history paper has been accepted for Publication in the Concord Review, one of the most selective student history journals in the nation. Of the students selected for this issue, Scarlet is the only public school student nationwide to receive this distinction.

Board President Meyer congratulated Penuel Shapiro on his recent wrestling match victory.

Board Member Brown praised the student representatives for implementing this Intern Pilot Project and thanked them for their leadership with the idea.

Board President Meyer announced that the initial group of pilot interns produced educational materials on bullying and cyberbullying in record time marking a successful start for the initiative.

#### BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR'S UPDATE

##### Annual Comprehensive Audit Financial Review

Business Administrator Imani Moody introduced Auditors Robert Provost and John Farina of PKF O'Connor Davies who presented an overview of the District Financial Audit for the year ending June 30, 2025.

#### SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE

Superintendent Bing Highlighted the Following Areas:

- School Board Recognition Month
  - Mr. Bing expressed his sincere appreciation to the Board of Education for leadership, service, partnership and commitment to students, district staff and families. He acknowledged the significant time, effort, and personal sacrifice required to manage budgeting, programming, staffing, and daily district challenges.
- Statewide Budget Challenges
  - Referenced recent headlines highlighting major budget gaps in other districts due to overspending, excessive hiring, reliance on pandemic funds, and rising healthcare costs and while also noting financial pressures in neighboring districts due to increased enrollment and programming demands.
  - Emphasized the need to hold the line on adding new amenities, courses, and staffing that were previously approved more easily.
  - Stated the primary directive since the start of leadership: avoid layoffs (RIFs) and staff reductions. Staff transfers may be necessary.
  - Highlighted last year's successful effort to close an \$8.5M budget gap without layoffs and confirmed the district is now facing another approximately \$8M gap.
  - Committed to continued transparency as budget decisions move forward.
  - Noted insurance changes to reduce a potential 33% healthcare increase down to 11%.
  - Ongoing work continues to identify strategies to reduce expenditures.
- Facilities & Snowstorm Response
  - Recognized facilities department and new Facilities Director Henry Bottiglierie for working extended shifts including overnight stays during the first severe snow storm of the year which brought approximately 17 inches of snow. He praised coordination with both towns to clear schools, sidewalks, and streets and thanked the

transportation department for ensuring buses were operating following the storm.

- 26-27 Program of Studies Presentation
  - Commended the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), Columbia High School Administration, and counselors for their work on the 2026-2027 Program of Studies. Highlighted the thoughtful, collaborative effort to preserve academic rigor and the breadth of robust academic opportunities while operating within tight budget constraints. Noted positive community feedback.
- Maplewood Middle School STEAM Tank Team
  - Celebrated Maplewood Middle School STEAM Tank team for presenting at the STEM Newark Ecosystem at NJIT recognizing students' innovation, problem-solving skills, and strong district-wide STEAM learning efforts. The project focused on transportation safety around Maplewood Middle School.
- Transportation Action Committee
  - Held the first Transportation Action Committee meeting. The Committee's focus areas include mission and goals, policies and procedures, routing and timing, hazardous route reports, and demand management.
- Student Athletic Recognition
  - Congratulated Columbia High School sophomore Jhasi Mtume for being ranked the #110 junior male boxer nationally for 2026, commending his dedication, discipline, and perseverance. Mr. Bing acknowledged the collaboration between his family and the high school to ensure academic continuity, balancing academics with national competition travel while supporting his pursuit of Junior Olympics goal.

#### PRESENTATION

Dr. Kevin Gilbert, Asst. Superintendent of Schools presented *SOMSD Intentional Integration & Student Enrollment in Advanced Courses* focusing on:

- Intentional Integration Initiative Enrollment
- SOMSD K12 Enrollment
- 2024-2025 and 2025-2026 District Demographics
- Course Enrollment in Classes
- Course Enrollment at the middle and high schools
- 2025-26 Advanced Placement Course Enrollment
- Math Course Enrollment at the middle and high schools

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

#### BOARD PRESIDENT'S UPDATE - Will Meyer

#### RESOLUTION OF SOLIDARITY

Board President Meyer acknowledged the anxiety many community members have felt in recent weeks regarding immigration enforcement actions in Minneapolis and elsewhere, and the concern from our own neighbors. We know these same issues are affecting families in Essex County, and over the past year have touched students in our district. The resolution of solidarity being considered this

evening reflects the Board's and District's shared concerns and ongoing efforts to safeguard those students and families most at risk.

RECOGNITION OF RECENT LOSSES

The community is grieving significant losses, including the tragic passing of Columbia High School senior Jonah Patton Shimanoff. Tonight, we remember the joyful life of Jonah and extend thanks to Columbia High School Principal Frank Sanchez for the remarkable memories of Jonah shared at yesterday's memorial service.

The Board also recognized the passing of four former district employees in this month's personnel resolution, including former Columbia High School Assistant Principal Terry Woolard.

BOARD COMMITTEES

Board committees have resumed their work for the year, including the newly formed Student and Family Affairs Committee. A primary focus across committees is preparation of the FY27 budget, as the district works to align expenditures with revenue and anticipates difficult decisions in the months ahead.

RITZER FIELD

The Ritzer Field proposal will be reviewed by the Maplewood Planning Board on February 10 and will return to the board after that process concludes.

BOARD OF SCHOOL ESTIMATE

The Board of School Estimate plans to meet on February 19 for an informational session to discuss the mandate of the Board of School Estimate with its new members as well as the district's finances and possible resolutions that the Board of Education could send BOSE this year.

BOARD RETREAT

The Board will hold its first quarterly Retreat on February 12, focusing on the School Ethics Act, budget development, and the Board's oversight role in district programming.

SOMS EVENT

The South Orange Middle School fourth annual "My Black is Beautiful" event, celebrating Black history through the arts is taking place on February 21 at SOPAC.

HEARING OF INDIVIDUALS AND DELEGATIONS

Community Members Erin Murphy, Jonathan Castro and Steve Brown addressed the Board.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Committee reports from the Policy, Curriculum & Instruction, Personnel, Student and Family Affairs, Special Services and Finance, Facilities and Technology

committee meetings were presented by the committee chairs. Minutes for these meetings are available on the district website.

ITEMS FOR ACTION

Motion made by Board Member Higgins, seconded by Board Member Callahan to move resolutions 4903-4915 for discussion and voting.

4903A. MEMORIALS

BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE BOARD OF EDUCATION approve the following memorials:

Anne Marie Rabke, retired CHS School Nurse passed away on November 30, 2025;

Robert Shillito, retired Director of School Counseling passed away on January 6, 2026;

Terry Woolard, former CHS Assistant Principal passed away on December 29, 2025;

David Yoresh, retired Physical Education Teacher, passed away on January 11, 2026;

The Superintendent is asked to convey our condolences to the family and friends of Anne Rabke, Robert Shillito, Terry Woolard and Dave Yoresh.

4903B. RETIREMENTS

NAME	ASSIGNMENT	EFFECTIVE DATE	YEARS IN DISTRICT
MacPherson, Lisa	T Art SOM - 1.0 FTE	7/1/26	25
Quinn, Loren	T Science MM - 1.0 FTE	7/1/26	26.8
Wolff, John	T 5 DB - 1.0 FTE	7/1/26	31.6

The above retirees faithfully served in the public schools of South Orange and Maplewood. In appreciation of their contributions to the educational welfare of this community, they will be given recognition at one of the June 2026 meetings.

4903C. RESIGNATION

NAME	ASSIGNMENT	EFFECTIVE DATE	YEARS IN DISTRICT
Andre, Joelle	T SPED/Math SOM - 1.0 FTE	3/22/26	1.7

4903D. 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
Unis, Nicole	LDT-C DIST - 1.0 FTE	3/2/26 or sooner 6/30/26	\$79,097

4903E. 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
Zelley, Jacqueline	T SPED/INC Gr. 1 DB - 1.0 FTE	1/9/26 6/5/26	\$66,100

4903F. RESCIND 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
Seddon, Michael	Maintenance (Electrician) DIST - 1.0 FTE	TBD 6/30/26	\$82,905

4903G. CHANGE IN END DATE

NAME	ASSIGNMENT	OLD END DATE	NEW END DATE
Hirsh, Susan	LR T-4 MAR - 1.0 FTE	1/31/26	6/18/26
Mogavero, Vincent	LR T SPED/INC Gr. 5 CLIN - 1.0 FTE	2/12/26	2/27/26

4903H. CHANGE IN START DATE

NAME	ASSIGNMENT	OLD END DATE	NEW END DATE
Bennett, Telia	Assistant Principal CHS - 1.0 FTE	TBD	1/5/26
Little, Maia	LR T Physical Ed. SB - 1.0 FTE	TBD	1/12/26
Ward, Amanda	T LA/7 SOM - 1.0 FTE	TBD	1/5/26

4903I. ADMINISTRATIVE LEAVE

NAME	EFFECTIVE DATE
Employee # 4726	12/19/25-1/21/26 (w/pay)
Employee # 4002	1/14/26 (w/pay)

4903J. LEAVES OF ABSENCE

NAME	ASSIGNMENT	EFFECTIVE DATE
Bialer, Deborah	T 4 MAR - 1.0 FTE	8/27/25-6/30/26 (Paid Medical/Sick Leave)
Faison, Aja	T SPED/INC Gr.5 CLIN - 1.0 FTE	2/13/26-2/27/26 (Unpaid Childcare Leave)
Martino, Adrienne	T Science SOM 1.0 FTE	1/14/26 (.75 day)-1/16/26 and 1/21/26-1/30/26 (Unpaid FMLA)
McNally, Eva	T Art DB - 1.0 FTE	1/9/26 (Unpaid NJ FLA)
Ng, Suzanne	Media Specialist CHS - 1.0 FTE	1/22/26 (1/2 day) - 2/15/26 (Unpaid Personal Leave)
Jurist, Susan	T SPED MM - 1.0 FTE	1/12/26-1/31/26 (Unpaid Personal Leave)

4903K. TRANSFERS/REASSIGNMENTS

NAME	OLD ASSIGNMENT	NEW ASSIGNMENT	EFFECTIVE DATE
Amboise-Etienne, Bervelyne	School Psychologist SB/MAR - 1.0 FTE	School Psychologist MONT - 1.0 FTE	1/26/26
Mroz, Michael	School Psychologist MONT - 1.0 FTE	School Psychologist SB/MAR 1.0 FTE	1/26/26

4903L. STIPENDS

NAME	ASSIGNMENT	EFFECTIVE DATE	ACTUAL SALARY
Giusti, Ryan	Ninth Grade Team Leader CHS - 1.0 FTE	1/5/26 6/30/26	\$5,944 (pro-rated)
Harris, Elizabeth	Scenery Construction SOM - 1.0 FTE	1/20/26 6/30/26	\$2,834
Muirhead, Ryan	Varsity Coach, Baseball CHS - 1.0 FTE	3/1/26 6/30/26	\$7,891
Nichols, Thomas (Max)	JV/Asst Coach, Baseball CHS - 1.0 FTE	3/1/26 6/30/26	\$5,614
Reyes, Nicolas	Freshman/Asst Coach, Baseball CHS - 1.0 FTE	3/1/26 6/30/26	\$3,811
Clesmere, Lindsey	JV/Asst Coach, Softball CHS - 1.0 FTE	3/1/26 6/30/26	\$5,614
Reichenstein, Steven	Varsity Coach, Tennis (Boys) CHS - 1.0 FTE	3/1/26 6/30/26	\$6,566

4903M. SALARY ADJUSTMENTS

NAME	ASSIGNMENT	EFFECTIVE DATE	ADJUSTMENT	ACTUAL SALARY
Parsio, Corrina	Sup. STEM, 9-12 CHS - 1.0 FTE	6/27- 8/28/25 (13 days)	\$533.63 (per day)	\$6,937.15

Banner, Abiodun	Asst. Principal CHS 1.0 FTE	12/1- 12/23/25 (7 days) 12/1- 12/23/25 (7 days) 12/1- 12/23/25 (1 day)	\$37.50 (per day) \$50.00 (per day) \$75.00 (per day)	\$262.50  \$350.00  \$75.00
McCormick, Philip	Asst. Principal CHS 1.0 FTE	12/1- 12/23/25 (7 days) 12/1- 12/23/25 (5 days) 12/1- 12/23/25 (1 day)	\$37.50 (per day) \$50.00 (per day) \$150.00 (per day)	\$262.50  \$250.00  \$150.00
Obwoge, Lamech	Asst. Principal CHS 1.0 FTE	12/1- 12/23/25 (7 days) 12/1- 12/23/25 (5 days)	\$37.50 (per day) \$50.00 (per day)	\$262.50  \$250.00
Sanchez, Frank	Principal CHS 1.0 FTE	12/1- 12/23/25 (7 days) 12/1- 12/23/25 (7 days) 12/1- 12/23/25 (1 day)	\$37.50 (per day) \$50.00 (per day) \$75.00 (per day)	\$262.50  \$350.00  \$75.00
DeCeglie, Maura	T PreK (Rooster) MONT - 1.0 FTE	4 days	\$40.00 (per day)	\$160.00
Moore, Kelly	T PreK (Rooster) MONT - 1.0 FTE	4 days	\$40.00 (per day)	\$160.00
Ambike, Shalmali	Data Entry Mgr. CHS - 1.0 FTE	7/1/25 6/30/26	+\$2,000	\$2,000
Mooney-Chavez, Danielle	School Counselor CHS - 1.0 FTE	7/1/25 6/30/26	+\$2,000	\$2,000
Benning, Avery	T SPED MM - 1.2 FTE	9/2/25 1/31/26	+\$16,246.40	\$97,478 (pro- rated)
Blackford, Meghan	T SPED MM - 1.2 FTE	9/2/25 1/31/26	+\$14,973.94 (paid @ 17%)	\$103,056 (pro- rated)
Barry-Austin, Tracey	Social Worker MONT - 1.2 FTE	9/17/25 1/31/26	+\$18,566 (pro-rated)	\$111.398 (pro- rated)

Mroz, Michael	School Psychologist MONT - 1.2 FTE	9/17/25 1/31/26	+\$21,213 (pro-rated)	\$127,282 (pro-rated)
Copeland, Jeanette	Clerical Aide DB - 1.0 FTE	12/15- 1/12/26 (14 hours)	\$14.78 (per hour)	\$206.92
Bethea, Sabrina	Clerical Aide TUS - 1.0 FTE	1/20- 1/22/26 (21 hours)	\$14.78 (per hour)	\$310.38

4904A. APPOINTMENT OF SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS FOR THE 2025-2026 SCHOOL YEAR AT \$175/DAY

STATE CERTIFIED TEACHER

1. Losardo, Lark

COLLEGE GRADUATE AND STATE SUBSTITUTE CERTIFICATE

1. Birdsall, Olivia
2. Fanneron, Thomas

NON-DEGREE AND STATE SUBSTITUTE CERTIFICATE

1. Boerger, David
2. Klein, Jordan
3. Richardson, Iman
4. Tekeste, Ruth

4904B. APPOINTMENT OF OUT OF DISTRICT COACHES FOR THE 2025-2026 SCHOOL YEAR

NAME	ASSIGNMENT	CONTRACT YEAR	STIPEND
Dennis, Donte	Girls JV Lacrosse Coach	03/2026 06/2026	\$5,614
Derilus, Matthew	Boys JV Basketball Coach	12/1/2025 12/31/2025	\$5,490 (pro-rated)
McCombs, David	Boys JV Indoor Trach Coach	12/2025 2/2026	\$6,566
Sims, Stevana	Girls JV Basketball Coach	12/2025 2/2026	\$5,614

4904C. APPOINTMENT OF VOLUNTEERS FOR THE 2025-2026 SCHOOL YEAR

NAME	ASSIGNMENT
Lintern, David	CHS Band Truck Driver
Ripley, Lorry	CHS Band Truck Driver

4905A. 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].

4905B. 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].

4906A. Receives and accepts the following financial reports:

1. December 2025 Board Secretary's Report
2. December 2025 Treasurer Report
3. December 2025 Transfer Report
4. December 2025 Expense Account Adjustment Analyses
5. Check Register 427863-428135 in the amount of \$8,364,457.43
6. Check Register 200939-200942 in the amount of \$2,521,717.35
7. December 2025 Payroll Register in the amount of \$7,862,599.68

4906B. Certify the Board Secretary's Monthly Financial Report.

4906C. Approves the attendance and related travel and/or workshop expenses for the following work-related events:

EMPLOYEE	WORKSHOP/CONFERENCE	DATE(S)	LOCATION	ESTIMATED COSTS
Suzanne Ackley Columbia HS	Empowering Instruction: Strategies for NJTSS Success	2/5/26	Monroe Township, NJ	\$0.00
Erin Bolstad Marshall	Success Using I-Ready and Literacy Integration for NJ Educators	2/25/26	Monroe Township, NJ	\$41.83
Henry Bottiglierie Central Office	NJSBGA Expo/Conference 2026	3/22/26-3/25/26	Atlantic City, NJ	\$740.80
Eshaya Draper Central Office	NJSPRA Winter 2026 Workshop	1/13/26	Monroe Township, NJ	\$90.63
Christine Houseworth Columbia HS	Engaging Secondary Newcomers	3/10/26	Trenton, NJ	\$67.39
Dennis James Central Office	NJSBGA Expo/Conference 2026	3/22/26-3/25/26	Atlantic City, NJ	\$740.80
Keysha Knight Columbia HS	Managing Multiple Projects, Objectives and Deadlines	2/27/26	Virtual	\$149.00
Michael Loupis Columbia HS	ASAP NJ 39 <sup>th</sup> Annual Conference	3/5/26-3/6/26	Princeton, NJ	\$350.00
Chelsea Pasquale South Orange MS	NJ Music Educators State Conference	2/19/26-2/21/26	Atlantic City, NJ	\$0.00

Lavonne Wallace Clinton School	Emerging Leaders Conference	2/24/26	Monroe Township, NJ	\$452.54
Total				\$2,632.99

4906D. Approves the following attendance and/or workshop related expenses:

BOARD MEMBER	EVENT	DATE	Location	Estimated Costs
Elizabeth Callahan	Women's Leadership Conference 2026	3/20/26	Ewing, NJ	\$177.50
Meredith Higgins	Women's Leadership Conference 2026	3/20/26	Ewing, NJ	\$177.50
Meredith Higgins	New Board Member Orientation Weekend	2/20/26-2/22/26	Plainsboro Township, NJ	\$0.00
Shayna Sackett- Gable	Women's Leadership Conference 2026	3/20/26	Ewing, NJ	\$177.50
Paul Stephan	New Board Member Orientation Weekend	2/20/26-2/22/26	Plainsboro Township, NJ	\$0.00

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Board of Education approves the above event to be work related and within the scope of the work responsibilities of the of the attendee and promotes the delivery of instruction or furthering of efficient operation of the school district and is fiscally prudent, and in compliance with N.J.S.A. 18A:12-24 and 24.1 of the School Ethics Act.

4906E. WHEREAS, pursuant to NJSA 18:A:6-61 et seq., the South Orange and Maplewood Board of Education must elect one of its members to represent it on the Representative Assembly of the Essex Regional Educational Services Commission; and

WHEREAS, the South Orange and Maplewood Board of Education has held such an election among its members;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Superintendent of the Essex Regional Educational Services Commission be notified that Paul Stephan has been duly elected as a member of the Representative Assembly of the Essex Regional Educational Services Commission; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT a copy of the minutes indicating such election be forwarded to the Superintendent/Board Secretary of the Essex Regional Educational Services Commission.

4906F. Approves the following provider(s) for the 2025-2026 school year for the service indicated:

Provider Name	Service	Rate
Jag Athletic Training Bridgewater, NJ	Athletic Trainer	\$85.00/hour \$90.00/hour Holidays

4906G. 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
Map International Import & Export Corp.	Food Service Supplies & Equipment	CO-OP
Kiker Learning	Professional Development	Other
Meritain Health	Health Insurance	Other
Standard Insurance	Disability Insurance	Other

4906H. WHEREAS, the South Orange Maplewood Board of Education has received the audit; reviewed the recommendations contained in the Management Report on Administrative Findings, Financial, Compliance and Performance Reporting Audit Report for the period July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025 as prepared by PKF O'Connor Davies, LLP; and

WHEREAS, the South Orange Maplewood Board of Education upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, does hereby,

1. Authorize the Board Secretary to enter said discussion in the minutes of this meeting;
2. Accept the audit and approve and authorize the implementation of a Corrective Action

Plan that addresses the Audit Findings and Recommendations in the Management Report on Administrative Findings, Financial, Compliance and Performance for the Fiscal Year ending June 2025, presented by PKF O'Connor Davies, LLP.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the South Orange Maplewood Board of Education authorizes the Superintendent of Schools and the School Business Administrator to produce two (2) certified copies of said Corrective Action Plan to be filed with the County Superintendent of Schools and the State Department of Education.

4906I. BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Board of Education accepts a donation to the Parenting Center in the amount of \$1,000.00.

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	\$1,000.00
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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.

4906J. Whereas, the South Orange Maplewood Board of Education desires to apply for and obtain a grant from the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs for approximately \$100,000 to carry out a project to meet state compliance and safety needs throughout the district including

remediation of gymnasium partitions, basketball backstops, batting cage, gymnasium seating and playgrounds.

Be it therefore RESOLVED,

1. That the South Orange Maplewood Board of Education does hereby authorize the application for such a grant; and,
2. Recognizes and accepts that the Department may offer a lesser or greater amount and therefore, upon receipt of the grant agreement from the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, does further authorize the execution of any such grant agreement; and also, upon receipt of the fully executed agreement from the Department, does further authorize the expenditure of funds pursuant to the terms of the agreement between the South Orange Maplewood Board of Education and the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs.

Be it further RESOLVED, that the persons whose names, titles, and signatures appear below are authorized to sign the application, and that they or their successors in said titles are authorized to sign the agreement, and any other documents necessary in connection therewith:

- Jason Bing, Superintendent
- William Meyer, Board President

4906K. Approves a Clinical Affiliation Agreement with Long Island University for the purposes of providing field/clinical experience for university students enrolled in the Speech Language Pathology program. The agreement is effective for one year beginning on January 15, 2026.

4906L. Approves a Memorandum of Agreement with Montclair State University for the purposes of providing a practicum environment for university students enrolled in the Masters Level Speech Language Pathology Program. The agreement is effective for one year beginning on January 29, 2026.

4906M. WHEREAS, a number of public entities in the State of New Jersey have joined together to form the METROPOLITAN HEALTH INSURANCE FUND, hereafter referred to as "FUND", as permitted by N.J.S.A. 11:15-3, 17:1-8.1, and 40A:10-36 et seq., and;

WHEREAS, the FUND was approved to become operational by the Departments of Insurance and Community Affairs and has been operational since that date, and;

WHEREAS, the statutes and regulations governing the creation and operation of a joint insurance fund, contain certain elaborate restrictions and safeguards concerning the safe and efficient administration of the public interest entrusted to such a FUND;

WHEREAS, the governing body of South Orange Maplewood Board of Education, hereinafter referred to as "LOCAL UNIT" has determined that membership in the FUND is in the best interest of the LOCAL UNIT.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the governing body of the LOCAL UNIT hereby agrees as follows:

- i. Become a member of the FUND for the period outlined in the LOCAL UNIT's Indemnity and Trust Agreements.
- ii. Will participate in the following type (s) of coverage (s):
  - a. Medicare Advantage / Health Insurance and/or Prescription Insurance and/or Dental Insurance as defined pursuant to N.J.S.A. 17B:17-4, the FUND's Bylaws, and Plan of Risk Management.
- iii. Adopts and approves the FUND's Bylaws.
- iv. Execute an application for membership and any accompanying certifications.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the governing body of the LOCAL UNIT is authorized and directed to execute the Indemnity and Trust Agreement and such other documents signifying membership in the FUND as required by the FUND's Bylaws, and to deliver these documents to the FUND's Executive Director with the express reservation that these documents shall become effective only upon:

- i. Approval of the LOCAL UNIT by the FUND.
- ii. Receipt from the LOCAL UNIT of a Resolution accepting assessment.
- iii. Approval by the New Jersey Department of Insurance and Department of Community Affairs.

4906N. BE IT RESOLVED by the South Orange Maplewood Board of Education that Imani Moody be and is hereby appointed as FUND Commissioner to the Metropolitan Health Insurance Fund to represent South Orange Maplewood Board of Education (and/or district).

AND;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT Tiffani Reneau be and is hereby appointed as Alternate Fund Commissioner to the Metropolitan Health Insurance Fund effective January 1, 2026.

4906O. WHEREAS, the governing bodies of various local units of government, as defined in N.J.A.C. 11:15-3.2, have collectively formed a Joint Insurance Fund as such an entity is authorized and described in N.J.S.A. 40A:10-36 et. seq. and the administrative regulations promulgated pursuant thereto; and

WHEREAS, the South Orange Maplewood Board of Education (local unit) has agreed to become a member of the FUND in accordance with and to the extent provided for in the Bylaws of the FUND and in consideration of such obligations and benefits to be shared by the membership of the FUND;

NOW THEREFORE, it is agreed as follows:

1. The South Orange Maplewood Board of Education accepts the FUND's Bylaws as approved and adopted and agrees to be bound by and to comply

- with each and every provision of said Bylaws and the pertinent statutes and administrative regulations pertaining to same.
2. The South Orange Maplewood Board of Education agrees to participate in the FUND with respect to health insurance, as defined in N.J.S.A. 17B:17-4, and as authorized in the South Orange Maplewood Board of Education's resolution to join.
  3. The South Orange Maplewood Board of Education agrees to become a member of the FUND and to participate in the health insurance coverages offered for an initial period, (subject to early release or termination pursuant to the Bylaws), such membership to commence on January 1, 2026 and ending on December 31, 2028 at 12:01 AM provided, however, that the South Orange Maplewood Board of Education may withdraw at any time upon 90 day written notice to the FUND.
  4. The South Orange Maplewood Board of Education certifies that it has never defaulted on payment of any claims if self-insured and has not been cancelled for non-payment of insurance premiums for a period of at least two (2) years prior to the date of this Agreement.
  5. In consideration of membership in the FUND, the South Orange Maplewood Board of Education agrees that it shall jointly and severally assume and discharge the liability of each and every member of the FUND, for the periods during which the member is receiving coverage, all of whom as a condition of membership in the FUND shall execute an Indemnity and Trust Agreement similar to this Agreement and by execution hereto, the full faith and credit of the South Orange Maplewood Board of Education is pledged to the punctual payments of any sums which shall become due to the FUND in accordance with the Bylaws thereof, this Agreement or any applicable Statute. However, nothing herein shall be construed as an obligation of the South Orange Maplewood Board of Education for claims and expenses that are not covered by the FUND, or for that portion of any claim or liability within the South Orange Maplewood Board of Education retained limit or in an amount which exceeds the FUND's limit of coverage.
  6. If the FUND in the enforcement of any part of this Agreement shall incur necessary expenses or become obligated to pay attorney's fees and/or court costs, the South Orange Maplewood Board of Education agrees to reimburse the FUND for all such reasonable expenses, fees, and costs on demand.
  7. The South Orange Maplewood Board of Education and the FUND agree that the FUND shall hold all moneys in excess of the South Orange Maplewood Board of Education's retained loss fund paid by the South Orange Maplewood Board of Education to the FUND as fiduciaries for the benefit of FUND claimants all in accordance with N.J.A.C. 11:15-3 et. seq.
  8. The FUND shall establish and maintain Claims Trust Accounts for the payment of health insurance claims in accordance with N.J.S.A. 40A:10-36 et. seq., N.J.S.A. 40A:5-1 and such other statutes and regulations as may be applicable. More specifically, the aforementioned Trust Accounts shall be utilized solely for the

payment of claims, allocated claim expense and stop loss insurance or reinsurance premiums for each risk or liability as follows:

- a) Employer contributions to group health insurance
- b) Employee contributions to contributory group health insurance
- c) Employer contributions to contingency account
- d) Employee contributions to contingency account
- e) Other trust accounts as required by the Commissioner of Insurance

9. Notwithstanding 8 above, to the contrary, the FUND shall not be required to establish separate trust accounts for employee contributions provided the FUND provides a plan in its Bylaws for the recording and accounting of employee contributions of each member.

10. Each LOCAL UNIT of government who shall become a member of the FUND shall be obligated to execute an Indemnity and Trust Agreement.

4906P. Approves a professional services agreement with Spiezle Architectural Group for Improvements at Ritzer Field for additional soil sampling and materials management plan at a cost of \$19,600.00.

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.

4906Q. WHEREAS 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 BuyBoard Purchasing Cooperative (BuyBoard) hereinafter referred to as the Lead Agency has offered voluntary participation in the Cooperative Pricing System for the purchase of goods and services; and

WHEREAS the governing body of BuyBoard is a nine (9) member Board of Directors composed of officials and employees of Cooperative members and employees and appointees of sponsoring and administering School Boards Associations around the country duly considered the establishment of a Cooperative Pricing System for the provision and the performance of goods and services.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the South Orange Maplewood Board of Education, by the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools and the School Business Administrator hereby authorizes the South Orange Maplewood Board of Education to participate in the Cooperative Pricing System with BuyBoard Purchasing Cooperative; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Lead Agency shall be responsible for complying with the provisions of the local Public Contracts Law (N.J.S.A.40A11-1 et seq.) and all other provisions of the revised statutes of the State of New Jersey.

4906R. Accepts a donation of a 1998 Tartini Viola 16 to benefit the Columbia High School Strings Program. The approximate value of the donation is \$1,000.

4906S. Hereby authorizes the enrollment of Student #8174262665 for the 2025-2026 school year through June 30, 2026, on the basis of tuition, in accordance with the terms and conditions set forth in the tuition contract.

4906T. BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Board of Education accepts a donation from the Columbia High School Girls Lacrosse Boosters in the amount of \$5,208.00.

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

20-068-200-890-CH-5900                      CHS SPORTS                      \$5,208.00

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.

4907. Adopt the following new courses:

New Course Name	Department
Guide to High School Success	21 <sup>st</sup> Century Learning
This advanced course immerses students in professional music production and audio engineering using industry-standard DAWs. Students develop skills in sound design, electronic composition, mixing, and audio post-production while creating original music for film, games, and multimedia. Aligned with industry certifications such as Pro Tools, Ableton, and Logic Pro, the course prepares students for careers in music production, sound engineering, and media composition.	

4908. Approves the following:

WHEREAS, in accordance with law, hearings were afforded with regard to the children identified by student number below; and

WHEREAS, the Board has determined that, as to the students identified below, the parents or guardians are not domiciled within the District or the children are not kept in the home of another person domiciled within the school district pursuant to the affidavit pupil's statute; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board hereby orders the transfer or removal of the students identified below.

<u>NJ State ID #</u>	<u>School</u>	<u>Grade</u>
2648723519	CHS	9 <sup>th</sup>
7743015051	Mar	4 <sup>th</sup>
2062535581	Mar	3 <sup>RD</sup>

4909. Hereby affirms the HIB investigations reported to the South Orange/Maplewood School District for the month of December 2025.

4910A. Adopt Policy 5512 Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying.

- 4910B. Adopt Policy 9320 Cooperation with Law Enforcement Agencies.
- 4911-1. Approves the first reading of Policy 2530 Resource Materials
- 4911-2. Approves the first reading of Policy 2535 Library Materials.
- 4911-3. Approves the first reading of Policy 5120 Assignment of Students.
- 4911-4. Approves the first reading of Policy 9130 Public Complaints.
- 4911-5. Approves the first reading of Regulation 2535 Library Materials.
- 4911-6. Approves the first reading of Regulation 9130 Public Complaints.
- 4912A. Approves the settlement agreement for Student ID #4043509326 and authorizes the Board President to execute the settlement agreement.
- 4912B. Approves the settlement agreement for Student ID #5468184903 and authorizes the Board President to execute the settlement agreement.
4913. WHEREAS, the South Orange Board of Education ("Board") and the South Orange-Maplewood Education Association ("SOMEA") are parties to a Collective Negotiated Agreement effective July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2027; and

WHEREAS, the Board and SOMEA have ratified and approved a Memorandum of Agreement setting forth terms of a successor agreement to the Collective Negotiated Agreement; and

WHEREAS, Article III(C) of the Collective Negotiated Agreement provides that the agreement shall not be modified in whole or in part except by an instrument in writing duly executed by both parties; and

WHEREAS, the Board and SOMEA have mutually agreed to operate a Saturday Academy at the middle school level beginning in January 2026 and continuing through May 2027, contingent upon available grant funding; and

WHEREAS, the Board and SOMEA desire to memorialize the terms and conditions related to compensation and operation of the Saturday Academy through a written sidebar agreement; and

WHEREAS, the sidebar agreement establishes compensation rates for certificated volunteers, preparation time, and clarifies the Board's right to utilize private vendors or non-SOMEA personnel should an insufficient number of volunteers be available;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the South Orange Board of Education hereby approves the Sidebar Agreement with the South Orange-Maplewood Education Association regarding Saturday Academy compensation and operations, as presented; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Superintendent of Schools and the Board President are authorized to execute the Sidebar Agreement on behalf of the Board.

4914. Approves the Uniform State Memorandum of Agreement Between Education and Law Enforcement Officials for the 2025-2026 SY pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A: 16-6.2 and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, THAT the live streaming video referenced in P.L. 2017, c.119 will not be accessed except in emergent situations, without a request from a District administrator.

4915. Approves the revised school calendar for the 2025-2026 school year as presented.

ROLL CALL: Motion 4903A-M, 4904, 4905,4906A-T, 4907, 4908, 4909, 4910, 4911,4912, 4913, 4914, 4915, YES: Bennett, Brown, Callahan, Higgins, Kapadia, Meyer, Nayar, Sackett-Gable, Stephan NO: None

Motion made by Board Member Stephan, seconded by Board Member Sackett-Gable to move resolution 4916 for discussion and voting.

4916. WHEREAS, the South Orange-Maplewood Board of Education ("Board") is charged under N.J.S.A. 18A:11-1 and N.J.S.A. 18A:33-1 et seq. with providing a thorough and efficient system of public education and establishing the instructional program of the School District; and

WHEREAS, the Superintendent of Schools and administrative staff have developed the Columbia High School Program of Studies for the 2026-2027 school year, which sets forth course offerings, graduation requirements, and academic pathways consistent with the New Jersey Student Learning Standards, applicable statutes, and regulations of the New Jersey Department of Education; and

WHEREAS, the proposed Program of Studies reflects the District's educational goals, curricular priorities, staffing considerations, and the needs and interests of students enrolled at Columbia High School; and

WHEREAS, the Board has reviewed the proposed Program of Studies and finds it to be educationally sound and consistent with the District's mission and statutory obligations;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the South Orange-Maplewood Board of Education hereby approves the Columbia High School Program of Studies for the 2026-2027 school year, as presented by the Superintendent of Schools; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Superintendent of Schools, or designee, is authorized to implement the approved Program of Studies and to make such non-substantive administrative adjustments as may be necessary to ensure compliance with law, regulation, scheduling needs, and student enrollment patterns, provided that any substantive changes shall be brought to the Board for review and approval.

ROLL CALL: Motion 4916 YES: Brown, Callahan, Higgins, Kapadia, Meyer, Nayar, Sackett-Gable, Stephan NO: Bennett

Motion made by Board Member Callahan, seconded by Board Member Nayar to move resolution 4917 for discussion and voting.

4917. WHEREAS, it is the right of every resident school-aged child, regardless of immigration status, to access a free public education as guaranteed under federal law;

WHEREAS, consistent with *Plyler v. Doe*, 457 U.S. 202 (1982) and guidance issued by the New Jersey Department of Education, the South Orange-Maplewood School District has a responsibility to ensure that all school-aged children who reside within its boundaries, regardless of immigration status, can safely access a free public education;

WHEREAS, federal immigration enforcement activities and recent events in the wider community have created fear and instability that disrupts the educational environment and threatens the emotional safety of our students and families;

WHEREAS, these enforcement actions have impacted not only our nation as a whole but have been seen in the detention and removal of families, including school-age students, from within Essex County and even in this District, instilling fear and instability within our community and hindering the educational work of the District; and

WHEREAS, these actions by federal officers have served to impede the efforts of our District to appropriately serve our student and family population and have had a corrosive effect on their ability to access the education guaranteed to them under federal and state law,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the South Orange-Maplewood Board of Education reaffirms its commitment that all school-aged children residing in South Orange and Maplewood receive a free public education; enjoy all the opportunities and benefits available in our schools, regardless of ethnicity, national origin, race, or immigration status; and do so free from harassment or intimidation; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board stands in solidarity with all students and their families – and in particular students and families who are immigrants, people of color, and multilingual learners – in ensuring they may attend school free from harassment, intimidation, or disruption; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board affirms the District's continued strict enforcement of existing laws and policies protecting student privacy and safety, specifically:

- Strictly limiting access for non-local law enforcement – including U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement – to prevent disruption to the educational setting under Policies 7440, 9150, and 9320 and protecting students during transport to and from school under Policy 8360;

- Adhering to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and District Policies 8330 and 8335 to protect student records from unauthorized review; and
- Maintaining District protocol that requires immediate reporting of any ICE activity to the Superintendent's Office.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board commits to an ongoing review of its policies regarding building access, recordkeeping, and educational access, and to taking any other necessary actions within its power, to secure a free public education for all school-age children; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Superintendent shall share this Resolution with District families, staff, and vendors that have contact with students and families, using usual means of communication, and that the Resolution be translated into the languages spoken by students and families at home.

ROLL CALL: Motion 4917 YES: Bennett, Brown, Callahan, Higgins, Kapadia, Meyer, Nayar, Sackett-Gable, Stephan NO: None

HEARING OF INDIVIDUALS AND DELEGATIONS

NONE.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

Future Meetings

The Board of Education will meet in Public Session on Thursday, February 26, 2026, 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 Member Sackett-Gable, seconded by Board Member Callahan to adjourn. Motion to adjourn was unanimously approved at 11:08 p.m.

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Imani Moody, Board Secretary