

Regular Meeting
South Orange-Maplewood
Board of Education
March 26, 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 March 26, 2026.

Board President Meyer called the meeting to order at 6:31 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.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

WHEREAS, the Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-11, permits the Board of Education to meet in closed executive session to discuss certain matters, and

WHEREAS, the length of the Executive Session is estimated to be seventy-five (75) minutes after which the public meeting of the Board shall (select one) reconvene and immediately adjourn or reconvene and proceed with business where formal action will be taken, now, therefore be it

RESOLVED: The Board of Education adjourns to closed session to discuss personnel, legal, and miscellaneous confidential matters. Be it further

RESOLVED: The minutes of this closed session will be made public when the need for confidentiality no longer exists.

Motion made by Board Member Stephan, second by Board Member Callahan to adjourn to Executive Session. Motion unanimously approved.

**Board Members adjourned to Executive Session at 6:33 p.m.
Board Members reconvened at 8:06 p.m.**

**Student Representative Strogov and Board Member Bennett Present
Eight Voting Members Present**

HONORING CHRISTOPHER SETTLE

Board Member Meyer opened the meeting honoring Christopher Settle, a longstanding security guard at the district’s Administration Building and Columbia High School, who passed away recently. Chris was recognized for his smile, kindness and dedication to the district community. He was the kind of person that would brighten your day. His passing has left a hole in the lives of many people who loved him. Details about his upcoming celebration of life service was shared.

TEACHER RECOGNITIONS

Emily Mamrak, Multi-Age Teacher at Marshall Elementary School was honored for promoting health and wellness, inspiring staff with her NYC Marathon completion, earning a yoga teacher certification, and launching the first “Girls on the Run” chapter at Marshall School. This program empowers girls with confidence and life skills through physical activity and social-emotional learning.

Kenya Massey, Dance teacher at Maplewood Middle School Dance Teacher was recognized for hosting the annual “One World Dance Concert” celebrating Black History Month via student performances that emphasized globalism and cultural engagement through dance. The concert created a welcoming space where students could connect, build confidence, and celebrate culture through the arts.

Jamie Handwerker, Physical Education and Health Teacher at Maplewood Middle School was praised for coordinating Hazel Clark Day in partnership with USA Track and Field, hosting a run, jump, throw clinic that engaged over 200 students and included appearances by former Olympians, promoting youth sport participation and health. The event gave students a fun and active way to experience the value of youth sports and staying healthy.

BOARD RECOGNITIONS - Scarlet Strogov

	NAME/SCHOOL	RECOGNITION
	SOMSD Teachers from Achieve Foundation	Congratulations to the teachers and teams of teachers who received Deborah Prinz Educator Grants this month through the Achieve Foundation. Achieve board members delivered more than \$23,600 in grant funding for 14 projects and programs across SOMSD, adding to nearly \$62,000 for 41 grants awarded this past fall. We are grateful for this continued investment in our educators and students, and for the creative opportunities these grants make possible throughout the district.
	Columbia High School Sophia Kahn	Columbia High School is proud to recognize Sophia Kahn as our Class of 2026 valedictorian and Lola Karp-Foster as our

		salutatorian. Sophia will be attending the University of Pennsylvania, where she plans to study political science and Spanish, after serving as managing editor of The Columbian and being selected for the New Jersey Scholars Program.
	Lola Karp-Foster	Lola plans to study biomedical engineering, focusing on neural technologies, building on her advanced classes and research experience in neuroscience. Even though they've taken different paths, both Sophia and Lola have made a real impact at Columbia through their hard work, curiosity, and dedication. Congratulations!

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES UPDATE

Student Representative Strogov shared concerns about communication within the Athletic Department, noting delayed or missing responses, roster cuts after finalization, limited transparency, and gaps in communication between athletic leadership and coaches. She emphasized the importance of improving dialogue and collaboration to strengthen the athletics program.

SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE - *Mr. Jason Bing*

Superintendent Bing highlighted the following:

- Celebrated Columbia High School Assistant Principal Dr. Telia Bennett, and Dr. Candace Stewart, Art Teacher for successfully defending dissertations.
- Honored Columbia High student Chioma Ugonna Okafor as Essex County Unsung Hero for leadership and peer service.
- Highlighted Columbia High School Robotics Team 4102 qualifying for the world competition.
- Announced the Board's recent New Jersey School Board Association (NJSBA) Certification, reflecting Governance excellence.
- Recognized Mandarin teachers for Lunar New Year celebrations.
- Congratulated Principal Lynn Irby for being honored by the Columbia High School Global Majority Achievement Community (GMAC) for her leadership and mentorship which has shaped generations of students across the South Orange and Maplewood School District.
- Addressed the ongoing challenge of developing the 2026-2027 budget, emphasizing empathy, transparency, and fiscal responsibility amid rising costs and limited revenue growth.
- Discussed athletics department challenges and the efforts to recruit 25-30 community members, parents, and student athletes for an advisory committee to restructure and improve the athletics program, including better funding, organization, and equitable treatment comparable to arts programs.

PRESENTATION

Equity Audit and Implementation

Dr. Kevin Gilbert, Asst. Superintendent of Schools presented an update on the Implementation of the Rutgers Equity Audit. The presentation included:

- Rutgers Equity Audit Guided Philosophy
- Curriculum and Instruction Recommendations
- Intervention Recommendations
- Recommendations for the Development of Pedagogical Capacity with an Equity Lens
- Intention Integration
- Rutgers Equity Audit Expected Implementation
- Recommendations Progress
 - Two recommendations were marked completed since last update: embedding growth mindset in professional development and identifying high-achieving students from underrepresented groups.
 - I&RS (Intervention & Referral Services) system revamped, now a consistent multi-tier system supporting academics and behavior.
 - Pedagogical capacity development faced delays due to legal and political challenges but is now back on track with continuous assessment and professional development advancing.
 - Affinity spaces for teachers of color are planned for launch in September 2026 after contract reviews and staff training.
 - Intentional Integration Initiative (III) adjustments reflect demographic and economic shifts, with ongoing annual data analysis.
 - Surveys of families withdrawing children since 2018 are underway to understand patterns.
 - The equity audit work is in year three of an anticipated five-year plan. Implementation is progressing, but sustainability and deeper cultural shifts are forthcoming.

Board President's Update - Will Meyer

Board President's updated included:

- Commemoration of International Transgender Day of Visibility with a resolution affirming district commitment to LGBTQ+ students.
- Board President Meyer and Board Member Callahan attended a breakfast hosted by South Orange Village and Maplewood Township honoring crossing guards.
- Strategic planning is under way. The first of three sessions was held on March 16. It was led by the district's New Jersey School Board Association Representative Jeanne Cleary. Community engagement was encouraged for the next session.
- The District and Board received NJSBA Certification, a significant achievement requiring satisfaction of a list of criteria. This is a multi-year achievement, and credit is due to the current Board and prior Boards under the leadership of Ms. Nubia Duvall Wilson, Dr. Qawi Telsford, and Ms. Kaitlyn Wittleder.

- Budget Update
 - The district is working hard to finalize a balanced budget despite rising costs and slowing revenue growth. In addition, the district is dealing with a leadership transition in the Business Office. Business Administrator Imani Moody is currently on family leave, and Frank Ceurvels has been appointed as Interim Business Administrator. Mr. Ceurvels and the Business Office staff are putting in significant effort to complete the budget, which is still being adjusted. Board members have reviewed it in small groups, and the final version is expected to be ready for a vote on May 4.
- Capital Projects Update
 - The state approved 40% debt service aid for auditorium renovations at Maplewood Middle School (\$2.2 million eligible) and South Orange Middle School (\$900,000 eligible). For the Ritzer project, about half of the \$7.7 million submitted qualifies for aid (\$4 million eligible vs. \$3.7 million ineligible). The board will review next steps and report back.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion made by Board Member Callahan seconded by Board Member Sackett-Gable to approve the minutes of the following meetings: February 12, 2026 Board Retreat and February 26, 2026 - Executive and Regular Board Meetings. Motion unanimously approved.

BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR'S UPDATE

Interim Business Administrator Frank Ceurvels introduced himself and summarized his extensive experience supporting school budgets and operations while also providing an update on the following:

- Current budget finalization in process
- Procurement challenges due to new legislation affecting vendor contracts.
- Construction delays primarily due to material shortages (e.g., lockers at CHS).
- Recognition of the board's commitment to certification and governance.
- Commitment to ongoing support and transparency in budget matters.
- Board Resolutions for adoption this evening.

HEARING OF INDIVIDUALS AND DELEGATIONS

Students Caroline Shaw, Elizabeth Leavy, Katie Calhoun, Levi Faber-Kawene, Jeremy Crawford, Maggie Doran-Paley and Community Members Donal Connolly, Matthew Fink, Ben Vitale, Khadijah Costley White, Todd Illingworth, Jurga Marshall and Jessica Miller addressed the Board. Topics included the Athletic Department, field maintenance and a visitor management system.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Committee reports from the Finance, Facilities and Technology, Special Services, Student and Family Affairs, Personnel, Curriculum & Instruction, and Policy & Governance 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 Nayar, seconded by Board Member Bennett to move resolution 4943.

4943. WHEREAS, International Transgender Day of Visibility, observed annually on March 31, celebrates the contributions, resilience, and lived experiences of transgender and gender non-conforming individuals; and WHEREAS, the South Orange-Maplewood School District is committed to fostering a safe, inclusive, and equitable learning environment for all students, and affirms the dignity and worth of every student and family; and

WHEREAS, visibility and affirmation are critical to the well-being and academic success of transgender and gender non-conforming students; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Education recognizes with concern ongoing incidents of bullying and harassment targeting transgender students, which must not be ignored; and

WHEREAS, the Board further acknowledges a broader national climate in which transgender individuals face heightened scrutiny, actions, and even policies that may contribute to feelings of marginalization or vulnerability; and

WHEREAS, transgender students may experience intersecting forms of discrimination, requiring an inclusive, responsive, and proactive approach by the district;

WHEREAS, the district is committed to enforcing policies that prohibit discrimination, harassment, intimidation, and bullying based on gender identity or expression, including through the continued implementation of Board Policy 5756; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the South Orange-Maplewood Board of Education recognizes March 31 as International Transgender Day of Visibility; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board reaffirms its commitment to supporting transgender and gender non-conforming students and families, ensuring their safety, inclusion, and full participation in the life of the district; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board calls upon all members of the school community to stand against bullying and harassment in all forms and to actively foster a culture of respect, empathy, and belonging; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board will continue its oversight to ensure that the District is engaging with students and families, listening to concerns, and responding with appropriate supports and actions to ensure student safety and well-being;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution be read publicly in advance of March 31 as a clear statement of the district's values and expectations.

ROLL CALL: Motion 4943 YES: Bennett, Callahan, Higgins, Kapadia, Meyer, Nayar, Sackett-Gable, Stephan NO: None

Motion made by Board Member Nayar, seconded by Board Member Bennett to move resolutions 4934-4942 and 4944-4955.

4934A. RETIREMENTS

NAME	ASSIGNMENT	EFFECTIVE DATE	YEARS IN DISTRICT
Brody, Susan	T 2 SB - 1.0 FTE	7/1/26	20
Conyers, Vernell	T 5 SM - 1.0 FTE	7/1/26	22
Merrigan, Heather	T KDG MAR - 1.0 FTE	7/1/26	19

4934B. RESIGNATIONS

NAME	ASSIGNMENT	EFFECTIVE DATE	YEARS IN DISTRICT
Mitola, Megan	T Math MM - 1.0 FTE	7/1/26	6.5
Thomas-Enyeart, Kristie	T SS CHS - 1.0 FTE	7/1/26	15
Veza, Rebecca	T KDG TUS - 1.0 FTE	7/1/26	17
Weber, Raquel	T 1 TUS - 1.0 FTE	7/1/26	7

4934C. 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
Jackson, Terri	T 2 TUS - 1.0 FTE	3/27/26 5/5/26	\$77,410
Mogavero, Vincent	T SPED/INC Gr. 5 TUS - 1.0 FTE	3/4/26 6/18/26	\$66,100

4934D. CHANGE IN START DATE

NAME	ASSIGNMENT	OLD START DATE	NEW START DATE
Smalls, II Dr. Donovan	Acting Principal DB - 1.0 FTE	TBD	3/9/26

4934E. CHANGE IN END DATE

NAME	ASSIGNMENT	OLD END DATE	NEW END DATE
Gannon, Nina	LR T SPED/LLD MAR - 1.0 FTE	4/16/26	4/29/26
Little, Maia	LR T Phys. Ed. SB - 1.0 FTE	3/20/26	3/27/26

Smalls, II Dr. Donovan	Acting Principal DB - 1.0 FTE	TBD	4/24/26
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4934F. TRANSFER/REASSIGNMENT

NAME	OLD ASSIGNMENT	NEW ASSIGNMENT	NEW END DATE
Jackson, Terri	LR - T 2 TUS - 1.0 FTE	LR - T 4 TUS - 1.0 FTE	3/27/26
Rosenburgh, Elissa	T 4 TUS - 1.0 FTE	T 2 TUS - 1.0 FTE	3/27/26

4934G. LEAVES OF ABSENCE

NAME	ASSIGNMENT	EFFECTIVE DATE
Castano, Jennifer	T SPED/INC MM - 1.0 FTE	8/31/26-6/30/27 (Unpaid Personal Leave)
Hilongos, Francine	T SPED/INC TUS 1.0 FTE	2/20/26-4/7/26 (Paid Maternity Leave) 4/8/26-6/30/26 (Unpaid NJ FLA)
Hughes, Jessica	T SPED/INC DB 1.0 FTE	1/12/26-3/10/26 (1/2 day) (Paid Maternity Leave) 3/10/26 (1/2 day)-3/25/26 (Unpaid Medical Leave) 3/26/26-6/5/26 (Unpaid NJ FLA)
LaPadula, Maria Cristina	T WL/Italian CHS - 1.0 FTE	3/23/26-3/27/26 (Unpaid FMLA)
Ng, Suzanne	Library Media Spec CHS - 1.0 FTE	1/22/26-4/3/26 (Unpaid Personal Leave)
Phelan, Cynthia	T WL/Spanish TUS/SB/CL - 1.0 FTE	3/16/26-3/19/26 (Unpaid FMLA)
Rodriguez, Gina	T 4 TUS - 1.0 FTE	8/31/26-6/30/27 (Unpaid Personal Leave)
Steinik, Hannah	T SPED/LLD MAR - 1.0 FTE	3/6/26 (1/2 day) - 4/29/26 (Unpaid FMLA)

4934H. STIPEND

NAME	ASSIGNMENT	EFFECTIVE DATE	ACTUAL SALARY
McGlotten, Lynn	Assistant to the Principal SOM - 1.0 FTE	3/9/26 4/24/26	\$8,189 (pro-rated)
Quick, Teresa	Yearbook TUS - 1.0 FTE	1/5/26 6/30/26	\$1,502

4934I. RESCIND STIPEND

NAME	ASSIGNMENT	EFFECTIVE DATE	ACTUAL SALARY
Harman, Ryan	Varsity Coach, Boys Outdoor Track CHS - 1.0 FTE	3/1/26 6/30/26	TBD

4934J. TITLE I STIPEND PAYMENTS

NAME	ASSIGNMENT	EFFECTIVE DATE	ACTUAL SALARY
Friedrich, Donna	Right Back at You Project Lead SB - 1.0 FTE	3/1/26 6/30/26	\$6,000
Buono, Kristin	Girls Movement Group Lead SB - 1.0 FTE	3/1/26 6/30/26	\$1,666.66
Lanzafame, Susan	Girls Movement Group Lead SB - 1.0 FTE	3/1/26 6/30/26	\$1,666.66
Lawson, Rahmiece	Girls Movement Group Lead SB - 1.0 FTE	3/1/26 6/30/26	\$1,666.66

4934K. SALARY ADJUSTMENTS

NAME	ASSIGNMENT	EFFECTIVE DATE	ADJUSTMENT	ACTUAL SALARY
Bottiglierie, Henry	Director of Facilities DIST - 1.0 FTE	3/1/26 6/30/26	+\$10,000	\$160,000
Palmieri, Samantha	LDTC CHS - .2 FTE	11/1- 11/10/25 (6 days)	\$95.31 (per day)	\$571.88
Benning, Avery	T SPED MM - 1.2 FTE	9/2/25 6/30/26	+\$16,246.40	\$97,478
Blackford, Meghan	T SPED MM - 1.2 FTE	9/2/25 6/30/26	+\$14,973.94 (per day @ 17%)	\$103,056
Strauss, Brittany	T SPED MM - 1.2 FTE	10/27/25 6/30/26	+\$14,135 (pro-rated & paid @17%)	\$97,280
Bruno, Heather	T SPED MM - 1.2 FTE	10/27/25 3/26/26	+\$17,049 (pro-rated & paid @17%)	\$117,342 (pro-rated)
Reyes, Nicolas	T SPED MM - 1.2 FTE	10/27/25 3/26/26	+\$13,159 (pro-rated & paid @ 17%)	\$90,570 (pro-rated)
Santos, Ryan	T SPED MM - 1.2 FTE	10/27/25 3/26/26	+\$12,747 (pro-rated & paid @ 17%)	\$87,729 (pro-rated)
Simmons, Adam	T SPED MM - 1.2 FTE	10/27/25 3/26/26	+\$14,209 (pro-rated & paid @ 17%)	\$97,791 (pro-rated)
Fein, Suzanne	T SPED MM - 1.1 FTE	11/17/25 3/26/26	+\$11,237.60 (pro-rated)	\$126,614 (pro-rated)
Copeland, Jeanette	Clerical Aide DB - 1.0 FTE	3/11-16/26 (14 hours)	\$14.78 (per hour)	\$206.92

Toledo, Maria	Clerical Aide MAR - 1.0 FTE	2/26-3/4/26 (32 hours)	\$10.69 (per hour)	\$342.08
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4935A. APPOINTMENT OF SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS FOR THE 2025-2026 SCHOOL YEAR AT \$175/DAY.

STATE CERTIFIED TEACHER

1. Scheper, Kelly

COLLEGE GRADUATE AND STATE SUBSTITUTE CERTIFICATE

1. Conroy, Mackenzie
2. Halpern, Samuel

NON-DEGREE AND STATE SUBSTITUTE CERTIFICATE

1. Kaesshaefer, Ian

4935B. APPOINTMENT OF SUBSTITUTE NURSES FOR THE 2025-2026 SCHOOL YEAR AT \$215/DAY

1. Porter, Julianne

4935C. APPOINTMENT OF OUT OF DISTRICT COACHES FOR THE 2025-2026 SCHOOL YEAR

NAME	ASSIGNMENT	CONTRACT YEAR	STIPEND
Downey, Brian	Boys JV Lacrosse Coach	03/2026 06/2026	\$5,614
Glymph, Belinda	Girls Varsity Outdoor Track Asst. Coach	03/2026 06/2026	\$5,614
Johnson, Michael	Girls Varsity Outdoor Track Head Coach	03/2026 06/2026	\$7,780
McCombs, David	Boys JV Outdoor Track	03/2026 06/2026	\$5,614
Sabol, Joseph	Head Wrestling Coach	12/2025 02/2026	\$7,905
Simon, Alex	Boys Varsity Outdoor Track Head Coach	03/2026 06/2026	\$7,780

4935D. RESCIND APPOINTMENT OF OUT OF DISTRICT COACHES FOR THE 2025-2026 SCHOOL YEAR

NAME	ASSIGNMENT	CONTRACT YEAR	STIPEND
Pappalardo, Christopher	Boys JV Lacrosse Coach	3/2026 6/2026	\$5,614

4936. 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].

4937A. Receives and Accepts the following financial reports:

1. February 2026 Board Secretary's Report
2. February 2026 Treasurer Report
3. February 2026 Transfer Report
4. February 2026 Expense Account Adjustment Analyses
5. March 2026 Lease Payments in the amount of \$622,301.70
6. Check Register#428742 in the amount of \$6,750.00
7. Check Register# 428743-429009 in the amount of \$5,847,646.50
8. Check Register#200948-200956 in the amount of \$3,237,019.78
9. February 2026 Payroll Register in the amount of \$7,928,800.78

4937B. Certify the Board Secretary's Monthly Financial Report.

4937C. Approves the attendance and related travel and/or workshop expenses for the following work-related events:

EMPLOYEE	WORKSHOP/CONFERENCE	DATE(S)	LOCATION	ESTIMATED COSTS
Jennifer Antoni Columbia HS	Education Opportunities Fair	3/11/26	Ewing, NJ	\$59.10
Katie Cifuentes Columbia HS	Woodcock Johnson V Training	4/16/26	Wayne, NJ	\$431.55
Mara Fox Marshall School	Woodcock Johnson V Training	4/16/26	Wayne, NJ	\$410.99
Carey Guido Maplewood MS	NJAHPERD Annual Convention (rescheduled)	5/4/26-5/5/26	Princeton, NJ	\$0.00
Leshia Johnson Tuscan School	Woodcock Johnson V Training	4/16/26	Wayne, NJ	\$409.30
Diane Leick Maplewood MS	Trauma Informed Education	4/15/26	New Brunswick, NJ	\$18.01
James Manno Columbia HS	Education Opportunities Fair	3/11/26	Ewing, NJ	\$309.10
Samantha Palmieri Columbia HS	Woodcock Johnson V Training	4/16/26	Wayne, NJ	\$431.55
Ramon Robles-Fernandez Columbia HS	AP Workshop and Reading	6/10/26-6/17/26	Tampa, FL	\$0.00
Yolanda Sanchez Columbia HS	Woodcock Johnson V Training	4/16/26	Wayne, NJ	\$431.55
Maria Serpico Maplewood MS	Woodcock Johnson V Training	4/16/26	Wayne, NJ	\$416.28
Nicole Unis Montrose School	Woodcock Johnson V Training	4/16/26	Wayne, NJ	\$412.03

Lavonne Wallace Clinton School	Emerging Leaders Conference (rescheduled)	3/17/26	Monroe Twp., NJ	\$0.00
Total				\$3,329.46

4937D. 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
Kencor, LLC	Elevator Service, Inspection, Repair	Coop
Kin Contractors, LLC	Fencing Repair and Replacement	Coop
Pellegrino Chevrolet	Class 1-3 Pickup trucks/Chassis, Sport Utility Vehicles And Vans	Coop
Public Sewer Service	Cesspool, Septic, Waste line, Grease Trap, Sewer Jet Inspection, Maintenance	Coop
Shaw's Complete Security	Locksmith Service	Coop
Sportcare	Synthetic Turf: Repair and Replacement	Coop
Storr Tractor Co	Facility Grounds Equipment	Coop

4937E. Amends resolution#4920E approved on February 26, 2026. This amendment approves a two-year affiliation agreement with Teachers College, Columbia University effective August 1, 2026 - August 1, 2028 for the purposes of providing clinical experience for university students enrolled in the Psychological Counseling program. The agreement will auto renew for two more years unless terminated by either party.

4937F. Approves a Clinical Affiliation Agreement with Seton Hall University, College of Human Development, Culture and Media Department of Professional Psychology and Family Therapy for the purposes of providing clinical experience for university students enrolled in Counseling, Psychology and Marriage and Family Therapy programs. The agreement is effective September 1, 2026 to September 1, 2029.

4937G. Approves the carry-over of Fiscal Year 2025 Federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act, (IDEIA) Part B Basic and Preschool funds in the amount of \$110,643.00 listed below:

<u>Program</u>	<u>Carryover</u>
IDEIA Basic (public)	\$ 60,922.00
IDEIA Basic (non-public)	\$ 49,721.00
Total Basic	\$110,643.00
IDEIA Preschool (public)	\$ 0.00

IDEIA Preschool (nonpublic)	\$ 0.00
Total Preschool	\$ 0.00

Total Carryover \$110,643.00

4937H. Accepts State Nonpublic Auxiliary Services (Chapter 192) and Handicapped Services (Chapter 193) Aid Entitlement Funds for 2025-2026 for a total amount of \$97,293.00 allocated as follows:

<u>NP Auxiliary Services</u>	<u>Rate/Pupil</u>	<u>Pupils</u>	<u>State Aid</u>	<u>Allocation</u>
*Compensatory Education	\$1,146.87	42	\$34,635.00	
*E.S.L.	\$1,167.94	0	\$0.00	
*Transportation	\$0	0	\$0.00	
Total Auxiliary Services				\$34,635.00
* Prorated at 75.50%				
<u>NP Handicapped Services</u>	<u>Rate/Pupil</u>	<u>Pupils</u>	<u>State Aid</u>	<u>Allocation</u>
*Initial Exam & Class.	\$1,326.17	14	\$18,566.00	
*Annual Exam & Class.	\$380.00	22	\$ 8,360.00	
*Corrective Speech	\$930.00	10	\$ 9,300.00	
*Supplemental Instruction	\$826.00	32	\$26,432.00	
Total Handicapped Services				\$62,658.00
TOTAL 192/193 Allocation				\$97,293.00
*Prorated at 100.00%				

4937I. Accepts a donation to the Parenting Center in the amount of \$5,0000.00 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 \$5,000.00
 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.

4937J. Renews the agreement with MIL Val Motors, Inc. dba Essex County Towing, of South Orange, New Jersey to provide towing services for vehicles illegally parked on District property.

4937K. Authorize the following Clubs, Parent Organizations and PTA's be covered as additionally insured under the District's NJSIG policy for the 2025-2026 school year.

CHS Clubs
Cougars Connection
Fin Tech Club
Marine Biology Club
Global Majority Achievement Community

This list must be approved annually and may be amended throughout the school year.

- 4937L. Approves the disposal either by auction or as refuse of the following items deemed unusable by the district based on knowledge of existing programs and based on the age and condition of the items.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Board of Education approves the sale of the surplus property through GovDeals pursuant to the terms and conditions of State Contract A-70967/T2581.

- 4937M. Approves an agreement with Shoop SBA, LLC of Fairfield, NJ for Procurement Consulting at a rate of \$130.00/hour to assist in preparing all specifications and documents for the advertisement of bids, solicitation of quotations, competitive contracting, concession purchasing, proprietary bids and Requests for Proposals (RFP). This will also include the procuring Special Education-Related Services through the RFP process.

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.

- 4937N. Approves an additional extension of the contract with Epic Management, Inc., for Construction Management Services and oversight of the Columbia High School Girl's Locker Room project and the completion/closeout of the South Orange Middle School project through April 30, 2026. The contract is hereby increased by \$21,402.00.

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.

- 4937O. Accepts a donation of an Erwin Otto Full Size Violin including a bow, shoulder rest and case to benefit the Columbia High School Orchestra Program. The approximate value of the donation is \$100.

4938. 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>
2414736248	CHS	9 th

4939. Affirms the HIB investigations reported to the South Orange/Maplewood School District for the month of February 2026.
- 4940A. Adopt Policy 0142.1 Nepotism.
- 4940B. Adopt Policy 5111 Eligibility of Resident Non-Residents.
- 4940C. Adopt Policy 9163 Spectators Code of Conduct for Interscholastic.
- 4940D. Adopt Regulation 2535 Library Materials.
- 4940E. Adopt Regulation 5530 Substance Abuse.
4941. Approves the first reading of Policy 1220 Employment of Chief School Administrator.
4942. WHEREAS, the South Orange-Maplewood Board of Education (the "Board") and the South Orange-Maplewood Education Association (SOMEA) are parties to a Collective Bargaining Agreement governing terms and conditions of employment; and
- WHEREAS, the Board and SOMEA have reached a mutually agreed upon Sidebar Agreement dated March 4, 2026 regarding compensation and scheduling accommodations for Mr. Novemsky in relation to additional workload and instructional time during the 2025-2026 academic year; and
- WHEREAS, the Sidebar Agreement provides that for the first half of the academic year (September through January), during which Mr. Novemsky had two days per week without a lunch period, he shall be compensated at a rate equivalent to 0.4 of his contractual salary; and
- WHEREAS, for the second half of the academic year (February through June), the additional instructional time shall be treated as a sixth class period pursuant to the Collective Bargaining Agreement; and
- WHEREAS, the agreement further outlines reasonable accommodations when feasible, including the provision of a teacher assistant during periods where Mr. Novemsky has neither a lunch period nor a preparation period proximate thereto; and
- WHEREAS, the parties agree that the Sidebar Agreement represents a one-time settlement of this matter and shall not constitute precedent or past practice for future assignments;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the South Orange-Maplewood Board of Education hereby approves and accepts the Sidebar Agreement between the Board and the South Orange-Maplewood Education Association dated March 4, 2026; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Superintendent of Schools and the Board Secretary are authorized to execute and implement the terms of this agreement on behalf of the Board.

4944. WHEREAS, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:39-1, boards of education in New Jersey are required to provide mandatory transportation to "remote" students, defined generally as students who reside more than two (2) miles from their assigned public elementary school; and

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A. 18A:39-1 further authorizes, but does not require, boards of education to provide courtesy transportation to students who reside within the statutory remote limits, subject to the discretion of the board and the availability of funds; and

WHEREAS, the South Orange-Maplewood Board of Education ("Board") has historically provided courtesy transportation to certain non-remote pre-k students; and

WHEREAS, the Board has reviewed its transportation obligations, fiscal considerations, and statutory authority and has determined that the continuation of courtesy transportation for non-remote pre-k students is discretionary and not legally mandated under New Jersey law; and

WHEREAS, the Board recognizes that transportation provided pursuant to a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a related service required under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), 20 U.S.C. § 1400 et seq., N.J.S.A. 18A:46-1 et seq., and N.J.A.C. 6A:14-2.1 and 6A:14-3.7, and is not subject to elimination through changes to courtesy transportation policy; and

WHEREAS, the Board seeks to provide clear advance notice to families regarding transportation eligibility for future school years while continuing to meet all mandatory transportation obligations imposed by state and federal law;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that, effective beginning with the 2026-2027 school year, the South Orange-Maplewood Board of Education shall discontinue courtesy transportation for pre-k students who do not qualify as "remote" students under N.J.S.A. 18A:39-1; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board shall continue to provide mandatory transportation to all pre-k students who meet the statutory definition of "remote" students in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:39-1; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that nothing in this resolution shall be construed to alter, limit, or deny transportation services required pursuant to a student's IEP, which shall continue to be provided as required by federal and state special education law; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Superintendent of Schools or designee is authorized and directed to implement this resolution, update administrative procedures and family communications accordingly, and provide timely notice to parents and guardians regarding transportation eligibility for the 2026-2027 school year and beyond.

4945. WHEREAS, the South Orange Maplewood Board of Education (the "Board") and the South Orange Maplewood Education Association (the "Association") are parties to a Collective Negotiations Agreement (the "CNA"); and WHEREAS, the Board and the Association have engaged in discussions regarding the implementation of a Freshman Academy model at Columbia High School; and

WHEREAS, the parties have mutually agreed to the terms and conditions set forth in a Sidebar Agreement dated March 24, 2026, which outlines expectations related to staffing, scheduling, professional responsibilities, and program implementation; and

WHEREAS, the Sidebar Agreement reflects a shared commitment to supporting student achievement, fostering collaboration among staff, and ensuring a successful transition into ninth grade through the Freshman Academy model; and

WHEREAS, the Sidebar Agreement has been reviewed and ratified by the Association and is subject to approval by the Board of Education;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the South Orange Maplewood Board of Education hereby approves the Sidebar Agreement between the Board and the South Orange Maplewood Education Association regarding the Freshman Academy program at Columbia High School; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board authorizes the Superintendent to implement the terms of the agreement and to take any necessary actions to ensure compliance with its provisions; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this Sidebar Agreement shall be incorporated as part of the parties' Collective Negotiations Agreement and shall remain in effect through June 30, 2027, unless otherwise modified by mutual agreement of the parties; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this agreement shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the State of New Jersey.

ROLL CALL: Motion 4934, 4935, 4936, 4937, 4938, 4939, 4940, 4941, 4942, 4943, 4944, 4945 YES: Bennett, Callahan, Higgins, Kapadia, Meyer, Nayar, Sackett-Gable, Stephan NO: None

Motion made by Board Member Callahan, seconded by Board Member Sackett-Gable to move resolution 4946.

4946. WHEREAS, the South Orange-Maplewood Board of Education ("Board") is

responsible for ensuring that students attending schools within the district are bona fide residents entitled to a free public education pursuant to applicable New Jersey statutes and regulations; and

WHEREAS, the district conducted a residency review concerning a Student ID# 7194318756 currently enrolled in the South Orange-Maplewood School District; and

WHEREAS, the residency review included an examination of documentation, records, and any information provided by the Student's parent(s)/guardian(s); and

WHEREAS, based upon the information gathered, the administration determined that the Student is not domiciled within the geographic boundaries of the South Orange-Maplewood School District and is therefore not entitled to continued enrollment without payment of tuition; and

WHEREAS, a residency hearing was held on March 10, 2026 before a committee of the Board, during which the parent(s)/guardian(s) were provided an opportunity to present information and respond to the district's determination; and

WHEREAS, upon consideration of the information presented at the March 10th hearing, as well as all submitted materials and relevant information, the Board finds that the determination of non-residency was made in accordance with applicable law and district policy;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the South Orange-Maplewood Board of Education hereby upholds the administration's determination that the Student is not a resident of the district; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Student shall be removed from enrollment in the South Orange-Maplewood School District effective immediately, or on a date determined appropriate by the Superintendent, unless tuition arrangements are made in accordance with district policy; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the parent(s)/guardian(s) shall be responsible for any tuition assessed for the period of ineligible attendance, consistent with New Jersey law; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Superintendent or designee is authorized to take all necessary actions to implement this resolution.

ROLL CALL: Motion 4946 YES: Bennett, Callahan, Higgins, Kapadia, Meyer, Nayar, Sackett-Gable, Stephan NO: None

Motion made by Board Member Sackett-Gable, seconded by Board Member Callahan to move resolution 4947.

4947. WHEREAS, the South Orange-Maplewood Board of Education ("Board") is committed to maintaining a safe and orderly educational environment for all students and staff in accordance with district policy and New Jersey statutes and regulations; and

WHEREAS, Student ID# 8007941441 ("the Student") was subject to disciplinary action resulting in a recommendation for long-term suspension from the South Orange-Maplewood School District; and

WHEREAS, a long-term suspension hearing was held on March 18, 2026 before a committee of the Board, during which the administration presented information supporting the disciplinary action and the Student and parent(s)/guardian(s) were provided an opportunity to respond; and

WHEREAS, the Board committee carefully reviewed all testimony, evidence, and information presented at the hearing; and

WHEREAS, the Board finds that the administration's decision was made in accordance with applicable law, Board policy, and due process requirements;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the South Orange-Maplewood Board of Education hereby upholds the administration's decision to impose a long-term suspension for Student ID# 8007941441; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Student shall be suspended for the remainder of the current school year; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Superintendent or designee is authorized to take all necessary actions to implement this resolution, including ensuring the provision of any required educational services during the period of suspension in accordance with New Jersey law and district policy.

ROLL CALL: Motion 4947 YES: Bennett, Callahan, Higgins, Kapadia, Meyer, Sackett-Gable, Stephan NO: Nayar

Motion made by Board Member Higgins, seconded by Board Member Stephan to move resolution 4948.

4948. WHEREAS, the South Orange-Maplewood Board of Education ("Board") is committed to maintaining a safe and orderly educational environment for all students and staff in accordance with district policy and New Jersey statutes and regulations; and

WHEREAS, Student ID# 5374714081 ("the Student") was subject to disciplinary action resulting in a recommendation for a forty-five (45) day suspension from the South Orange-Maplewood School District; and

WHEREAS, a long-term suspension hearing was held on March 18, 2026 before a committee of the Board, during which the administration presented information supporting the disciplinary action and the Student and parent(s)/guardian(s) were provided an opportunity to respond; and

WHEREAS, the Board committee carefully reviewed all testimony, evidence, and information presented at the hearing; and

WHEREAS, upon consideration of the full record, the Board has determined that modification of the disciplinary action is appropriate;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the South Orange-Maplewood Board of Education hereby declines to implement the administration's decision to impose a forty-five (45) day suspension for Student ID# 5374714081; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board recognizes and affirms the period of suspension already served by the Student as disciplinary action under the circumstances; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Student shall be permitted to return to school effective immediately, or on a date determined appropriate by the Superintendent; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Superintendent or designee is authorized to take all necessary actions to implement this resolution, including facilitating the Student's reentry and ensuring appropriate supports are in place.

ROLL CALL: Motion 4948 YES: Bennett, Callahan, Higgins, Kapadia, Meyer, Nayar, Sackett-Gable, Stephan NO: None

Motion made by Board Member Higgins, seconded by Board Member Stephan to move resolution 4949.

4949. WHEREAS, the South Orange-Maplewood Board of Education ("Board") is committed to providing a safe and supportive educational environment free from harassment, intimidation, and bullying ("HIB") in accordance with the New Jersey Anti-Bullying Act and district policy; and WHEREAS, an investigation was conducted regarding an allegation of harassment, intimidation, and bullying involving Student ID# 7945576367, identified as HIB Appeal No. 298923_TES_10312025; and

WHEREAS, the results of the investigation determined that the alleged incident did not meet the statutory criteria for HIB and was therefore found to be unfounded; and

WHEREAS, an appeal of this determination was filed, and a hearing was held on March 23, 2026 before a committee of the Board, during which all relevant information, reports, and testimony were reviewed; and

WHEREAS, the Board committee carefully considered the findings of the investigation, the applicable legal standards, and all information presented at the appeal hearing; and

WHEREAS, the Board finds that the determination that the alleged HIB incident was unfounded was made in accordance with applicable law, Board policy, and established procedures;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the South Orange-Maplewood Board of Education hereby upholds the determination that HIB Appeal No. 298923_TES_10312025 involving Student ID# 7945576367 is unfounded; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Superintendent or designee is authorized to take all necessary actions to implement this resolution and ensure compliance with all applicable laws and policies.

ROLL CALL: Motion 4949 YES: Bennett, Higgins, Kapadia, Meyer, Nayar, Sackett-Gable, Stephan NO: None ABSTAIN: Callahan

Motion made by Board Member Callahan, seconded by Board Member Sackett-Gable to move resolution 4950.

4950. WHEREAS, the South Orange-Maplewood Board of Education ("Board") is committed to providing a safe and supportive educational environment free from harassment, intimidation, and bullying ("HIB") in accordance with the New Jersey Anti-Bullying Act and district policy; and

WHEREAS, an investigation was conducted regarding an allegation of harassment, intimidation, and bullying involving Student ID# 6431459596, identified as HIB Appeal No. 299310_MMS_11122025; and

WHEREAS, the results of the investigation determined that the alleged incident met the statutory criteria for harassment, intimidation, and bullying and was therefore found to be founded; and

WHEREAS, an appeal of this determination was filed, and a hearing was held on March 23, 2026 before a committee of the Board, during which all relevant information, reports, and testimony were reviewed; and

WHEREAS, the Board committee carefully considered the findings of the investigation, the applicable legal standards, and all information presented at the appeal hearing; and

WHEREAS, the Board finds that the determination that the alleged HIB incident was founded was made in accordance with applicable law, Board policy, and established procedures;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the South Orange-Maplewood Board of Education hereby upholds the determination that HIB Appeal No. 299310_MMS_11122025 involving Student ID# 6431459596 is founded; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Superintendent or designee is authorized to take all necessary actions to implement this resolution and ensure compliance with all applicable laws and policies.

ROLL CALL: Motion 4950 YES: Meyer, Nayar, Sackett-Gable, Stephan NO: Bennett, Higgins, Kapadia ABSTAIN: Callahan

HEARING OF INDIVIDUALS AND DELEGATIONS

NONE.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

Future Meetings

The Board of Education will meet in Public Session on Thursday, April 23, 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 Nayar to adjourn. Motion to adjourn was unanimously approved at 10:33 p.m.

Board Secretary