

Special Meeting
South Orange-Maplewood
Board of Education
May 7, 2026

A Special Meeting of the Board of Education of South Orange-Maplewood was held in the District Meeting Room at the Administration Building, 525 Academy Street, Maplewood, New Jersey and via an online video conference platform on May 7, 2026.

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

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

Absent: NONE

NINE VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT

Pledge of Allegiance

NOTICE OF THE MEETING

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

- A. That written notice was sent from the Office of the Secretary of the Board at 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.

Motion made by Board Member Sackett-Gable, second by Board Member Stephan to adjourn to Executive Session. Motion unanimously approved.

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 Sackett-Gable, seconded by Board Member Kapadia to adjourn to Executive Session. Motion unanimously approved.

**Board Members adjourned to Executive Session at 6:33 p.m.
Board Members reconvened at 7:37 p.m.**

BOARD PRESIDENT'S UPDATE

Board President Meyer explained that primary purpose of the meeting is to take formal action on staff reappointments. While the meeting had originally been advertised as a reorganization meeting, the formal reorganization resolutions, including the reappointment of certain vendors, were postponed because several vendor contracts are still in the bidding process. The Board instead is focused on renewing staff contracts, noting that many well-known and valued employees were being recommended for another year.

Board President Meyer also acknowledged community concerns about employees who were not recommended for renewal. Recognizing the volume of emails received from residents asking the Board to intervene, he emphasized that the Board's authority in personnel matters is limited. To help clarify the Board's role and explain the process for renewals, non-renewals, and the elimination of positions, the President Meyer invited Board Counsel, Mr. Patrick Carrigg to provide an overview of the legal procedures and the Board's responsibilities.

Mr. Carrigg provided a legal overview explaining the Board's limited role regarding staff renewals and non-renewals. Tenured employees are generally guaranteed renewal, while non-tenured staff recommendations come from the Superintendent. The board holds no authority to rehire individuals excluded from the renewal list nor can it alter Superintendent recommendations directly. Non-renewed staff have procedural recourse through statement of reasons and potential Donaldson hearings. Mr. Carrigg also clarified the tenure bumping process, where tenured staff may displace non-tenured colleagues if positions are eliminated due to budget cuts.

SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE

Superintendent Bing delivered a detailed report on the district's fiscal challenges and personnel management strategies amidst the looming statewide fiscal cliff. Since 2024, the district has strategically utilized attrition and internal transfers to reduce costs and maintain instructional integrity without compromising classroom experience. Despite these efforts saving millions, the district faces elimination of eight positions with a projected \$8 million budget gap for 2027-2028, largely driven by rising healthcare costs, utility expenses, and insufficient state funding. Mr. Bing emphasized transparency, collaboration with leadership, staff, and the community, and advocacy efforts at the state government level for sustainable funding.

HEARING OF INDIVIDUALS AND DELEGATIONS

Community Members including Frank Sanchez, Columbia High School Principal, David Burstein and Steve Reichenstein addressed the Board.

ACTION ITEMS

Motion made by Board Member Brown, seconded by Board Member Callahan to move resolutions 4966-4967. Motion unanimously approved.

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

4966. APPROVE REAPPOINTMENT OF NON-TENURED STAFF FOR THE 2026-27 SCHOOL YEAR [list on file in Board Secretary's office]

4967. APPROVE REAPPOINTMENT OF ALL OTHER STAFF FOR THE 2026-27 SCHOOL YEAR [list on file in Board Secretary's office].

Roll Call: Motion 4966-4967 PASSED YES: Bennett, Brown, Callahan, Higgins, Kapadia, Meyer, Nayar, Sackett-Gable, Stephan
NO: None

Motion made by Board Member Sackett-Gable, seconded by Board Member Stephan to move resolutions 4968A-B. Motion unanimously approved.

4968A. Renews the contract with Effective School Solutions, LLC of Summit, New Jersey for Therapeutic Mental Health Wrap Around Program Services in the amount of \$632,214.01 July 1, 2026 - June 30, 2027.

4968B. Approves the following rates for Summer School 2026:

FREE [for students experiencing economic hardship]

<u>HIGH SCHOOL ADVANCEMENT</u>	<u>Rates</u>
High School Math Advancement (SOMSD students)	\$1,000.00
High School Math Advancement	\$1,300.00
21 st Century Class Advancement	\$ 500.00
Personal Finance Advancement Online	\$ 250.00
 <u>HIGH SCHOOL CREDIT RECOVERY</u>	
5 Credit Course	\$ 425.00
2.5 Credit Course	\$ 300.00
1.25 Credit Course	\$ 150.00
 <u>GRADES 5-12 MUSIC PROGRAM</u>	
	\$ 190.00

ROLL CALL: Motion 4968A-B PASSED YES: Bennett, Brown, 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 4969. Motion unanimously approved.

4969. WHEREAS, the South Orange Maplewood Board of Education ("Board") has been presented with a Separation Agreement regarding Employee ID# 2439; and

WHEREAS, the Board has reviewed the terms of the Separation Agreement and finds it to be in the best interest of the School District to approve said Agreement;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the South Orange Maplewood Board of Education hereby approves the Separation Agreement with Employee ID# 2439; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Superintendent and Board Secretary are authorized to execute any and all documents necessary to implement this Resolution.

ROLL CALL: Motion 4969 PASSED YES: Bennett, Brown, Callahan, Higgins, Kapadia, Meyer, Nayar, Sackett-Gable, Stephan NO: None

HEARING OF INDIVIDUALS AND DELEGATIONS

NONE.

FUTURE MEETINGS

The Board of Education will meet in Public Session on Thursday, May 21, 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. Action will be taken.

On Thursday, May 28, 2026 at 6:30 p.m., the Board of Education will convene using an online video conference platform for an Executive Session for the purpose of discussing the Chief School Administrator (CSA) Evaluation. Action will not be taken.

ADJOURNMENT

Board Member Sackett-Gable made a motion, seconded by Board Member Kapadia to adjourn. Motion to adjourn was unanimously approved at 8:08 p.m.

Board Secretary