SCHOOL DISTRICT OF SOUTH ORANGE AND MAPLEWOOD, NEW JERSEY
PUBLIC BOARD MEETING
NOVEMBER 19, 2026

RESOLUTION **5052**

FOR ACTION

SUBJECT: **URGING STATE LEADERS TO ESTABLISH A DEDICATED FUND FROM NEW JERSEY'S META SETTLEMENT FOR STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH AND DIGITAL SAFETY**

WHEREAS, the State of New Jersey has recently secured a historic legal settlement against Meta Platforms, Inc., following litigation led by the New Jersey Attorney General concerning the adverse impacts of social media platforms on youth mental health; and

WHEREAS, this settlement is expected to provide more than $500M to the State of NJ over a period of years, creating a significant opportunity for the state to invest in programs that protect children and adolescents and address the harms associated with social media and other digital technologies; and

WHEREAS, the settlement provides for payments to the New Jersey Attorney General and permits the proceeds to be used for consumer protection, education, and other purposes authorized by law, creating an opportunity for the State to dedicate a substantial portion of these funds to protecting children from the harms underlying the litigation;

WHEREAS, New Jersey public schools are on the front lines addressing the effects of technology and social media on children and adolescents, and school districts increasingly provide mental health services, counseling, crisis intervention, digital literacy education, media literacy, and other supports addressing student wellness and safety; and

WHEREAS, dedicated State funding would enable school districts to expand evidence-based student wellness and mental health services, strengthen digital safety and media literacy programs, evaluate educational technology for safety and efficacy, protect student privacy, and provide developmentally appropriate alternatives to unnecessary screen-based instruction; and

WHEREAS, the distribution of such funding should be equitable and statewide, ensuring that students throughout New Jersey benefit from these settlement proceeds while recognizing that districts and communities have differing levels of student need; and

WHEREAS, any allocation of such settlement funding to public education must supplement, rather than supplant, existing State and local education funding, and must be accompanied by strict transparency and accountability measures regarding its deployment and impact; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the South Orange-Maplewood Board of Education urges Governor Mikie Sherrill, Attorney General Jennifer Davenport, and the New Jersey Legislature to establish a dedicated, nonlapsing fund for a substantial portion of New Jersey's proceeds from the Meta settlement, ensuring that those funds are used to prevent and address harms to children and adolescents associated with social media and unhealthy technology use; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a significant portion of such funding be made available to New Jersey public school districts through the Department of Education, supporting evidence-based and evidence-informed programs addressing student mental health, digital safety, media literacy, cyberbullying prevention, healthy technology use, and family education; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that eligible uses include reviewing the safety, privacy, age appropriateness, and educational efficacy of technologies used in schools, and supporting developmentally appropriate practices that reduce unnecessary screen exposure and provide effective alternatives to screen-based instruction; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that funding be allocated equitably across New Jersey, taking into account student enrollment and demonstrated needs, and that such funding supplement rather than supplant existing State and local education funding, with appropriate transparency, accountability, and reporting requirements; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board supports prioritizing any funds received by the District for student wellness, mental-health supports, digital literacy, and the evaluation and responsible use of educational technology, consistent with applicable grant requirements and District needs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to Governor Mikie Sherrill, Attorney General Jennifer Davenport, Senate President Nicholas Scutari, Assembly Speaker Craig Coughlin, Senator Renee Burgess, Assemblyman Chigozie Onyema, Assemblywoman Cleopatra Tucker, the Commissioner of Education, and the New Jersey School Boards Association.