

**SCHOOL DISTRICT OF SOUTH ORANGE AND MAPLEWOOD, NJ**  
**PUBLIC BOARD MEETING**  
**December 20, 2021**

**RESOLUTION            4239**

**FOR ACTION**

**SUBJECT:     RESOLUTION AFFIRMING BOARD OF EDUCATION COMMITMENT TO  
                  AFFIRMING AND WELCOMING SPACES FOR THE SOMSD COMMUNITY**

WHEREAS, the South Orange Maplewood Board of Education is fully committed to supporting all students, families, staff, and community, and;

WHEREAS, the South Orange Maplewood Board of Education was a leader in crafting LGBTQ+ Policies to protect the rights of children and staff, as well as create welcoming inclusive learning environments, and;

WHEREAS, the South Orange Maplewood Board of Education had a norm of placing all policies for first and second read into a single resolution, and;

WHEREAS, that norm created situations where individual board members could not easily separate a single policy for an individual vote, and;

WHEREAS, the South Orange Maplewood Board of Education has subsequently changed the norm to include separate numbering of each policy to make a separate vote easier for board members and easier for the management of the meeting process, and;

WHEREAS, the May17th Special Board Meeting of the South Orange Maplewood Board of Education included a resolution that had multiple policies as one resolution, and;

WHEREAS, board members expressed the desire to sever a policy for an individual vote which semantically was not recommended by legal counsel at the time, but could have included a motion to withdraw the entire resolution and rewrite the resolution to include this opportunity to vote separately on the policies, and;

WHEREAS, a process to rescind the original resolution and revote on individual policies has the potential to create additional confusion with respect to the status of the policy from May until now, and in particular the potential impact on federal funds, and;

WHEREAS, the minutes of the May regular meeting can be formally amended, therefore the South Orange-Maplewood School Board would like to formally amend the May Regular Meeting Minutes to include a copy of this resolution as well as this language, following directly after the notation of the vote on the agenda resolutions:

During the May Board Meeting there was a desire by some board members to vote separately on the policies. Due to procedural norms and legal advice, this severing was not granted. The result was that board members voted no to express their objection to a particular policy but had the result of signaling to the community that they were against all the policies, including the LGBTQ Student Policy, and Resource Policy. This was an unfair conclusion for anyone in the community to draw and any public shaming of board members for individual votes should not be tolerated in our community. All current board members (as of December 2021) affirm their commitment to all students, families, and staff and commit to ensuring that all children and staff feel welcome and included in our learning spaces.