

**SCHOOL DISTRICT OF SOUTH ORANGE AND MAPLEWOOD, NJ
PUBLIC BOARD MEETING
DECEMBER 18, 2025**

FOR ACTION

RESOLUTION 4900

**SUBJECT: APPROVE RESOLUTION REQUESTING NJSBA SUPPORT FOR
MULTIWINNER RANKED CHOICE VOTING**

WHEREAS, the Board of Education of the School District of South Orange & Maplewood is committed to strengthening democratic participation and promoting electoral processes that reflect the full range of community preferences; and

WHEREAS, New Jersey school districts strive to ensure that local board of education elections provide fair opportunities for all candidates and enable voters to express nuanced preferences in multi-candidate, multi-seat contests; and

WHEREAS, all school districts in New Jersey are required to use an electoral system known as “Plurality Block Vote” or “Plurality At-Large,” where every voter may make as many votes as there are seats to be filled, those votes are unranked, and the candidates with the most votes win.

WHEREAS, in such elections—particularly where several candidates compete for multiple at-large seats—the current Plurality Block Voting structure can amplify small differences in voter support in ways that do not always reflect the broader distribution of community sentiment or the relative strength of individual candidates; and

WHEREAS, these structural features may inadvertently favor tightly grouped voting patterns and limit mechanisms through which voter preferences can be expressed or aggregated to achieve more equitable representation; and

WHEREAS, Ranked Choice Voting (RCV)—a system in which voters may rank candidates in order of preference and votes are counted in an “instant-runoff” or Single Transferable Vote process—has been demonstrated in other jurisdictions to

support majority-backed winners, reduce vote-splitting among similar candidates, and allow proportional representation in multi-seat elections; and

WHEREAS, Multiwinner RCV can democratically accommodate an electoral field of any size, without dilution effects; and

WHEREAS, research from states and municipalities implementing RCV shows that voters report high satisfaction with the process, greater clarity in expressing preferences, and confidence that election results more accurately reflect community priorities; and

WHEREAS, New Jersey currently does not provide statutory authority for school districts to adopt RCV for local school board elections, nor do districts have the flexibility to request such a system even where community dynamics may suggest its potential benefits; and

WHEREAS, The Delegate Assembly is the official policymaking body of the New Jersey School Boards Association; and

WHEREAS, Education-related policies resulting from prior Delegate Assembly and Board of Directors actions are codified in the NJSBA's Manual of Positions and Policies on Education; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the South Orange-Maplewood Board of Education proposes the following new policy language for adoption by the Delegate Assembly and inclusion in NJSBA's Manual of Positions and Policies on Education:

The NJSBA supports allowing, but not requiring, districts to use Ranked Choice Voting in school board elections.

BE IT RESOLVED, That this resolution be placed on the agenda for consideration at the May 16th, 2026, Delegate Assembly. Adopted at a regular meeting of the South Orange-Maplewood Board of Education on December 18th, 2025.