



SOUTHFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS MINUTES

MEETING: Special Board Meeting	DATE: August 25, 2026	TIME: 6:00 p.m.	LOCATION: John W. English Administrative Center
BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:			
☒ Talisha Belk, President	☐ Leslie Love Smith-Thomas Vice President	☒ Yvette Ware- DeVaul, Secretary	☒ Nicole Denson, Treasurer
☒ Amani Johnson, Trustee	☒ Jillian Holloway, Trustee	☒ Jenae' Anderson, Trustee	
ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:			
☒ Jennifer Green, Ed.D. Superintendent	☒ Sommer Caldwell- Carruthers, Associate Superintendent of Instruction	☒ James Jackson, Chief of Staff	☒ Devaughn Stephens, Chief of Talent Mtg
☐ Marc Ingram, Chief Financial Officer	☒ Paula Lightsey, Executive Director of Academic Advisement & SEL	☒ Angela Smith, Director of Intense Student Services Network (ISSN)	☒ Joseph Corace, Chief Operations Officer
☒ April Rogers, Director of State and Federal Programs	☒ Minutes: Carolyn Foster, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent and the Board of Education	Cherri Dougherty Rebecca Luddington	Student Board Representatives: ☐ Samantha Amesse, SA&T ☐ Favour Ibirinde, UK12

1. Opening of Meeting

The meeting was called to order by Board President Belk at 6:07 p.m. Board President Belk read the opening statement and Trustee roll call was taken. Trustee Smith-Thomas has an excused absence. We are joined by several members of the EDN Team who is present and will be reporting out this evening, with the exception of Marc Ingram who also has an excused absence.

2. Information Items

a. MASB 2026-2027 Delegate Assembly

- Secretary Ware-DeVaul indicated that delegates must be present in person and certified by their local board of education. The number of delegates that a school district can have is based on the number of scholars in the district. We are allowed to have three (3) delegates and an alternate.
- The first meeting is on Thursday, October 15, 2026 @ 7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. at the Lansing Center in downtown Lansing.
- MASB 2026-2027 Delegate Assembly was tabled.

b. Report 65-01 CUBE/NSBA Membership

- CUBE/NSBA supports bringing together educational leaders at a time when domestic policies and global trends are combining to shape the future of our students. CUBE/NSBA offers sessions that will give the Board of Education new ideas, trainings, and tools to help the district forward.
- Dr. Green discussed the benefits of having the CUBE/NSBA Membership.
- Report 65-01 CUBE/NSBA Membership was tabled.

c. Report 65-02 SPS Large Format AV Upgrades (BP-T2)

- Southfield Public Schools (SPS) issued RFP 2026-21 (BP-T2) for Large Format AV Upgrades to support renovations at Birney K-8 School, Levey Middle School, and Thompson K-8 International Academy. Bid specifications were issued on July 17, 2026, and representatives from seven companies attended the pre-bid meeting on July 20, 2026. Four bids were received on August 5, 2026:
Digital Age Technologies, Inc. – \$422,082.00
Telsystems – \$437,237.00
Capricorn Diversified Systems LLC – \$533,692.36
VSC, Inc. – \$572,449.00

All four bidders submitted the required Bid Bond, Familial Disclosure, and Affidavit of Compliance. The technology team, consisting of representatives from Oakland Schools and Integrated Design Solutions (IDS), reviewed the bids. A post-bid interview was conducted with Digital Age Technologies, Inc. on August 11, 2026. Following its review, IDS determined that Digital Age Technologies' bid was complete and compliant with the bid documents and historical pricing models. The contract also establishes unit pricing that may be used for future large-format AV upgrades at additional buildings throughout the Bond Program project phases through the change order process. Pricing is guaranteed for 36 months beyond the November 13, 2026 Substantial Completion date, subject to the equipment cost and tariff adjustment provisions established in the bid documents.

- SPS Large Format AV Upgrades (BP-T2) was tabled.
- Birney K-8 – gymnasium, dance space, cafeteria and multipurpose room
- Levey Middle – gymnasium and cafeteria,
- Thompson K-8 – gymnasium and cafeteria
- Original Bid Price - **\$422,083.00**
Remove Birney K-8 multipurpose room- \$29,399.00 and remove Birney K-8 cafeteria- \$25,966.00
NEW BID TOTAL- \$366,718.00
- Bulletin – change in scope, which will make it a lesser cost.
- The end of November is slated for the completion of the project.
- This includes training on how to use the audio visual equipment.
- The work on the project will take place after hours with the least amount of interruptions.
- d. **Operations Report Out – District Readiness**
 - i. **Instruction – Sommer Caldwell-Carruthers**
 - **Summer Learning 2026:** 850 students enrolled, 75% average attendance and 4 paid high school interns
 - **Program Highlights:** added rising kindergarten (pre-kindergarten) to the program, interactive learning carnival – grades PK-1, state school aid package bill signing, work based learning pilot launched, incorporated science and social studies embedded in curriculum, 11 vendors, and we targeted skills requiring additional support
 - **High School Credit Recovery:** students from Southfield A&T and University K12 recovered credit toward graduation; students reported to the building twice each week for direct instruction from our own teachers; strong attendance and a passing rate were both required to earn the recovered credit; the purpose was to move students back on track for on-time graduation
 - **Camp Invention STEM Camp:** a one week STEM camp sponsored by Camp Invention and General Motors; 70 students in grades 1-6 applied from elementary schools across the district; the camp was led by a SPS teacher; campers worked on hands on STEM projects every day of the week
 - **District-Wide Weighted Proficiency M-Step & PSAT Overall Data:** ELA/Reading & Writing from 35.6% to 36.6%; Mathematics from 17.5% to 19.2%; Science from 19.8% to 22.6%; Social Studies from 24.4% to 28.1%
 - **University K12 Academy: A Historic Climb – Michigan State Rank:** moved up to #14 from #30; **National Rank:** moved up to #525 from #800+; **Detroit Metro Area Rank:** moved up to #8 from #15
Primary factors behind the surge: perfect graduation profile; advanced placement expansion; statewide assessment out performance
 - **A&T: Current priorities and how we will know: Professional Development** – increase the professional development of the staff so that instructional strategies are delivered with rigor; **Proficiency** – improve credit accumulation so more students remain on track for on time graduation; **Student Engagement** – increase our incentives for the PBIS program and increase mentorship opportunities for students; **Access** – increase the number of students enrolled in at least one advanced or college credit course; **Attainment** – improve credit accumulation so more students

remain on track for on time graduation; **Attendance** – reduce chronic absenteeism through tiered response and family engagement

- **The Work at a Glance:** Regional Assistance Plan finalized with expanded strategies for virtual education, dual enrollment, and advanced placement; district priorities, goals, and core documents rebuilt around a single, coherent instructional framework; new knowledge building literacy curriculum launching in every elementary classroom, aligned to PA 146; summer leadership and teacher learning delivered ahead of the first day, with follow-up embedded all year
- Instructional Documents and Goals: Completed: MTSS District Handbook – complete; PA 146 Literacy Compliance – complete; MICIP District Plan – complete; K-12 Grading Calendar – complete; **Teacher Evaluation Training – in progress**
- **Professional Development: Delivered This Summer** – two (2) day principal retreat; MTSS sessions for building leaders with a checklist drawn from the revised district handbook; Title I teacher protocol training and device protocol review for building teams; CKLA curriculum institutes for K-5 teachers and instructional coaches

Continuing Through the Year: early teacher evaluation training for staff and administrators; job embedded coaching cycles in literacy and mathematics; monthly principal learning sessions tied to walkthrough evidence and student data; content area supervisor support for secondary departments and new teacher mentoring

- **Ready for Day One: Curriculum** – materials have been delivered and grading calendars are published; **Assessment** – screening and benchmark windows scheduled; **MTSS** – revised handbook in every building and intervention entry points and staffing confirmed; **Compliance** – plan requirements are documented and submitted; **Leadership** – principals trained and aligned to one instructional framework; **Support** – coaching schedules, Title I protocols, and device protocols in place
- **Watching in the First 60 Days:** attendance patterns in the opening weeks; CKLA implementation fidelity from walkthrough evidence in every elementary building; fall screening dyslexia K-3
- **Next Report to the Board:** beginning year data breakdown October 2026-2027 board cycle
- Excited the numbers are increasing; high school grading scale; not at risk for losing any grant dollars
- We are not at risk of losing any of the Summer Discovery grant dollars.

ii. **Enrollment – Rebecca Luddington**

- Our enrollment is trending up. We have enrolled 152 scholars in the last seven (7) days. We had 25 students that dropped/left the district. 599 new students – 42 are returning students. We have 252 kindergarteners enrolled. Friday, August 28, 2026 is the last day for School of Choice enrollment.
- We are still advertising at the Aretha Franklin Amphitheatre, this Friday is our last day of advertisement there. The Human Resource department has an event.
- We need to amp up the social media posts about still having spots available for enrollment.
- We are still sharing with the community that we are still open to enroll.
- District enrollment is always open but School of Choice is closing on Friday, August 28, 2026. Count Day is Wednesday, October 7, 2026. We will share the final enrollment numbers when the final numbers come in.

iii. **Human Resources – DeVaughn Stephens**

- **School Readiness for the 2026-2027 Year:** 20 total positions to fill; 4 selected or in transfer; 16 actively posted and recruiting
- **Where the Remaining Openings Are Concentrated:** **Thompson K-8** – 7 openings (Kindergarten, 3rd, 5th ASD, ECDD, Spanish, ESL); **Adler Elementary and Birney K-8** – 3 openings each (general education and ASD roles); **Bussey Center and Kennedy Learning Center** – 2 openings each, both are Special Education roles; **Stevenson, Southfield A&T, University K-12** – 1 opening each (1st Grade, CTE Business, Middle School English)

- All schools currently below full staffing are operating with sub to fill coverage while recruitment continues.
 - **Teacher and Leadership Development Funding:** Grow Your Own (GYO) Grant - \$93,900 awarded June 2026; **Section 27H Mentoring and Induction Grant** – submitted July 2026, estimated award date not specified; **Teacher Quality Partnership (TQP) Grant** – submitted June 2026, estimated award date not specified
 - **HR Priorities for 2026-2027: Talent Development and Pipelines** – Design and Validate; **Recruiting and Retention** – Scheduling and Drafting Policy; **Job Postings, Onboarding and HRIS** – In Progress; **Succession Planning** – Phased Pilot; **Staff Engagement** – Survey Pilot
 - Retired teachers are working in the district.
 - We are using the strategy of reaching out to more retirees to return to the district.
 - Yolanda Johnson, a paraprofessional at Stevenson Elementary, took advantage of the Grow Your Own program.
 - Our elementary school staff have been training in Letrs for several years. Our goal is that by 2030 all of our elementary teachers in the district will be train.
 - Mr. Stephens states that he is will sit down with Ms. Rogers to determine grant which grants are available. We are pursuing the Out -of- School (OST) grants.
- iv. **ISSN Intense Student Support Network – Angela Smith**
- **Speech and Language Pathologist:** at the close of the 2025-2026 school year; the district had eight (8) SLP vacancies, which include 4 retirees; currently the district has seven (7) SLP vacancies, four (4) of the seven (7) are being filled by a third party contractor (in person) – six (6) in person and two (2) virtual
 - **ISSN Increase Enrollment:** ISSN department enrolled 54 new students for the 2026-2027 school year; due to the increased enrollment in ISSN, we had to add an additional elementary Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) classroom at Adler Elementary
 - **105c Agreement:** is a required written contract in Michigan between a student's resident school district and a non-resident enrolling school district under Section 105c of the State School Aid Act. **School of Choice:** Section 105c allows a student to attend a public school in a different school district located in a contiguous (neighboring) intermediate school district (ISD). **Special Education Focus:** the agreement is specifically required if the enrolling student is eligible for special education programs and services (has an Individualized Education Program IEP). **Cost Responsibility:** The written contract explicitly outlines which district pays for the added costs of the student's special education service. **Enrollment Condition:** if the resident district and the enrolling district cannot reach a cooperative cost agreement for a special education student, the enrolling district must refuse 105c admission.
 - We are not enrolling scholars from other counties where the 105c has not been signed.
- v. **School Safety – James Jackson**
- **School Safety** – Staffing and Security: SROs, DM Burr Officers, Building level safety responsibilities, coordination with local law enforcement
 - **Physical Security** – Surveillance camera enhancements, metal detector deployment, review of doors, locks and entry points
 - **Preparedness** – emergency response protocols, threat assessment teams, crisis response procedures, staff awareness and training
- vi. **Communications – James Jackson**
- **Communication Priorities** – timely information, consistent messaging, multiple communications channels, accessible information for families, clear emergency
 - **Current Communications Tools** – School Messenger, District website, District and school social media, mobile communication platforms, email, phone and text messaging

- **Communication Campaigns** – Why Southfield?/Enroll Now, Employee/Partner of the Month, Academic Programs, Alumni Spotlights, Scholar Spotlights, Extraordinary Events/Ribbon Cuttings, Athletic Highlights, Athletic Spotlights

vii. Athletics – James Jackson

- **Program Readiness** – fall athletic programs prepared for competition, coaches and support staff, athletic schedules and facilities, eligibility and registration process, transportation and event logistics
- **Student Athlete Readiness** – physical examinations and eligibility, academic eligibility, registration and requires documentation, equipment and uniforms, expectations for conduct and sportsmanship
- **Operational Readiness** – athletic facilities, game day security, medical and athletic training support, officials and event staffing, communication with families
 - o We have a mobile officer to service our K-5 schools.
 - o Our ALICE training is ongoing.
- We received strong support from our community partners, who will be joining us in welcoming and celebrating our scholars during Clap-In events throughout the District.

viii. Southwest Food Excellence – Jordan Groves & Kim Tomrell

- **Participation Performance:** Total meals served SY25-56 – 685,612; ADP – 3,320; Highest participation breakfast – chicken biscuit sandwich and cinnamon rolls; Best seller lunch – Chicken & waffles, Doritos walking tacos
- **Culinary Arts Partnership:** we look forward to continuing our partnership with culinary arts program led by Chef Devoria & Chef Carly; holiday meal kits for volunteer hours; lunch service students cooked lunch for fellow students and served them twice each semester
- **Staffing Review:** Stevenson – two noon hour aide positions; Thompson – one noon hour aide position; Birney – one noon hour aide position; A&T – Administrative Assistant (interviewing)
- **26-27 Audits/Policy:** in the spring of 2026 SFE in partnership with Bussey early education team successfully passed our CACFP AR review with zero findings; improvement previous CACFP review in 2018 under previous FSMC had findings under compliance and fiscal; upcoming/anticipated: AR Review MDE date TBD Finance office is currently finalizing desk review with MDE fiscal auditor; district wellness policy rewritten in partnership with SFE
- **Marketing Highlights Q3/4:** Farmers Markets/Harvest of the Month; September – National Quesadilla Day; October – Apple Crunch & Homecoming; November – Thanksgiving & Cookies for Cans; December – Holiday Meal Kits; January – National Bagel Day
- **Marketing Highlights:** announcing our partnership with Domino's pizza; featuring smart slice pizza option for satellites school including University K-5 and KLC buildings; served on Mondays and Fridays; the first slice is free with lunch; students may purchase additional slices for \$2.25 via their MiStar account only
- Chief Operating Officer (COO), Joe Corace gave a brief overview of the moving pieces in the district. We are starting districtwide recycling this year. Fifteen (15) of the electric buses will be ready at the start of the school year. The operations department looked at their budget very closely to be fiscally responsible for this school year. We have great partnerships with First Student, GDI, SFE, and DM Burr.

- **ix. First Student:** First Student is prepared for the 2026 – 2027 school year with new leadership, full staffing, and a fleet that has successfully passed state inspections. Wyatt Hazlett has joined as the new Location Manager and Joe Eversole is serving as the new Area General Manager. Jheri Nelson and her team will provide front-line support to address any SPS start-up concerns.
- First Student will operate 55 routes, including 27 General Education, 21 Special Education, and seven Out-of-District Special Education routes. All scheduled routes and Special Needs monitor positions have been fully assigned, with a 100% employee return rate from the 2025–2026 school year. Route dry runs and adjustments are also underway to maximize safety and efficiency.

- The fleet has expanded with 20 new electric buses, with 15 designated for General Education and one for Special Needs service beginning August 31. The remaining five EV buses are awaiting final inspections.
- First Student also consolidated five routes, resulting in an estimated \$370,000 in savings for the 2026 – 2027 school year, excluding additional anticipated savings from reduced diesel fuel usage associated with the new electric bus fleet. Staff will be present at pickup and drop-off locations during the first week of school to provide additional support.
- Parents will continue to receive route information through the MiStar system and may use First Student's FirstView bus-tracking application. Monthly principal surveys and meetings will also continue throughout the school year to support communication and address transportation needs.
- First View is a mobile app that parents can use to track and see where the bus is currently.
- x. **GDI:** Lora Burton – some teachers are able to access their rooms. There are several spaces that need to be recleaned and floors that need to be repolished because of the ongoing construction in the buildings. There was discussion as to which buildings were ready for the first day of school.
- e. **Financial Report**
- f. **Monthly Bill Disbursement**
 - Treasurer Denson thanked Mr. Ingram, Dr. Green and Ms. Foster for the Lunch n Learn over the summer.

3. Action Items

a. Consent Agenda

- i. June 30, 2026, Truth in Taxation
- ii. June 30, 2026, Special Board Meeting/Study Session
- Trustee Johnson introduced a motion to open and approve Consent Agenda – Approval of Minutes and supported by Trustee Anderson.

President Belk asked Secretary Smith-Thomas to call for the vote.

Ayes: Trustee Anderson, Trustee Belk, Trustee Denson, Trustee Holloway, Trustee Johnson, Trustee Ware-DeVaul

Nays: Nil

Absent: Trustee Smith-Thomas

Motion carried.

b. Report 65-03 Personnel Action Report

- #27 – the district appreciates this individual for announcing their retirement well in advance so there are no gaps and we can provide some cross training for their replacement
- Trustee Johnson introduced a motion to open and approve Report 65-03 Personnel Action Report and it was supported by Treasurer Denson.

President Belk asked Secretary Ware-DeVaul to call for the vote.

Ayes: Trustee Holloway, Trustee Anderson, Trustee Belk, Trustee Denson, Trustee Johnson, Trustee Ware-DeVaul

Nays: Nil

Absent: Trustee Smith-Thomas

Motion carried.

4. Public Participation

- There was no public participation.

5. For the Good of the Order

- ## 6. Future Meetings

- ## 7. Adjournment:

- Approved on: October 8, 2026**
- Yvette Ware-DeVaull, Board Secretary**