



SOUTHFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS MINUTES

MEETING: Regular Board Meeting		DATE: March 7, 2026		TIME: 7:00 p.m.		LOCATION: John W. English Administrative Center	
BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:							
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Talisha Belk, President	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Leslie L. Smith-Thomas, Vice President	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yvette Ware- DeVaul, Secretary	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Nicole Denson, Treasurer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Amani Johnson, Trustee	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jillian Holloway, Trustee	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jenae' Anderson, Trustee	
ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:							
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jennifer Green, Ed.D. Superintendent	<input type="checkbox"/> Lanissa Freeman, Deputy Superintendent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> James Jackson, Chief of Staff	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DeVaughn Stephens, Chief of Talent Mtg	<input type="checkbox"/> Marc Ingram, Chief Financial Officer	<input type="checkbox"/> Paula Lightsey, Executive Director of Academic Advisement & SEL	<input type="checkbox"/> Sommer Caldwell- Carruthers, Executive Director of Instruction	<input type="checkbox"/> Joseph Corace, Chief Operations Officer
<input type="checkbox"/> April Rogers, Exe. Dir., State and Federal Programs	<input type="checkbox"/> Angela Smith, Exec. Director of ISSN	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minutes: Carolyn Foster, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent and the Board of Education			Student Board Representatives: <input type="checkbox"/> Paris Whitman, SA&T <input type="checkbox"/> Chidi Nnaji, UK12		

1. Opening of Meeting

The meeting was called to order by Board President Belk at 9:15 a.m. Board President Belk read the opening statement and Trustee roll call was taken. Trustee Anderson had an excused absence. Trustee Johnson arrived at 9:29 a.m.

2. Information Items

a. The Role of the Board in the Non-renewal Process

- The ground rules of the session were discussed.
- There was an icebreaker. The takeaway for many of the Trustees was ambivert and what it meant. An ambivert is a person whose personality type falls between introversion and extroversion, balancing characteristics of both.
- The agenda was discussed.
- **Expected outcomes:** clarity on board member roles and responsibilities in the non-renewal process; act within confidence and within proper board boundaries during personnel decisions.
- **Dimensions of a Governance Framework:** unity of purpose, roles and responsibilities, positive governing body culture – norms, and supportive structure and process – protocols.
- The NSBA identifies the role of the board as setting the direction, ensuring accountability, establishing structures, demonstrating community leadership, and developing positive relationships.
- The school boards govern in their lane.
- The board governs and the superintendent administers.
- The board's responsibilities are to hire and evaluate the superintendent, adopt policies, approve budget, set district goals and make final personnel decisions.
- The superintendent's responsibilities are to manage daily operations, recommend policies, prepare budget, implement board decisions, and evaluate and recommend personnel.
- The board hires and evaluates the superintendent only. The superintendent recommends all other personnel actions. The board approves/denies personnel recommendations by majority vote. Individual board members do NOT evaluate staff or investigate staff performance directly. Do NOT second guess the superintendent's recommendations (unless the law/policy has not been followed).

- Reasons for non-renewals are poor performance, declining enrollment, right-sizing the district, and economic necessity.
- Considerations were made to minimize the impact to the classroom, organizational effectiveness, and maintaining a 10% fund balance.
- We are keeping the district fiscally sound.
- Employee categories include teachers (covered by the Tenure Act), administrators (individual contracts), support staff (maybe union or non-affiliated), and at-will employees.
- Per State law, the only positions are required in a district are teachers, Board of Education and superintendent.
- The board process for non-renewal is as follows. The superintendent presents recommendations, board asks clarifying questions, executive session (if needed), return to open session, board discussion, board vote (majority required), and notice provided to affected employees.
- The Trustees power is in their questioning.
- Confidentiality requirements are that ALL personnel matters are confidential, board votes in open session, discussion may be in closed session, do NOT discuss individual employees publicly, do NOT discuss with employees, parents, or community, and violation can result in personal liability.
- Key outcomes: individual board members do NOT have authority, confidentiality is NON-NEGOTIABLE – personal relationships do NOT override governance, process protects everyone, the board supports the superintendent publicly, and what you can and cannot say.
- Providing Trustees with three talking points will be very helpful and important.
- It is against the law for the superintendent to share information regarding an employee with the board.
- The State of Michigan is the co-signer for the \$345 million dollar bond and part of the 2022 bond initiative was to right size the district.
- If the board does not accept the superintendent's recommendation, the district could fall below the 10% fund balance.
- We are the role models for our children.
- SPS is not the only school in the state that is losing students. The State of Michigan loses about 12,000 students every year. Oakland County over the last decade has lose 35,000 students. According to the SIMCOG report there will only be 6,000 additional school aged children in Oakland County collectively over the next 25 years.
- There will be consideration to notify individuals by March 31, 2026 for potential non-renewal in the 90 day, 60 day and 30 day timeframes. We look to see if they are able to fill another position within the district. June 30, 2026 is their last day of work.
- Anyone sharing information with the community is violating FERPA.
- March 31, 2026 is the deadline for notices to individuals in the process being considered for non-renewal.
- The board went over two scenario exercises as it relates to the role of the board in the non-renewal process.
- The District's organizational chart is current and will be updated once the process is complete.

3. Public Participation

- There was no public participation.

4. For the Good of the Order

- Dr. Green is a panelist in the SpEd Symposium – three Trustees will be attending the forum. There is seating for ten people at the table.
- Farmington and Farmington Hills are combining their State of the District.

