SOUTHFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS MINUTES

MEETING:	DATE:	TIME:	LOCATION:
Committee of the Whole Meeting	October 8, 2026	5:00 p.m.	John W. English Administrative Center

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

☒ Talisha Belk, President | ☒ Leslie Love Smith-Thomas Vice President | ☒ Yvette Ware-DeVaull, 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, Executive 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

Student Board Representatives:
☐ Samantha Amesse, SA&T
☐ Favour Ibirinde, UK12

Proposed for Adoption

1. Opening of Meeting

The meeting was called to order by Board President Belk at 5:12 p.m. Board President Belk read the opening statement and Trustee roll call was taken. Vice President Smith-Thomas arrived at 5:27 p.m. All Trustees were present.

2. Board Matters

a. Board Accountability and Path Forward

- President Belk wants the board to have a more structured flow.
- Every board member will work within their role and work as a more cohesive unit.
- The ask is to have each of the board committees to have quarterly report outs to keep the board abreast of things happening within the committees.

b. Board Communication and Updates

- President Belk prefers texting as a form of communication opposed to an email for things that need her immediate attention.
- President Belk and Vice President Smith-Thomas should be cc'd on emails to Dr. Green even when it relates to your child/scholar.
- Transparency is key in all of the Board's communication.
- As a reminder, someone can request to FOIA your personal phone for those text threads.
- We will create a google drive for supplemental materials for the fiscal year to share with the Trustees.

c. Board Operating Procedures Committee Update

- Board Operating Procedures (BOP)
- The work has been distributed in January. There was a March deadline. In March, there was a request to push back the deadline.
- Vice President Smith-Thomas and Trustee Holloway need a new deadline. Trustee Anderson has completed her portion.
- New timeline: November 17, 2026, Ms. Foster will send the BOPs out to everyone. The BOP will be amended by December 1, 2026. The Trustees will vote on them on December 8, 2026 at the regular board meeting.

- The Trustees will send their questions to President Belk and Dr. Green. Dr. Green will compile a frequently asked question (FAQ) document and send it to all the Trustees.
- The Trustees will make a motion to adopt the BOP.

d. Sustainability Committee Update

- The next Sustainability Committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, November 19, 2026.
- The recycling bins bought with grant funds are now in place at all Southfield Public Schools (SPS). Waste Management will put outdoor recycling dumpsters in place on or before October 5, 2026, which is when the program officially begins.
- All 20 EV buses are now in use. Twenty of our 65 buses are electric, which is 31% of our fleet. We will save 6 figures in diesel fuel alone this year and much more than that if the price stays at $7 a gallon.
- We are being considered for another State grant entitled Modernizing Michigan Public Schools. Ten schools will be chosen to participate and each school will receive a free comprehensive energy plan assessing solar, geothermal, battery storage and energy efficient upgrades including EV charging stations across the district.
- Our Communications Team is looking into the week of October 26, 2026, as the target to do a press release and PR event announcing our 20 new EV buses and charging stations.

e. Bond Construction Committee Update

- The Board needs Trustees that are committed to attending the Bond Construction Committee meetings.
- Trustee Holloway states that she is busy and unable to attend every week but she can commit to two weeks a month.
- Trustee Johnson states that he can commit to two weeks a month.
- Each week the time commitment is different for the Bond Construction Committee meetings. The upcoming meetings will be longer with the scope of work that needs to be addressed.
- Vice President Smith-Thomas mentioned checking out MASB CBA 200 courses to gain knowledge on school bonds.
- The mirrors in the restrooms at the schools are not put up by the construction company but by the Operations Team.
- Secretary Ware-DeVaull says that she could commit to attending the Bond Construction Committee meetings. Both Trustee Holloway and Trustee Johnson state that they are willing to step down for now.

f. Financial Nuances

- The Summer Discovery vendors received a letter regarding a delay in their payment.
- The Board would like to get a Finance Committee together to meet.
- Vice President Smith-Thomas suggests taking MASB CBA 200 courses to gain knowledge on school finance.
- The Trustees want a study session to better understand our school finances.
- The Trustees shared topics that they want to discuss during the finance study session.
- The topics ranged from payroll, transportation, GDI, and utilities.

3. Report of the Superintendent

a. SPS Full Organizational Chart

- The Trustees were provided with a copy of the SPS Organizational Chart, which is current to date.

b. District Website Updates

- This is a lengthy process and it will take the remainder of the 2026-27 school year.
- The Communications and Technology Teams are vetting several website vendors to get the best one for our needs.

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- The team includes: George Pitchford, Legal Counsel; James Jackson, Chief of Staff; Asia Mercer, Communications Coordinator; Allyson Dewar, IT Manager; Nikoji Smith, Webmaster
- They meet on Thursdays and they are pursuing two parallel courses of actions: finalizing the contract with Finalsite and vetting and identifying a new website vendor
- Attorney Pitchford is handling the contractual portion to end the contract with Finalsite at the end of the 2026-27 school year. Allyson, Asia and Nikoji are all evaluating potential vendors looking for several key components they offer.
- At the next meeting, they will evaluate three potential vendors: FoxBright, ParentSquare and Apptegy.
- **November – December 2026:** present the recommended vendor to the Board for consideration and approval. Following approval of the new website vendor, we will begin the formal development and implementation process with the selected vendor.
- **January – June 2027:**
- Begin development of the new website and communications platform; establish the district's website structure, content architecture and design; begin content migration and development; configure the messaging platform and necessary integrations; conduct staff training and testing; develop a transition and launch plan.
- **Summer 2027:** complete the transition from Finalsite to the new platform; conduct final testing, accessibility reviews and quality assurance; train administrators and staff as needed; launch the new website and communications platform.
- **Prior to the First Day of School — 2027-28 SY**
- New website and communications platform fully operational for students, families, staff and the community.
- The key milestone is securing Board approval by **November or December 2026**. This gives the district approximately six to seven months to work with the selected vendor on development, content migration, training and testing before the summer 2027 transition.
- Our objective is to avoid simply replacing one website with another. We want to use this opportunity to build a platform that is easier for families to navigate, easier for staff to manage, more effective for district communications, and better aligned with the district's long-term needs.
- Our media scholars will work the video board for our board meetings.
- We are looking into using Digi for each school to record their own events.

c. Learning Loss Concerns

- We signed the 23g grant today for tutoring during school and after school. This is a grant for tutoring through the State. It starts in two weeks.
- We need a STEM class at the U Middle to stay competitive.
- We have to ensure the substitute teachers are receiving the lesson plans and assignments for the classes they are covering.
- Treasurer Denson states that she will attend the Delegate Assembly on Thursday evening.

4. Public Participation

- There was no public participation.

5. For the Good of the Order

- There was no For the Good of the Order.

6. Adjournment

- President Belk adjourned the Committee of the Whole Meeting at 6:57 p.m.

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Approved on: November 10, 2026
Yvette Ware-DeVaull, Board Secretary

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