



# SOUTHFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS MINUTES

MEETING: Special Board Meeting/Study Session		DATE: January 27, 2026	TIME: 6:00 p.m.	LOCATION: John W. English Administrative Center			
BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:							
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Talisha Belk, President	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Leslie Love 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"/> Jenaé' Anderson, Trustee	
ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:							
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jennifer Green, Ed.D. Superintendent	<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Marc Ingram, Chief Financial Officer	<input type="checkbox"/> Paula Lightsey, Executive Director of Academic Advisement & SEL	<input checked="" 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 6:00 p.m. Board President Belk read the opening statement and Trustee roll call was taken. All Trustees were present. For the record, some members of the EDN Team were present and others were attending meetings on the District's behalf.

## 2. Information Items

### a. Plante Moran Standard Operating Procedure – Phase 2: The Risk and Accounting Advisory Services

#### • Scope of Services:

- A comprehensive gap analysis between department-level administrative guidelines, department-level standard operating procedures (SOP), and the Southfield Public Schools Board of Education Policies Manual (Board policies). The analysis will consist of: engaging key stakeholders via interviews to understand current practices; examining administrative guidelines, SOPs, and Board policy documents for each in-scope section outlined below; identifying non-compliance with Board policies, conflicting or redundant procedures, gaps in internal controls, and unclear responsibilities; and performing minor to moderate updates to existing SOPs.
- A fixed asset accounting process assessment. The assessment will entail the following: a performing process level walkthroughs with key stakeholders responsible for fixed asset accounting; reviewing current state fixed asset documents including but not limited to the fixed asset register, depreciation schedules, and fixed asset tracking reports, and reconciliations; and identifying areas of improvements to enhance internal controls, support completeness and accuracy of fixed asset records, and strengthen the adequacy and timeliness over the accounting for capital project transactions.

#### • Deliverables

- Gap analysis memo outlining: summary of compliance gaps and conflicts and prioritized, actionable recommendations for efficiency, internal control enhances, and best practices to effectively execute monitoring and oversight of the accounting for ongoing capital projects.

#### • Fees and Timing

- Plante Moran is available to begin on March 2, 2026. The targeted completion date for all consulting activities is July 31, 2026
- Policy gap analysis – 300 estimated hours - \$60,000
- Fixed asset process assessment – 90 estimated hours - \$18,000
- Total estimated hours 390 – Not to exceed fee \$78,000
- Plante Moran would not have recommendations on any policies, only recommendations for the administrative guidelines.
- There would be communication between Plante Moran to SPS and SPS to Neola. There would be a reciprocal engagement to keep the work moving.
- Dr. Green gave a brief overview as to how we got here indicating the policies and administrative guidelines were out of date when she came to the District. The Board asked to have Plante Moran to look over our Standard Operating Procedures, which has brought us to phase 2.
- Training is included as a part of this package.
- President Belk indicated that this information was lifted in the audit process and we would need to hold off on voting so that we can review further. This is two separate issues.
- b. Southfield High School for the Arts & Technology CSI Presentation – Sommer Caldwell-Carruthers**
- CSI – Overall School Index in the bottom 5%
- How often is the designation given? Every three years
- Who plans and implements supports? District
- Who approves supports? State
- Who sets criteria and timelines? State
- Index Threshold – 35.33
- Southfield A&T Overall School Index – 33.28
- Successes**
- 100% participation; 92.6% graduation rate; school climate and engagement are stable, reflected by a 55.1 School Quality Index
- Opportunities for Growth**
- 23% proficient in reading, 3.25% proficient in math (11<sup>th</sup> grade); proficiency is underperforming statewide, putting us in the bottom 5% with our school index.
- Exit CSI**
- Not be in the bottom 5% of MI School Index, and have a graduation higher than 67%, and improve proficiency in both Math and ELA SAT in Spring 2027 and 2028
- What's Next**
- Met with MDE and Oakland Schools on January 14, 2026
- January-February: Partnership Agreement Development
  - Review current MICIP; complete needs assessments; create goals, benchmarks, outcomes; begin PA Template Draft
  - March 2026: Complete and submit for review Partnership Agreement (PA) Template Draft; revise as needed; sign and submit final PA Template
- Highlights**
- High-Quality Instruction: clear expectations in reading and math; consistent instructional practices across classrooms; strong use of curriculum and standards; professional learning communities for teachers
- Targeted Student Acceleration: small-group tutoring; intervention blocks; priority for students closest to proficiency
- Support for Special Populations: targeted instruction; increased support in core academic classes
- Data-Driven Progress Monitoring: frequent checks on student progress; quick instructional adjustments when growth stalls

- We are meeting with our support team from Oakland Schools and the State of Michigan.
- We know that what we do, has to be researched-based and scientifically proven.
- Once the plan has been completed and the goals have been identified, these will be the goals that we will use for the evaluation.
- The 2025-2026 school year is our “draft year” to draft the plan and goals. This will go into effect in the fall for the 2026-2027 school year.
- The partnership is with Southfield Public Schools and the Michigan Department of Education.
- Our children deserve better and it is up to us to spend the money in the appropriate manner to professionally develop those who teach our scholars to ensure the change.
- Mrs. Caldwell-Carruthers’ team has a viable curriculum for K-12, with a pacing guide.
- We have to ensure that the building leaders and supervisors are getting into the classrooms to see what our teachers are teaching.
- Vice President Smith-Thomas indicated that this is the reason that she has been asking for policies that relate to our teaching staff.
- Dr. Green indicated that the plan and goals will be for all of our schools in the district, not just SA&T.
- We will be having science fairs at each school and then hosting a District wide science fair.
- We have access to additional grant resources: RAG – Regional Assistance Grant and 21H.
- We are piloting one of the reading literacy programs by MDE. We are piloting Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA) at Adler Elementary and Birney K-8.
- CKLA is a research-based comprehensive literacy program for preschool through Grade 5 (with resources up to Grade 8).
- We knew what our data was but we did not know where the cutoff was going to be. We came in at 33 and the cutoff was 35.
- We will provide the board with quarterly updates, walkthrough data and consumables. HR can create a form for walkthroughs for the principals.
- We will have the plan and goals with an April 1, 2026 deadline.

**c. Report 64-47 Upward Bound Course Information – Julea Ward**

- Southfield A&T has partnered with Northern Michigan University’s Math-Science Upward Bound program for nearly a decade. This collaboration has provided students with meaningful academic enrichment, college exposure, and personal growth opportunities. The program includes a six-week summer residential academic experience focused on STEM skill development, problem solving, and career exploration. Students also engage in team-based activities that build confidence and lasting peer connections.
- In alignment with neighboring partner districts, Southfield A&T is seeking approval to award students 0.5 elective credit in Math, English, or Science upon successful completion of two summer academic sessions. This credit option expands access to advanced learning, supports college and career readiness, and recognizes the rigorous instructional work completed through the Upward Bound summer program.
- Ms. Ward brought two SA&T scholars that attended the program and gave insight into their experience.
- This is a federally funded program. This program is free to our scholars.
- There are approximately thirteen (13) SA&T students enrolled in this program. We are working with UK12 to allow their students to take advantage of enrolling in this program.
- As long as we bring this program before the Board for approval, this is similar to a new course offering. Then we can determine where it best be placed to meet the credits by the Michigan Education curriculum.
- Dr. Green made an amended recommendation to the Board. She is asking that this program includes the Class of 2026 to impact the current scholars.

- Word of mouth is the way that this program has been marketed to peers.
- Trustee Johnson moved to open and approve Report 64-47 Upward Bound Course Information with the amended language to include the Class of 2026 and it was supported by Vice President Smith-Thomas.

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

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

Nays: Nil

Motion carried unanimously.

**d. Report 64-48 New Course: English 10 – AP Seminar**

- AP Seminar: English 10 is a rigorous, year-long course that meets the Grade 10 English requirement and serves as the foundational course for the College Board’s AP Capstone Diploma Program. The course strengthens critical reading, analytical writing, research, collaboration, and presentation skills through an interdisciplinary, inquiry-driven approach. It also positions our schools for College Board Honor Roll recognition in the college optimization category, which requires at least one AP course beginning in grade 9 or 10.
- Students engage with complex real-world and academic issues by analyzing texts, data, and media from multiple perspectives. Through guided inquiry, they learn to evaluate source credibility, synthesize information, and build evidence-based arguments. The course emphasizes academic writing, seminar discussion, teamwork, and formal presentations.
- AP Seminar: English 10 aligns with state ELA standards and extends learning beyond traditional literature study by focusing on inquiry, reasoning, and scholarly communication.
- Through CollegeBoard, we get a report that indicates the trajectory of a scholars path (Grades 8, 9, and 10) to take more rigorous courses.
- Because of Dr. Green’s InKind service hours with CollegeBoard, our teachers are afforded training at no cost to the District.
- This is districtwide at the high schools – SA&T and UK12.
- There is no SEA salary and benefits impact because SPS has to pay the teacher anyway. The staff member can be paid through grant funds. There is a teacher identified at UK12 and we are working on getting staff trained at SA&T.
- Vice President Smith-Thomas moved to open and approve Report 64-48 New Course: English 10 – AP Seminar and it was supported by Trustee Johnson.

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

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

Nays: Nil

Motion carried unanimously.

**e. Report 64-49 New Course: AP Business with Personal Finance Course**

- Launching in the 2026-27 school year, AP Business with Personal Finance is a yearlong high school business and personal finance course that aligns closely with a college-level introduction to business course. Students explore the business disciplines of entrepreneurship, marketing, finance, accounting, and management through real-world business applications, case studies, and project based learning. In addition, students learn and apply all the National Standards for Personal Financial Education created by the Council for Economic Education and the Jumpstart Coalition for

Personal Financial Literacy. Teachers can participate in a range of professional learning programs for AP Business with Personal Finance, such as AP Summer Institutes (APSI) and AP Workshops.

- We are asking for a districtwide adoption for this yearlong capstone program. It will replace our current business class at SA&T. Our business class teacher will teach this course.
- We do not have cross campus offerings. At the moment, we do not have a teacher at UK12 identified for this course.
- Vice President Smith-Thomas moved to open and approve Report 64-49 New Course: AP Business with Personal Finance Course and it was supported by Trustee Johnson.

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

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

Nays: Nil

Motion carried unanimously.

**f. Report 64-50 New Course: AP Cybersecurity**

- AP Cybersecurity is a yearlong high school course that offers a broad introduction to the field and aligns closely with a college-level, introductory cybersecurity course. Students learn about common threats and vulnerabilities and how they combine to create risk. Students study how individuals and organizations manage risk and how risk can be mitigated through a defense-in-depth strategy. Students explore specific vulnerabilities, attacks, mitigations, and detection measures across a variety of domains including physical spaces, computer networks, devices, and data and applications. Throughout the course, students consider the impact of cybersecurity on individuals, organizations, societies, and governments. Content and skills taught in the course align with the professional skills outlined in the National Initiative for Cybersecurity Education Workforce Framework.
- This is a districtwide offering. However, we do not have anyone identified on either campus to teach this course.
- We need to get the word out that we have these class offerings in our district.
- Vice President Smith-Thomas moved to open and approve Report 64-50 New Course: AP Cybersecurity and it was supported by Trustee Johnson.

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

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

Nays: Nil

Motion carried unanimously.

**g. Report 64-51 Bussey Interagency Agreement – General Fund**

- Head Start Performance Standard 1302(a) Purpose. A program must ensure all staff, consultants, and contractors engaged in the delivery of program services have sufficient knowledge, training and experience, and competencies to fulfill the roles and responsibilities of their positions and to ensure high-quality service delivery in accordance with the program performance standards. A program must provide ongoing training and professional development to support staff in fulfilling their roles and responsibilities. (2) Education management. As prescribed in section 648A(a)(2)(B)(i) of the Act, a program must ensure staff and consultants that serve as education managers or coordinators, including those that serve as curriculum specialists, have a baccalaureate or advanced degree in early childhood education or a baccalaureate or advanced degree and equivalent coursework in early childhood education with early education teaching experience.
- There are twelve (12) students in Head Start and ten (10) in GSRP that have IEPs.

- There are no grants and we are not getting funded at the amount in which we should receive for our special needs scholars.
- Trustee Johnson moved to open and approve Report 64-51 Bussey Interagency Agreement and it was supported by Vice President Smith-Thomas.

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

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

Nays: Nil

Motion carried unanimously.

#### **h. Report 64-52 School of Choice**

- Southfield Public Schools has participated in Open Enrollment (Section 105 Choice) since June of 2001, and is going to participate in Section 105 and 105c; and Southfield Public Schools (districtwide) may have seats available in kindergarten through 9th grade for the first semester of 2026 – 2027.
- Southfield Public Schools Board of Education will participate in open enrollment (Section 105 Choice) for the 2026 – 2027 academic year by inviting residents of Oakland County to apply for unlimited positions in grades kindergarten through ninth. Southfield Public Schools Board of Education will participate in open enrollment (Section 105c Choice) for the 2026 – 2027 academic year by inviting residents of counties contiguous to Oakland County to apply for unlimited positions in grades kindergarten through fifth district wide and the unlimited positions in grades sixth through tenth with examination and assessment at University K-12 Academy.
- Trustee Johnson moved to open and approve Report 64-52 School of Choice and it was supported by Vice President Smith-Thomas.

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

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

Nays: Nil

Motion carried unanimously.

### **3. Public Participation**

- There was no public participation.

### **4. Action Items**

#### **a. Report 64-53 Personnel Action Report**

- This report is lengthy because it is provided to you in real time for those individuals that will be retiring in June.
- Trustee Johnson moved to open and approve Report 64-53 Personnel Action Report and it was supported by Vice President Smith-Thomas.

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

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

Nays: Nil

Motion carried unanimously.

**5. Closed Session**

- Trustee Anderson introduced a motion to go into Closed Session under the Michigan Compiled Law. Open Meetings Act, Section 15.268, Section 8 (e) to consult with its attorney regarding trial or settlement strategy in connection with specific pending litigation, but only if an open meeting would have a detrimental financial effect on the litigating or settlement position of the public body and it was supported by Trustee Johnson.

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

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

Nays: Nil

Motion carried unanimously.

- Closed Session started: 8:20 p.m.
- Closed Session ended: 8:50 p.m.
- No decision was made.

**6. For the Good of the Order**

- Vice President Smith-Thomas attended Bussey’s Policy Council meeting and spoke about the InKind dollars. She indicated that they were down and mentioned ways to get more InKind dollars – beautification opportunities and Trustees can volunteer.

**7. Future Meetings**

- Wednesday, January 28, 2026, Capital Facilities Bond Legislative Briefing at Adler Elementary @ 5:30 p.m.
- February 6 – February 7, 2026, Winter Institute
- Tuesday, February 10, 2026, Regular Meeting @ 7:00 p.m.
- February 16 – February 20, 2026, Mid-Winter Recess: NO SCHOOL
- Tuesday, February 24, 2026, Special Meeting/Study Session @ 6:00 p.m.
- Saturday, March 7, 2026, Special Meeting/Non-renewal Workshop at JWE @ 9:00 a.m.

**8. Adjournment**

- President Belk adjourned the Special Board Meeting/Study Session at 9:01 p.m.

**Approved on: March 10, 2026**

**Yvette Ware-DeVaul, Board Secretary**