



SOUTHFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS MINUTES

MEETING: Special Board Meeting/Committee of the Whole	DATE: June 17, 2025	TIME: 6:00 p.m.	LOCATION: John W. English Administrative Center				
BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:							
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ashanti Bland, President	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yvette Ware- DeVaul, Vice President	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Leslie L. Smith-Thomas, Secretary	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Talisha Belk, Treasurer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Amani Johnson, Trustee	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jillian Holloway, Trustee	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Nicole Denson, 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 type="checkbox"/> , Chief of Talent Mtg	<input type="checkbox"/> Marc Ingram, Chief Financial Officer	<input type="checkbox"/> Rebecca Luddington, Manager of Pupil Accounting	<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"/> Micaela Beckford, UK12 <input type="checkbox"/> Eric Spragins, Southfield A&T		

1. Opening of Meeting

The meeting was called to order by Board President Bland at . Board President Bland read the opening statement and Trustee roll call was taken. All Trustees were present.

2. Information Items

a. Report 63-106 Board Stipend

- President Bland went over the current board meeting stipend for members of the Southfield Public School District:
 - \$30 per board meeting (this rate has not been adjusted in over a decade), during which time the responsibilities of board members and the cost of living have increased.
 - In its current form, the stipend does not reflect the workload or responsibility of officer roles, is below the regional average among comparable districts, and may pose a barrier to attract and retain diverse and qualified candidates.
- Regional Comparisons of Oakland County School Districts:
 - Oak Park Schools - \$65 per meeting stipend
 - Farmington Public - \$60 per meeting stipend
 - Ferndale Public - \$50 per meeting stipend
 - Berkley Schools District - \$55 per meeting stipend
 - Southfield Public - \$30 per meeting stipend
- Meeting Schedule Overview
- Each board member participates in the following each year:
 - 11 Regular Board Meetings
 - 11 Study Sessions
 - 7 Estimated Board Hearings
 - Total: 29 compensated meetings per year
- Proposed Tiered Stipend Structure
 - President - \$60 for 29 meetings totals \$1,740
 - Vice President - \$55 for 29 meetings totals \$1,595
 - Treasurer - \$50 for 29 meetings totals \$1,450

- Secretary - \$50 for 29 meetings totals \$1,450
- 3 Trustees - \$50 for 29 meetings totals \$4,350
- Overall total of \$10,585
- Current total cost \$30 X 29 meetings X 7 members totals \$6,090
- Net Increase: \$10,585 - \$6,090 = \$4,495
- Increase the capped stipend amount from \$1,500 to \$2,000 per FY.
- Offsetting the Increase
- To support this adjustment responsibly, it was proposed:
 - Reduce the board travel budget from \$7,000 per Trustee to \$5,000 per Trustee totaling a \$2,000 per Trustee savings.
 - Current net travel budget \$49,000 FY vs. the proposed net travel budget \$35,000 = \$14,000 net savings per FY
 - \$14,000 travel savings minus \$4,495 stipend increase = \$9,505 savings per FY (Trustees uses the full \$5,000 travel budget).
 - When attending a Board approved conference, all fees, parking, mileage, meals, and housing (*within one day before and one day after the start and conclusion of the event with an exception for any natural disaster or terrorist attacks*) will be reimbursed.
- Rationale
 - Equity & Fairness: The plan acknowledges the elevated responsibilities of officers' roles while offering fair compensation to all board members.
 - Alignment with Peers: This brings Southfield closer to surrounding districts without exceeding them.
 - Budget – Neutral Philosophy: By reducing travel and reprioritizing existing board funds, we ensure fiscal responsibility with no net increase to the Board's total allocation.
- Recommendation:
 - Treasurer Belk respectfully recommend that the Southfield Public School Board approve the proposed tiered stipend structure and the corresponding travel budget reduction, both effective on July 1, 2025, to modernize compensation, improve equity, and preserve fiscal responsibility.
- This was presented as information.
- b. Superintendent Mid-Year Review**
- It was mentioned that the prior Superintendent goals were met.
- The bond will be a continuous requirement.
- Some Trustees mentioned Superintendent goals that they wanted to see accomplished:
 - Pulse on how we are retaining students and staff (retention)
 - Enrollment
 - Why they are leaving and where are they going? How and why?
 - Dr. Green spoke to a survey she did at UK12
 - It was mentioned that discussing this information in January would be too late
 - The District's website – completed with a December deadline
 - Information from the exit interviews for staff
 - Early Childhood Education vision
 - Parent communication plan
 - Human Resources (HR)
- There was discussion regarding a Board Retreat in August.
- A work session with the Dr. Green and the Trustees
- President Bland asked if everyone could come up with a few Superintendent goals for Dr. Green and send them to President Bland.
- The goals would need to be obtainable, since this is a short asking period.
- c. Report 63-107 Settlement of Batista v Office of Retirement Services Resolution**

- Litigation regarding the calculation of Michigan school district administrator wages has been ongoing since *Batista v Office of Retirement Services (ORS)* was initiated in 2019. The Michigan Association of Superintendents and Administrators (MASA) filed this litigation to challenge the ORS arbitrary restrictions of the retirement pension benefits. To determine how much a public-school retiree is entitled to from the retirement system.
- Group A consists of employees who retired between January 1, 2015 and July 1, 2021. The review will examine if the individual was subject to a normal salary schedule, or at one-point subject to a compensation freeze.
- Group B includes employees who retired between July 1, 2021 and June 30, 2025. Group B are entitled to having compensation from July of 2021 through June of 2025 automatically count towards their final average compensation, if the yearly average of these increases is no more than 8%. For members of Group B who received an average yearly increase of more than 8%, ORS will also consider the following provision, when determining if the increases in excess of 8% should be allowed: The reporting unit's board of control has passed a resolution attesting that the subject compensation was not paid for the specific purpose of increasing final average compensation (also known as "spiking"). Passing this resolution would allow those employees to submit the executed resolution as evidence to ORS when they request a review of the pension calculation pursuant to the terms of the *Batista* settlement.
- It may be prudent for the District to pass this resolution as a matter of principle regarding the Board approving compensation established for all employees, it serves the political purpose of showing a local unit of government's expectation that compensation paid to their employees should count towards the employees' pensions. Also, this would create a "safe harbor" and establish an intentional Board of Education action if, in the future, ORS attempts to limit pension final average compensation of employees under some new pretense or rule it later establishes.
- Trustee Johnson moved to open and approve Report 63-107 Settlement of *Batista v Office of Retirement Services* Resolution and it was supported by Trustee Denson.

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

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

Nays: Nil

Motion carried.

d. Report 63-108 Policy 7300 Disposition of Real Property: First Read

- This is the first read for Policy 7300 Disposition of Real Property.
- The revisions/amendments are in parentheses and italicized:
- Paragraph 3: The Board shall direct the periodic (*semiannual*) review of all District property and authorize the disposition by sale, donation, trade, or discard of any not required for school purposes in accordance with the provisions of this policy, (*specific grant provisions as outlined in EDGAR*) and Policy 7310 – Disposition of Surplus Property.
- B. Written offers shall be referred to the Board Finance Committee (*and/or Board of Education*) for review and recommendations.

e. Report 63-109 Policy 7310 Disposition of Surplus Property: First Read

- This is the first read for Policy 7310 Disposition of Real Property.
- The revisions/amendments are in parentheses and italicized:
- The Board of Education requires the Superintendent or designee to review that property of the District periodically (*semiannually*) and to dispose (*and/or sell*) of that material and equipment which is no longer usable in accordance with the terms of this policy (*and uniform grant guidance*).
- C. Disposition: The Superintendent or designee is authorized (*semiannually*) to dispose of obsolete instructional and other property by selling, it to the highest bidder, by donation to appropriate parties,

3. Public Participation

- #### 4. Adjournment

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| Approved on: August 12, 2025 |
| Leslie L. Smith-Thomas, Board Secretary |