



SOUTHFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS MINUTES

MEETING: Special Board Meeting/Study Session	DATE: September 23, 2025	TIME: 6:00 p.m.	LOCATION: John W. English Administrative Center
BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:			
☒ Ashanti Bland, President	☒ Yvette Ware- DeVaull, Vice President	☒ Leslie L. Smith-Thomas, Secretary	☒ Talisha Belk, Treasurer
☒ Amani Johnson, Trustee	☒ Jillian Holloway, Trustee	☒ Nicole Denson, Trustee	
ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:			
☒ Jennifer Green, Ed.D. Superintendent	☒ Lanissa Freeman, Deputy Superintendent	☒ James Jackson, Chief of Staff	☐ , Chief of Talent Mtg
☒ Marc Ingram, Chief Financial Officer	☒ Rebecca Luddington, Manager of Pupil Accounting	☒ Sommer Caldwell- Carruthers, Executive Director of Instruction	☐ Joseph Corace, Chief Operations Officer
☐ April Rogers, Exe. Dir., State and Federal Programs	☒ Angela Smith, Exec. Director of ISSN	☒ Minutes: Carolyn Foster, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent and the Board of Education	Student Board Representatives: ☐ Paris Whitman, SA&T ☐ Chidi Nnaji, UK12

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. Trustee Johnson arrived at 6:07 p.m. Trustee Smith-Thomas arrived at 6:43 p.m.

EDN members are in the audience.

2. Information Items

a. Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) Update – Plante Moran: Gabrielle Wafer

- Our project scope included documenting current State standard operating procedures for the following process areas: recruitment, onboarding, performance management, compensation, offboarding, payroll processing, transportation, food and nutrition, security, substitutes, and IT. Each recommendation is based on inquiry with applicable process owners during discussions to develop SOPs and flowcharts. The improvement opportunities below are listed based on recommended priority. The recommendations are summarized based on recommended priority to support mitigating risks.
 - o High: recommendation will provide significant enhancements to the process, internal controls, or efficiency to the operations
 - o Medium: recommendation will provide moderate enhancements to the process, internal controls, or efficiency to the operations
 - o Low: recommendation will provide minor enhancements to the process, internal controls, or efficiency to the operations
- We were not engaged to and did not perform an internal control assessment. Further, we were not engaged and did not perform an audit, the objective of which would be the expression of an opinion on the district's internal control environment. Accordingly, we do not express such an opinion. Had we performed additional procedures, other matters might have come to our attention that would have been reported to you.
 - o High: compensation, payroll processing, onboarding, food and nutrition
 - o Medium: recruitment, food and nutrition, onboarding, offboarding, security
 - o Low: compensation, food and nutrition

- Ms. Wafer mentioned the words consistency, standard, and automate – meaning SPS needs to use automation controls for their standard practices.
- This information is housed on the Plante Moran share point drive.
- We will probably invite Ms. Wafer back for additional information, but this information was very helpful and a great starting point.
- We need to work on our internal controls immediately. We need to work to get this information digitized.
- They have completed the first phase of this project.
- We are on the second round of interviews for the human resource Executive Director position.
- Jesse Sutton engages with SFE as it relates to their purchases.
- Payroll was mentioned as it relates a verification process before it is submitted.
- When this process is complete, we will have a full workup of SPS's SOPs.

b. Academic Data Presentation – Sommer Caldwell-Carruthers & Veneice Daniels

- All the data information for will be released in November, which is too late.
- The report that came out only released the information for third and fourth grades.
- **FAQs about State Assessments**
 - o When was the State Assessments released to public? How are districts notified? The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) released the 2025 results on August 27, 2025. Districts receive email notification and an update in the MDE Spotlight newsletter when the embargo is lifted.
 - o What does “embargo” mean for state assessments? Districts get early access to test scores for internal planning, but the data is confidential until MDEs public release date.
 - o What is the district process as the MDE starts slowly releasing data during embargoing? The instructional team reviews preliminary results and calculates key indicators internally.
 - o Who can have access to test scores while still “embargoed”? Authorized MDE staff, district and school administrators with approved roles, and designated staff such as assessment coordinators or data analysts.
 - o When is the State average released? Grade-level state summaries – August 27, 2025, and Cumulative state summary reports and accountability data – November 2025.
 - o Is all the data released at once? No.
 - o What happens if embargoed data are shared early? This is a violation to the MDE policy. Consequences can include a formal notice of violation, disciplinary action, loss of access to secure data systems, legal or privacy issues (including FERPA concern), and reputational harm to the district.
- **Grade Levels Tested for M-Step and PSAT/SAT**
 - o ELA: 3rd-11th
 - o Math: 3rd-11th
 - o Science: 5th, 8th, 11th
 - o Social Studies: 5th, 8th, 11th
- **Proficiency Comparisons from 2024-2025**
 - o Math 2025: 18.5% Math 2025: 17.45%
 - o ELA 2024: 34.8% ELA 2025: 35.64%
- **2024-2025 Math M-Step, PSAT 8, SAT**
 - o 3rd Grade: 32.3% Advanced & Proficient, 26.1% Partially Proficient, and 41.6% Not Proficient
 - o 4th Grade: 21.8% Advanced & Proficient, 36.2% Partially Proficient, and 42% Not Proficient
 - o 5th Grade: 13.4% Advanced & Proficient, 24.8% Partially Proficient, and 61.8% Not Proficient
 - o 6th Grade: 13.7% Advanced & Proficient, 26% Partially Proficient, and 60.4% Not Proficient
 - o 7th Grade: 18.7% Advanced & Proficient, 23.4% Partially Proficient, and 57.9% Not Proficient
 - o 8th Grade: 11.3% Advanced & Proficient, 42.4% Partially Proficient, and 46.3% Not Proficient

- o 11th Grade: 11% Advanced & Proficient, 23.8% Partially Proficient, and 65.8% Not Proficient
- **2024-2025 ELA M-Step, PSAT 8, SAT**
 - o 3rd Grade: 33.9% Advanced & Proficient, 25.9% Partially Proficient, and 40.3% Not Proficient
 - o 4th Grade: 34.7% Advanced & Proficient, 24% Partially Proficient, and 41.2% Not Proficient
 - o 5th Grade: 13.4% Advanced & Proficient, 24.8% Partially Proficient, and 61.8% Not Proficient
 - o 6th Grade: 27.3% Advanced & Proficient, 25.7% Partially Proficient, and 47.1% Not Proficient
 - o 7th Grade: 33.5% Advanced & Proficient, 24.9% Partially Proficient, and 41.5% Not Proficient
 - o 8th Grade: 48.3% Advanced & Proficient, 23.9% Partially Proficient, and 43.1% Not Proficient
 - o 11th Grade: 36.3% Advanced & Proficient, 20.6% Partially Proficient, and 43.1% Not Proficient
- **2024-2025 Science M-Step**
 - o 5th Grade: 24.9% Advanced & Proficient, 29.6% Partially Proficient, and 45.5% Not Proficient
 - o 8th Grade: 19% Advanced & Proficient, 33.4% Partially Proficient, and 47.6% Not Proficient
 - o 11th Grade: 15.7% Advanced & Proficient, 11.6% Partially Proficient, and 72.7% Not Proficient
- **2024-2025 Social Studies**
 - o 5th Grade: 18.1% Advanced & Proficient, 44.4% Partially Proficient, and 37.4% Not Proficient
 - o 8th Grade: 28.1% Advanced & Proficient, 24.1% Partially Proficient, and 47.9% Not Proficient
 - o 11th Grade: 27% Advanced & Proficient, 29.9% Partially Proficient, and 43.1% Not Proficient
- **2024-2025 Math PSAT 9 & PSAT 10**
 - o 9th Grade: Met Benchmark 11.6% Not Met Benchmark 88.4%
 - o 10th Grade: Met Benchmark 12.5% Not Met Benchmark 87.5%
- **2024-2025 ELA PSAT 9 & PSAT 10**
 - o 9th Grade: Met Benchmark 42.8% Not Met Benchmark 57.2%
 - o 10th Grade: Met Benchmark 57.2% Not Met Benchmark 59.6%
- **Read By Third Grade Update: SPS Third Grade 2024-2025**
 - o Meet: 59.7% Meet requirement – student scale score is 1272 or above.
 - o Support: 40.3% Support requirement – student scale score 1271 or below.
- **Highlights**
 - o ELA proficiency increased by 2.4%
 - o 6th grade (13.75%), 7th grade (29.8%), and 11th grade (22%) ELA scores have increased from last year.
 - o 5th grade (41%), 8th grade (84%), and 11th grade (18.42%) Social Studies have increased from last year.
 - o 11th grade science increased by 11% from previous year.
 - o 8th grade ELA has the highest proficiency for the second year in a row at 48.3%.
 - o 7th grade (48%) and 11th grade (22%) math scores increased from last year.
- **Instructional Barriers/Pain Points (Not all the instructional barriers/pain points are listed in this brief overview)**
 - o **Family and Community Engagement:** decline in parent support or participation
 - o **Attendance Challenges:** poor attendance (students) and an increase in staff absenteeism
 - o **Staff Resistance to Change**
 - o **Instructional Practice:** grading practices, content delivery, limited student voice, etc.
 - o **Technology Gaps Among Staff:** inconsistent or reluctant use of available instructional technology by staff
 - o **Professional Learning:** low participation
 - o **School Culture & Climate:** strain on morale due to misalignment between leadership vision and daily practice
 - o **Data-Driven Action:** require each school to create and implement an instructional plan based on its building-level data

- o **Targeted Academic Supports:** offer in-school and after-school tutoring funded through 23G funds
- o **Leadership and Curriculum Alignment:** require a mandatory School Instructional Plan aligned with district goals and state benchmarks
- o **Instructional Practices:** all core teachers will receive instructional expectations from the curriculum supervisors.
- **Instructional Plan**
 - o **Student Engagement and Attendance:** Districtwide goal is to decrease chronic absenteeism by at least 10% this school year. Support schools in implementing the Ron Clark Academy inspired models that foster high energy classrooms, strong relationships, and student ownership of learning to strengthen engagement and empower student voice.
 - o **Ongoing Professional Development:** provide ongoing professional development for educators focused on evidence-based literacy instruction techniques and strategies
 - o **Additional Strengthening Measures:** provide continuous coaching for principals and leadership teams on data analysis and instructional leadership
- Secretary Smith-Thomas mentioned that she has asked for the data from the Bussey Center to strengthen the partnership and help build our K-1 scholars as it relates to iRips.
- Dr. Kelly Walsh is data-driven so we will see that information.
- Administrators need to be more diligent with their evaluations.
- Performing evaluations will be a bigger conversation.
- All the books for our elementary schools have been received.
- There are four levels of grievance: Level 1 goes to the person over that unit, Level 2 goes to HR, Level 3 comes to Office of the Superintendent, and Level 4 goes to the State.
- The information in the Highlights section should be scrolled on our website for current and potential parents to see.
- c. **Emergency Operations Plan Update – James Jackson**
 - The purpose of the update is to provide the Southfield Board of Education with the status of our emergency operations structure and planning.
 - Over the last school year, the district has been focused on updating the Emergency Operations Procedures as well as making physical updates to our campuses.
 - Through the 2022 Capital Improvement Bond, the district has been making structural improvements to all campuses that improve the physical security of our schools.
 - Through the 31aa grant funding, the district has purchased metal detectors.
 - There are 21 contracted security officers assigned to the district through DM Burr Security Services.
 - There are currently four School Resource Officers (SROs) assigned to the district by the Southfield Police Department.
 - Emergency Operations Goal 2025-2026: increase the district's security measures, both physical and procedural, to ensure that students and staff feel safe on our campuses.
 - When all the information has been finalized, the manuals will be housed in each building for the administrators.
 - We have several partnerships by way of crisis support. We have strong partnerships with the Oakland County Health Department, our school-based health centers, and Southfield Youth Assistance.
 - We will be able to use the metal detectors out on the field during sporting events.
 - The Trustees moved down to Report 64-15 Sustainable Design Standards for New Construction and Major Renovations: First Read.
- d. **Report 64-14 Emergency Virtual Plans – Dr. Green**

- The Learning at a Distance instructional model provides fully virtual engagement for students through a combination of synchronous (live) and asynchronous (independent) learning experiences. Schedules for elementary and secondary students are intentionally designed to balance live group and small-group instruction with independent learning time.
- Strategic integration of synchronous and asynchronous learning is essential to every weekly plan. Teachers will determine when live instruction is necessary to support facilitation, discourse, or deeper understanding of content. Paper-based materials may also be provided to support learner's needs and reduce challenges related to online access.
- This resolution is for up to 15 emergency days.
- Teachers will record the attendance in MiStar.
- Vice President Ware-DeVaul moved to open and approve Report 64-14 Emergency Virtual Plans and the motion was supported by Trustee Johnson.
- President Bland stated for the record that Trustee Johnson arrived at 6:07 p.m. and Trustee Smith-Thomas arrived at 6:43 p.m.

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

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

Nays: Nil

Motion carried unanimously.

e. Report 64-15 Sustainable Design Standards for New Construction and Major Renovations: First Read – Trustee Johnson

- Trustee Johnson gave an overview of the Sustainable Design Standards for New Construction and Major Renovations: First Read. All new facilities and major renovation projects funded through capital bonds or other sources shall incorporate environmentally sustainable design and operational practices. Incorporating sustainable design into new school buildings supports our educational mission by creating healthier, safer, and more inspiring environments that improve student learning, reduce absenteeism, and model responsible stewardship. These spaces also serve as teaching tools, reinforcing lessons in science, sustainability, and civic responsibility. Sustainable design is also fiscally responsible—reducing long-term operational costs, improving energy efficiency, and helping the district make the most of public investments. Our district's efforts are strengthened by partnerships like the DTE Commercial New Construction (CNC) Program, which provides energy modeling, bundled energy conservation strategies, and verification support to guide savings-focused design decisions.
- President Bland stated that this is the First Read for Report 64-15 Sustainable Design Standards for New Construction and Major Renovations and if any changes occur before the vote, then we will have to go back to a First Read.
- Great job by Trustee Johnson, the Sustainability Committee and Joe Corace.
- The Trustees moved back up to Report 64-14 Emergency Virtual Plans.

f. Report 64-16 Move Management

- This item is just for discussion. It costs \$10,000 per month to store items during the move. After the storage period, we are finding that teachers are discarding many of the items that they have stored.
- No school is the same. The number of items to be stored will be different for each location.
- Dr. Green had a discussion with the construction teams, and they agree that all the building staff need to verify what items need to be purged.
- Verify on the front end the items going into storage are items that we are utilizing. We are not storing personal items or items that we are not using.
- Purging cost cannot come out of bond dollars.

- Staff receive 16 hours of pay to pack and then unpack with assistance from the move management.
- We must see if this is something that we can put in a policy.
- If this is something the board would like to take on, we can reach out to Brad Banasik, Neola or get Plante Moran to see if this is something that makes sense.
- The instructional walkthroughs happen on a regular basis. When new material is identified and not being used, we reach out to the administrators to have it used. When old material is located, we have the administrators to get the material removed and given away. We prefer to have the old material given away to the scholars for additional support material at home.
- If anyone wants to create something for Move Management, they can bring it to the October study session.

g. Report 64-17 Artificial Intelligence

- Some of our schools are allowed to use AI, while others in the district are not.
- There was an ask if the Trustees would like to start exploring AI policies.
- We would like to be ahead of the curve as it relates to having AI policies.
- For the Trustees attending the ALC, if there are sessions surrounding AI, President Bland would like to have that information shared.
- We do not want to make using AI punitive, for our scholars.
- Oakland School would like for students to utilize AI and to teach them how to use it.

h. Report 64-18 Real Estate Proposal – Old Bussey

- Dr. Green gave a recap of the conversations between herself, the board and the potential buyer.
- The potential buyer would offer \$850,000 for the property. They would cut the property on the side of the school to have some community space which would include a public park for young people to play and a charging station. Dr. Green advised that she does not have a vote, and she would bring it back to the Trustees. She states that the building is being vandalized, and it is costing a lot of money for the upkeep of the property.
- Treasurer Belk spoke about the district being fiscally responsible with holding on to the property. She spoke about the building being vandalized and it being an eyesore and the safety issues.
- Vice President Ware-DeVaul moved to open and approve Report 64-18 Real Estate Proposal – Old Bussey and the motion was supported by Treasurer Belk.
- Dr. Green read more of the email stating that the potential buyer is open to adding a walking track circling the park. Dr. Green indicated that there is no park on that side of 12 Mile, and it is a safety concern to have our scholars cross over 12 Mile to the Inglenook Park.
- Trustee Holloway wanted to know who would be able to use the park and Dr. Green states that the community would be able to.
- President Bland spoke about a park that was created by the Jewish community after they purchased a building and built a school. She states that she does not think that the Jewish community has given their work and then taken it back.
- Dr. Green replied that it would be approximately \$20,000,000 - \$25,000,000 to bring it back up to code. She explained that the building became vacant due to the decline in the student population.
- Vice President Ware-DeVaul and Treasurer Belk would like to go ahead and vote on it.
- Dr. Green mentioned that if this vote should fail, then she will be asking for funds to get cameras and remove the graffiti from the building.

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

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

Nays: Trustee Holloway

Trustee Holloway wants something with taxable value.

Trustee Smith-Thomas states that she does not like it because it is defining to our district line.

Motion carried.

Yes: 6 No: 1

3. Public Participation

- There was no public participation.

4. Action Items

a. Consent Agenda – Approval of Minutes

- i. August 18, 2025, Special Board Meeting
 - ii. September 9, 2025, Regular Board Meeting
- Vice President Ware-DeVauld moved to open and approve Consent Agenda – Approval of Minutes and the motion was supported by Trustee Johnson.

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

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

Nays: Nil

Motion carried unanimously.

b. Report 64-19 Personnel Action Report

- There was an unfavorable individual which has been removed from the report for the Spanish position. The offer was rescinded.
- Vice President Ware-DeVauld moved to open and approve Report 64-19 Personnel Action Report and the motion was supported by Trustee Johnson.

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

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

Nays: Nil

Motion carried unanimously.

5. For the Good of the Order

- Count Day is October 1, 2025 – our schools are receiving numerous donations.
- We are sending robocalls to the families that have left the district, to let them know if their current school is not meeting their needs then they can return to SPS.
- Transportation is an issue at one of our schools which affects 50 of our scholars.
- The transportation department has hired five new drivers.

6. Future Meetings

- a. Tuesday, October 14, 2025, Regular Board Meeting @ 7:00 p.m.
- b. Tuesday, October 28, 2025, Special Board Meeting/Study Session @ 6:00 p.m.
- c. Tuesday, November 11, 2025, Regular Board Meeting @ 7:00 p.m.

7. Adjournment

President Bland adjourned the Special Board Meeting/Study Session at 8:40 p.m.

Approved on: October 14, 2025
Leslie L. Smith-Thomas, Board Secretary

Proposed for Adoption