



# SOUTHFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS MINUTES

MEETING: Special Board Meeting	DATE: August 18, 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lanissa Freeman, Deputy Superintendent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> James Jackson, Chief of Staff	<input type="checkbox"/> , Chief of Talent Mtg
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Marc Ingram, Chief Financial Officer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rebecca Luddington, Manager of Pupil Accounting
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sommer Caldwell- Carruthers, Executive Director of Instruction	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Joseph Corace, Chief Operations Officer
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> April Rogers, Exe. Dir., State and Federal Programs	<input checked="" 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 Bland at 6:30 p.m. Board President Bland read the opening statement and Trustee roll call was taken. All Trustees were present.

## 2. Information Items

### a. MASB 2025 Delegate Assembly

- Trustees will decide on whether they want to be the MASB 2025 Delegate. The deadline to submit our selection is Thursday, October 2, 2025. The meetings start on Thursday, October 23, 2025.

### b. Report 64-01 District Phone System License Renewal: General Funds – Allyson Dewar

- Southfield Public Schools (SPS) currently operates a Cisco phone system. Phone system licenses are up for renewal. The last renewal was January 2020. The cost in 2020 was not to exceed \$275,000.00 and it was paid all at one time. With this renewal, services will move from on premises to the cloud. Benefits of this renewal and move to the cloud include the following:
  - Cost Savings- Lower upfront costs and predictable pricing.
  - Scalability- Easily manage users and supports growth/downsizing.
  - Flexibility and Mobility- Apps and softphones for anywhere/anytime access.
  - Reliability and Redundancy- Cloud systems have built-in redundancy and failover reducing downtime.
  - Advanced Features- Access to modern features and regular updates.
  - Simplified Management- Centralized management portal.
  - Security and Compliance- Compliance with regulations and regular security updates.
  - Environmental Efficiency- Reduces physical hardware and energy use.
  - Migration Cost- \$26,855.00 (Year 1), Total Licensing Cost: \$172,196.40 to be paid yearly for 5 years at \$34,439.28. Year 1: \$61,294.28 Years 2-4: \$34,439.28
  - This is a 5-year plan.
- The district phone system allows you to retrieve your district voice mail while working from home.
- Vice President Ware-DeVaul moved to open and approve Report 64-01 District Phone System License Renewal and it 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, and Trustee Ware-DeVaul

Nays: Nil

Motion carried unanimously.

**c. Report 64-02 University K12 & Southfield A&T Metal Detectors: 31aa – Allyson Dewar, Paul Careathers, Officer Fletcher, and Chief James Jackson**

- The district expressed their interest in metal detectors for University K-12 (UK12) and Southfield A&T (SA&T) during the 2024-2025 school year. Communications by Design, the district technology bond consultant, put together and presented information on numerous solutions for the district. After careful review, it was expressed that the district was interested in the Garrett line of metal detectors. The Technology Department worked with Garrett to find the right solution to meet the needs of the district. The District Technology Department also collaborated with the Chief of Staff to identify door placement, examine staff training options, and review the assembly requirements. This solution was then presented to the district for approval. The impact amount is \$63,700.00.
- This is the metal detector model that the Secret Service used when Former Vice President Kamala Harris visited the district.
- The district did receive a 20% discount upon purchase of the items.
- The metal detectors will not be here by the start of the 2025-2026 school year.
- We have started drafting communication for parents as it relates to the metal detectors.
- We will verify when the metal detectors arrive. We will not be installing the metal detectors when children are in the building.
- The metal detector will move with the UK12 students to their respective buildings during the construction time.
- It was mentioned that the Trustees should walk through what this looks like so that they will have firsthand knowledge of the process.
- For our K-5 scholars, we would like to have videos of the process and communicate this to our parents and students strategically.
- We will have female officers available to assist both the high school campuses.
- There will be changes to the entry process at the high schools.
- We will need to have a Town Hall to discuss the implementation of the metal detectors at UK12 and SA&T.
- There was a demonstration of how the hand wand work.
- There was an overview of the which doors the students will utilize when entering both high school campuses.
- Trustees were advised to email any additional questions to President Bland, Dr. Green and Chief Jackson.
- We need to create FAQs for everyone, so they are familiar with how this works.
- Vice President Ware-DeVaul moves to open and approve the purchase and not the installation of the metal detectors and it was supported by Trustee Johnson.

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, and Trustee Belk

Nays: Nil

Motion carried unanimously.

**d. Report 64-03 Dell Virtual Chief Information Security (vCISO) and Incident Recovery Retained Service (IRR): General Funds**

- On November 19, 2024, the district went through a cybersecurity tabletop exercise with Dell. This was a discussion-based event where district participants simulated responses to a serious cybersecurity incident/crisis (MiStar data breach). This exercise helped identify gaps in existing plans, clarified roles and responsibilities, and enhanced overall preparedness. After the exercise, the district and Dell reviewed the After-Action Report/Improvement Plan. While the district did extremely well with this exercise, further conversations were had with Dell to establish cybersecurity plans and support. The impact amount is \$163,721.88 for 6 months.
- Vice President Ware-DeVauld moved to open and approve Report 64-03 Dell Virtual Chief Information Security (vCISO) and Incident Recovery Retained Service (IRR) and it was supported by Trustee Johnson.
- It is very expensive for 6 months.
- The Trustees would need to revisit this report again at the March study session.
- If you get other Oakland County districts on board, we will receive a discount moving forward.
- We do not have a state budget at this time so it would be fiscally irresponsible to go all the way. We are piloting this service.

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, and Trustee Ware-DeVauld

Nays: Nil

Motion carried unanimously.

**e. Operations Report – District Readiness**

**i. First Student: Maurice Johnson**

- Routes in MiStar – 8/11/2025
- Kickoff – 8/12/2025
- RESA – 8/14/2025
- BID Day – 8/18/2025
- Dry Runs – Week 8/18/2025 (Drivers, Standby Drivers, and Spare Drivers)
- First View 1.0
  - Implementation Rollout Date – 8/25/2025
  - Fresh Look
  - Simplified Tech Environment
  - Advanced Tracking
  - New Downloads for the Mobile App
  - New Web-based Dashboard
- Quality Control
  - Monthly surveys – 9/1/2025
  - Star Rating Basis – 1 to 5 Stars
  - Overall Transportation Performance
  - Customer Service and Follow Up from Office Staff
  - Professionalism and Courtesy of Drivers
- True Partner Actions
  - \$300K Overall Give Back Goal by End of Year 2025 (December 2025)
  - Route Efficiencies - \$150K
  - EV Cost Avoidance - \$50K
  - Summer School - \$14K
- Julie Nelson is taking Julie Schillings position.

- Elementary school scholars that live within one mile of school do not take the bus and middle schoolers that are one and a half miles do not take the bus.
- There are several transportation employees that arrive at 5:00 a.m. to answer any calls that may come in. The staff overlap in taking phone calls during peak times. They leave when the last bus returns from its route.
- The Board moved down to Athletics.

**ii. DM Burr: Paul Careathers**

- Officer Careathers spoke about the metal detectors.
- The security team has one position available, but they are set for the start of the new school year.
- They have an “one call officer” who can respond to Adler, Stevenson, and McIntyre.
- The security team will be utilizing a new security hotline for tips and things of that nature.
- Officer Careathers is very proud of his security team for their presence and hard work.
- Officer Careathers thanked Paula Lightsey, Chief Jackson, and his team for the high restorative practice scores.
- Officer Careathers and his team will be participating in additional training/meetings this week and next week.
- Officer Careathers will meet with Tyler to get the information out to the schools that the “on call officer” will respond to the elementary schools.
- Officer Careathers states that he has done research into using the clear backpacks.
- Dr. Green stated that we gave away a lot of backpacks at the Back-to-School Fair. There is a lot of thought and consideration that needs to go into using clear backpacks in the future.
- Trustee Holloway mentioned that students having medical devices going through metal detectors.

**iii. GDI: Laura Horton, Kathy Nichols, and Santana Whittaker**

- GDI custodial team uses a cleaning checklist when cleaning the district buildings
- There were photos shown of the work done over the summer in the district buildings
- There will be a Custodial List for all the school buildings – the Custodial List contains the names of the GDI staff working at the respective buildings.
- GDI sends out monthly surveys to Southfield Public Schools building administrators.
- President Bland thanked GDI stating that UK12 looked good during their Jumpstart Day event.
  - GDI has Quality Control Inspectors in the schools 2x a month inspecting the work of the GDI staff.
  - “GDI prides itself on being a collaborative partner, working alongside SPS to support the district’s goals and deliver meaningful outcomes.”
  - GDI will forfeit 1% of the increase for the school year 2025-2026.
  - GDI will remove 2.5 janitors from the night staff for the 2025-2026 school year due to efficiencies
  - Two \$5,000 scholarships to be awarded to SPS students for the 2025-2026 school year, picked by SPS.
  - GDI will purchase a high-low for a savings of \$2,200 per month for the district.
  - A donation of \$10,000 to families in need across the District during the Christmas season, to be picked by SPS.
  - As a committed team player, GDI works closely with district leadership and staff to ensure shared success and continuous improvement.
  - GDI greatly values our partnership with SPS. We extend our sincere thank you to Dr. Green, SPS Board of Education, Joe Corace, and Phil Curran for the opportunity to serve the district.
- GDI will have staff that go in after each event to clean and prepare the school for the next day.
- There is a process through Community Schools where GDI is notified of events that take place and require their attention.

#### iv. SFE: Jordan Groves, Kimberly Tomrell, Eli Fox, and Joshua Bryant

- Jordan Groves won an award from SFE for Manager of the Year.
  - 6 years of dedicated partnership aligned with Southfield Public Schools initiative and strategic vision; strategic fiscal partnership that has reduced fees by 14% while maintaining quality and innovation; upgraded talent and support within the district adding two experienced chefs to drive quality and participation; partnering with principals to ensure that we are collecting continuous feedback and growing the program; engaging students while building trust, positive feedback and ultimately growing participation; committed to evolving, delivering, and growing together
- **Partnership Highlights**
  - GM & Executive Chefs driving meaningful program enhancements; added nutrition and compliance lead to strengthened operations; supported championship events and community catering (500+ meals)
  - Partnered with district for holiday food box distribution; returned \$200K in profits to student programs; collaborated on 400 holiday meal kits with culinary students; launched culinary internship for high school credit hours; mentored special needs students in food service and life skills; drove hot breakfast initiative with a 15% participation increase through March; launched (Reggie Rainbow" and fruit tastings with U of M's Project Healthy Schools; secured \$85,000 in grants including fresh fruit and vegetables and MI 10 cents a meal grant
  - United Dairy Industry Michigan grant awardee of new equipment – milk coolers and breakfast merchandisers to increase participation; partnered on "2030 Project" to reduce food waste
  - 520,000+ meals served - \$1.4M+ in federal reimbursements
- **Participation and Student Engagement**
  - 24-25 University K12 Academy Taste Testing Results
  - Breakfast likes - bagels, cereal, pop tarts, breakfast sandwiches (quick grab and go options)
  - Lunch likes - nachos, Bosco sticks, chicken, tater tots
  - Please add – chicken and waffles, orange chicken and fast food
  - Results: chicken and waffles, orange chicken and wing bar added to the menu
- **SFE Promise:** We want every student to be excited about eating at school, ensuring they are nourished to learn.
- **Michigan School Meals**
  - We do not have a fiscal budget for SY 25-26
  - Free meals for students are funded through September 30, 2025
  - Southfield is to remain CEP (Community Eligibility Provision) meaning the meals will remain free for at least 3 years
  - We have partnered with the Communication team to provide information and forms to parents/guardians
  - Education benefit form has been sent to parents. The more forms submitted will help the district secure funding for other programs
  - Parents must understand that failure to disclose income will result in application being denied
- **Monthly Promotions**
  - Building SPS customized food service programs in collaboration with students, faculty and community: September – National Quesadilla Day, October – National School Lunch Week, Apple Crunch Homecoming Tailgate theme, November – Thanksgiving served district wide 11/20/2025 and "Cookies for Cans" Food Drive, and December – Holiday meal kits for families of Southfield a continued partnership with the Culinary Arts Program
- **Districtwide Partnership Goals**
  - Committed to Culinary Consistency, Dedicated to Unified Branding, Innovating Program Options, Focused on Student

- **Birney K-8 & Thompson K-8 – Goals:** highest participation 24-25, rebranding service lines to modernize and improve dining atmosphere; expanding `a la carte offerings to drive participation and sales
- **Levey Middle – Goals:** launched a Tower Garden program in partnership with Stephen Ritz to support interactive nutrition and STEM education; testing out new cook and hold units to improve satellite food quality; introduced mobile carts to expand the breakfast program and increase morning participation; redesigning the `a la carte program to offer more appealing, age-appropriate options
- **Stevenson & Adler Elementary Schools – Goals:** launching enhanced fruit and vegetable bars tied to Harvest of the Month
- **Bussey Center – Goals:**
- *Bi-monthly Nutrition Education for Parents:* interactive sessions aligned with classroom and cafeteria initiatives; practical strategies supporting healthy eating at home, strengthening school-home wellness connection
- *Culinary Message Board:* central location for nutrition tips, recipes, and menu highlights; enhances communication with families and staff
- **Kennedy Learning Center – Goals:** Life Skills and Independence; Weekly Cooking Skills Program, hands on classes for special needs students, teach 10-20 simple nutritious recipes, graduation ceremony to celebrate progress, continue our work with KLC students with life skills in the kitchen space
- **Southfield High School for the Arts & Technology – Goals:** continue innovating and building upon student surveys to drive variety and participation based upon student voice; create exciting, engaging student dining experience
- **Student Driven Menus:** we invite students to taste-test for proposed new menu items for their candid feedback; we use student feedback to develop a list of menu items for further testing; and items that prove popular will make it to the menu stage
- **Future Foodies: SFE Nutrition Education**
  - Café and Classroom Education – Every other month; Farmer's Markets – Twice a year; Roving Chef – Twice a year

**Thank you!** We look forward to continuously servicing your students, your district and your community.

- Trustee Johnson discussed food composting at the school buildings.
- Halal is a costly menu item, and President Bland would like to have the information presented in a survey and go from there.
- There was discussion regarding the setting up for lunch because staff would not be at the park due to the rain forecast.

#### **v. Champions**

- Champions serviced 400 families last year.
- They anticipate servicing 600 families this year.
- Levey is the first middle school they will be servicing.
- Champions services ages 4-12 years old.
- Champions have support for students with special needs.
- This information is on the Intake Form and if families are omitting to answer it, then they do not know or cannot provide the support needed.
- Champions can share the list of students with Director Smith of the ISSN Department.

#### **vi. Athletics – Shaquita Coltrane (Coach Q)**

- Coach Q apologized for having an overlapping parent meeting with the board meeting.
- She is excited for the opportunity to start fresh.
- Coach Q and her coaches are up for the challenge. They are looking to work smarter and not harder.

- Coach Q and her coaches use the platform called Final Form to house their athletes' physical forms. This allows the coaches to have access to their athlete's physical form in case of an emergency.
- Coach Q is looking to implement different ways that she can bring the community back to the sporting events.
- Coach Q will get the fall sporting schedules to me as soon as she possibly can.
- The sports being added for elementary school students are cheerleading, girls' and boys' basketball, and coed soccer.
- The sports being added to middle schools are coed soccer and flag football.
- The athletics department has 2-3 vendors that they use to get merchandise from.
- Coach Q is noticing that parents are getting together to use outside vendors for things. She has advised that if the parent's vendor does not fulfill their commitment to the parents, that has nothing to do with SPS.
- For the record, coaches need to be held accountable if they decide to go outside and utilize different vendors as well.
- President Bland moved back up to DM Burr (security).
- The Trustees took a recess at 8:23 p.m.
- The Trustees resumed at 8:34 p.m.

**f. Back to School Fair Report Out:**

- Mrs. Glass stated that last year the Avance team helped with the fair and did not lead or execute actions of the fair.
- This year the Avance team was apart of planning and executing the Back-to-School Fair. There were areas that needed growth. This year and last year, there were some aspects that needed enhanced cross-team collaboration. This reduced efforts and efficiencies.
- Their first observation is effective communication. SPS and Avance have improved SPS communication and communication processes. There is always room for continued improvement. Clear, consistent and timely communication is the key to aligning internal and external auditing systems. Therefore, there are still areas for growth. With communication, the Avance team can create, assist, plan, strategize, corresponding messages, talking points, media relations, etc.
- Their second observation is the silo approach. Avance has observed that many of the employees are dedicated and committed to their work. This approach leads to problems like duplicate efforts.
- Their third observation is that heightened accountability will ensure that the objectives and responsibilities are clear and followed through across the district. Enhanced accountability will improve efficiency for our internal and external customers so that they will not leave.
- SPS can strengthen the district with effective communication, teamwork verses the silo approach.
- On behalf of the Avance Team, thank you! Mrs. Glass loves this district.
- President Bland states that this was a great school year. Avance did great work on the State of the District. Thank you for your hard work!
- Mrs. Glass states that without the data and the baseline, it becomes a challenge to process accurate information.

**g. Bond Update**

- Dr. Green and Mrs. Luddington spoke to using the Middle Cities data to project staffing needs and students in the district. In the 23-24 SY Middle Cities under projected and in the 24-25 SY they under projected. The 25-26 SY they are projecting 4,630 students and in MiStar we have 4,302 students and that is what we have in the district. We are losing roughly 5-7% of our students yearly. The majority are leaving after middle school.
- Our middle schoolers are leaving to go to West Bloomfield, Cass Tech, Renaissance, King, FLIX, and Marygrove. DPSCD has the Detroit Promise Program.

- Students that attend UK12 leave to go to SA&T because they want programming and the high school experience.
- We are not branding our schools well.
- DPSCD has more dollars to offer new hires, those incentives.
- If we had laid off staff in June, they would have potentially gone elsewhere for employment.
- Waiting until August allowed us to keep them all in the district.
- Let's figure out how many teacher vacancies we will have at the start of the school year and draft some communication to parents. If we under promise and over deliver, our parents will be happy.
- Ms. Smith's ISSN Department is fully staffed.
- We need to work with our Lathrup Village City Council Leaders to drum up support for SPS.
- The SA&T roof is delayed. Stevenson will be ready. Thompson K-8 needs two windows installed.
- Dr. Green stated that she will be enrolling two of her great-grandchildren into the district.

#### **h. Financial Report**

##### **i. Monthly Bill Disbursement**

- Treasurer Belk did not have anything to report out on the monthly bill disbursement and financial reports.

### **3. Public Participation**

- There was no public participation.

### **4. Action Items**

#### **a. Consent Agenda – Approval of Minutes**

- i. May 27, 2025, Special Meeting/Study Session
- ii. June 10, 2025, Regular Meeting
- iii. June 17, 2025, Special Meeting/Student Hearings
- iv. June 17, 2025, Committee of the Whole Meeting
- v. June 24, 2025, Special Meeting/Truth in Taxation
- vi. June 24, 2025, Special Meeting/Study Session
- Vice President Ware-DeVaul moved to open and approve the Consent Agenda – Approval of Minutes and it was supported by Treasurer Belk.

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, and Trustee Ware-DeVaul

Nays: Nil

Motion carried unanimously.

#### **b. Report 63-97 Contract Extension of Video Production Specialist Services: General Fund**

- M-1 Studio's current two-year contract expires on June 30, 2025, and this is a request to extend the contract for one year. This contract does not exceed \$60,000 in the FY 2025-2026.
- Vice President Ware-DeVaul moved to open and approve Report 63-97 Contract Extension of Video Production Specialist Services and it was supported by Trustee Johnson.

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, and Trustee Belk

Nays: Nil

Motion carried unanimously.



**c. Report 63-106 Board Stipend: Second Read**

- Vice President Ware-DeVauld moved to open and approve Report 63-106 Board Stipend and it was supported by Trustee Johnson.
- If the first proposed Board Stipend revision is approved, then all other Board Stipend proposed revisions are null and void.

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

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

Nays: Trustee Holloway – wanted the second proposed Board Stipend revision to pass

Motion carried.

6 yes; 1 no votes

**d. Report 64-04 CUBE Membership**

- CUBE supports bringing together educational leaders at a time when domestic policies and global trends are combining to shape the future of our students. CUBE offers sessions that will give the Board of Education new ideas, training, and tools to help drive the district forward. This membership will not exceed \$5,000.
- Vice President Ware-DeVauld moved to open and approve Report 64-04 CUBE Membership and it 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, and Trustee Belk

Nays: Nil

Motion carried unanimously.

**e. Report 64-05 Personnel Action Report**

- #20 – Congratulations
- #17 – Moved up
- We have identified some candidates for the H.R. Executive Director position.
- #18 – is a title change only
- Vice President Ware-DeVauld moved to open and approve Report 64-05 Personnel Action Report and it 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, and Trustee Ware-DeVauld

Nays: Nil

Motion carried unanimously.

**5. For the Good of the Order**

- There was no For the Good of the Order.

**6. Future Meetings**

- Tuesday, August 19, 2025, Opening Day @ Kensington Park 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. (inclement weather - we will be at SA&T O House at 9:00 a.m.)
- Tuesday, September 9, 2025, Regular Meeting 7:00 p.m.

**7. Adjournment**

- |  |
|--|
| <b>Approved on: September 23, 2025</b>         |
| <b>Leslie L. Smith-Thomas, Board Secretary</b> |