



SOUTHFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS MINUTES

MEETING: Regular Board Meeting	DATE: November 11, 2025	TIME: 7:00 p.m.	LOCATION: John W. English Administrative Center		
BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:					
President Ashanti Bland, Vice President DeVaull,	Yvette Ware- Smith-Thomas, Secretary	Leslie L. Treasurer	Talisha Belk, Amani Johnson, Trustee		
ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:					
Jennifer Green, Ed.D. Superintendent	Lanissa Freeman, Deputy Superintendent	James Jackson, Chief of Staff	Chief of Talent Mtg		
April Rogers, Exec. Dir., State and Federal Programs	Angela Smith, Exec. Director of ISSN	Paula Lightsey, Executive Director of Academic Advisement and Social Emotional Learning	Marc Ingram, Chief Financial Officer		
		Rebecca Luddington, Manager of Pupil Accounting			
		Sommer Caldwell- Carruthers, Executive Director of Instruction			
		Joseph Corace, Chief Operations Officer			
Student Board Representatives:					
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Paris Whitman, SA&T <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chidi Nnaji, UK12					

1. Opening of Meeting

The meeting was called to order by Board President Bland at 7:00 p.m. Board President Bland read the opening statement and Trustee roll call was taken. All Trustees were present. Our technical support is handled by M1 Studios. We all stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Board Matters

- Vice President Ware-DeVaull spoke about attending the Delegates Assembly at the MASB Annual Leadership Conference (ALC). Vice President Ware-DeVaull spoke about several sessions that she attended like Michigan Virtual and AI.
- Trustee Denson wished everyone that has served our country a Happy Veterans Day. She states it has been about a year since she started serving the district. It is a pleasure for her to serve the district and to represent the district as a delegate at the Delegates Assembly. She mentioned some of the topics that they got to vote on during her time attending the ALC. She states that it was great to connect with vendors across the state.
- Trustee Holloway also attended the Delegates Assembly and the ALC. She attended a session that makes you think about questions to ask yourself as a board whether they align with the board policies and goals to benefit the district.
- President Bland thanked the Trustees for attending the Delegates Assembly and ALC.
- President Bland states that this is her last regular board meeting.
- She gave an overview of the transitional timeline:
 - Resignation effective on November 17, 2025
 - During the Committee of the Whole (COTW) Meeting on November 13, 2025, Vice President Ware-DeVaull will become the Interim Board President
 - November 17, 2025 – Posting of School Board Vacancy on the District website, District social media, and the Southfield Sun's website (banner)
 - November 25, 2025 – Application deadline – via portal by 5:00 p.m.
 - December 1, 2025 and/or December 8, 2025 – Candidate interviews
 - December 9, 2025 – Swearing-in of the new board member
 - January 6, 2026 – Organizational Meeting

- President Bland gave a heartfelt thank you to the District and the community. She mentioned Lori List, her 7th grade teacher, who reached out and told her to apply for the Southfield Board of Education. Thank you to the SPS staff and the Trustees.
- **Civic Recognition:** R'riel Ciers, Dominic James, Donovan
 - President Bland thanked the UK12 students for their civic service at the polls on November 4, 2025; and thank you to the parents that allowed their students to be there to assist.
- Sylvia Jordan stated that the students were instrumental in her entire campaign.
- Vice President Ware-DeVaull thanked President Bland for all of her hard work and sacrifice and for a job well done.
- President Bland is looking to bridge the gap between the district and city council.

3. Report of the Student Board Representatives

a. Paris Whitman: Southfield High School for the Arts & Technology (SA&T)

- Congratulations to Board President Ashanti Bland for being elected to the Southfield City Council.
- Thank you to all the veterans that served in the United States armed forces.
- There will be a food drive tomorrow, November 12, 2025, at JWE Administration Building from 4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.
- **Here are the past and current highlights for , SA&T sports:**
- All fall sports season have officially ended, wrapping up an exciting start to the school year.
 - On Senior Night, the Varsity Football team won their homecoming game against Pontiac. JV won against Pontiac the same week.
 - The cheer team performed during the pep rally, and they delivered an energetic halftime performance at the homecoming game. Alumni cheerleaders were invited to join, which created a powerful moment of school spirit.
 - The Dance Academy performed a routine during the homecoming pep rally.
 - The marching band along with the Levey Middle School band gave an outstanding final field show during the homecoming game.
 - Student Council collaborated with UK12's Student Council to make this Homecoming Pep Rally one of the best. Together, they aligned several spirit week themes and introduced a shared "spirit stick" to highlight unity between schools. Seniors from each fall sport were recognized during the pep rally. There were class competitions in which the sophomores took the victory. The Class of 2028 from both Uni and SA&T took a joint class photo to celebrate their win.
- **Leadership and Activities Highlights:**
 - October 30, 2025: Student Council members participated in Stevenson Elementary School's Trunk or Treat.
 - November 7, 2025: The Student Council hosted their second blood drive led by Mr. Green and Community Service Chair, Terra Jones.
 - The Dance Company, advanced dance program, spent the day at Thompson K-8 during their Halloween celebration.
 - Business Professionals of America's executive board attended the Fall Leadership Conference with all Michigan regions.
 - For the month of November, the National Honor Society is running a Mittens for Kiddies Donation Drive to collect children's winter gloves.
 - On November 7th, the Senior Class Board had their general board meeting of the school year. This meeting was open to all seniors interested in being more involved in the planning and production of their Senior Class.
- **Academic Highlights:**
 - The first card marking ends on October 28th, and grades were viewable in MiStar on November 5th.

- If there's one word that sums up this month, it is definitely UNITY! From the spirit weeks to school partnerships to celebrating leaders who make a difference, Southfield continues to shine together.
- See you all in December, Warriors!
- b. **Chidi Nnaji: University K-12 Academy (UK12)**
- **“Nurturing Tomorrow’s Leaders Today”**
- **Fall Bash** – Chargers love spreading joy, eat their hay, paw-tastic experience, put on their saffron, and have a permanent memory of the night.
- **Your Own Uni-Buddy:** no matter what we do; we do it together.
- **Our “houses” run deep in our veins** – there is nothing a Charger loves more than leading the world.
- **Senior Pinning:** at the U we are all one big ranch.
- **Planting Excellence:** they know patience is always rewarded.
- **U Students Show Grit on and Off the Court:** both of our middle school teams always run their hardest.
- **Math Monsters:** here at the U, we battle any kind of monster.
- **Smart Wilsons:** already starting the race early.
- **Honor Ceremony:** they know that we appreciate their work.
- **People Who Encompass What It Means to Be a Charger**
 - Asher is consistently standing out in class, while most kids would struggle with a curriculum a grade ahead. He is consistently leading his class.
 - Johnnie, a 6th grader, is one of the kindest people we have at the U. He consistently goes out of his way to have a positive attitude.
 - Aminata, an 11th grader already understands the importance of inclusivity. She consistently tries to bring a smile to everyone from the Motherland, as the President of the African Students Association.
- **Chargers Always Charge into the Future:**
 - **November 26-28 is the Thanksgiving break**
 - **The first half of senior dues are due in December**
- **We Believe in Celebrating People with Different Roles at the U:**
 - **People like Ashanti Bland:** The current President of the Southfield Public Schools Board of Education; who has been recently elected to the Southfield City Council and is a former Charger! Congratulations!
- Thank you to Chief Jackson for serving our country.

4. Report of the Superintendent

- a. **Employee of the Month: Lydia Brisson-Fast – Birney K-8 School**
- b. **Partner of the Month: Amy Rich – Oakland Schools, IT Department**
- c. **Legislative Update: Dr. Green**

- November 30th is the deadline to accept 31aa funds. Dr. Green touched on 31aa's risks to the district. Our legal counsel and many other legal counsels are cautioning us to weigh the acceptance of the funds against the legal and insurance risk. We will have a decision closer to the deadline as we receive different opinions from legal counsel relative to the 31aa funds totaling \$575,000. We have found some alternative grant funds to pay for the programs currently funded by 31aa. This is in case we decide not to support the resolution for 31aa.

- d. **Staffing Update**

- Dr. Green went over the Staffing Update PowerPoint.
- e. **Metal Detectors: Chief James Jackson**

- The district made a decision to move forward with the purchasing and then implementing metal detectors. We are planning to roll out the metal detectors on January 5, 2026, after Winter Recess. We have begun to have meetings with the staff members. We will be meeting with parents this coming week to talk to them about the processes and procedures. A metal detector will be present during this meeting, so the parents can see it and see how it works firsthand. Chief Jackson has begun to talk to building leadership to have grade level meetings with the students before the Winter Recess. Students will know the processes and procedures for the metal detectors, so that this will not be a shock to them on January 5, 2026. The Chief of Police and the Police Department recommend that we move forward in this direction. The School Resource Officers (SROs) were instrumental in developing this process as well.
- The board will need to revise and approve the policy on safety before the January 5, 2026 implementation of metal detectors.
- The metal detectors were grant funded. There has been communication provided to parents regarding the upcoming meeting about the metal detector processes, procedures, and implementation on January 5, 2026.
- There has been extensive talk and training on how to handle anyone with a medical device, wheelchair, and crutches. They will move to the side, and a “secondary search” will be conducted with a wand.
- There will be an officer at the doors to man the metal detectors for students that arrive late, parents, and guests that enter the building.
- The team has timed the process of the metal detector. It does not take that much time. For the long lines due to the search, we have spoken to the building leaders about beginning the process a little earlier. Teachers will be patient as we adjust to the process.
- The student board representatives had questions about what the acronym ISSN stands for and what is it? Intense Student Support Network (ISSN) supports students with an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) per their educational needs. The ISSN Medicaid Billing Supervisor is responsible for billing Medicaid, which is a type of insurance for our ISSN supported students.
- ASD is Autism Spectrum Disorder.

f. Move Management

i. Birney K-8: Chief James Jackson

- To date, Birney will be our most complex move. We will be splitting the staff and students into two separate buildings. We have worked diligently with the building leaders to discuss the planning and the messaging. After the virtual meeting, we sent out a FAQs sheet to families to ensure they had the answers and information they needed. There were weekly meetings with operations, transportation, SFE, and custodial. There are a lot of moving pieces.
- We will be pivoting from the contractor to replace the ceiling tiles, which we will handle internally, and they will replace the carpeting in a couple of classes at Vandenberg.
- President Bland and Trustee Denson thanked the team for all of their hard work in this process, messaging and communication to parents and staff.
- Thank you to Principal Baldwin and Vice Principal Pritchett for all of their hard work.
- Champions is working on transferring their licensing to Vandenberg and Southfield Regional Academic Center.
- The parent in-person meeting regarding the metal detectors will be held on November 20, 2025 in the SA&T Media Center at 6:00 p.m.
- The building leaders will know when the next Parent Teacher Conferences are being held.
- Chief Jackson thanked President Bland for all her hard work on the board.

ii. University K12: Dr. Green

- The UK12 elementary students will attend Vandenberg in the summer of 2026. The building will be prepared for their arrival. The UK12 middle school students will still attend Eisenhower

in the summer of 2026. The change is with that of the high school. They will be moving to Southfield Regional Academic Center.

- We need to meet code with the fire suppression system at SA&T. It would not be ready with the levels of approval needed to get it completed (city, county, and state). The approvals all take time to get scheduled to come out and approve the work that has been done.
- This is why we need a Construction Committee. This will be a conversation at the COTW meeting on Thursday. It will be beneficial to be a part of these conversations so that the board is aware of construction matters.
- We are in communication with the staff at UK12. We are drafting a letter to the parents regarding the transition to the three different locations in the summer of 2026. Parents should have that letter by the close of business on Friday, November 14, 2025.

g. First Student Performance Improvement Plan: Dr. Green

- The First Student Performance Improvement Plan outlines several topics and how they plan to execute them:
 - Student Safety
 - Incident Reporting
 - Timeliness and Route Performance
 - Technology Functionality and Parent Communication
 - Field Trips, Athletics, and Extracurricular Services
 - Communication and Transparency
 - Driver Accountability and Training
 - Performance Monitoring and Compliance
- We have had weekly meetings with First Student and there will be a 30-day meeting with their upper leadership team member that came out to the meeting to discuss the problems we were having. This is to ensure that they are consistent with their performance improvement plan. They will come in and show us how to operate their updated digital platform.
- The board will have monthly updates from Dr. Green regarding the performance of First Student.

h. Bussey's Director's Report – Dr. Ursula Kelley-Wash, Interim Director

- Congratulations President Bland in your appointment to the Southfield City Council.
- **Bussey's Vision Statement:** To deliver comprehensive services for children and families, by giving them a head start and great start on their future, thus preparing them for kindergarten and life.
- **Enrollment Report:** Total enrollment is 144 scholars.
- **Average Daily Attendance (ADA):** Early Head Start (EHS): 86%, Head Start (HS): 81%, HS/GSRP: 81%, GSRP: 85%
- **Child and Adult Care Food Program:** CACFP is a federal program that provides reimbursements for meals and snacks to eligible children and adults. Meals and snacks distribution totaled: 4,125.
- **Brigance Assessment Measures:** Academic/Cognitive Development, Language Development, Physical Development, and Social-Emotional Development
 - Average Pre-Test Scores: EHS: 71, HS: 63, GSRP: 71
- **Education:** Educators Empowering Educators, Fire Safety House
- **Family Engagement:** Muffins for Moms, Harvest Festival
- **Bussey Center for Early Childhood Education:** Q & A
- Secretary Smith-Thomas thanked Dr. Kelley Wash for a very professional and comprehensive report.
- During the staff meetings the Educators Empowering Educators session is where the educators get up and speak to their peers. This is not anything worked out with the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) to earn credit. The educators use this time to empower themselves by speaking in front of their peers and empowering their peers by sharing their insight.

- There are different areas of concern for each of the student population. This data comes from the first two weeks of school.
- President Bland thanked Dr. Kelley-Wash for turning around the Bussey program in the short time that she has been there.
- **Thank you!**
- Paris wanted to make sure she could share the information about the parent meeting regarding the metal detectors to ensure parents are getting the information.
- There will be grade level meetings for the students happening before the roll out of the metal detectors.

5. Public Participation

- Participant #1: University and the AP classes they offer. We have brilliant children in the district. There should not be any negative conversations about this district.
- Participant #2: Long time ambassador and advocate to the district. Congratulations to Dr. Green and President Bland.

6. Action Items

a. Consent Agenda

- i. October 28, 2025, Special Board Meeting/Study Session
- ii. October 28, 2025, Special Board Meeting/Closed Session

- Vice President Ware-DeVaull moved to open and approve Consent Agenda – Approval of Minutes and it was supported by Trustee Johnson.

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

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

Nays: Nil

Motion carried unanimously.

b. Report 64-28 Personnel Action Report

- Vice President Ware-DeVaull moved to open and approve Report 64-28 Personnel Action Report, and it was supported by Trustee Johnson.
- #7: We received 40 applications for this position. Ten applicants have the strongest credentials, and they will be interviewed starting next week.
#4 & #6 were mentioned.
#7's salary was competitive with other districts.
#1 was lifted in the Staffing Update presentation, this evening.
#7 was not lifted on the Staffing Update presentation because of an oversight.

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

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

Nays: Nil

Motion carried unanimously.

7. Information Items

- a. Financial Report
- b. Monthly Bill Disbursement

- Treasurer Belk indicated that the questions that she had were answered and the items that she thought would elevate as risk were mentioned by Dr. Green. The \$575,000 grant funds from 31aa is still considered a risk.
- Treasurer Belk mentioned the \$1.5 million dollars that the board approved to bring the fire suppression system up to code at SA&T. The work still needs to be done but there is a timeline change for the work to be completed. Plante Moran provided Treasurer Belk with a detailed email that she was able to work through. Our financials look amazing per usual.

8. For the Good of the Order

- Secretary Smith-Thomas reminded the Trustees of the MASB: education credits deadline is December 15, 2025. The MASB Winter Institute information has been sent out as well.
- Secretary Smith-Thomas would like to celebrate and congratulate our SA&T Marching Band. They are doing some amazing things. The experience they are receiving is remarkable. They have been asked to participate in the Thanksgiving Day Parade again this year. Be on the lookout for any support they may need.
- Southfield Public Schools (SPS) in partnership with Forgotten Harvest will have a food drive at JWE on November 12, 2025 from 4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. You must have a child currently enrolled in SPS.

9. Future Meetings

- a. Thursday, November 13, 2025, Committee of the Whole Meeting @ 6:00 p.m.
- b. November 26, 2025–November 28, 2025, Thanksgiving Recess: NO SCHOOL
- c. Tuesday, December 9, 2025, Regular Board Meeting @ 7:00 p.m.
- d. December 22, 2025–January 2, 2026, Winter Recess: NO SCHOOL
- e. Tuesday, January 13, 2026, Regular Board Meeting @ 7:00 p.m.

10. Adjournment

- President Bland adjourned the Regular Board Meeting at 8:51 p.m.

Approved on: December 9, 2025
Leslie L. Smith-Thomas, Board Secretary