**Introduction of Dr. Taylor from Board President Annemarie Maini**

I am very honored to have served with each of my colleagues as we undertook our most important Board of Education role: to hire a superintendent, and I am particularly pleased that we were able to successfully make this decision as a committee of the whole. I am proud that each board member had ownership of the process and that decisions were made and respected through the majority of the Board process.

I want to thank our search consultant, Dr. Librera, of West Hudson Associates. Dr. Librera is a former principal of Columbia High School, the former commissioner of education for the New Jersey Department of Education, and most importantly for our community, the proud grandfather of children in our district. His breadth of contacts and his experience in supporting boards through this process was invaluable. Thank you Dr. Librera.

Throughout the search, Board Presidents, Board Member Baker last year and me as Board President this year, updated the community on the process to date, which included how the community participated in crafting the leadership profile in feedback sessions and an online survey. This leadership profile, as well as the needs of our district as clearly articulated by Dr. Ficarra, were the primary determinants of who was selected for interviews.

Dr. Taylor not only matched our community’s leadership profile, but he also has demonstrated successful experience and proven results in the big goals for our district. He also has excellent communication skills, and an incredible ability to relate to people and students. Dr. Taylor’s eight years of experience as the Superintendent of Willingboro have provided an excellent foundation for him to lead the work to address SOMSD’s current priorities. Some highlights include:

* Successfully leading the implementation and completion of a $67 Million facilities bond referendum under budget and ahead of schedule.
* He led successful implementation of reconfiguration of elementary schools.
* He facilitated the creation of two District Early Childhood Development Centers using $4+ Million in competitive grant funding.
* He successfully implemented student Chromebook “1 to 1” initiative grades 3rd-12th.
* He improved Willingboro’s performance by 60% in Curriculum and Instruction and improved district operational processes as measured by QSAC.
* He currently serves as a leader and strategist in addressing student equity matters not only in his district, but statewide.

His training and experience as a kindergarten teacher have been put to good use throughout the rest of his career, and his active alumni relationship with Morehouse gives him an excellent recruiting network.

We appreciated Dr. Taylor’s willingness to accommodate 9 board member schedules as we arranged opportunities for in-depth conversations, including coming in late in the evenings and on a weekend afternoon. This speaks volumes about his commitment and willingness to make himself accessible at any time.

The Board’s discussions with Dr. Taylor explored his philosophy and experience in areas such as making difficult choices in the face of budget cuts, qsac ratings, lunch policies, course access policy, supporting equity, holding administrators and teachers to high standards, and building an inclusive culture where all children feel respected and valued. Dr. Taylor’s willingness to address our concerns and to be interested in learning about our community and how he would meet the needs of all of our students led the vast majority of the board to move forward with selecting him as our new superintendent.

I am very excited that we have found an educational leader of Dr. Taylor’s calibre, who has direct experience managing large infrastructure projects, designing and implementing elementary reconfiguration, expanding preschool services, and balancing innovation and compliance.