

**SCHOOL DISTRICT OF SOUTH ORANGE AND MAPLEWOOD, NEW JERSEY
PUBLIC BOARD MEETING
SEPTEMBER 28, 2023**

RESOLUTION 4519

FOR ACTION

**SUBJECT: APPROVE REVISED BOE COMMITTEES FOR THE
2023 CALENDAR YEAR**

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approves the revised Board of Education Committees for the 2023 calendar year as presented.

BACKGROUND

BOE Committees are appointed and approved yearly. Special committees may be created for special assignments and they shall be dissolved by Board resolution upon completion of their assignment.

SOMSD BOE COMMITTEE LIAISON CHART

							Resolution #:	4519	
Standing Committees	Wright	Duvall Wilson	Eckert	Gifford	Malespina	Telesford	Vadlamani	Winkfield	Wittleder
Curriculum & Instruction		X	X		X - Chair			X	
Finance, Facilities & Technology (FFT)		X-Chair		X			X		X
Personnel	X		X-Chair					X	X
Policy				X-Chair	X	X			
Special Committees									
Fergus Implementation Committee	X	X	X	X	Conflicted	X	X	X	X- Chair
Ad Hoc Committees									
Data & Technology Committee						X-Chair	X	X	
Municipal Partnerships		X-Chair							X
Special Services (meets every other month)	X		X			X-Chair			
Executive Committee		X			X				X
Sick Bank Committee			X					X	X
Negotiations Committee			X					X - Chair	X
* Board President can attend Committees as an Ex Oficio Member									
Liaisons									
Achieve Foundation							X		
Board of School Estimate		X					X- alt		X
Essex County School Board Association		X							
Field Use Trust					X				
MapSO Freedom School (MFS)					X				
NJSBA Delegate Assembly				X					
SEPAC						X			

Revised: 9/28/2023

Fergus Implementation Committee

Committee Charge:

The Fergus Implementation Special Committee will assist the Board in its oversight role to ensure the District's compliance with the BPW Settlement during the three-year monitoring phase. The objective of the committee is to ensure that all of Dr. Fergus' recommendations from the Equity Audit Report are implemented by August 2026.

Timetable

- The Committee will exist for three years, September 28, 2023 - August 2026, or for the entire duration of the monitoring period.
- The Committee will meet monthly with the Superintendent and chosen designee(s) of the District
- The Committee shall review the progress of each of the recommendations in the Fergus Plan, and the Integration Plan, to inform the Board as to whether implementation timelines are being met

Committee Reporting

- The Committee Chair shall provide written monthly meeting minutes to the Board
- The Committee Chair will provide a monthly update during the public Board meeting

Access to Resources

- The Committee may request information, documentation, and data as necessary to inform the Board as to achievement of the goals and the timetables in the Fergus Plan and the Integration Plan
- The Committee shall review the January/June presentations being made to Justice Wallace and to the community

Dr. Fergus' Recommendations

- The Committee will serve to inform the Board as to the implementation of the following recommendations from the Dr. Fergus Equity Audit Report:

Settlement Term 3A:

- Prioritize material and verbal messaging regarding math growth mindset: It is recommended to prioritize the development of a growth mindset and actively challenge gender and race-based stereotypes in math performance for educators, students, and families. This entails promoting the understanding that ability is not fixed, but rather malleable and can be enhanced through effort and persistence. By shifting students' beliefs about the nature of ability, educators can support students to embrace challenges and view setbacks as opportunities for growth, rather than as indicators of fixed traits.
- Foster heterogeneous student collaboration in math instruction: In elementary and middle school math courses, equip educators to create opportunities for students of different

abilities, backgrounds, and learning styles to collaborate and work together on math tasks.

- Ensure that low-track students receive the high-quality instruction that they need to become better math students: Review the current curriculum and standards for lower-track math classes to ensure that they align with higher-level cognitive skills such as evaluation and creation (the two upper tiers of Bloom's Taxonomy). Identify areas where the curriculum can be enhanced to provide more challenging tasks that require students to analyze, evaluate, and create mathematical solutions.
- Create a clear plan and timeline to identify high-achieving students from under-represented backgrounds for higher-track math courses: Implement strategies to identify students with high math achievement potential who may come from underrepresented backgrounds. This can include using multiple criteria such as teacher recommendations, performance on low-stakes math assessments, and considering students' demonstrated interest and motivation in math.
- Create enrichment and acceleration opportunities: Develop enrichment and acceleration programs that provide students with the opportunity to move into accelerated math classes in grades 6 through 8. Offer summer enrichment courses specifically designed to reinforce and extend math concepts.
- Increase accessible and equitable parent involvement: Actively involve parents in the math course selection process and provide strategies to support their children's math achievement at home. Offer math course selection sessions at different times of the day and in different modalities to accommodate different families. In addition, math course selection sessions can be led in multiple languages, including closed captioning or translated materials, to ensure that multilingual families and speakers of languages other than English can fully participate.
- Revisit the choice policy for math course selection: Evaluate and modify the existing policy for math course selection to promote equity and reduce potential biases. Reduce the emphasis on high-stakes or one-time performance on math assessments as the sole criterion for course placement. Instead, consider multiple factors that provide a more comprehensive understanding of students' abilities and potential for success in advanced math courses.

Settlement Term 3B

- Develop and implement a professional development series that focuses on continued development of cross-cultural capacity in order to replace bias-based beliefs such as color blindness, deficit thinking, and racial discomfort.
- Continuous assessment of educator knowledge on intervention support systems, curriculum and instruction improvements.
Through professional development, build teacher empathy for all students. Events such as the middle school Challenge Day create humanistic bonds between teachers and students.
- Conduct a curriculum audit of courses in humanities, English-Language Arts, and history using a culturally responsive protocol to determine where more inclusive materials and pedagogies are needed.

- Hire more Black teachers/teachers of color and create affinity spaces to support those teachers to increase retention.
- Build on successes of affinity spaces for students of color such as MAC scholars.
- Provide affinity spaces for BIPOC students across school levels.

Settlement Term 3C

- Development of a district-wide tiered system of support that includes defining academic and behavioral tiers available and processes for utilization.
- Extensive review of I&RS Implementation Process Guide in order to address inconsistencies and redundancies.
- Develop list of tiered interventions for academic behavioral supports.
- Develop tools and protocols for the operation of intervention team meetings.

Settlement Term 3D

- The February 17, 2021 memo from the Alves Group notes ACS data on parental education level, average household income, and race/ethnicity composition. The data demonstrates a significant pattern of income, educational level, and racial/ethnic community segregation. Specifically, the communities surrounding Seth Boyden, Marshall, and South Mountain and Annex elementary schools maintain demonstratively hyper segregation by education level, income, and race/ethnicity. And there appears to be a larger number of families in the educational attainment categories 4 and 5 (based on table 1 in 2/17/21 memo) than educational attainment categories 3 and 3.5. The concern is how this skewed demographic makeup will affect having a proportional distribution of integration. In other words, does this skewed pattern lead to students eligible for free/reduced lunch program (FRLP), households less than \$150,000, and Black or Latinx identified experiencing being distributed disproportionately? For example, if there are 350 students that are not eligible for FRLP, households greater than \$200,000, and White, and 100 students FRLP eligible, households less than \$150,000, and Black or Latinx, and in order to achieve a proportional representation of 30% FRLP and 40% non-FRLP across schools this will involve potentially moving all 100 FRLP students and only needing to move 100 of the 350 non-FRLP students. I recommend some further modeling of integration in which factors with greatest skewed patterns are weighted more intensely over other factors. For instance, household income and parent education could be weighted more than race/ethnicity.
- The pattern of average household income and parent educational level should be examined over time in order to understand whether the III plan can be sustained. In other words, if the communities of South Orange and Maplewood are growing housing patterns that require specific levels of average household income to qualify then this may impact the ability of the school district to have enough students to sustain the current demographic distributions. For instance, according to media outlets there is a new mixed use housing unit (Vose and Taylor) with a total of 110 units and 11 are available for moderate to low-income qualified families. This pattern of available housing may not be sufficient over time to sustain the integration plan of the district. This may result in South

Orange Maplewood school district becoming similar to other districts that desired diversity and integration but the community (i.e., housing, police, childcare, social services) were developed to provide services accessible for those with moderate to affluent members of the community. I recommend discussing with South Orange and Maplewood community managers how they are advancing integration through housing.

- The schools with the greatest segregation are Seth Boyden and South Mountain; this is by race/ethnicity and FRLP eligibility. Given the comments I outlined above, perhaps a staged integration in which these two schools are prioritized over the next several years. This may prevent the adverse effect I outlined in comment #1. Additionally, how will the algorithm be adjusted if the South Orange and Maplewood communities incur additional housing segregation?
- The February 17, 2023 memo from the Alves Group outlines on page 2 withdrawal patterns for 2021-22 and 2022-23. The memo demonstrates that withdrawal patterns reduced between those two school years. I suggest reviewing pre-COVID quarantine school years (i.e., 2018-19, 2017-18) to understand these withdrawal patterns. In particular, what is the average rate of withdrawals occurring in the district including by race/ethnicity and FRLP eligibility. Another layer of this analysis should be at the middle school level in order to review if both middle schools are having relatively proportional withdrawal patterns.
- The III plan needs to parallel an integration of academic support services. In the 2021 elementary report I authored, I identified the academic support services varied greatly across schools but in particular between Seth Boyden and South Mountain. More specifically, Seth Boyden maintained an I&RS process (academic support tiers) in which intervention teams met every 4-6 weeks; meanwhile at South Mountain the intervention teams would meet 1-2 times per semester. Additionally, the 2021 and 2023 reports both outline the inconsistent operation of the academic support services that contributes to the patterns of academic segregation and disproportionate patterns in special education. I recommend the improvements of the academic support services at the elementary schools occur within the next 2 years in order to ensure the tiered supports have time to work efficiently before enrollment integration advances.