South Plainfield Board of Education

Organization Meeting Minutes
South Plainfield High School Media Center
January 6, 2025
6:00 pm

South Plainfield Public Schools Mission Statement:

Students are the focus of the South Plainfield Public Schools. We will provide a dynamic, rigorous, relevant, and technology-enriched curriculum, guided by the New Jersey Student Learning Standards. Our mission is to develop life-long learners who are prepared to succeed in a global and diverse society. We are resolved to educate the whole child, instilling the desire within our students to question and to become divergent thinkers who can achieve their fullest potential.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Benanti called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

II. SALUTE TO FLAG

Announcement:

In accordance with the terms of the Sunshine Law, adequate notice of this meeting was posted in all school buildings, the Administration Building and sent to the Borough Clerk's office, Public Library, three newspapers and Tapinto online on December 12, 2024.

Please be advised:

- There is no smoking on school grounds - inside or outside - at any time.
- Please silence all electronic devices.
- Pursuant to District Policy #0167, each statement made by a participant shall be limited to three minutes' duration and no participant may speak more than once on the same topic.

III. TRANSACTION OF BUSINESS FOR WHICH MEETING WAS CALLED

A. Reading of the Official Election Results

Mr. Alex Benanti, Business Administrator/Board Secretary read the official 2024 Board of Education election results.

B. Mr. Alex Benanti, Business Administrator/Board Secretary announced the Newly Elected Board Members:

John Espin
Sharon Miller
Divon Pender

C. Oath of Office

Mr. Christopher Sedefian, Legal Counsel, administered the Oath of Office for the following newly elected board members:

John Espin – 3-year term
Sharon Miller - 3-year term
Divon Pender - 3-year term

IV. ROLL CALL – Mr. Benanti

Board Members Present:	Mr. Both, Mr. Cassio, Mr. Chapman, Mr. Espin, Mr. Giannakis, Mrs. Miller, Mr. Pender, Mr. Pennisi, Mr. Seesselberg
Also Present:	Dr. Noreen Tansey Lishak, Superintendent; Mr. Alex Benanti, Business Administrator/Board Secretary; Mr. Christopher Sedefian, Legal Counsel
Absent:	Ms. Mary Malyska, Assistant Superintendent; Mr. Murat Yazici, Assistant Business Administrator

V. ELECTION OF PRESIDENT

Alex Benanti, Business Administrator/Board Secretary announced that nominations are in order for the office of President.

Mr. Chapman nominated Mr. Cassio. Mr. Giannakis seconded the motion.

With no additional nominations, Mr. Benanti asked for a motion to close the nominations.

MOTION: Mr. Giannakis SECOND: Mrs. Miller VOTE: 9-0

The following vote is for Mr. Cassio to serve as the 2025 Board of Education President.

MOTION: Mr. Giannakis SECOND: Mrs. Miller VOTE: 9-0

VI. ELECTION OF VICE PRESIDENT

Mr. Cassio assumed the chair and announced that nominations are now in order for the office of Vice President.

Mr. Pennisi nominated Mr. Chapman. Mr. Giannakis seconded the motion.

With no additional nominations, Mr. Benanti asked for a motion to close the nominations.

MOTION: Mr. Giannakis SECOND: Mrs. Miller VOTE: 9-0

The following vote is for Mr. Chapman to serve as the 2025 Board of Education Vice President.

MOTION: Mr. Giannakis SECOND: Mrs. Miller VOTE: 9-0

VII. AGENDA ADDITIONS AND/OR DELTIONS

VIII. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS ONLY

IX. APPROVAL OF 2025 MEETING DATES

RESOLVED, that the South Plainfield Board of Education, pursuant to Chapter 231, PAL. (Open Public Meetings Act) does hereby proclaim the public meetings of the Board of Education will be held in the South Plainfield High School Media Center, 200 Lake Street, South Plainfield, at the dates and times listed below:

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the South Plainfield Board of Education does hereby designate the Star Ledger, The Home News and Tribune, The Courier News, and TAPinto South Plainfield as official newspapers to receive notices of meetings:

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that notices of meetings of the board of Education will be posted in the South Plainfield Board of Education Administration Office, school buildings, sent to the Borough Clerk's Office and be posted on the district website.

2025 Meeting Schedule

Date	Time	Meeting
Wednesday, January 15, 2025	6:00 p.m.	Regular Public Meeting
Wednesday, February 19, 2025	6:00 p.m.	Regular Public Meeting
Wednesday, March 19, 2025	6:00 p.m.	Regular Public Meeting Tentative Budget Adoption
Wednesday, April 16, 2025	6:00 p.m.	Regular Public Meeting
Wednesday, May 7, 2025	6:00 p.m.	Budget Hearing and Adoption Regular Public Meeting
Wednesday, June 11, 2025	6:00 p.m.	Regular Public Meeting
Wednesday, July 16, 2025	6:00 p.m.	Regular Public Meeting
Wednesday, August 13, 2025	6:00 p.m.	Regular Public Meeting
Wednesday, September 17, 2025	6:00 p.m.	Regular Public Meeting
Wednesday, October 15, 2025	6:00 p.m.	Regular Public Meeting
Wednesday, November 19, 2025	6:00 p.m.	Regular Public Meeting
Wednesday, December 17, 2025	6:00 p.m.	Regular Public Meeting

DISCUSSION:

MOTION: Mr. Giannakis SECOND: Mr. Pender VOTE: 9-0

X. PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY

RESOLVED, that the Board shall be governed in its deliberations in all cases in which it is not inconsistent with Statute, Administrative Code, Bylaws of the Board, or Robert's Rules of Order (as revised), except that rules or order may be amended at any meeting by majority of the full board.

MOTION: Mr. Giannakis SECOND: Mrs. Miller VOTE: 9-0

XI. ADOPT BOARD MEMBER CODE OF ETHICS

RESOLVED, upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, that the Board of Education adopt the New Jersey School Boards Association Board Member Code of Ethics, as shown in Attachment 1.

MOTION: Mr. Giannakis SECOND: Mrs. Miller VOTE: 9-0

XII. PUBLIC COMMENTS

XIII. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

XIV. EXECUTIVE SESSION: 6:16 – 6:46 p.m.

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business of the Board, there was a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:46 p.m.

MOTION: Mr. Giannakis SECOND: Mrs. Miller VOTE: 9-0

New Jersey School Boards Association

413 West State Street • Trenton, NJ 08618 • Telephone: 609.695.7600 • Toll-Free: 888.88NJSBA • Fax: 609.695.0413

Code of Ethics for School Board Members

N.J.S.A 18A:12-24.1

a. I will uphold and enforce all laws, rules and regulations of the State Board of Education, and court orders pertaining to schools. Desired changes shall be brought about only through legal and ethical procedures.

b. I will make decisions in terms of the educational welfare of children and will seek to develop and maintain public schools that meet the individual needs of all children regardless of their ability, race, creed, sex, or social standing.

c. I will confine my board action to policy making, planning, and appraisal, and I will help to frame policies and plans only after the board has consulted those who will be affected by them.

d. I will carry out my responsibility, not to administer the schools, but, together with my fellow board members, to see that they are well run.

e. I will recognize that authority rests with the board of education and will make no personal promises nor take any private action that may compromise the board.

f. I will refuse to surrender my independent judgment to special interest or partisan political groups or to use the schools for personal gain or for the gain of friends.

g. I will hold confidential all matters pertaining to the schools which, if disclosed, would needlessly injure individuals or the schools. In all other matters, I will provide accurate information and, in concert with my fellow board members, interpret to the staff the aspirations of the community for its school.

h. I will vote to appoint the best qualified personnel available after consideration of the recommendation of the chief administrative officer.

i. I will support and protect school personnel in proper performance of their duties.

j. I will refer all complaints to the chief administrative officer and will act on the complaints at public meetings only after failure of an administrative solution.

***N.J.A.C.* 6A:32-3.2**
Requirements for the code of ethics for district board of education members and charter school board of trustees members

(a) Each district board of education and charter school board of trustees shall:
1. Discuss annually the School Ethics Act and the Code of Ethics for School Board Members, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:12-21 et seq., at a regularly scheduled public meeting;
2. Adopt policies and procedures regarding the training of district board of education and charter school board of trustees members in understanding the Code of Ethics; and
3. Provide documentation pursuant to (b) below that each member of the district board of education or charter school board of trustees has received and reviewed the Code of Ethics.

(b) Each member of the district board of education or charter school board of trustees shall sign an acknowledgement of receipt of the Code of Ethics for School Board Members contained within *N.J.S.A.* 18A:12-21 et seq. The acknowledgement of receipt requires each district board of education member and charter school board of trustees member to read and become familiar with the Code of Ethics.