

**The Somerset Hills School District
 Regular Meeting Agenda - December 17, 2025
 Executive Session - 6:30 pm
 Regular Public Meeting - 7:30 pm
 Bernards High School - Community Room**

Call to Order & Welcome

Board President Mrs. Frenda called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

Roll Call

Present:

Mr. Baker	Mrs. Gomez (arrived 7:27 pm, left 8:15 pm)
Ms. Ballard	Mrs. Hoppe
Ms. Clark-Emery	Mrs. Santoro
Ms. Cooper	Mrs. Wry (arrived 6:32 pm)
Ms. Gils (arrived 6:33 pm, left 8:32 pm)	Mrs. Frenda

Absent: None.

Also Present:

Dr. Brian Brotschul, Superintendent
 Dr. Coleen Butler, Assistant Superintendent
 Mr. Richard Liguori, Business Administrator/Board Secretary
 Ms. Megan Oduyela, Busch Law Group

Board Norms

Before a Meeting
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Arrive on time and prepared (read agenda and all attachments, including committee minutes in advance). ● Understand the placement of items on the agenda and understand why. ● Observe the board chain of command and respect the distinction between the role of the superintendent and the board. ● Understand what our role as members of the board is, including what items are executive session discussions versus public meeting discussions. ● Be problem solvers by working through issues and seeking advice and clarity from fellow board members and NJSBA if there are points of concern or contention.
During a Meeting
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● No active use of phones in executive sessions or at the board table. ● Why speaking/why not? ● Value all voices; everyone has a chance to respond while being respectful of others.

- Non-repetition of issues/debate by the same individual until all have had the opportunity to speak.
- Signal to the board president to speak, the board president acknowledges the next speaker to allow uninterrupted opinions with time in mind.
- No surprises to the board or administration.

After a Meeting

- Support the outcomes determined by the majority while ensuring that minority voices are acknowledged.
- Abide by your responsibilities as a board member and be respectful of administrative and board time constraints.
- Be dedicated to supporting and attending school functions.
- Strive to develop professionally as individual board members and as a Board.
- Remember that students are always at the center of our decisions.

District Goals

2025-2026 District Goals

- **Academic**
 - Show progress in decreasing achievement gaps by advancing academic performance through increased support in areas of instruction for academic subgroups. Evaluate progress annually using all available assessment data.
 - Identify staff to leverage existing education by assessing interest in obtaining further certifications to expand available dual enrollment and career and technical education (CTE) student course offerings.
- **Facilities**
 - To prioritize planning for STEM/Robotics/CTE curriculum, develop a prioritized long-range facility plan and cost estimates.
- **Community Integration**
 - To support the belief that every community member is a stakeholder, develop 2-3 avenues to expand community connectivity and engage with all community members to communicate district outcomes and opportunities for further engagement with those residents with and without school-aged children.
- **Culture & Climate / Social Emotional Learning**
 - Identify and implement tools and mechanisms to establish a baseline understanding of student and staff experience in Somerset Hills School District to develop a future strategic plan to enhance workplace and school culture, climate, and social-emotional learning.

Executive Session

Mrs. Santoro made a motion to go to Executive Session at 6:33 pm. Ms. Cooper seconded.

WHEREAS the “Open Public Meetings Act” (Chapter 231 Laws of 1975) authorizes a public body to exclude the public from that portion of a meeting at which specified topics are to be discussed under circumstances where the public consideration of such topics will clearly endanger the public, or where the personal privacy or guaranteed rights of individuals whose activities or affairs are to be discussed would be clearly in danger of unwarranted invasions, and

WHEREAS the matters about to be presented for discussion clearly meet the “circumstances” test of such Act:

RESOLVED that the Board of Education of Somerset Hills now adjourns its public session to reconvene in Executive Session for the purpose of discussing the following: Student Matters.

And, be it further,

RESOLVED that the discussion in Executive Session be disclosed when the Board’s consideration of the subject matter has been closed, or that such matter does not adversely affect the rights of prospective, current, or past public officers, or personnel of the Board, unless such individuals have in writing requested the disclosures of such discussion at a public meeting and provided such public disclosure will no longer clearly endanger the public interest.

Mrs. Wry made a motion to return to Public Session at 6:55 pm. Ms. Ballard seconded.

Mrs. Gomez joined at 7:27 pm. The public meeting resumed at 7:30 pm.

Pledge of Allegiance**Report of the Superintendent**

1. Student Reports
 - a. BMS report provided by Joseph Gomez and Titus Knaus
 - b. BHS report provided by Sophia Fazel-Sarjui and Nolan Baker
2. Recognition of Crimson Advisor:
 - a. Heather Hunkele

WHEREAS, the Somerset Hills Board of Education gives special honor and commendation to educators who exemplify dedication, care, and excellence in teaching, and ignite a passion in students;

WHEREAS, **Heather Hunkele** is part of Bernards High School and serves as an inspiration to her students and colleagues alike;

WHEREAS, **Heather Hunkele**, is invested in advancing skills of exceptional journalism and providing meaningful experiences for student writers that prepare them for engagement with authentic audiences;

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved by the Somerset Hills Board of Education that: The members of the Board of Education hereby commend **Heather Hunkele** for her commitment to the BHS journalism program and its student contributors, as they were the 7th school internationally, and 2nd in the state to complete the six badges of exceptional journalism and be named as a SNO Distinguished Site.

When the Somerset Hills Board of Education adjourns this day, it does so in honor of the achievements earned by **Heather Hunkele**.

The Board of Education Secretary is directed to have this Resolution reflected in the permanent minutes of the Somerset Hills Board of Education on this 17th day of December 2025.

Samantha Frenda
Board of Education President

Brian B. Brotschul, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

3. Recognition of Crimson Editors-In-Chief:

- a. Ella Patel
- b. Andrew Tropp
- c. Colin Caggiano

WHEREAS, the Somerset Hills Board of Education gives special honor and commendation to dedicated students who write and publish at the highest academic level with effort, responsibility, and a positive attitude;

WHEREAS, (**Crimson Editor**) sees the merit in practicing the skills of exceptional journalism, as well as grit and determination when applying principles of journalism to both print and online publications;

WHEREAS, (**Crimson Editor**) is part of Bernards High School and serves as an inspiration to peers and staff members alike;

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved by the Somerset Hills Board of Education that: The members of the Board of Education hereby commend (**Crimson Editor**) for his/her extraordinary accomplishments, along with his/her editorial team, being the 7th school internationally and 2nd in the state to complete the six badges of exceptional journalism and be named as a SNO Distinguished Site.

When the Somerset Hills Board of Education adjourns this day, it does so in honor of the achievements earned by (**Crimson Editor**).

The Board of Education Secretary is directed to have this Resolution reflected in the permanent minutes of the Somerset Hills Board of Education on this 17th day of December 2025.

Samantha Frenda
Board of Education President

Brian B. Brotschul, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

4. Recognition of Crimson Staff:

- a. Jack Martin
- b. Will Simpson
- c. Ben Balian
- d. Charlotte Caggiano

- e. Lyla Carey
- f. Cara Falzarano
- g. Olivia Highland
- h. Ashika Papishetty
- i. Aletha Reynolds
- j. Macklin Dunnder
- k. Charlie Quinn
- l. Julian Bonk
- m. Cameron Bong

WHEREAS, the Somerset Hills Board of Education gives special honor and commendation to dedicated students who write and publish at the highest academic level with effort, responsibility, and a positive attitude;

WHEREAS, (**Crimson Writer**) sees the merit in practicing the skills of exceptional journalism, as well as grit and determination when applying principles of journalism to both print and online publications;

WHEREAS, (**Crimson Writer**) is part of Bernards High School and serves as an inspiration to peers and staff members alike;

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved by the Somerset Hills Board of Education that: The members of the Board of Education hereby commend (**Crimson Writer**) for his/her extraordinary accomplishments, along with his/her editorial team, being the 7th school internationally and 2nd in the state to complete the six badges of exceptional journalism and be named as a SNO Distinguished Site.

When the Somerset Hills Board of Education adjourns this day, it does so in honor of the achievements earned by (**Crimson Writer**).

The Board of Education Secretary is directed to have this Resolution reflected in the permanent minutes of the Somerset Hills Board of Education on this 17th day of December 2025.

Samantha Frenda
Board of Education President

Brian B. Brotschul, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

5. Superintendent Report: Dr. Brotschul raised awareness of several timely and pertinent District issues, including tributes to two outgoing Board members, an update on Referendum 2026, and an update on the 2026 Regionalization Study.

Outgoing Board Member Recognition - Silvia Gils, Robert Baker. Both Ms. Gils and Mr. Baker received plaques recognizing their service. Mr. Baker was additionally recognized by Mrs. Frenda, Ms. Cooper, and Mrs. Santoro. Mr. Baker shared words of thanks.

Mrs. Gomez left at 8:15 pm. Ms. Gils left at 8:32 pm.

Public Comments for Actionable Agenda Items - seeing no one from the public, Mrs. Santoro moved to close public comments. Ms. Cooper seconded. All remaining present voted in favor.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Resolved, that the Somerset Hills Board of Education approve the Public Input & Action and Executive meeting minutes for November 19, 2025.

Mrs. Hoppe moved to approve, and Mrs. Wry seconded.

The minutes were approved by a roll call vote of 6-0-2. Voting: Ayes: Mr. Baker, Ms. Ballard, Ms. Clark-Emery, Ms. Cooper, Mrs. Hoppe, Mrs. Santoro. Abstain (Executive meeting minutes only): Mrs. Wry, Mrs. Frenda. Absent: Ms. Gils, Mrs. Gomez.

APPROVAL OF BEDMINSTER REPRESENTATIVE

RESOLVED, that the Somerset Hills Board of Education approve Gabriela Gomez as the Bedminster representative to the Somerset Hills Board of Education for the 2026 calendar year.

Mrs. Wry moved to approve, and Mrs. Hoppe seconded.

The minutes were approved by a roll call vote of 8-0-0. Voting: Ayes: Mr. Baker, Ms. Ballard, Ms. Clark-Emery, Ms. Cooper, Mrs. Hoppe, Mrs. Santoro, Mrs. Wry, Mrs. Frenda. Absent: Ms. Gils, Mrs. Gomez.

BUSINESS OPERATIONS

A. Committee Report & Discussion - Mr. Baker gave the report. The Committee met on December 2, 2025. The following items were discussed:

- Mr. Jeremy Schwarz reported that to reduce the number of phishing emails and prevent bad actors from our systems; several changes will be made to cyber security protocols. Starting in January, all sign-ins will require a two-factor authorization using DUO. Then in the summer, the email platform will be changed to Microsoft Outlook instead of Gmail. Also, all incoming email will show the real address in addition to a spoofed address. He also reported that a backup to our regular internet provider, Verizon, has been provided by Lightpath. We have experienced several outages due to fiber-line failures in the Verizon system along Route 202. Having two providers will prevent any outage to our IT systems. Mr. Schwarz reported that the cost to install the two donated HUDL sports cameras for the baseball and softball field is about \$7500 to \$10,000 each. However, since it is planned to replace both backstops, it makes sense to hold off until the new backstops are in place.
- Dr. Brotschul reported that the Food Network of Somerset County backpack distribution program has started at Bedwell and is working fine.
- Dr. Brotschul reported on the baseball and softball field improvements that are needed. These include a new pitcher's mound for the baseball bullpen, a new softball batting cage, an indoor batting cage (donation from SH Baseball Club), scheduled grooming by a third-party service company twice per year and a new L-screen used for batting practice. Some of these projects will be completed in this year's budget, but some may need to be budgeted for next year, along with the new back stops for each field. Dr. Brotschul is also studying how to improve the handicap access for both fields. To help in this assessment, he plans to have our engineering company develop a plan for our review.

- Mr. Liguori discussed the plan to improve the accounting oversight for the three student activities fee accounts handled at each school. Last year, our financial auditor made a recommendation to improve the accounting methods used by each of the three schools. To satisfy this recommendation it has been decided to purchase a software package for each school that is especially designed for activity fee accounting. Mr. Liguori has found two vendors that appear to meet our needs. They range in price from \$7,000 to \$15,000 per year. He will report back to the committee next month with his recommendation for which software we should purchase.
- Dr. Brotschul shared with the committee three pending NJ legislative bills that would impact public education. Bill A5966/S4885 would modify certain provisions of the school funding law, which would require the Commissioner of Education to give schools preliminary notification of state aid funds. Bill S5847 extends the deadline for completion of the school’s annual audit for 2024-2025. Bill S4861 requires the executive county superintendent to establish a consolidation plan to combine the school districts in the county into regional districts.
- Mr. Liguori reported that we have received four submissions for our Request for Proposals to be the broker of record that manages our employee health benefits. The administration will review the submissions and put forward at least two to the committee to review next month.
- Dr. Brotschul reported that the 2026-2027 budget preparation process has started. Each school and department will submit their expense budgets before the end of the year for consolidation and review. The committee should see some of the preliminary numbers by the February committee meeting.

Discussion - Mr. Baker pointed out the various grants and donations on the agenda and gave thanks. Ms. Clark-Emery made note of specific items being done in advance of the spring sports season.

B. Action Items: Mr. Baker moved items #1-16, Ms. Cooper seconded.

Items #1-16 were approved by roll call vote of 8-0-0. Voting: Ayes: Mr. Baker, Ms. Ballard, Ms. Clark-Emery, Ms. Cooper, Mrs. Hoppe, Mrs. Santoro, Mrs. Wry, Mrs. Frenda. Absent: Ms. Gils, Mrs. Gomez.

1. Board Secretary & Treasurer Reports & Board Certification*

WHEREAS, the Board Secretary has received the Reports of the Secretary and Treasurer for the month of November 2025 showing the following balances:

FUND	Board Secretary Cash Balance (1)	Treasurer Cash Balance (2)
(10) General Fund	\$9,288,403.50	\$9,288,403.50
(20) Special Revenue Fund	\$121,496.82	\$121,496.82
(30) Capital Projects Fund	-	-
(40)Debt Service Fund	\$725,584.57	\$725,584.57
Total Government Funds	\$10,135,484.89	\$10,135,484.89

(1) From Secretary’s Report (2) From Treasurer’s Report

WHEREAS in compliance with N.J.A.C.6A: 23-2.1(c)3 the secretary has certified that, as of the date of the report(s), no budgetary line item account has encumbrances and expenditures which in total exceed the amount appropriated by the district board of education, now, therefore, be it
RESOLVED, the Board of Education accepts the above referenced report and certifications and orders that they be attached to and made part of the record of this meeting, and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, in compliance with N.J.A.C.6A: 23-3.11(c) 4, the Board of Education certifies that, after review of the secretary’s monthly financial reports (appropriation section) and upon consultation with the appropriate district officials, to the best of its knowledge, no major account or fund has been overexpended in violation of N.J.A.C.6A: 23-2.11(b), and that sufficient funds are available to meet the district’s financial obligations for the remainder of the year.

2. Approve 2025-2026 Budget Transfers*

RESOLVED, that the Somerset Hills Board of Education approves the attached list of budget transfers for November 2025.

3. Payment of Bills*

WHEREAS, the Board Secretary has presented attached final November 2025 check registers with the recommendation that the checks be paid, and Now, therefore, be it RESOLVED, that the following bills be paid and an itemized list be filed with the minutes of this meeting:

FUND	
(10) General Fund	\$5,253,591.72
(20) Special Revenue Fund	\$100,925.69
(30) Capital Projects Fund	-
(40) Debt Service Fund	-
(60) Cafeteria Fund	\$74,074.19
(90) Agency Fund	\$1,255,614.43
TOTAL	\$6,684,206.03

4. Payment of Bills*

WHEREAS, the Board Secretary has presented attached December 2025 check registers with the recommendation that the checks be paid, and Now, therefore, be it RESOLVED, that the following bills be paid and an itemized list be filed with the minutes of this meeting:

FUND	
(10) General Fund	\$1,986,559.27
(20) Special Revenue Fund	\$24,283.47
(30) Capital Projects Fund	-
(40) Debt Service Fund	-
(60) Cafeteria Fund	-
(90) Agency Fund	\$427,096.26
TOTAL	\$2,437,939.00

5. Approve Special Education Schools*

RESOLVED, that the Somerset Hills Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the following schools for the 2025-2026 school year and extended school year:

	Student ID#	School	Location	Cost
a	5485971445	Hunterdon Prep	Annandale, NJ	\$42,471.00 (Prorated)

6. Approve Home Instruction and Beside Instruction*

RESOLVED, that the Somerset Hills Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the

Superintendent, approve the following home instruction and beside instruction for the 2025-2026 school year and extended school year:

	Provider	Services	Location	Cost	Not to Exceed Amount
a	Rutgers Behavioral Health Care	Bedside Instruction	Piscataway, NJ	\$75/hr	\$5,000

7. Approve Special Education Providers*

RESOLVED, that the Somerset Hills Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the following providers for the 2025-2026 school year and extended school year:

	Provider	Services	Location	Cost	Not to Exceed Amount
a	Care Options for Kids	Nursing (1:1)	Mount Laurel, NJ	\$61-\$68/hr	\$20,000

8. Approve Parent Organization Fundraisers*

RESOLVED, that the Somerset Hills Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the following parent organization fundraisers for the 2025-2026 school year:

	Organization	School	Event	Date
a	PAC Parents	BHS	Madrigals <i>Sounds of the Season</i> Album Online Sales	December 2025
b	BHS Ski Team	BHS	Yellas: Dine to Give Back	January 7, 2026

9. Approve Municipal Alliance Grant

RESOLVED, that the Somerset Hills Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, authorizes the application and approves funds for the 2025-2026 school year for the Municipal Alliance Grant as follows:

	Grant/Program	School	Amount
a	B Well	BES	\$5,000.00
b	Youth Summit	BMS	\$2,500.00
c	BMS After School Homework Club	BMS	\$2,500.00

10. Approve Municipal Alliance Grant*

RESOLVED, that the Somerset Hills Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, authorizes the application and approves funds for the 2025-2026 school year for the Municipal Alliance Grant as follows:

	Grant/Program	School	Amount
a	BHS ELL Homework Support	BHS	\$2,000.00

11. Accept Donations*

RESOLVED, that the Somerset Hills Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, accepts the following donations for the 2025-2026 school year:

	Organization	Grant Requested	School	Amount/Value
a	Somerset Hills Education Foundation	Biotechnology in Conservation Biology- Newstein Chang	BHS	\$3,337
b	Somerset Hills Education Foundation	Step Into Learning: An Outdoor Sensory Path for Whole-Child Development- Holly Jablonski & Debbie Rokosky	BES	\$5,000
c	Somerset Hills Education Foundation	Performing Arts Workshop- Jade Pietroluongo	BHS	\$2,000
d	Somerset Hills Education Foundation	Disc Golf Baskets & Equipment- Tyler Nadolny	BHS	\$1,710
e	Somerset Hills Education Foundation	Portable CNC Tool (Sharper Origin)- Judge Ellis	BHS	\$3,599

12. Accept Donation*

RESOLVED, that the Somerset Hills Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, accepts the following donation for the 2025-2026 school year:

	Organization	Item	School	Amount/Value
a	Somerset Hills Ball Club	Hanging batting cage net	BHS	\$2,000.00

13. Approve Revised Not to Exceed Amount*

RESOLVED, that the Somerset Hills Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the revised not to exceed amount for the 2025-2026 school year:

	Vendor	Description	Amount Not to Exceed
a	Anderson & Shah Law Group	Legal Services	\$150,000.00

14. Approve Participation in the Sourcewell Cooperative Purchasing System and Use of Contract #90121-UPS*

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-10 and N.J.A.C. 5:34-7.0 et seq. permit a Board of Education to utilize nationally recognized cooperative purchasing systems that have been approved by the New Jersey Division of Local Government Services; and

WHEREAS, Sourcewell (formerly the National Joint Powers Alliance – NJPA) is an approved national cooperative purchasing system that has completed the required public procurement process in accordance with applicable statutes; and

WHEREAS, the Somerset Hills Board of Education (“Board”) is currently registered as a participating member of Sourcewell, but wishes to reaffirm and formally approve its continued participation; and

WHEREAS, participation in Sourcewell will allow the District to secure competitively priced goods and services from vendors offering contracts awarded through a publicly advertised, competitively bid process; and

WHEREAS, the Board has determined that participation in Sourcewell is in the best interest of the District, providing cost savings, operational efficiency, and streamlined procurement opportunities throughout the year; and

WHEREAS, Sourcewell has awarded Contract #090121-UPS to United Parcel Service (UPS) for Express Courier, Overnight & Ground Delivery Logistics Services, and the District has an operational need for such services.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Somerset Hills Board of Education that it hereby authorizes the District’s continued participation in the cooperative purchasing system and the utilization of their contractual relationship with UPS.

15. Approve Joint Transportation Agreement*

RESOLVED, that the Somerset Hills Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the 2025-2026 Vehicle Maintenance Agreement with the Morris-Union Jointure Commission to provide transportation services for the 2025-2026 school year, at an amount not to exceed \$50,000.

16. Approve 2025-2026 Non-Public Security Aid*

RESOLVED, that the Somerset Hills Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the use of funds for Non-Public Security Aid for the following school:

	Non-Public School	Description	Amount
a	Far Hills Country Day School	CDW-G Verkada Video Alarms, Desk/Viewing Stations, Security licenses and subscriptions	\$23,340.00

C. Business Operations Old Business / New Business - None.

CURRICULUM

A. Committee Report & Discussion - Ms. Cooper gave the report. The Committee met on December 3, 2025. The following items were discussed:

DISCUSSION HIGHLIGHTS AND DECISIONS/CONCLUSIONS REACHED:

1. One to one at BHS

- Dr. Brotschul reported that our updated cell phone policy (no using phones in class) is going well and is appreciated by both students and staff. Given the success of this policy and potential legislative action, the high school will be moving to a bell-to-bell cell phone-free policy in September 2026.
- Next semester, BHS will be instituting sporadic cell-free days and clusters of days to prepare students and staff for the new policy.
- However, many students who use their own personal computers during the school day are still able to use their devices to access texts and social media.
- To ensure equity and consistency with device use, BHS will move to a one-to-one device model in the next academic year. This will necessitate the district to acquire some additional Chrome books beyond what the district has already purchased for NJSLA testing. Dr. Brotschul has indicated that this is a priority and is working with Mr. Liguori to find funds/budget for this initiative.
- The committee fully supported both the change in cell phone policy and the move to a one-to-one device policy at BHS.
- The committee also discussed access to Genesis during the school day. According to Dr. Brotschul, the lack of access to Genesis during the school day is not as popular as the cell phone policy among students. Unfortunately, customizing access (eg, to students during their lunch periods or to specific grades) is not currently possible. Dr. Brotschul will keep us updated.

2. College counseling for 1st-generation students (Jaime Walker)

- Dr. Walker joined us to discuss the numerous supports the district currently provides to 1st generation college students.
- Our counselors are the district's greatest resource for these students. Their philosophy is to meet these students where they are, expose them to potential future academic options and career paths, and help them meet their goals.
- This starts as early as middle school, when students are first exposed to college and career inventories.
- The district also partners with organizations such as Middle Earth and the Ramapo College Bridge program. Middle Earth helps students explore a wide range of college and career options and provides useful guidance, while the Ramapo Bridge program provides first-generation students with mentors who are first-generation students at Ramapo.
- Students also have the option of taking College Readiness, a course offered to Juniors in the Spring and Seniors in the fall. This course guides students through the application process and helps prepare students for college itself.
- In addition, students have access to college reps and military recruiters, who frequently visit the school to talk to students, and dual enrollment courses, which give students early exposure to college courses.
- Other community partnerships are available to help students with the expense of college applications.
- In short, while one counselor is not dedicated to first-generation college students, all our counselors are fully trained and prepared to help these students meet their academic or career goals.

3. Atlas

- Currently, parents are able to access the entire curriculum using the Atlas Web site.

- This year, the district is continuing its work to make accessing curricula easier for families and to facilitate collaboration among staff.
- By June, parents will have even greater access to the tools provided by Atlas, including more comprehensive search functionality and the ability to view unit plans, and teachers will be able to use Atlas to collaborate more easily.

4. Bedminster Math

- Dr. Brotschul and Dr. Butler briefly reviewed the differences between SHSD and Bedminster regarding accelerated middle school math.
- Last year, SHSD updated its criteria for placement but there are still major differences between districts. The committee agreed that no additional changes at SHSD are necessary at this time.

5. 9/11 lessons

- The committee also briefly discussed a concern related to the BHS social studies curriculum, which has since been resolved.

6. Transitional bilingual program at Bedwell

- Dr. Butler then reviewed the evolution, status, and next steps for the bilingual program at Bedwell.
- First, she described the steps involved in the development of the bilingual program:
 - 2018 - Dr. Dempsey requested exploring the institution of a bilingual program at Bedwell
 - 2018-2019 - Mr. Catelli had conversations with various schools that offer bilingual programs.
 - 2019-2020 - An SHSD Exploration Team was formed and visited several schools to examine various programs.
 - 2020-2021 - Work was paused due to the COVID pandemic.
 - 2021-2022 - Work resumed and a proposal for a bilingual program was developed using the information gathered during the research phase.
 - April 18, 2022 - The Curriculum committee supported the idea of moving forward with the proposal for our current bilingual program.
 - Fall 2022 - The BOE officially adopted the program and the planning phase began.
 - September 2024 - The program launched with our inaugural kindergarten class.
 - September 2025 - The program added a first grade class, as had been planned.
 - Ongoing - Student achievement and student needs are being closely monitored to determine next steps
- Potential options for next steps for our first graders include:
 - Transition students to general education 2nd grade as originally planned.
 - Move targeted students to a general education 2nd-grade class with a bilingual para; others move to a general education 2nd-grade class without para support.
 - Open a bilingual transitional 2nd grade for the students who would benefit from another year of transitional services (students who may benefit from an additional year might include those who have not yet had two years of instruction and/or those students who may continue to need more intensive support) at Bedwell.
- The decision about next steps will be made early next year based on the needs of our students.

DECISIONS

1. No concerns were raised regarding PD or field trip requests.

Discussion - Mrs. Wry mentioned that she was present at the committee meeting though not mentioned as such in the chair's report to the Board. Mrs. Santoro asked a clarifying question about Genesis. Mrs.

Hoppe commented regarding Genesis. Mrs. Santoro asked a question regarding Genesis and complemented the process and timeline regarding the transitional bilingual program. Ms. Ballard asked a clarifying question about bell-to-bell cell phones and Genesis access.

B. Action Items: Ms. Cooper moved items #1-5, Mrs. Wry seconded.

Items 1-5 were approved by roll call vote of 8-0-0. Voting: Ayes: Mr. Baker, Ms. Ballard, Ms. Clark-Emery, Ms. Cooper, Mrs. Hoppe, Mrs. Santoro, Mrs. Wry, Mrs. Frenda. Absent: Ms. Gils, Mrs. Gomez.

1. Approve Professional Development/School Business

RESOLVED, that the Somerset Hills Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the following professional development/school business for the 2025-2026 school year:

	School	Name	Workshop/Conference/School Business	Date(s)	Est. Cost
a	BMS	Barna, Lindsay	Rutgers Collaborative Leadership Training	1/14/26	TBD
b	BMS	Berry, Courtney	Rutgers Collaborative Leadership Training	1/14/26	TBD
c	BMS	Calabrese, Eric	Field Trip Chaperone-Grade 5	6/8/26	\$0
d	BMS	Chaffee, Salome	Rutgers Collaborative Leadership Training	1/14/26	TBD
e	BMS	Clark, Michelle	Field Trip Chaperone-Grade 5	6/8/26	\$0
f	BMS	Clark, Michelle	Rutgers Collaborative Leadership Training	1/14/26	TBD
g	BES	Coheleach, Ilona	Field Trip Chaperone-Grade 2	5/15/26	\$0
h	BES	Falzarano, Sarah	Field Trip Chaperone-Grade 2	5/15/26	\$0
i	BES	Falzarano, Sarah	Rutgers Collaborative Leadership Training	1/14/26	TBD
j	BMS	Fritsche, Max	Capturing Kids' Hearts Training	1/21/26- 1/22/26	\$550
k	BES	Gelsinger, Allison	Field Trip Chaperone-Grade 2	5/15/26	\$0
l	BMS	Gilly, Zoltan	Rutgers Collaborative Leadership Training	1/14/26	TBD
m	BES	Gutierrez, Tatiana	2026 Spring Conference NJTESOL/NJBE, Inc. (NJ Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages/NJ Bilingual Educators, Inc.)	5/21/26	\$325
n	BES	Hall, Kristine	Rutgers Collaborative Leadership Training	1/14/26	TBD

	School	Name	Workshop/Conference/School Business	Date(s)	Est. Cost
o	BES	Johnson, Kimberly	Field Trip Chaperone-Grade 2	5/15/26	\$0
p	BMS	Jurgens, Allyssa	Field Trip Chaperone-BMS 8th Grade Chorus	1/14/26	\$0
q	BMS	Jurgens, Allyssa	Field Trip Chaperone-BHS Instrumental Music Department	3/19/26-3/23/26	\$0
r	BMS	Kellett, Ashley	Capturing Kids' Hearts Training	1/21/26-1/22/26	\$550
s	BMS	King, Brian	Field Trip Chaperone-BMS Earth Science Team	1/22/26	\$0
t	BMS	Kleinstei, Mary	Field Trip Chaperone-Grade 5	6/8/26	\$0
u	BES	Lourenco, Emma	Rutgers Collaborative Leadership Training	1/14/26	TBD
v	BES	Matos, Gabriela	Field Trip Chaperone-Grade 2	5/15/26	\$0
w	BMS	McGovern, Danielle	Rutgers Collaborative Leadership Training	1/14/26	TBD
x	BES	McShane, Sarah	Rutgers Collaborative Leadership Training	1/14/26	TBD
y	BES	McSpirtt, Kelly	Effective IEPs in Action: Practical Tools for Writing and Data Collection	3/2/26	\$131
z	BMS	Medina, Pilar	Capturing Kids' Hearts Training	1/21/26-1/22/26	\$550
aa	BES	O'Day, Lauren	Rutgers Collaborative Leadership Training	1/14/26	TBD
bb	BES	Palmieri, Jeremy	2026 Annual Convention NJAHPERD (NJ Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation & Dance)	2/23/26-2/24/26	\$589.67
cc	BES	Paterno, Amy	2026 Annual Convention NJAHPERD (NJ Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation & Dance)	2/23/26-2/24/26	\$582.79
dd	BMS	Pistilli-Urena, Jaclyn	Capturing Kids' Hearts Training	1/21/26-1/22/26	\$550
ee	BES	Reed, Patrick	Rutgers Collaborative Leadership Training	1/14/26	TBD
ff	BES	Rokosky, Debbie	Rutgers Collaborative Leadership Training	1/14/26	TBD
gg	BES	Sheehan, Carolyn	Field Trip Chaperone-Grade 2	5/15/26	\$0
hh	BES	Sheehan, Carolyn	Rutgers Collaborative Leadership Training	1/14/26	TBD

	School	Name	Workshop/Conference/School Business	Date(s)	Est. Cost
ii	BMS	Snyder, Jason	Field Trip Chaperone-BMS 8th Grade Band and Orchestra	1/7/26	\$0
jj	BMS	Snyder, Jason	Field Trip Chaperone-BHS Instrumental Music Department	3/19/26-3/23/26	\$0
kk	BMS	Snyder, Jason	Rutgers Collaborative Leadership Training	1/14/26	TBD
ll	BMS	Tresslar, Kristene	Rutgers Collaborative Leadership Training	1/14/26	TBD
mm	BMS	Turner, Samantha	Field Trip Chaperone-Grade 5	6/8/26	\$0
nn	BMS	Weinstein, Julie	Capturing Kids' Hearts Training	1/21/26-1/22/26	\$550
oo	BMS	Weinstein, Julie	Field Trip Chaperone-Grade 5	6/8/26	\$0
pp	BES	Ziolkowski, Maureen	Field Trip Chaperone-Grade 2	5/15/26	\$0

2. Approve Professional Development/School Business*

RESOLVED, that the Somerset Hills Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the following professional development/school business, for the 2025-2026 school year:

	School	Name	Workshop/Conference/School Business	Date(s)	Est. Cost
a	District	Barna, Lindsay	Literacy Leaders' Network Meetings	1/29/26, 3/19/26	\$0
b	BHS	Boudreau, Derek	NJSIAA (NJ State Interscholastic Athletic Association) Tennis Coaches' Clinic	1/9/26	\$0
c	District	Brotschul, Brian	TCNJ Education Recruitment Program/Fair	3/11/26	\$0
d	BHS	Camooso, Stephanie	2026 FLENJ (Fellowship of Language Educators of New Jersey) Annual Conference	3/18/26	\$180
e	BHS	Carmon, David	2026 Football Coaching Clinic	2/19/26-2/20/26	\$390
f	BHS	Ferrara, James	Field Trip Chaperone-NJ Science League	1/22/26	\$0
g	BHS	Ferrara, James	Field Trip Chaperone-Physics Club	1/24/26	\$0
h	BHS	Koch, Kevin	Field Trip Chaperone-Tech & Robotics	4/16/26	\$0
i	BHS	Koch, Kevin	Field Trip Chaperone-Tech & Robotics	3/27/26	\$0
j	BHS	Koch, Kevin	Field Trip Chaperone-Tech & Robotics	5/21/26	\$0

	School	Name	Workshop/Conference/School Business	Date(s)	Est. Cost
k	BHS	Koch, Kevin	Field Trip Chaperone-Tech & Robotics	1/27/26	\$0
l	District	Koransky, Jamie	Building a Shared Language Between ESL and Child Study Teams: Supporting Our Multilingual Learners	2/27/26	\$217.71
m	District	Mehan, Kathy	TCNJ Education Recruitment Program/Fair	3/11/26	\$424.91
n	BHS	Neiss, Joanna	Field Trip Chaperone-Anatomy Classes	1/16/26	\$0
o	BHS	Pasqua, Jaclyn	2026 FLENJ (Fellowship of Language Educators of New Jersey) Annual Conference	3/18/26	\$180
p	BHS	Pasqua, Jaclyn	Field Trip Chaperone-Spanish 5H	12/12/25	\$0
q	BHS	Pistilli-Urena, Jaclyn	Field Trip Chaperone-BHS Instrumental Music Department	3/19/26-3/23/26	\$0
r	BHS	Pistilli-Urena, Jaclyn	Field Trip Chaperone-Harvard Model Congress	2/19/26-2/20/26	\$0
s	BHS	Samson, Alyssa	Field Trip Chaperone-Girls Lacrosse	3/19/26-3/23/26	\$0
t	BHS	Simoneau, Jon	2026 Football Coaching Clinic	2/19/26-2/20/26	\$390
u	BHS	Taesler, Stephen	Field Trip Chaperone-BHS Instrumental Music Department	3/19/26	\$0
v	BHS	Thatcher, Stephanie	2026 FLENJ (Fellowship of Language Educators of New Jersey) Annual Conference	3/18/26	\$140
w	BHS	Volosin, Lauren	TCNJ Scholar Engagement Series-The Witch in Literature	2/2/26	\$327.02
x	BHS	Wierzbicki, Kyle	2026 Football Coaching Clinic	2/19/26-2/20/26	\$390
y	BHS	Young, Joseph	Field Trip Chaperone-Science League	1/22/26, 3/18/26	\$0

3. Approve Field Trips

RESOLVED, that the Somerset Hills Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the following field trips for the 2025-2026 school year:

	School	Trip	# of Students	# of Faculty	# of Chaperones
a	BES	Fairview Farm - Bedminster, NJ Grade 2	70	5	14

	School	Trip	# of Students	# of Faculty	# of Chaperones
b	BES	Waterloo Village - Stanhope, NJ Grade 3	88	7	15
c	BES	Bernardsville Police Station - Bernardsville, NJ Preschool (Trip 1)	12	5	0
d	BES	Bernardsville Police Station - Bernardsville, NJ Preschool (Trip 2)	12	5	0
e	BMS	Lake Hopatcong State Park - Landing, NJ Grade 5	80	8	0
f	BMS	Ridge High School - Basking Ridge, NJ BMS Earth Science Team	6	1	0

4. Approve Field Trips*

RESOLVED, that the Somerset Hills Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the following field trips for the 2025-2026 school year:

	School	Trip	# of Students	# of Faculty	# of Chaperones
a	BHS	Jonathan Dayton High School - Springfield, NJ Technology & Robotics	6	1	0
b	BHS	Bernardsville Middle School - Bernardsville, NJ BHS French 3H Class	15	1	0
c	BHS	Universal Orlando - Orlando, FL Girls Lacrosse	21	2	0
d	BHS	Ridge High School - Basking Ridge, NJ Science League	35	4	0
e	BHS	Mount Olive High School - Flanders, NJ Science League	35	4	0

5. Approve Professional Development Program*

RESOLVED, that the Somerset Hills Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the contract for Lift As We Climb Consulting, LLC, for professional development in sheltered instruction and bilingual program coaching for the 2025-2026 school year in the amount of \$18,400, funded in part by Title IV federal grant.

C. Curriculum Old Business / New Business - None.

PERSONNEL

A. Committee Report and Discussion: Ms. Ballard gave the report. The Committee met on December 4, 2025. The following items were discussed:

1. Review of Personnel Agenda - On the calendar this month is ESL leave replacement; approval of stipended position for teachers involved in the dual enrollment program (University of Delaware, Ramapo, Kean, RVCC, Seton Hall) because teachers answer to these colleges twice yearly, in December and June. There was also a discussion surrounding Multilingual Learning Programming and possible personnel requirements for next year.
2. The hiring process is ongoing for the BHS lacrosse coach.
3. We reviewed the job description of the Math Interventionist/Math Specialist: We are always looking for math support at middle school; we do have a reading specialist, so this dovetails nicely.
4. Interim AP at Bedwell - Jasmine Akauola, assistant principal at Bedwell, is leaving in January for a new position. We wish her well. Luckily, there is currently an interim administrator, Marcos Vargas, in place who meets the needs of this position, and he will be reassigned to take over the position through the end of the school year. In February or March we will begin our search for an assistant principal.
5. Maintenance Foreman position: upon the retirement of Rufus Vought, this position is being retitled as a maintenance position, which will be under the supervision of the director of operations. As a district, we are always looking for the best way to leverage our positions. The duties of the Custodial Foreman position, which had been consolidated into another position but was found to require too much responsibility for one person, will be available in July.

Discussion - None.

B. Action Items: Ms. Ballard moved items #1-12, Mr. Baker seconded.

Items 1-12 were approved by roll call vote of 8-0-0. Voting: Ayes: Mr. Baker, Ms. Ballard, Ms. Clark-Emery, Ms. Cooper, Mrs. Hoppe, Mrs. Santoro, Mrs. Wry, Mrs. Frenda. Absent: Ms. Gils, Mrs. Gomez.

1. Approve Appointment Certified Staff

RESOLVED, that the Somerset Hills Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the appointment of the following non-tenured certificated staff for the 2025-2026 school year, *subject to further investigation pursuant to law*:

	Name	School	Position/UPC	Step	Level	Salary	Replace	Effective
a	Dalen, Sara	BES	Music Teacher TCH.ES.MUSI.NA.02	4-5	MA	\$75,390 <i>prorated</i>	Noonan	2/17/26 <i>(or sooner)</i>

2. Approve Appointment Leave Replacement

RESOLVED, that the Somerset Hills Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, amend the appointment of the following leave replacement teacher for the 2025-2026 school year; *subject to further investigation pursuant to law*:

	Name	School	Position/UPC	Level	Step	Salary	Replace	Effective
a	Hogan, Hailey	BES	ESL Teacher TCH.ES.ESL.NA.02.LR	BA	3	\$67,895 <i>prorated</i>	9878	2/2/26 <i>(or sooner)</i> - 6/18/26

3. Amend Appointment Interim Administrator*

RESOLVED, that the Somerset Hills Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, extend the appointment of the following Interim Administrator for the 2025-2026 School Year, *subject to further investigation pursuant to law*:

	Name	Position/Location	Salary	Effective Date
a	Vargas, Marcos	Director/District	\$550/per diem	10/16/25 - 6/30/26

4. Approve Leave of Absence*

RESOLVED, that the Somerset Hills Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the following leave of absence:

	Employee #	School	Position	Type of leave	Date of Leave/Notes
a	9085	BHS	Certified Staff	Disability FMLA Anticipated Return	03/03/26 - 04/28/26 (paid w/benefits) 04/29/26 - 06/22/26 (unpaid w/benefits) 08/25/26

5. Amend Leave of Absence*

RESOLVED, that the Somerset Hills Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, amend the following leave of absence:

	Employee #	School	Position	Type of leave	Date of Leave/Notes
a	9951	BHS	Certified	Paid Sick Days Unpaid Anticipated RTW	01/12/26 - 02/02/26 01/28/26 (paid w/benefits) 02/03/26 01/29/26 - 03/01/26 (unpaid w/benefits) 03/02/26

6. Rescind Athletic Position*

RESOLVED, that the Somerset Hills Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, rescind the appointment of the following athletic position for the 2025-2026 school year:

	Name	Position	School	Season	Stipend
a	Johnson, Alec	Assistant AD: Spring 50%	BHS	Spring	\$1,964.60

7. Approve Co-Curricular Position

RESOLVED, that the Somerset Hills Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the appointment of the following co-curricular position for the 2025-2026 school year:

	Name	Position	School	Season	Stipend
a	Smith, Lauren	Math Club	BES	25-26 SY	\$61.12/hour

8. Approve Stipend Positions*

RESOLVED, that the Somerset Hills Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the appointment of the following stipend positions for the 2025-2026 school year:

	Name	Position	School	Season	Stipend
a	Anderson, Richard	Dual Enrollment - Calculus	BHS	25-26 SY	\$2,000
b	Ciocco, Jared	Dual Enrollment - Latin	BHS	25-26 SY	\$2,000
c	Hemans, Nicholas	Dual Enrollment - Entrepreneurship	BHS	25-26 SY	\$2,000
d	Hunkele, Heather	Dual Enrollment - Journalism	BHS	25-26 SY	\$2,000
e	Pasqua, Jaclyn	Dual Enrollment - Spanish	BHS	25-26 SY	\$2,000
f	Thatcher, Stephanie	Dual Enrollment - French	BHS	25-26 SY	\$2,000
g	Volosin, Lauren	Dual Enrollment - Tomorrow's Teachers	BHS	25-26 SY	\$2,000

9. Approve Overloads*

RESOLVED, that the Somerset Hills Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the following overloads for the 2025-2026 school year:

	Type of Support	Teacher	Term	Periods/ week	Salary	Overload Salary prorated
a	Biology A BHS	Neiss, Joanna	12/1/25 - 1/2/26	5	\$67,895	\$962.04
b	English - SIP BHS	Weltler, Lynn	S2*	5	\$117,800	\$9,818.63
c	Math - SIP BHS	Camuto, Lisa	S2*	5	\$92,275	\$7,691.12

★ Per diem until completed as determined by Principal

10. Approve Athletic Positions*

RESOLVED, that the Somerset Hills Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the appointment of the following athletic positions for the 2025-2026 school year:

	Name	Position	School	Season	Stipend
a	Femenella, Matthew	Volunteer: Lacrosse Men's	BHS	Spring	\$0
b	Simoneau, Jon	Volunteer: Winter Track	BHS	Winter	\$0
c	Simoneau, Jon	Volunteer: Spring Track	BHS	Spring	\$0
d	Depew, Charlotte	Volunteer: Fencing	BHS	Winter	\$0
e	Monteleone, Nicholas	Volunteer: Wrestling	BHS	Winter	\$0

11. Approve Title Change in Position Control Roster*

RESOLVED, that the Somerset Hills Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the following title change in the District Position Control Roster:

	Old Title	New Title	Location	Effective
a	Maintenance Foreman MNT.DIST.FORE.NA.01	Maintenance MNT.DIST.MTCE.NA.04	District	1/1/26

12. Approve Job Description*

RESOLVED, that the Somerset Hills Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the following job description:

a	Math Interventionist
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C. Personnel Old Business / New Business - None.

POLICY

A. Committee Report and Discussion: Ms. Ballard gave the report. The Committee met on December 4, 2025. The following items were discussed:

- Administrative Presentation, Dr. Scott Neigel
 - The topic was cell phones at BHS. The schoolwide system is as follows:
 - Pre K- 8 cell phone free, bell to bell
 - BHS cell phone caddy system; no phones allowed during class, although students are allowed access at lunch and at passing
 - Looking to September launch at BHS of cell phone free, bell to bell; will probably be a Legislative requirement, so the school is planning accordingly.

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- The plan going forward is to meet with teachers, as well as meeting with students in groups so that the students understand the rationale of the change.
 - Some benefits of current policy:
 - Students' time out of the classroom is down since when they go to the bathroom, using the bathroom is the only goal as it has become boring, as there is nothing to do besides the usual. No more checking phones, or meeting friends/ fellow students summoned by text, in the bathroom. This echoes the theme: "we want you in class!"
 - Teacher perspective: uniform policy is a relief; possible control of phones by teachers has been a concern. Teachers find kids more focused, generally. One student work around the policy is the practice of mirroring the phone to use social media on their laptop; Dr. Neigel suggested that one solution is to make sure everyone has a chrome book
 - Kids understand the importance of and the reasoning for not using phones during class. They game during lunch and utilize phones in study hall, cafeteria and hallways.
 - The enforcement will be tough if/when the state goes bell to bell.
 - Another inherent challenge will be the use of earbuds; some folks have earbuds in because they don't want/need to be social; some listen to music during passing time.
 - Dr. Neigel spoke to the importance of promoting awareness; a ban is a ban, but it is also important to get folks to think of how they monitor their interactions and time spent on their phones.
 - Wellness Day in March proposed by Student Council; Dr. Neigel Scott proposing including cell phone wellness as part of the day
 - One board member commented that some students don't know how to have conversations; not natural to them. Another board member asked about continuing current policy versus ban, citing cell phone policy at Ridge.
 - Dr. Brotschul commented on the incongruity of the change in policy when the MS students graduate to BHS; BMS rule was no cell phone but when you get to BHS, you can use your cell phone.
 - This policy is very much on the radar with influential legislators, drafted to make school solve a societal problem. Need education for parents and families.
 - Discussion, Dr. Brotschul: School Counseling - Minority Students
 - A board member had requested that we explore, discuss, outline counseling of first generation and minority students in terms of planning. A question was raised in re: having a dedicated counselor.
 - Dr. Jaime Walker, Director of Guidance, met with the Curriculum Committee. She spoke to the partnership with Middle Earth, which applies one to one application support through their Youth College Readiness programs Dr. Butler stated that this organization is very responsive to student needs and requests; for example, students requested a bus tour of local colleges and they were able to arrange that tour.
 - Other programming discussed included Ramapo College Bridge Program; Naviance connectivity re: college prep, College Prep Planning nights offered by the schools (usually very well attended) and partnerships with colleges and trade schools.
 - Our MLL program has a great commitment from Mr. Catelli and Ms. Garay (BHS teacher); they are very connected and ESL connections are strong with significant touchpoints with students.

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- No counselors designated specifically for Hispanic folks or first gen only; all guidance counselors have skills to help everyone. Since counselors are assigned alphabetically, they counsel the same students year after year, building connections with students and often families, as multiple children from families will have the same counselors.
 - A board member asked about kindergarten and first grade bilingual learners; as a transitional situation and how that works. It is possible to move out of the class if that would be the best situation for the child, but most students are in the class all year. It was noted that all students do related arts with the wider community.
 - A board member asked about kindergarten orientation: it didn't occur last spring but will take place this year.
 - Freedom to Read Act (Summary)
 - On August 13, 2025, the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) published guidance titled “Development of Model Policies for Library Material Curation and Review Under the Freedom to Read Act” (Guidance).
 - The NJDOE released this Guidance to assist districts in implementing the provisions of the “Freedom to Read Act” – N.J.S.A. 18A:34A-1 through N.J.S.A. 18A:34A-7.
 - The “Freedom to Read Act” requires districts to adopt a policy and procedure that provide standards for the curation of library material, establish criteria for the removal of existing school library material, and provide protection against attempts to censor school library material.
 - The “Freedom to Read Act” is effective on December 9, 2025
 - First Reading
 - First Reading: 2530 Policy and Regulation (Resource Materials)
 - First Reading: 2535 Policy and Regulation (Library Material-New)
 - First Reading: 9130 Policy and Regulation (Public Complaints)
 - 2535: Creates a new policy for library material cut and paste from the law 2535; nothing objectionable just a lot of change to it- can move to first reading
 - 2530: Resource material policy
 - What this hints at: every supplemental resource material that is not in the approved curriculum could potentially be required to go through the approval process, which as read implies a process to get things approved involving Dr. Brotschul, Dr. Butler, principals, etc.; which could prove onerous and also restrictive to the dynamic nature of teaching.
 - The policy committee will consider a way to structure this to make the process more tenable, following Strauss Esmay Proposal to ensure compliance with the law.
 - Second Reading
 - Food Services Policy
 - Lice Policy Requested updates to policy. New protocols in alignment with the American Academy of Pediatrics. Documents that parents would receive in conjunction with this policy in the event their child has lice.
 - Follow-Up Items/Committee Member Items
 - A Board Member raised a discussion in re: girls' basketball, that cuts had been made, and students and parents had been surprised. Better communication in re: basketball information is needed.

Discussion: Ms. Cooper asked why there was no kindergarten orientation last year. Mrs. Wry indicated the resource material policy was well thought out, important, and fair.

B. Action Items: Ms. Ballard moved items #1-2, Mrs. Santoro seconded.

Items #1-2 were approved by roll call vote of 8-0-0. Voting: Ayes: Mr. Baker, Ms. Ballard, Ms. Clark-Emery, Ms. Cooper, Mrs. Hoppe, Mrs. Santoro, Mrs. Wry, Mrs. Frenda. Absent: Ms. Gils, Mrs. Gomez.

1. First Reading*

RESOLVED, that the Somerset Hills Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the first reading of the following bylaws, policies and/or regulations:

Policy/Regulation #	Title
P 9130	Public Complaints
R 9130	Public Complaints
P2535	Library Material
R2535	Library Material

2. Second Reading*

RESOLVED, that the Somerset Hills Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the second reading of the following bylaw, policy & regulations:

Policy/Regulation #	Title
P 8507	Breakfast Offer Versus Serve (OVS)
P 8454	Management Of Pediculosis

C. Policy Old Business / New Business: None.

STUDENT SERVICES

A. Committee Report and Discussion: Mrs. Santoro gave the report. The committee met on December 4, 2025.

1. School Start Times - The committee asked to speak with Dr. Neigel regarding the afternoon (ability to get the train on time). A Board member asked for a shuttle from the train station to the high school. Will report out on both items.
 - a. A shuttle from the train station is not feasible. In addition, given the cross town traffic at that time of day, students may actually be able to walk faster than a shuttle could transport them.
 - b. Again, the Administration feels that there is enough open spaces and things to do in the afternoon that any adjustment would be absorbed during this time of day, rather than the early morning hours.

2. BHS School Leadership Team - Update to be provided about the high school process, specifically with Dr. Neigel in attendance before his dismissal from the meeting.
 - a. Dr. Brotschul had very positive feedback about the BHS School Leadership Team work that is being done at the high school. Both Dr. Brotschul and Dr. Neigel are very proud of the work that is being done by the team. The Leadership Team is working to solve problems with solutions that they develop based on their day to day understanding, experience, and expertise. All around it has been a positive experience and all are looking forward to seeing how the work will grow and expand. Thank you to all staff for embracing this process!
3. Survey Process: NJ SCI - January survey targeted. Applied for technical assistance professional development - will explain how that impacted the survey
4. Labor and Management Matters - Further training to take place on January 14, 2026, for Bedwell and BMS School Leadership Teams - Bedwell and BMS will engage with Rutgers on this in the beginning of the school year.
5. Student Services Update: Student Matters - All matters in progress continue to be monitored or are moving

Discussion: None.

B. Action Items: Ms. Cooper moved items #1-2, Ms. Ballard seconded.

Items #1-2 were approved by roll call vote of 8-0-0. Voting: Ayes: Mr. Baker, Ms. Ballard, Ms. Clark-Emery, Ms. Cooper, Mrs. Hoppe, Mrs. Santoro, Mrs. Wry, Mrs. Frenda. Absent: Ms. Gils, Mrs. Gomez.

1. HIB Report

RESOLVED, that the Somerset Hills Board of Education reviewed the Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying cases presented on November 19, 2025, and upheld the findings and/or consequences recommended by the Superintendent:

School	Report #	Outcomes
BMS	2	Founded
BMS	3	Unfounded
BMS	4	Founded
BMS	5	Founded
BMS	6	Founded
BMS	7A	Founded
BMS	7B	Unfounded
BMS	8	Founded

HIBs to Date (25-26 SY)	Founded	Unfounded	Split	Total
BES	0	0	0	0
BMS	6	1	1	8

2. HIB Report*

RESOLVED, that the Somerset Hills Board of Education reviewed the Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying cases presented on November 19, 2025, and upheld the findings and/or consequences recommended by the Superintendent:

School	Report #	Outcomes
BHS	4	Unfounded
BHS	5	Founded
BHS	6	Unfounded
BHS	7	Founded

HIBs to Date (25-26 SY)	Founded	Unfounded	Split	Total
BHS	5	2	0	7

C. Student Services Old Business / New Business - None.

Board Announcements

1. Mrs. Wry commended all involved with the BHS concerts and school play.

Public Comments

1. Alicen Librera - Bernardsville - asked about daytime meetings and thanked Mr. Baker for his service.
2. Jill Cannon - Bernardsville - support for boys lacrosse coach.
3. Sama Habibi - Gladstone - thanked Mr. Baker for his service.

Seeing no one else from the public, Ms. Cooper moved to close public comments. Mrs. Santoro seconded. All were in favor.

Adjournment

Mr. Baker moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:30 pm. Ms. Ballard seconded the motion. All in favor. Ayes: 8-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Richard D. Liguori
Business Administrator / Board Secretary

***Note:** The areas of permitted voting for the Bedminster district representative of the Board of Education are: (a) Tuition to be charged the sending district by the receiving district and the bill lists or contracts for the purchase, operation or maintenance of facilities, equipment and instructional materials to be used in the education of the pupils of the sending district; (b) New capital construction to be utilized by sending district pupils; (c) Appointment, transfer or removal of teaching staff members providing services to pupils of the sending district, including any teaching staff member who is a member of the receiving district's central administrative staff; (d) Addition or deletion of curricular and extracurricular programs involving pupils of the sending district; (e) Any matter directly involving the sending district pupils or programs and services utilized by those pupils; (f) Approval of the annual receiving district budget; (g) Any collectively negotiated agreement involving employees who provide services utilized by sending district pupils; (h) Any individual employee contracts not covered by a collectively negotiated agreement, if those employees provide or oversee programs or services utilized by sending district pupils; and (i) Any matter concerning governance of the receiving district board of education including, but not limited to, the selection of the board president or vice-president, approval of board bylaws, and the employment of professionals or consultants such as attorneys, architects, engineers, or others who provide services to the receiving district board of education.

(cf: P.L.1996, c.103, s.1)