

**The Somerset Hills School District
 Regular Meeting Agenda - January 28, 2026
 Executive Session - 6:00 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 6:05 pm.

Roll Call

Present:

- | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Ms. Ballard | Mrs. Hunt |
| Ms. Clark-Emery | Mrs. Librera |
| Ms. Cooper | Mrs. Wry (arrived 6:25 pm) |
| Mrs. Gomez (arrived 6:40 pm) | Mrs. Frenda |

Absent: Mrs. Hoppe, Mrs. Santoro.

Also Present:

- Dr. Brian Brotschul, Superintendent
- Dr. Coleen Butler, Assistant Superintendent
- Mr. Richard Liguori, Business Administrator / Board Secretary
- Mr. Adam Weiss, Esq., 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. Librera made a motion to go to Executive Session at 6:08 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: Personnel, Student Matters, Litigation, and Attorney/Client Privileged Information.

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.

Ms. Cooper made a motion to return to Public Session at 7:28 pm. Ms. Ballard seconded.

The public meeting resumed at 7:30 pm.

Pledge of Allegiance

Report of the Superintendent

1. Student Reports
 - a. BMS report provided by Teddy Quinn and Rahima Wellington
 - b. BHS report provided by Sophia Fazel-Sarjui and Nolan Baker
2. Recognition of CJMEA Honors Choir:
 - a. Ella Hunscher
 - b. Poppy Pickett

A Resolution honoring **Poppy Pickett** for her hard work and talent in the area of vocal music.

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

WHEREAS, **Poppy Pickett** sees the merit of embodying the collaborative spirit, dedication, and high standard of excellence necessary to perform at an advanced level;

WHEREAS, **Poppy Pickett** is part of Bernardsville Middle 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 **Poppy Pickett** for her extraordinary accomplishment of acceptance into the Central Jersey Music Educator Association’s Honors Choir.

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

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 28th day of January 2026.

Samantha Frenda
Board of Education President

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

A Resolution honoring **Ella Hunscher** for her hard work and talent in the area of vocal music.

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

WHEREAS, **Ella Hunscher** sees the merit of embodying the collaborative spirit, dedication, and high standard of excellence necessary to perform at an advanced level;

WHEREAS, **Ella Hunscher** is part of Bernardsville Middle 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 **Ella Hunscher** for her extraordinary accomplishment of acceptance into the Central Jersey Music Educator Association’s Honors Choir for the second year in a row!

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

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 28th day of January 2026.

Samantha Frenda
Board of Education President

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

3. Recognition of WAICY Award: Ria Lewis

A Resolution honoring **Ria Lewis** for her *BridgeBot* creation, an AI-powered dialogue assistant.

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

WHEREAS, **Ria Lewis** sees the merit of ethical technology use and real-world problem solving;

WHEREAS, **Ria Lewis** 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 **Ria Lewis** for her accomplishment, earning a Global Silver Award at the World Artificial Intelligence Competition for Youth, where she addressed complex social challenges through innovation and exemplified her dedication to serving others.

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

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 28th day of January 2026.

Samantha Frenda
Board of Education President

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

4. Superintendent Report: Dr. Brotschul raised awareness of several timely and pertinent District issues, including updates on Referendum 2026, the 2026 Regionalization Study, and the School Climate Studies.

FY25 Audit Presentation - given by Mr. Joseph Stout, CPA - Suplee, Clooney & Company LLC. Mr. Stout indicated an unmodified opinion, indicating a clean audit with no findings or recommendations.

- A. Public Hearing for Audit Presentation - nobody spoke.
- B. Motion to close the Public Hearing for the Audit Presentation - seeing no one from the public, Mrs. Hunt moved to close the public hearing on the audit. Ms. Cooper seconded. All remaining present voted in favor.
- C. Action Item: Mrs. Wry moved item #1, Ms. Cooper seconded.

Item #1 was approved by roll call vote of 8-0-0. Voting: Ayes: Ms. Ballard, Ms. Clark-Emery, Ms. Cooper, Mrs. Gomez, Mrs. Hunt, Mrs. Librera, Mrs. Wry, Mrs. Frenda. Absent: Mrs. Hoppe, Mrs. Santoro.

1. Acceptance of 2024-2025 Audit*

WHEREAS, the Somerset Hills Board of Education engaged the firm of Suplee, Clooney and Company LLC to conduct a yearly audit of the district's financial records; and

WHEREAS, the firm audited these records for the 2024-2025 school year;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the minutes reflect that the Somerset Hills Board of Education reviewed the 2024-2025 Audit Report, inclusive of the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR) for the Somerset Hills School District for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2025 and the accompanying Auditor's Management Report (AMR) on the Administrative Funding, Financial Compliance and Performance also for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2025; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board Secretary be directed to file the necessary reports with the State Department of Education.

Public Comments for Actionable Agenda Items - seeing no one from the public, Mrs. Librera moved to close public comments. Mrs. Hunt 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 December 17, 2025, as well as the Reorganization meeting and Executive meeting minutes from January 5, 2026.

Mrs. Wry moved to approve, and Ms. Cooper seconded.

Item #1 was approved by roll call vote of 7-0-1. Voting: Ayes: Ms. Ballard, Ms. Clark-Emery, Ms. Cooper, Mrs. Hunt, Mrs. Librera, Mrs. Wry, Mrs. Frenda. Abstain: Mrs. Gomez. Absent: Mrs. Hoppe, Mrs. Santoro.

BUSINESS OPERATIONS

A. Committee Report & Discussion of Actionable Agenda Items - Ms. Cooper gave the report. The Committee met on January 20, 2026. The following items were discussed:

- The Committee heard from Joe Stout, Auditor from Suplee, Clooney & Company. We discussed the overall results of the Audit which was positive with no recommendations for changes this year. The district closed the fiscal year with a positive budget variance of \$1,154,028.75 (“surplus”), representing the amount by which actual revenues exceeded actual expenditures. This is consistent with the surpluses reported in previous years. Mr. Stout also reviewed the status of the audit recommendation from last year relating to balances in Student Activity Fees in each school. The Auditor concluded that action had been taken on this finding. The remainder of the audit was clean, meaning that no new recommendations were issued. Mr. Stout will be joining us to present his findings at the public meeting.
- The Committee heard from Jeremy Schwartz and Rich about Safety/Security specifically addressing the paging, door access, and panic systems. These systems need to be replaced in all three buildings, the priority being BMS.
 - We are currently keeping these systems functional through the hard work and efforts of our technology team. Some of the systems they are working with have been in place since 2007.
 - Jeremy and Rich researched and spoke with vendors that could provide the necessary hardware/software. Additionally, they visited schools using the technology that they felt best fit our needs. They are looking for a single solution to avoid multiple platforms that may over time, not be compatible.
 - For the door access system we have been layering new software over aging hardware. A new system will replace hardware and older wiring. Going forward the system would be network based. Each room will have a digital panel that has lights coded to specific situations (hold in place, medical emergency, etc.). Administration would be able to lock down the outside access. Additionally there will be outdoor strobes and a programmable, audible notification system.
 - We are currently compliant with Alyssa’s Law; however, Administration would like our compliance to be more robust. This would include location accuracy, door lock down, sirens, etc.
 - The new system will replace the paging system for the whole school. This will provide functionality that the Administration can access and control from anywhere. It will allow them ease of use and independence that our current system does not afford them.

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- The priority is to start with middle school this year, then elementary, then high school, finally, Olcott through 2027/2028.
 - We currently incur charges of \$250/\$350 for a service charge with a minimum of a few hours for paging and door access, and emergency notification. We currently have to use a service team for this and can't support it in house. With the new system we will be able to handle more of this in-house and directly through manufacturers.
 - The project budget for this initiative for all schools is \$1,725,000, with a cost of \$440,000 for BMS. The Administration is looking into finance options. Possible options include utilizing capital reserve or annual lease/purchase agreements. It is possible that some funding could come from the referendum, if it passes.
 - Although the committee supported the initiation of these upgrades, one board member had concerns about the timing and the cost of this initiative given the extensive facilities review in our previous year and the fact that these upgrades were not included in the referendum.
 - Jodi Smith joined our meeting to discuss Student Activities software.
 - The Team has been evaluating two different options for software.
 - We currently have 70 different clubs and accounts at BHS, with additional clubs and programs at BMS and Bedwell. Presently, we are performing full manual reconciliation. The various schools use different tools including Quicken, Quick Books, and Excel.
 - The Team evaluated 2 Vendors:
 - Account Tree - family owned works with My School Bucks.
 - less expensive 4300 annually/1288 set-up fee
 - Does not link with Genesis
 - Homegrown
 - Kev School Solutions - over 1000 school districts (10 in NJ)
 - 24/7 support to parents
 - Provides oversight, lockdown, links to Genesis every night
 - Manage donations through QR codes, spirit wear
 - \$8300 annually/\$7000 one time training and implementation fee.
 - Kev School Solutions is being recommended. The Committee recommends the purchase of this software package.
 - Next we discussed the advertising of our public meetings. As of March 1st public entities must post publicly on their website. The link must go to the NJ Secretary of State and will be consolidated by them. We will no longer have to advertise in a newspaper after March 1st, but we will need to advertise that we are posting public notices of our meetings on our Web site twice a month for one year.
 - We are going to resolicit bids for the Broker of Record for employee health benefits due to incompleteness in the way one question was answered.
 - ESIP - Schneider Electric - energy saving opportunities. We will be receiving some proposals to drill down on some HVAC issues in the district at BMS and Bedwell. More to come.
 - The Referendum is set for March 10, 2026. The voting locations have been determined as follows:
 - FH municipal building
 - PG gym
 - B'ville - Library and Church
 - There has not been a lot of traction to date at the planned activities; however, the Committee and Administration feel that this is typical of referendum events in NJ. There will be another push as we move closer to the date.
 - There have been 52 Kindergarten registrations to date. This year, the process began earlier than usual (before the holidays).

Discussion - Mrs. Wry updated the church name, which was noted as a future voting location in Ms. Cooper’s report.

B. Action Items: Ms. Cooper moved items #1-15, Mrs. Hunt seconded.

Items #1-4, 6-8, 11-15 were approved by roll call vote of 8-0-0. Voting: Ayes: Ms. Ballard, Ms. Clark-Emery, Ms. Cooper, Mrs. Gomez, Mrs. Hunt, Mrs. Librera, Mrs. Wry, Mrs. Frenda. Absent: Mrs. Hoppe, Mrs. Santoro.

Items #5, 9-10 were approved by roll call vote of 7-0-1. Voting: Ayes: Ms. Ballard, Ms. Clark-Emery, Ms. Cooper, Mrs. Hunt, Mrs. Librera, Mrs. Wry, Mrs. Frenda. Abstain: Mrs. Gomez. Absent: Mrs. Hoppe, Mrs. Santoro.

1. Board Secretary & Treasurer Reports & Board Certification*

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

FUND	Board Secretary Cash Balance (1)	Treasurer Cash Balance (2)
(10) General Fund	\$9,305,267.76	\$9,305,267.76
(20) Special Revenue Fund	\$130,413.96	\$130,413.96
(30) Capital Projects Fund	-	-
(40)Debt Service Fund	\$982,544.28	\$982,544.28
Total Government Funds	\$10,418,226.00	\$10,418,226.00

(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 December 2025.

3. Payment of Bills*

WHEREAS, the Board Secretary has presented attached Final December 2025 check register 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	\$4,108,282.09
(20) Special Revenue Fund	\$27,689.84
(30) Capital Projects Fund	-

FUND	
(40) Debt Service Fund	-
(60) Cafeteria Fund	\$51,743.29
(90) Agency Fund	\$1,209,594.88
TOTAL	\$5,397,310.10

4. Payment of Bills*

WHEREAS, the Board Secretary has presented attached January 2026 check register 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	\$2,348,845.33
(20) Special Revenue Fund	\$64,823.72
(30) Capital Projects Fund	-
(40) Debt Service Fund	-
(60) Cafeteria Fund	\$3,750.00
(90) Agency Fund	\$445,842.09
TOTAL	\$2,863,261.14

5. Approve Submission of Tennis Courts Renovations to NJ DOE

Be it RESOLVED, that the Board of Education of the Somerset Hills School District in the county of Somerset, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, hereby approves the submission of the following “Other Capital Project” to the Department of Education for review and approval and for amendment to the Long Range Facilities Plan. It is further understood that the District is not seeking funding at the current time for this project:

School	Project	DOE Project #
Bernardsville Middle School	Tennis Courts Renovations	35-4815-040

6. Approve Revised Not to Exceed Amount*

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

	Vendor	Description	Amount Not to Exceed
a	360 Translations	Translation Services	\$7,500.00

7. 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	6365497884	Montgomery Academy	Basking Ridge, NJ	\$47,488.32 (Pro-rated)

8. 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	Anonymous	Holiday gift cards	BHS	\$8,280.00

9. Approve Parent Organization Fundraisers

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

	Organization	School	Event	Date
a	Bedwell HSA	BES	Wizfit Challenge	February 2026
b	Bedwell HSA	BES	Penny Wars	February 2026
c	Bedwell HSA	BES	Plant Sales	April 2026
d	Bedwell HSA	BES	Art to Remember	March 2026
e	Bedwell HSA	BES	School Supplies Sale for 26-27 SY	May 2026
f	Bedwell HSA	BES	Bookworm Book Sale	Spring 2026
g	Bedwell HSA	BES	Lawn Sign Sale	Spring 2026
h	Bedwell HSA	BES	Bedwell Yearbook	Spring 2026

10. Approve Disposal of Old Assets

RESOLVED, that the Somerset Hills Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the disposal of the following assets at Bedwell Elementary School:

	Item	Quantity
a	30 gallon corner fish tank	1
b	150 gallon fish tank	1
c	20 gallon fish tank	1
d	30 gallon fish tank	1

	Item	Quantity
e	Chiller	1
f	Octagon 50 gallon fish tank	1
g	Tank for Octagon tank	1
h	5 gallon buckets of fish tank rocks	4
i	Rubber tree	1
j	Chair	1
k	Stand for 150 gallon fish tank	1

11. Approve Disposal of Old Assets*

RESOLVED, that the Somerset Hills Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the disposal of the following assets at Bernards High School:

	Item	Quantity	Serial Number
a	SkiERG machine (weight room)	1	1108170-2715-430572587
b	Cable machine (weight room)	1	150205-010066

12. Approve Re-Solicitation of RFP/EUS*

RESOLVED, that the Somerset Hills Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, rejects all proposals received in response to a Request for Proposal / Extraordinary Unspecifiable Services (RFP/EUS) for Broker of Record - Employee Health Services, and subsequently approves the re-solicitation with an updated start date of July 1, 2026.

13. Approve KEV School Solutions*

RESOLVED, that the Somerset Hills Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve KEV School Solutions to provide annual recurring software and services, plus one-time training and implementation, at an amount not to exceed \$15,405.00, with a start date of February 1, 2026.

14. Approve Carryover Funds for ESEA Grant for 2025-2026*

RESOLVED, that the Somerset Hills Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the submission and acceptance of amended funds to include carryover from the 2024-2025 school year for the ESEA Federal Grant Allocation as follows:

ESEA Title 1A Carryover (24-25): \$23,083.00

15. Approve Revised 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 revised Municipal Alliance Grant as follows:

	Grant/Program	School	Original Amount	New Amount
a	BHS ELL Homework Support	BHS	\$2,000.00	\$2,500.00

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

CURRICULUM

A. Committee Report & Discussion of Actionable Agenda Items - Ms. Cooper gave the report. The Committee met on January 22, 2026. The following items were discussed:

DISCUSSION HIGHLIGHTS AND DECISIONS/CONCLUSIONS REACHED:

1. Field trips

- At the request of a board member, we reviewed SHSD’s policies, regulations, and approaches to selecting field trips. Dr. Butler provided links to the policies, regulations, field trip approval forms, and information on 2024-2025 field trips.
- According to Dr. Butler, field trip selection is usually based on curricular standards if they are not legacy-driven. Examples of legacy field trips include the 8th grade NYC trip, pool parties, etc. Considerations include curricular relevance, costs, driving distance, ages of students, etc.
- Teachers and teacher teams usually drive the initiation of new field trips.
- One board member had questions about how the effectiveness and impact of field trips were evaluated. Dr. Brotschul indicated that the administrative team could come back to the committee with the impact of various field trips in May/June.

2. Dyslexia training

- NJDOE mandates dyslexia-focused professional development (PD) for K-3 teachers, reading specialists, and special ed teachers, requiring at least 2 hours on screening, intervention, and tech, stemming from 2013 laws, with more recent legislation emphasizing universal K-3 screening and teacher training in evidence-based practices for early literacy, including dyslexia support, to improve reading outcomes statewide.
- Districts must implement these requirements and track completion, with specific resources available through the NJDOE.
- Dr. Butler presented information on the dyslexia PD developed by Ms. Barna for our K-3 teachers, which included articles and videos on orthography, phonics, fluency, and comprehension.

3. JCC Event

- As Dr. Brotschul indicated in his report, BMS (Brett Cox, Lisa Garofolo, and the Humanities teachers) have been working with Avi Siegel, the Director of Teen Initiatives at the JCC, to develop a day of learning in early February.
- Avi will be supported by a Holocaust education specialist and Director of Holocaust Education (Illyse Shainbron).
- The program will include a 30-40-minute large group presentation on Jewish identity and

experiences from the perspective of a third-generation Holocaust survivor.

- Following the group presentation, seventh graders will participate in breakout sessions (~40 min) moderated by Jewish high school students and led by Avi or Illyse.
- The committee enthusiastically supported this event.
- The committee also discussed the need for more outward communication to parents and the distribution of parent-friendly resources prior to WW2 instruction, given the uptick in antisemitic incidents during this unit of study.

4. Curriculum and Instruction (Bernards High School Quality School Review)

- Dr. Brotschul discussed the status of the Quality School Review at BHS and indicated that he will be presenting its findings at the Curriculum meeting in February.
- He praised the BHS team for their engagement and active interest in participating in this detailed process but indicated that BHS could benefit from a greater focus on instructional leadership and instructional goal setting.
- The BMS leadership team is also currently completing the Quality School Review Survey and those results should be available in the next few weeks. More information to come.

DECISIONS

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

INFORMATION

1. Khanmigo

- Based on the request of a board member, Dr. Butler mentioned that Khanmigo is a program offered by the Khan Academy that offers AI tutoring for a fee.

2. AI Grants

- Dr. Brotschul maintains professional contacts with staff members at Kean University (Kean), New Jersey City University (NJCU), and Rutgers University.
- Through those contacts we have offered support in collaborative grant applications. We are awaiting confirmation of the grant awards, but we are poised to:
 - Participate in the project's advisory board, composed of university faculty who are teacher educators, K–12 educators, administrators, computer scientists, and technology leaders
 - Participate in or host professional learning activities and provide feedback on the usability and relevance of both preservice AI/CS learning modules and the in-service AI/CS professional learning series
 - Support the project's formative evaluation efforts through participation in surveys
 - Participate in interviews and classroom observation opportunities
 - Collaborate to ensure alignment between AI/CS concepts, district instructional priorities, and state digital literacy standards.

Discussion - None.

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

Items #2, 3, 5 were approved by roll call vote of 8-0-0. Voting: Ayes: Ms. Ballard, Ms. Clark-Emery, Ms. Cooper, Mrs. Gomez, Mrs. Hunt, Mrs. Librera, Mrs. Wry, Mrs. Frenda. Absent: Mrs. Hoppe, Mrs. Santoro.

Items #1, 4 were approved by roll call vote of 7-0-1. Voting: Ayes: Ms. Ballard, Ms. Clark-Emery, Ms. Cooper, Mrs. Hunt, Mrs. Librera, Mrs. Wry, Mrs. Frenda. Abstain: Mrs. Gomez. Absent: Mrs. Hoppe, Mrs. Santoro.

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	Andino, Alex	Field Trip Chaperone- Grade 6	5/18/26	\$0
b	BES	Arce, Cassandra	Field Trip Chaperone- Grade 3	4/15/26	\$0
c	BES	DeRoberts, Theresa	Improve Your ELL Students' Learning Using Multisensory Vocabulary Instruction	2/25/26	\$295
d	BMS	Filieri, Michael	Field Trip Chaperone- Wrestling	12/18/25-12/19/25	\$0
e	BMS	Fitzgerald, Marianne	Field Trip Chaperone- Grade 6	5/18/26	\$0
f	BMS	Freda, Michele	Field Trip Chaperone- Grade 6	5/18/26	\$0
g	BMS	Froysland, Megan	Field Trip Chaperone- Grade 5	6/8/26	\$0
h	BMS	Georgiana, Michael	Field Trip Chaperone- Grade 8	6/1/26	\$0
i	BMS	Georgiana, Michael	Field Trip Chaperone- Grade 8	6/17/26	\$0
j	BMS	Geyer, Julie	Field Trip Chaperone- Grade 6	5/18/26	\$0
k	BES	Gutierrez, Tatiana	Teaching Foundational Skills in Grades 4-12: Word Recognition, Vocabulary, Comprehension, and Fluency	4/16/26	\$180
l	BMS	Jurgens, Allyssa	Field Trip Chaperone- BHS Choral & Instrumental Ensembles	12/22/25	\$0
m	BES	Kartelias, Grace	Field Trip Chaperone- Grade 3	4/15/26	\$0
n	BMS	King, Brian	Field Trip Chaperone- BMS Earth Science Team	2/19/26	\$0
o	BMS	King, Brian	Field Trip Chaperone- BMS Earth Science Team	3/18/26	\$0

	School	Name	Workshop/Conference/School Business	Date(s)	Est. Cost
p	BMS	King, Brian	Field Trip Chaperone- BMS Earth Science Team	4/23/26	\$0
q	BMS	King, Brian	Field Trip Chaperone- Grade 8	6/1/26	\$0
r	BMS	King, Brian	Field Trip Chaperone- Grade 8	6/17/26	\$0
s	BMS	Koellhoffer, Keith	Building the High School Master Schedule NJ Principals and Supervisors Association/Foundation for Educational Administration	1/30/26	\$195
t	BMS	Marashlian, Nicole	Field Trip Chaperone- Grade 5	6/8/26	\$0
u	BES	Matos, Gabriela	Proactive and Preventative Classroom Behavior Strategies/In-Class Support	1/30/26	\$90
v	BES	McCloskey, Heather	Speechpathology.com Online webinars (3)	TBD	\$129
w	BMS	McGovern, Danielle	Field Trip Chaperone- Grade 8	6/1/26	\$0
x	BMS	McGovern, Danielle	Field Trip Chaperone- Grade 8	6/17/26	\$0
y	BES	McShane, Sarah	Field Trip Chaperone- Grade 3	4/15/26	\$0
z	BES	McSpiritt, Kelly	IEP & 504 Alignment: Ensuring Equity, Access, and Legal Compliance	2/11/26	\$101
aa	BMS	Medina, Pilar	2026 Spring Conference NJTESOL/NJBE, Inc. (NJ Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages/NJ Bilingual Educators, Inc.)	5/21/26	\$275
bb	BES	Pacheco, Yarelis	2026 Spring Conference NJTESOL/NJBE, Inc. (NJ Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages/NJ Bilingual Educators, Inc.)	5/21/26	\$325
cc	BES	Panik, Meredith	NJ Association of Pupil Services Administrators - Winter Academy Conference	2/27/26	\$231.43
dd	BES	Patrylow, Lauren	Field Trip Chaperone- Grade 3	4/15/26	\$0
ee	BMS	Porter, Shane	Field Trip Chaperone- Grade 8	6/1/26	\$0
ff	BMS	Porter, Shane	Field Trip Chaperone- Grade 8	6/17/26	\$0
gg	BES	Roll, Jill	Occupationaltherapy.com Online webinars (3)	TBD	\$129

	School	Name	Workshop/Conference/School Business	Date(s)	Est. Cost
hh	BES	Roth, Sarah	2026 Spring Conference NJTESOL/NJBE, Inc. (NJ Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages/NJ Bilingual Educators, Inc.)	5/21/26	\$325
ii	BMS	Rounsaville, Julie-Ann	Field Trip Chaperone- Grade 6	5/18/26	\$0
jj	BES	Rudin, Beth	Field Trip Chaperone- Grade 3	4/15/26	\$0
kk	BMS	Russo, Dawn	Field Trip Chaperone- Grade 8	6/1/26	\$0
ll	BMS	Russo, Dawn	Field Trip Chaperone- Grade 8	6/17/26	\$0
mm	BES	Seelig, Sophia	Field Trip Chaperone- Grade 3	4/15/26	\$0
nn	BMS	Tynan, Jessica	Field Trip Chaperone- Grade 8	6/1/26	\$0
oo	BMS	Tynan, Jessica	Field Trip Chaperone- Grade 8	6/17/26	\$0
pp	BMS	Wells, Kelly	Field Trip Chaperone- Grade 6	5/18/26	\$0
qq	BES	Zaborowski, Donna	NJ Branch International Dyslexia Association-Winter Institute Food for Thought Virtual Conference	2/7/26	\$35
rr	BES	Ziolkowski, Maureen	Proactive and Preventative Classroom Behavior Strategies/In-Class Support	1/30/26	\$90

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	Leading Early Literacy Instruction, Intervention, & Assessment: 2nd Annual Summit	2/18/26	\$0
b	BHS	Bittner, Cassandra	Field Trip Chaperone- Science League	1/22/26, 3/18/26	\$0
c	District	Brotschul, Brian	Building the High School Master Schedule NJ Principals and Supervisors Association/Foundation for Educational Administration	1/30/26	\$195

	School	Name	Workshop/Conference/School Business	Date(s)	Est. Cost
d	BHS	Carey, Amanda	NJ Branch International Dyslexia Association-Winter Institute Food for Thought Virtual Conference	TBD	\$140
e	BHS	Crisman, Gillian	Field Trip Chaperone- AP Art & Design, Art 3H, Art Club Leadership	5/18/26 or 5/20/26	\$0
f	BHS	Crisman, Gillian	Field Trip Chaperone- Art Club	2/25/26	\$0
g	BHS	Ellis, Amanda	Raritan Valley Community College Transition to College Event	3/10/26	\$0
h	BHS	Ferrara, James	Field Trip Chaperone- NJ Science League	3/18/26	\$0
i	BHS	Hunkele, Heather	Hunterdon County Student Media Convention	2/26/26	\$0
j	BHS	Incedon, Cassie	IEP & 504 Alignment: Ensuring Equity, Access, and Legal Compliance	2/11/26	\$90
k	District	Koransky, Jamie	IEP & 504 Alignment: Ensuring Equity, Access, and Legal Compliance	2/11/26	\$90
l	District	Koransky, Jamie	12th Annual Education & Behavioral Health Partnership & Conferences	2/6/26	\$0
m	BHS	Pasqua, Jacki	Capturing Kids' Hearts Flagship	3/10/26-3/11/26	\$62.04
n	District	Riccio, Frank	CEFM (Certified Educational Facilities Management) School Buildings & Grounds Annual Conference	3/23/26, 3/24/26	\$868.56
o	District	Riccio, Frank	56th Annual Pupil Transportation Conference	3/25/26-3/27/26	\$1,006.56
p	BHS	Rovtar, Kristina	Field Trip Chaperone- Art Club	2/25/26	\$0

3. Amend Professional Development/School Business*

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

	School	Name	Workshop/Conference/School Business	Date(s)	Est. Cost
a	BHS	Hoppe, Michael	National Athletic Directors Conference	12/12/25-12/16/25	\$1713.94

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	BMS	The College of New Jersey - Ewing, NJ Robotics Club	11	4	0
b	BMS	Bernards High School - Bernardsville, NJ BMS Earth Science Team	6	1	0
c	BMS	Mount Olive High School - Flanders, NJ BMS Earth Science Team	6	1	0
d	BMS	Bernards High School - Bernardsville, NJ BMS Earth Science Team	6	1	0
e	BMS	Adventure Aquarium - Camden, NJ Grade 6	110	6	16
f	BMS	Bernards High School - Bernardsville, NJ Grade 8	96	7	0
g	BMS	Bernards High School - Bernardsville, NJ Grade 8	96	7	0

5. 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	Community Food Bank - Hillside, NJ BHS Students	40	4	0
b	BHS	Jersey Clay Society - Wharton, NJ AP Art & Design, Art 3H, Art Club Leadership	23	2	0
c	BHS	Princeton University Art Museum - Princeton, NJ Art Club	37	3	0
d	BHS	Delaware Valley High School - Frenchtown, NJ The Crimson Staff	10	1	0

C. Curriculum Old Business / New Business - Mrs. Gomez inquired about a possible summer program for Bedminster 8th grade advanced math students. Dr. Brotschul indicated the dialogue is ongoing and a follow up would come at the next meeting.

PERSONNEL

A. Committee Report & Discussion of Actionable Agenda Items: Ms. Ballard gave the report. The Committee met on January 22, 2026. The following items were discussed:

1. Dr. Brotschul and staff are currently working on the creation of multiple budgets, each dependent on variations in state funding (such as flat state aid, or a small increase in state aid, or a decrease in state aid.)
 - a. Items due consideration are decreased enrollments and staffing. The goal is to maintain class sizes (there is a Board policy that speaks to this) and maintain operations.
 - b. The budget numbers are usually addressed the fourth Tuesday of February in a budget address by the Governor, and state aid numbers are released 48 hours after the address.
 - c. There is a grace period for the new Governor, but the budget address should take place by early March.

2. FY27 Staffing
 - a. Technology Positions
 - i. Currently we have two part time employees (29.5 hours per week) filling a position titled as a full time position. These employees have been very successful, and the plan is to retitle positions to go from one FT to two PT positions.
 - b. Other personnel matters
 - i. The Assistant Principal search process at Bedwell will start in the next few weeks; looking to a July 1 start.
 - ii. Maintenance Foreman position will be retitled as maintenance team member to better meet the needs of the district.
 - iii. Custodial Foreman position is currently being assessed.
 - iv. Multilingual Learning Programming; question re 2nd grade multilingual learning classroom. There have been several mid year enrollments in grade one; is second grade MLL classroom a solution or is a bilingual paraprofessional a better option?
 - v. Kindergarten registration has started; at the time of our meeting, there were about 50 kindergarteners enrolled; 80-90 enrollments are expected.

Discussion - Ms. Clark-Emery asked a question related to overloads on the agenda related to ESL.

B. Action Items: Mrs. Hunt moved items #1-14, Mrs. Librera seconded.

Items #3, 6-9, 12-14 were approved by roll call vote of 8-0-0. Voting: Ayes: Ms. Ballard, Ms. Clark-Emery, Ms. Cooper, Mrs. Gomez, Mrs. Hunt, Mrs. Librera, Mrs. Wry, Mrs. Frenda. Absent: Mrs. Hoppe, Mrs. Santoro.

Items #1-2, 4-5, 10-11 were approved by roll call vote of 7-0-1. Voting: Ayes: Ms. Ballard, Ms. Clark-Emery, Ms. Cooper, Mrs. Hunt, Mrs. Librera, Mrs. Wry, Mrs. Frenda. Abstain: Mrs. Gomez. Absent: Mrs. Hoppe, Mrs. Santoro.

1. Approve Appointment Non-Certified Staff

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

	Name	School	Position	Step	Salary	Replace	Effective
a	Danik, Jessica	BES/BMS	Registered Nurse-Part Time RN.DIST.NRSE.NA.01	3	\$44.56/hour	contracted service	2/17/26

2. Approve Transition Day

RESOLVED, that the Somerset Hills Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve a transition day for the following employee:

	Employee	School	Position	Days	Per Hour Rate
a	Danik, Jessica	BES/BMS	Registered Nurse	1	\$44.56/hour

3. 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	ESL	Venezia, David	1/5/26 - 2/27/26	5	\$81,130	\$2,704.87
b	ESL	Garay, Janet	1/5/26 - 2/27/26	5	\$109,050	\$3,635.73
c	Algebra II ESL ICS	Pasqua, Jaclyn	1/5/26 - 2/27/26	5	\$103,000	\$3,434.02
d	Environmental Sci ESL ICS	Cannon, Steven	1/5/26 - 2/27/26	5	\$70,485	\$2,349.97

4. Rescind Co-Curricular Position

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

5. 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	Patrylow, Lauren	Math Club	BES	25-26 SY	\$61.12/hour

6. Approve Co-Curricular Positions*

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

	Name	Position	School	Season	Stipend
a	Garay, Janet	Homework Club <i>Funded by Muni Alliance</i>	BHS	25-26 SY	\$61.12/hour
b	Medina, Pilar	Homework Club <i>Funded by Muni Alliance</i>	BHS	25-26 SY	\$61.12/hour

7. 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	Palmieri, Jeremy	Softball: Assistant (JV) 50%	BHS	Spring	\$2,895.20

8. Amend Athletic Position*

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

	Name	Position	School	Season	Stipend
a	Froysland, Megan	Softball: Assistant (JV) 50%	BHS	Spring	\$2,895.20 \$5,790.40

9. 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	Blakeslee, Garrett	Fencing: Assistant	BHS	Winter	\$5,583.60
b	Vitollo, Michael	Wrestling: Volunteer	BHS	Winter	\$0
c	Schaufler, Albert	Lacrosse: Mens Volunteer	BHS	Spring	\$0
d	Christiansen, Emily	Lacrosse: Womens Volunteer	BHS	Spring	\$0
e	Palmieri, Jeremy	Softball: Volunteer	BHS	Spring	\$0

10. Approve Internship

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

	Name	School/Subject	Mentor	Program	Service Agreement Effective
a	Van Koo, Emma	BES/Counseling	Dooley, Megan	Seton Hall University MA Program	Spring Semester 2026

11. 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	9490	BES	Certified	Disability FMLA Anticipated RTW	06/10/26-06/22/26 paid w/benefits 08/31/26-11/20/26 unpaid w/benefits 11/23/26

12. 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	Disability Unpaid Anticipated RTW	01/05/26-01/21/26 paid w/benefits 02/02/26 01/22/26-02/27/26 unpaid w/benefits 03/02/26

13. Approve Translator/Interpreter*

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

	Name	Rate of Pay

a	Heesemann, Diana	\$61.12/hour
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14. Approve Substitutes*

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

	Name	Substitute Position	Certification	Effective
a	LaSpada, Joseph	Teacher/Paraprofessional	Standard Certificate	1/22/26
b	Meeks, Maureen	Teacher/Paraprofessional	Standard Certificate	1/29/26
c	Marino, Matthew	Teacher/Paraprofessional	Certificate of Eligibility	1/29/26
d	Herman, Toni	Teacher/Paraprofessional	County Substitute Certificate	1/29/26
e	Downey, Linda	Teacher/Paraprofessional	County Substitute Certificate	1/29/26
f	Ferruggia, Kathleen	Teacher/Paraprofessional	County Substitute Certificate	1/29/26
g	DeMarco, Ava	Teacher/Paraprofessional	County Substitute Certificate	1/29/26
h	Simeone, Cindy	Bus Aide	n/a	1/29/26

C. Personnel Old Business / New Business - None.

POLICY

- A. Committee Report & Discussion of Actionable Agenda Items: Ms. Ballard gave the report. The Committee met on January 22, 2026. The following items were discussed:
1. Recently signed legislation and NJDOE Guidance - Cell Phones
 - a. Our electronic device policy was updated in spring, addressing the level of access to cell phones.
 - b. As expected, the Commissioner of Education was recently directed to create policy and provide guidelines to assist school districts in creating policies that restrict student use of cell phones, smartwatches, and internet-enabled devices from bell to bell (from open to close of the school day.)
 - c. Concerns have been raised about use of certain devices for health reasons; for example, the use of blood sugar reader apps, so there will be carve outs.
 - d. Strauss Esmay will recommend a policy.
 - e. BHS students have accepted current cell phone policies; students were actually more concerned about lack of access to Genesis during the school day.
 - f. In preparation for the new policy, the upcoming BHS Wellness Day in March will be phone free day. Other phone free days will be planned in spring in support of the future bell to bell policy.
 2. Strauss Esmay School law and Policy Symposium - Dr. Brotschul and Ms. Ballard attended. The conference provided in-depth review of several items:
 - a. Sexual Harassment - A detailed review of the historical background of Title VII and Title XII and where we are today. Issues raised were recent audits in NJ schools by the NJDOE at the direction of the US DOE, Division of Civil Rights. A change to Title IX law extends the right to bring a lawsuit for a violation against employees (formerly restricted to students.)

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- b. Freedom to Read Act - A review of the Freedom to Read Act statute, adopted into law in December 2025, which requires a policy to provide standards for the curation of library material, establish detailed procedures for the removal of library materials, provide guidance in the selection of library materials and provide protections against censorship. Many of the requirements of this law are already met within our district. The policy is set for second reading.
 - c. Mahmoud v Taylor
 - i. The school district, as previously discussed, has gotten out ahead on this, with processes and procedures in place. This was evident within the discussions and observations provided by other school districts in attendance at the conference.
 - ii. The Mahmoud decision was rendered in late June. At that time, Dr. Butler, Ms. Barna and Dr. Brotschul engaged with board attorneys about how to handle the ramifications of this case. At the opening of the current school year, training was held for faculty about our processes. A proactive approach was taken.
 - iii. Two new statutes introduced recently; in reference to pacing guides (class planning week by week to ensure meeting all standards) and how they get communicated out; every grade level has a process and procedure, parents will get this info at home.
 - iv. This summer: pacing guides will be evaluated.
 - v. Strauss Esmay is going to publish a stand alone policy (mid winter); for areas of curriculum covered by statute, specifically as it relates to in class literature that supports curriculum.
 - vi. Currently, some books were opposed by parents and those students opted out of the lesson; there have been just a few instances of this in the SHSD community.
 - vii. This involves an interactive process that should take place between the school principal and the individual family.
3. Second Reading
 - a. Freedom to Read Act
 - i. 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).
 - ii. 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.
 - iii. 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.
 - iv. The “Freedom to Read Act” is effective on December 9, 2025
 - b. 2535 Policy and Regulation (Library Material-New)
 - c. 9130 Policy and Regulation (Public Complaints)
 4. 2530 Policy and Regulation (Resource Materials) - in concert with Mahmoud and resource materials, creating policy

Discussion: Mrs. Wry asked about a possible NJSBA policy on cell phones. Dr. Brotschul indicated he would look into the matter.

B. Action Items: Mrs. Hunt moved item #1, Mrs. Librera seconded.

Item #1 was approved by roll call vote of 8-0-0. Voting: Ayes: Ms. Ballard, Ms. Clark-Emery, Ms. Cooper, Mrs. Gomez, Mrs. Hunt, Mrs. Librera, Mrs. Wry, Mrs. Frenda. Absent: Mrs. Hoppe, Mrs. Santoro.

1. 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 and/or regulation:

Policy/Regulation #	Title
P 9130	Public Complaints
R 9130	Public Complaints
P 2535	Library Material
R 2535	Library Material

C. Policy Old Business / New Business: None.

STUDENT SERVICES

A. Committee Report & Discussion of Actionable Agenda Items: Mrs. Frenda gave the report. The committee met on January 22, 2026.

<p><u>Capturing Kids Hearts</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fall Surveys: Student Survey, Staff Survey, Leadership Survey, and Parent Survey ● BMS National Highlight School Application ● 2026-2027 Budget Implications ● BHS Implications ● Board Training Review ● Board Retreat 	<p>Dr. Brotschul is going to go through the results of the surveys in his Superintendent Report. Overall, the middle school is having great success implementing CKH and it is beginning to really take hold as part of the culture. We had a bit of a dip this year with our results but this does not seem out of the norm as you can see a plateau in year two. Dr. Brotschul believes there are some easy items we can take a look at to increase results. We will be rolling this out next year at the high school. There would be some cost savings if we train and implement at Bedwell at the same time, however, Dr. Brotschul wants to make sure the timing is right for the most effective implementation. We are trying to organize a weekend where the Board can receive abbreviated training. It would be well worth it if we can coordinate our schedules to do this!</p>
<p><u>NJ SCI Climate Survey (Winter)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● BHS students, staff, and parents' status ● BMS students, staff, and parents' status 	<p>We had an extraordinary response from students and staff, a bit lighter from the parents. Specific analysis will be forthcoming as we have just concluded the survey period, but as a reminder, this data will feed directly into the development of our strategic plan around climate and culture. Good news, we have been accepted into a technical assistance cohort and will</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bedwell students, staff, and parents' status 	<p>have technical support for each team at each building. As a reminder we have 3 building teams and one district team for this work. Each team includes staff, parents, and will have a consultant.</p>
<p><u>New Jersey Public School Collaborative Survey (Staff Only) (Spring)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of survey results exemplar 	<p>Briefly reviewed this at the end of our meeting. Dr. Brotschul will provide additional information.</p>
<p>Athletic Conference(s) Matters</p>	<p>The District has initiated the process of withdrawing from our current conference (Skyland) and we will be applying to another conference that better suits our school size, is geographically beneficial and aligns with our needs more closely. This is a process that takes time that the Administration is working through.</p>
<p>Labor and Management Matters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality School Reviews: BHS, and BMS Bedwell Process 	<p>The District has been undergoing work with the Rutgers Labor and Management Group for several years. This work has proven to be valuable for Staff, Administration and the Board, through establishing frameworks for creating Teams, creating feedback loops, and working through initiatives and challenges. Board members are welcome to attend this year's conference on April 24th if schedules allow.</p>

Discussion: Dr. Brotschul indicated he will be coming back to the Board with more data related to NJSCI. He is currently working with the consultants regarding the nuances of the data. Mrs. Gomez asked a clarifying question about the timing and duration of the move to the Skylands Conference.

B. Action Items: Mrs. Wry moved items #1-3, Ms. Ballard seconded.

Item #2 was approved by roll call vote of 8-0-0. Voting: Ayes: Ms. Ballard, Ms. Clark-Emery, Ms. Cooper, Mrs. Gomez, Mrs. Hunt, Mrs. Librera, Mrs. Wry, Mrs. Frenda. Absent: Mrs. Hoppe, Mrs. Santoro.

Items #1, 3 were approved by roll call vote of 7-0-1. Voting: Ayes: Ms. Ballard, Ms. Clark-Emery, Ms. Cooper, Mrs. Hunt, Mrs. Librera, Mrs. Wry, Mrs. Frenda. Abstain: Mrs. Gomez. Absent: Mrs. Hoppe, Mrs. Santoro.

1. HIB Report

RESOLVED, that the Somerset Hills Board of Education reviewed the Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying cases presented on December 17, 2025, and upheld the findings and/or consequences recommended by the Superintendent:

School	Report #	Outcomes
BMS	9	Unfounded
BMS	10	Unfounded

School	Report #	Outcomes
BMS	11	Founded
BMS	12	Founded

HIBs to Date (25-26 SY)	Founded	Unfounded	Split	Total
BES	0	0	0	0
BMS	8	3	1	12

2. HIB Report*

RESOLVED, that the Somerset Hills Board of Education reviewed the Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying cases presented on December 17, 2025, and upheld the findings and/or consequences recommended by the Superintendent:

School	Report #	Outcomes
BHS	8	Founded
BHS	9	Founded
BHS	10	Founded
BHS	11A	Founded
BHS	11B	Unfounded
BHS	12	Unfounded

HIBs to Date (25-26 SY)	Founded	Unfounded	Split	Total
BHS	8	3	1	12

3. Approve HIB Determination

RESOLVED, that the Board affirm the Superintendent's decision on HIB Case BMS #2 following a Board hearing of an appeal on behalf of the student, as required by N.J.S.A. 18A:37-15(b)(6)(e).

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

Board Announcements

- Mrs. Gomez welcomed the new Board members, and welcomed Mrs. Wry back.
- Mrs. Frenda commented on the Unsung Heroes program.
- Ms. Ballard commented on the return of Battle of the Books.

Public Comments

1. Silvia Gils - Bernardsville - addressed Policy 5756, Mr. Weiss, pending litigation, and individual Board members.

Seeing no one else from the public, Mrs. Librera moved to close public comments. Mrs. Wry seconded. All were in favor.

Adjournment

Ms. Cooper moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:03 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)