

**LOWER TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION  
MINUTES  
WORK SESSION AND REGULAR MEETING  
JANUARY 28, 2026**

Work Session was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

**Work Session Meeting**

**Roll Call:**

<b>Present</b>	<b>Absent</b>
Cynthia Baldacchini	Lauren Cox
Monica DiVito	
Ember Loefflad	
James Morris	
Lauren Randle	
Lindsey Selby	
Patricia Smith	
Gary Douglass	

**Also in Attendance:**

Van Cathcart, Superintendent  
Katie Siciliano, Board Secretary  
Brett Gorman, Board Attorney

**Agenda Items:**

Mrs. Loefflad asked for more information on the LIFT grant. Ms. Siciliano and Mr. Cathcart provided more details regarding the grant.

**Non-Agenda Items:**

Board Management Calendar

Mrs. Smith spoke to the board members about using NJBSA's board calendar as a template to create a calendar for LTES Board to use to keep them on track throughout the year. Pat will create a google doc that only her, Gary & Van can edit. The board agreed that it would be helpful.

Mrs. Smith reminded Mr. Cathcart that they need to report on goals for next month.

Aide in Lieu for Choice Student Transportation

Mrs. Smith discussed and questioned Aide in Lieu for choice student transportation. The board discussed if they wanted to bring the issue up to the delegate assembly. The full board did not agree so the issue was dismissed.

**Other Matters:**

The board assigned new readers for the regular session.

Lindsey Selby will read the District mission and vision

Lauren Randle will read the goals

Monica DiVito will be the contact person for newly elected Board Members.

**Motion to enter Executive Session**

**Motion: Baldacchini Second: Selby**

**All Voted In Favor**

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

**Personnel: NONE**

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**Other Matters:**

Board Member - Ethics Training

**Motion to return to Regular Meeting:**

**Motion: Smith Second: Selby**

**All Voted In Favor**

**Regular Meeting:** Started at 6:40 p.m.

**Roll Call:**

**Present**

Cynthia Baldacchini

Monica DiVito

Ember Loefflad

James Morris

Lauren Randle

Lindsey Selby

Patricia Smith

Gary Douglass

**Absent**

Lauren Cox

**Also in Attendance:**

Van Cathcart, Superintendent

Katie Siciliano, Board Secretary

Brett Gorman, Board Attorney

**Salute to the Flag**

**Statement:**

Notice of this meeting of the Lower Township Board of Education, listing the Agenda as known, was duly sent to the Cape May County Herald - Times Newspaper, The Press of Atlantic City, posted at the Municipal Building, and a copy thereof delivered to the Township Clerk; in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act.

**District Mission Statement:**

"Dedicated to academic excellence, Lower Township Elementary Schools will nurture and challenge all students in a safe and innovative learning community. By encouraging respect and responsibility, students become self-directed, passionate, lifelong learners who will reach their potential. We are dedicated to supporting all students in exceeding the New Jersey Student Learning Standards."

**Vision Statement:**

*Every Student, Every Day, Learning, Teaching, Exploring, Succeeding.*

**2025-2026 District Goals:**

1. The Lower Township Elementary School District will reduce chronic absenteeism across all four schools by a minimum of 3 percentage points by June 2026.
2. By June 2026, the district will complete the onboarding process with eduCLIMBER, with full implementation beginning in the 2026–2027 school year.

**2025-2026 Board Goals:**

1. Develop an understanding of the proper implementation of Board SMART goals through the stages of adoption, progress monitoring and achievement.
2. Establish Board norms as well as protocols of the roles and responsibilities of the Board and the Superintendent as standards of behavior expected of all Board members in their interactions with each other, the Superintendent, district staff and the community.
3. Develop a comprehensive understanding of district assessments used to measure student achievement, resulting in a better understanding of data and to better equip the Board in supporting district educational priorities.

**This meeting will be conducted in accordance with:**

District Policy: #0164 Conduct of Board Meetings

District Policy: #0167 Public Participation in Board Meetings

**1} REPORTS:**

**A}** Board President - No report

**B}** Superintendent - Recognized the outside and private supporters of our district.

**C}** School Business Administrator: Recognized Buildings & Grounds and Transportation for their work during snow day/delay.

**D}** Presentations: Recognize Kristen Casella, Sandman’s Principal’s Secretary for ‘*Educational Support Professional of the Year*’ - Mr. Cathcart recognized Ms. Casella’s work and dedication to the district.

**E}** **Committee Reports:**

Finance & Facilities Committee - Met January 20th. Minutes not complete but will be sent to board shortly.

Personnel & Management Committee - Met January 20th. Minutes were sent to board. Supports approving all of the superintendent's personnel recommendations.

Curriculum & Instruction Committee - Were not able to meet but supports approving the LIFT & HIT grants. Will meet next month.

**F}** **Board Comment:**

Mrs. Baldacchini thanked everyone for their work to provide a safe return to school after snow.

Mrs. Loefflad also thanked everyone for getting students to school safely due to the impact of snow.

Mrs. Selby thanked the board for the work that was put in to make it an easy transition for new board members.

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Mrs. Smith enjoyed the "football math" and Mr. King's snow measurement competition.  
Mrs. DiVito congratulated Mrs. Casella.  
Mrs. Randle expressed excitement about upcoming school events  
Mr. Douglass congratulated Mrs. Casella

**2} APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

January 7, 2026 Reorganization/Regular Meeting  
Regular Meeting & Executive Meeting

**Motion: Douglass Second: Smith**

**Discussion: NONE**

**Voted Yes:** Cynthia Baldacchini  
Monica DiVito  
Ember Loefflad  
James Morris  
Lauren Randle  
Lindsey Selby  
Patricia Smith  
Gary Douglass

**Absent:** Lauren Cox

**3} CONSENT AGENDA:**

**OPEN MEETING TO THE PUBLIC TO SPEAK ON CONSENT ITEMS ONLY:**

***PLEASE NOTE:*** Each speaker shall identify him/herself by giving their name and address and will be allowed to speak once for a period not to exceed four minutes. The public comment portion of all Board Meetings shall not exceed forty minutes in total. Prior to the roll call vote, any member of the board may ask for discussion on any of the items within the block.  
*The following items are believed to be items of a routine nature and will be moved as a block of action items. Prior to the roll call vote, any member may ask for discussion on any of the items without the block.*

**R. Routine Matters**

**R-1 Approval of Financial Statements:**

Secretary's and custodian's reports for **December 2025** which are in agreement as certified by the Board Secretary, that no budgetary account has been over-expended, in violation of NJAC 6:20-2.12 (a), (d).

**R-2 Approval of Transfers: December 2025** {Backup R-2}

**R-3 Approval of Bill List: January 8, 2026 - January 28, 2026** {Backup R-3}

**R-4 Approval of Cafeteria Report: December 2025** {Backup R-4}

**R-5 Approval of Travel: October 2025 & January 2026** {Backup R-5}

**P. Personnel:**

**1.** On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the following substitute be

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approve for the 2025-2026 school year, pending receipt of required documentation:  
(Backup P-1)

**SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS**

Makenzie Larkin, Karly Gleeson, Hannah Stone, Michelle Gilbert

**SUBSTITUTE CLASSROOM AIDES**

Makenzie Larkin, Chloe Frame, Nichole Hamilton, Stephanie Hannum, Karly Gleeson, Marianne Linnington

**SUBSTITUTE DAY CARE AIDES**

Nichole Hamilton, Karly Gleeson

**SUBSTITUTE CAFETERIA AIDES**

Nichole Hamilton, Marianne Linnington

**SUBSTITUTE BUS AIDES**

Nichole Hamilton, Stephanie Hannum, Marianne Linnington

2. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education accept, with regret, the retirement of Dianne Wunder, Principal's Secretary at the Carl T. Mitnick School, effective April 30, 2026. (Backup P-2)
3. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education accept, with regret, the retirement of Krista Risley, Preschool Intervention and Referral Specialist at the David C. Douglass Veterans Memorial School, effective April 1, 2026. (Backup P-3)
4. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education accept the resignation of Veronica Rodriguez, Daily Part-Time Cafeteria Aide at the Maud Abrams School, effective February 13, 2026. (Backup P-4)
5. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve Susan Roselli as Temporary Media Specialist at the Sandman School at the rate of \$269.85 per diem, effective January 5, 2026 to June 15, 2026. (Backup P-5)
6. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education approves Nicole Connor as Temporary 5th Grade Resource Room Teacher at the Sandman Consolidated School at the rate of \$269.85 per diem, effective on or about March 3, 2026 to June 2026. (Backup P-6)
7. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve Haley Bieber, Kindergarten LLD Special Education Teacher at the Carl T. Mitnick School, for placement of MA on the LTEEA Teachers' Salary Guide, to reflect an increase of credits to her degree, effective February 1, 2026. (Backup P-7)

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- 8. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve Riley DeCamillo, Preschool Teacher at the David C. Douglass Veterans Memorial School, for placement of BA+30 on the LTEEA Teachers' Salary Guide, to reflect an increase of credits to her degree, effective February 1, 2026.
- 9. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve the following Non-FMLA:

<b><u>EMPLOYEE</u></b>	<b><u>POSITION</u></b>	<b><u>EFFECTIVE DATE</u></b>
#4239	Custodian	11/20/25 -2/12/26
#4690	Teacher	1/13/26 - 4/20/26
#6112	Daily PT Bus Aide	1/20/26 - 3/2/26
#5230	Teacher	2/2/26 - 6/15/26 Intermittent

- 10. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve the following on-call substitutes as daily part-time staff:

<b><u>Employee</u></b>	<b><u>Position</u></b>	<b><u>Effective Date</u></b>
Peyton Bortner	60 Credit Aide @ Mitnick	1/5/26
Danae Allen	Cafeteria Aide @ Sandman	1/8/26

- 11. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve the revised Job Description for Principal/Assistant Principal. (Backup P-11)

**H. Harassment, Intimidation & Bullying: None**

**L. Legislative and Internal Policies: None**

**E. Education:**

- 1. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve the Lower Cape May Regional High School Teacher Cadets Program to allow participating students to shadow selected teachers in the classroom throughout the day with specific requirements as per the Curriculum Map provided. (Backup E-1)
- 2. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve the following placement for 2025-2026: (Backup E-2)

**Case #4968-A** - 1st Grade student to Cape May County Special Services School District

- 3. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve the application of the Literacy Initiative for Families and Thriving Communities (LIFT) Grant, Cohort 2.

**F. Finance and Insurance:**

- 1. On the recommendation of the School Business Administrator, that the Lower Township

Board of Education to approve and accept the Annual Audit, to be read into the public record (if applicable), for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2025: (Complete document was distributed under separate cover.)

**FYE 6/30/2025- Annual School Audit Lower Twp Schools**

**Findings & Recommendations:**

- #1. Administrative Practices and Procedures – None.
- #2. Financial Planning, Accounting and Reporting – None.
- #3. School Purchasing Programs – None.
- #4. School Food Service – None.
- #5. Student Body Activities – None.
- #6. Day Care Program- None.
- #7. Application for State School Aide – None.
- #8. Pupil Transportation – None.
- #9. Facilities and Capital Assets – None.
- #10. Miscellaneous – None.
- #11. Status of Prior Year Audit Findings/Recommendations – None.

**FYE 6/30/2025- Annual School Audit Lower Twp Schools**

Findings: None.  
Recommendation: None.  
Corrective Action Plan: None.

The School Business Administrator made available to the board and the public the Synopsis of the 24-25 SY Audit. Mrs. Siciliano provided a summary of the findings and recommendations along with some financial information regarding the district's financial standing.

- 2. On the recommendation of the School Business Administrator, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve the pass-through Special Services Tuition Contract between Lower Township Elementary Schools and Middle Township Board of Education for Student # 19355 for September 2, 2025 through December 31, 2025, at the rate of \$12,240.64 (Backup F-2)
- 3. On the recommendation of the School Business Administrator, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve the transportation of 1st grade student (file # 5230-A) to CHOP Behavioral Health Program: Children's Intensive Emotional And Behavioral Services.
- 4. On the recommendation of the School Business Administrator, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve the transportation of Kindergarten student #19795 to Cape May Special Services School District.

5. On the recommendation of the School Business Administrator, that the Lower Township Board of Education authorize the application for the Literacy Initiative for Families and Thriving Communities Grant for \$40,000.00 meant to cultivate home-based literacy habits and foster strong family engagement in children’s literacy development.
6. On the recommendation of the School Business Administrator, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve the amendment of the 2025 - 2026 Title IA, Title IIA, and Title III grant fund allocations.
7. On the recommendation of the School Business Administrator, that the Lower Township Board of Education authorize the application for the NJ Learning Acceleration Program: High Impact Tutoring Grant for \$80,000.

**MOTION ON CONSENT AGENDA ON ALL MOTIONS LISTED BELOW:**

**Routine Matters: R-1 to R-5**

**Personnel: P-1 to P-11**

**Harassment, Intimidation & Bullying: None**

**Legislative and Internal Policies: None**

**Education: E-1 to E-3**

**Finance: F-1 to F-7**

**Motion: DiVito Second: Selby**

**Discussion: NONE**

**Voted Yes:**

Cynthia Baldacchini

Monica DiVito

Ember Loefflad

James Morris

Lauren Randle

Lindsey Selby

Patricia Smith

Gary Douglass

**Absent:**

Lauren Cox

**4} NON-CONSENT AGENDA: NONE**

**5} OLD/NEW BUSINESS:** Mr. Cathcart congratulated Ms. Wunder & Ms. Risley on their retirement which was just approved.

**6} OPEN MEETING TO THE PUBLIC: None**

**7} GOOD TO THE ORDER:**

**A}** Next Board Meeting: Work session: February 25, 2026

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- B}** Emergency Drill: 1/23/26 Lockdown Drill
- C}** Fire Drills: 12/10/25 & 1/7/26 Sandman School; 12/10/25 & 1/9/26 - Maud Abrams School; 12/22/25 & 1/7/26 - Mitnick School; 12/9/25 & 1/7/26 - Memorial School

**8} ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION TO ADJOURN THE MEETING**

**Motion: DiVito Second: Baldacchini**

**All Voted in Favor**

**The Meeting Concluded at 6:55 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,



Board Secretary/School Business Administrator