

**LOWER TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION
MINUTES
REORGANIZATION AND REGULAR MEETING
JANUARY 7, 2026**

The Reorganization Meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

Members Present:

Cynthia Baldacchini
Monica DiVito
James Morris
Lauren Randle
Patricia Smith
Gary Douglass

Also in Attendance:

Van Cathcart, Superintendent
Katie Siciliano, School Business Administrator

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.

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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.
1. Board Secretary administered the Oath of Office to elected and re-elected Board Members. Members signed Oath of Office Form.

Three Year Term

Ember Loefflad

Lauren Randle

Lindsey Selby

2. Election of the President

Board Secretary will take nominations for President of the Lower Township Board of Education commencing January 7, 2026 until the next Reorganization Meeting in 2027.

Motion: Douglass Second: Selby

All In Voted in Favor

Mrs. Smith nominated Mr. Douglass to be President of Lower Township Board of Education commencing January 7, 2026 until the next Reorganization Meeting in 2027.

Motion: DiVito Second: Randle

Voted Yes:

Cynthia Baldacchini

Monica DiVito

Ember Loefflad

James Morris

Lauren Randle

Lindsey Selby

Patricia Smith

Gary Douglass

3. Election of the Vice President

The Board President conducted the nomination of the Vice President.

Mrs. DiVito nominated Patricia Smith to be Vice President of Lower Township Board of Education commencing January 7, 2026 until the next Reorganization Meeting in 2027.

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Motion: Douglass Second: Randle

Voted Yes:

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

4. Code of Ethics

Lower Township Elementary School Code of Ethics: **Each Board member signed the Affidavit form on 1/7/2026.**

Pat Smith mentioned that Brett Gorman, Board Solicitor will be doing a presentation on Ethics at the January 28, 2026 board meeting. She noted that materials on the NJSBA website would be helpful for Board Members to access and read.

Motion to enter Executive Session

Motion: DiVito Second: Randle
All Voted In Favor

Other Matters:

Discussion of Board Member Vacancy Candidates

Motion to return to Reorganization Meeting:

Motion: Randle Second: DiVito

All Voted In Favor

Executive Session Adjourned at 6:13 p.m.

Reorganization Meeting:

Present:

Cynthia Baldacchini
Monica DiVito
Ember Loefflad
James Morris
Lauren Randle

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Lindsey Selby
Patricia Smith
Gary Douglass

Vote on Board Vacancy

5. The Board President took nominations for Board Vacancy.

Mr. Douglass nominated Lauren Cox to fill the Board Vacancy of Lower Township Board of Education commencing January 7, 2026 until December 31, 2026.

Motion: Douglass Second: DiVito

Discussion: None

Voted Yes:

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

6. Board Secretary administered the Oath of Office to **Lauren Cox**, newly voted in Board Member. Member signed Oath of Office Form.

R. REORGANIZATION:

Motion: Nominating **Lauren Cox** to represent the Lower Township Board of Education as the ***Delegate*** to the New Jersey School Boards Assembly.

Motion: DiVito Second: Douglass

Discussion: None

Motion: Nominating **Cynthia Baldacchini** to represent the Lower Township Board of Education as the ***Alternate Delegate*** to the New Jersey School Boards Assembly:

Motion: Douglass Second: Smith

Discussion: None

Voted Yes:

Cynthia Baldacchini
Monica DiVito

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Ember Loefflad
James Morris
Lauren Randle
Lindsey Selby
Patricia Smith
Gary Douglass
Lauren Cox

1. That the Board approve the following Appointments and Resolutions, for the fiscal year January 7, 2026 until the Reorganization Meeting 2027, as listed below;

- a. **Board Secretary & Records Custodian** – Katie Siciliano
- b. **ESEA Coordinator** – Sarah Bowman
- c. **Homeless Liaison/DC&P Coordinator** – Julia Sangillo
- d. **Public Agency Compliance Officer (P.A.C.O.)** – Katie Siciliano
- e. **Section 504 Compliance Officer** – Debra Keeler
- f. **Chief Equity/Affirmative Action Officer/Title IX Coordinator** –
Katie Siciliano
- g. **Annuity & Investment Planners & Disability Insurance:**
Crest Financial Services
Equitable Group
Lincoln Investment
Siracusa
Sturdy Financial Services
AFLAC
AIG
Colonial Life
Franklin Insurance
Prudential
- h. **Treasurer** – Lauren Read
- i. **IPM (Integrated Pest Management) Coordinator** – Gary O'Shea

2. That the Board approves that all current written policies, by-laws and rules/regulations in the official Policy Manual of the Lower Township Elementary School District be readopted for the period from the date of this Organization Meeting until the Organization Meeting in the next calendar year unless modified by the Board of Education in accordance with those applicable policies, by-laws and/or rules/regulations.

3. That the Board approves that all current written curriculum, courses, textbooks, workbooks, and ancillary materials of the District be adopted for the period from the date of this Organization Meeting until the Organization Meeting in the next calendar year, unless modified upon recommendation of the Superintendent.

4. "BANK DEPOSITORIES and DIRECT DEPOSIT"

RESOLVED, that as "Sturdy Bank", "NJARM", "The Bank of New York", "First Hope Bank" (Lease) and Sterling National Bank {ESIP} depositories for any and all monies that will be credited from time to time for any and all debt service;

AND, as the above stated bank is the paying agent for such debt service when due;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that an account in the name of this Board be kept with the "Sturdy Bank", "The Depository Trust Co.", "First Hope Bank" (Lease) and "Sterling National Bank {ESIP}" for the deposit in said bank to the credit of this Board from time to time, of any and all monies for said debt service;

RESOLVED, that the Cash Management Plan presented by Sturdy Bank, be approved for the Sweep Account and the Unemployment Trust Money Market Account, as provided in Board Policy #3300;

RESOLVED, that the following accounts titled, as listed below, in the name of the Board of Education, be kept with the Sturdy Bank for the deposit in said bank, to the credit of the Board from time to time, of any/all monies, checks, drafts, notes, acceptances or other evidence of indebtedness, whether belonging to the Board or otherwise, which may be or hereafter come into its possession, and that the said bank be and is hereby authorized to make payment from the funds on deposit with it open and according to the checks, drafts, notes, or acceptances of this Board signed, effective July 1, 2018.

RESOLVED, in accordance with P.L. 2013 c. 28, that the Board of Education require mandatory direct deposit for all employees for net pay, effective February 1, 2017, in a specific banking institution, based on information provided by the employee.

"BANK DEPOSITORIES"

TYPE	DESCRIPTION	NUMBER	AUTHORIZE SIGNATURE/TRANSFERS
Checking Sturdy General Acct.	Lower Township Board of Education General Acct.	XXXXXX0521	1. Board President or Board Vice President 2. Board Treasurer 3. Board Secretary or Business Administrator
Checking Sturdy Pay Acct.	Lower Township Board of Education Payroll	XXXXXX0548	1. Board Treasurer or Board Secretary or Business Administrator
Checking Sturdy Agency Acct.	Lower Township Board of Education Agency Acct.	XXXXXX9574	1. Board Treasurer or Board Secretary or Business Administrator
Money Market Sturdy Trust Acct.	Lower Township Board of Education Unemployment Trust	XXXXXX0080	4. Board Treasurer or Board Secretary or Business Administrator

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Checking Sturdy Cafeteria Acct.	Lower Township Board of Education Cafeteria Fund	XXXXXX0556	1. Board Secretary or Business Administrator 2. Cafeteria Supervisor
Checking Sturdy Student Activity Acct.	Lower Township Board of Education Student Activity Acct.	XXXXXX1326	1. Board President or Board Vice President 2. Board Treasurer 3. Board Secretary or Business Administrator
Checking Sturdy	Bond Proceeds	XXXXXX2696	1. Board President or Board Vice President 2. Board Treasurer 3. Board Secretary or Business Administrator
Checking Day Care Operations	Lower Township Board of Education Day Care Operations	XXXXXX3805	1. Board President or Board Vice President 2. Board Treasurer 3. Board Secretary or Business Administrator
Checking Sturdy	Bond Funded Acct.	XXXXXX7799	1. Board President or Board Vice President 2. Board Treasurer 3. Board Secretary or Business Administrator
Investment Acct. NJARM	Bond Proceeds	XXXXXX300	3. Board Secretary or Business Administrator

5. "PETTY CASH FUND - NEW JERSEY RIGHT TO KNOW/OPRA COPY COST - BOARD OFFICE"

WHEREAS, THE LOWER TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION, has the need to make immediate payments for delivered items of small purchases and provide copies to the public, as requested;

WHEREAS, THE LOWER TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION, maintains a cash on hand, not to exceed \$1,300 (\$500 – Board Office/\$200 Each School);

WHEREAS, all funds will be returned to the current expense budget on June 30, 2026;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board Secretary be responsible for petty cash funds established for the 2026-2027 school year, or until the next Reorganization Meeting;

ALSO, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the fees for documentation of New Jersey Right To Know and all Open Public Records Act documents, be consistent with law and Board Policy.

6. "UNEMPLOYMENT CLAIMS AND CHARGES 2026-27"

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WHEREAS, THE LOWER TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION, has the need to transfer funds for unemployment claims and charges;

WHEREAS, the payments are made from the unemployment trust account;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that transfer funds for unemployment claims and charges are authorized.

7. "AUTHORIZATION TO ADVERTISE FOR BIDS"

WHEREAS, THE LOWER TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION, has the need to advertise for bids according to the "Public School Contracts Law", N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-3(b) and use contracts issued by the State Cooperative Purchasing Bureau;

WHEREAS, the bid threshold will remain at \$53,000.00 (effective July 1, 2025);

WHEREAS, the following purchase areas may be advertised for solicitation of bids or state contract use:

PURCHASE AREAS

Photocopiers	Equipment Lease Agreement
Computer Equipment	Roof Replacement & Repair
Custodial Supplies	Buildings & Grounds Repair
Maintenance Equipment	Electrical & Plumbing
School Supplies	Office Supplies
Copier Paper	Audio Visual Equipment
Gasoline/Fuel Oil/Natural Gas/Electric	
School Transportation Equipment	
Asbestos Removal Services	

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board Secretary be authorized to advertise for bids or utilize the State Cooperative Purchasing Bureau, according to the Public School Contracts Law using the \$53,000.00 bid limit.

MOTION ON REORGANIZATION #1-#7

Motion: Smith Second: Douglass

Discussion: None

Voted Yes:

Cynthia Baldacchini

Monica DiVito

Ember Loefflad

James Morris

Lauren Randle

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Lindsey Selby
Patricia Smith
Gary Douglass
Lauren Cox

MOTION TO ADJOURN REORGANIZATION MEETING

**Motion: Randle Second: Baldacchini
All Voted in Favor**

MOTION TO CONVENE REGULAR MEETING

Motion: Smith Second: Baldacchini

Voted Yes:

Cynthia Baldacchini
Monica DiVito
Ember Loefflad
James Morris
Lauren Randle
Lindsey Selby
Patricia Smith
Gary Douglass
Lauren Cox

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: None

B} Superintendent: Mr. Cathcart congratulated all newly elected and appointed board members. He is appreciative of all of their service to the district.

C} School Business Administrator: None

D} Presentations: None

E} Committee Reports:

Finance & Facilities Committee - There was a meeting held on December 17, 2025. Mr. Douglass sent minutes out to all board members.

Personnel & Management Committee - Did not meet in December. Waiting on Committee reassignments to schedule in January.

Curriculum & Instruction Committee - Did not Meet in December. Waiting on Committee reassignments to schedule the next meeting.

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F} Board Comment:

Mrs. Smith asked board members to send her their requests for committees and she will do her best to assign them what they request. Please send this week so we can plan meetings.

Mrs. Selby is excited to be back on the board and ready to get started.

2} **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

December 3, 2025

Regular Meeting & Executive Meeting

Motion: Smith Second: Cox

Discussion: none

Voted Yes:

Cynthia Baldacchini

Monica DiVito

James Morris

Patricia Smith

Gary Douglass

Lauren Cox

Abstained:

Ember Loefflad

Lauren Randle

Lindsey Selby

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 within the block.

R. Routine Matters

R-1 Approval of Financial Statements:

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Secretary's and custodian's reports for **November 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: November 2025 {Backup R-2}

R-3 Approval of Bill List: December 3, 2025 - January 7, 2026 {Backup R-3}

R-4 Approval of Cafeteria Report: None

R-5 Approval of Travel: None

P. Personnel:

1. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the following substitute be approve for the 2025-2026 school year, pending receipt of required documentation:
(Backup P-1)

SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS

Gabriel Salinsky, Layla Nunez-Roach, Colby Yoh, Judy O'Connor-Becker, Molly McGuigan, Maggie Senatore

SUBSTITUTE 60 CREDIT AIDES

Monica Flad-Coombs, Gabrielle Eppright

SUBSTITUTE CLASSROOM AIDES

Victoria Fry, Emily Barreno-Bowen

SUBSTITUTE BUS AIDES

Victoria Fry

SUBSTITUTE CAFETERIA AIDE

Emily Barreno-Bowen

SUBSTITUTE FOOD SERVICE WORKER

Emily Barreno-Bowen

SUBSTITUTE DAYCARE

Emily Barreno-Bowen

2. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve the following transfers:

<u>EMPLOYEE</u>	<u>CURRENT POSITION</u>	<u>TRANSFERRED TO</u>
<i>Lindsay Davis</i>	<i>3rd Gr. LLD @ Maud Abrams</i>	<i>3rd Gr. Resource Room @ Maud Abrams</i>
<i>Holly Sanai</i>	<i>Classroom Aide @ Mitnick</i>	<i>Daily PT Nurse's Clerk @ Maud Abrams</i>

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

<u>EMPLOYEE</u>	<u>POSITION</u>	<u>EFFECTIVE DATE</u>
<i>Biby Reyes</i>	<i>Classroom Aide @ Memorial</i>	<i>10/13/25</i>
<i>Zachary Layton</i>	<i>Custodian</i>	<i>12/1/25</i>
<i>Daniel Sherno</i>	<i>Custodian</i>	<i>12/1/25</i>
<i>Hannah Christman</i>	<i>Daycare Aide</i>	<i>12/4/25</i>
<i>Catherine Donia</i>	<i>Classroom Aide @ Maud Abrams</i>	<i>12/5/25</i>
<i>David Kelly</i>	<i>Bus Driver</i>	<i>12/8/25</i>
<i>Maureen Karch</i>	<i>Bus Aide</i>	<i>12/8/25</i>
<i>Johnny Rios</i>	<i>Custodian</i>	<i>12/9/25</i>
<i>Lisa Dougherty</i>	<i>Classroom Aide @ Memorial</i>	<i>12/15/25</i>
<i>Kayla Gushue</i>	<i>Classroom Aide @ Memorial</i>	<i>1/5/26</i>

4. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education accept the resignation of Thomas Quinn, daily part time Paraprofessional at the David C. Douglass Veterans Memorial School, effective December 23, 2025. (Backup P-4)
5. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve Lauren Magnavita, LDTC at Sandman Consolidated School, for placement of MA+15 on the LTEEA Teachers' Salary Guide, to reflect an increase of credits to her degree, effective February 1, 2026. (Backup P-5)

H. Harassment, Intimidation & Bullying:

1. The Board affirms the actions taken by the Superintendent and the School Safety Teams, for H.I.B. Sandman #2 2025-2026 and H.I.B. Maud Abrams #1 2026-2026. (Backup H-1)

L. Legislative and Internal Policies:

1. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve the second reading for the following revisions to existing or new Policies and Regulations: (Backup L-1)

<u>NUMBER</u>	<u>TYPE</u>	<u>TITLE</u>
<i>2530</i>	<i>Policy & Regulation</i>	<i>Resource Materials</i>
<i>2535</i>	<i>Policy & Regulation</i>	<i>Library Material</i>
<i>9130</i>	<i>Policy & Regulation</i>	<i>Public Complaints and</i>
<i>Grievances</i>		

E. Education: None.

F. Finance and Insurance: None.

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MOTION ON CONSENT AGENDA ON ALL MOTIONS LISTED BELOW:

Routine Matters: R-1 to R-5

Personnel: P-1 to P-5

Harassment, Intimidation & Bullying: H-1

Legislative and Internal Policies: L-1

Education: None

Finance: None

Motion: Randle Second: Cox

Discussion: none

Voted Yes:

Cynthia Baldacchini

Monica DiVito

Ember Loefflad

James Morris

Lauren Randle

Lindsey Selby

Patricia Smith

Gary Douglass

Lauren Cox

4} NON-CONSENT AGENDA: None

5} OLD/NEW BUSINESS: None

6} OPEN MEETING TO THE PUBLIC: *(public comment rules as read above apply): None*

7} GOOD TO THE ORDER:

A} Next Board Meeting: Work session: January 28, 2026

B} Emergency Drill: 12/16/25 - 12/22/25 - Notification Communication Tests

C} Fire Drills: 12/9/25 - Memorial School; 12/10/25 - Sandman School & Maud
Abrams School; 12/22/25 - Mitnick School

8} ADJOURNMENT

MOTION TO ADJOURN THE MEETING

Motion: Selby Second: Baldacchini

All Voted in Favor

Regular Meeting Adjourned at 6:26 p.m.

1/7/2026

Respectfully submitted by,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Katie Siciliano". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'K' and a long, sweeping underline.

Katie Siciliano

School Business Administrator/ Board Secretary