

**LOWER TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION  
MINUTES  
WORK SESSION AND REGULAR MEETING  
FEBRUARY 25, 2026**

Work Session was Called to Order at 6:00 pm

**Work Session Meeting:**

**Roll Call:**

**PRESENT**

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:**

Ms. Smith requested clarification on Sandman suspensions and Maud's Maintenance report. Mr. Cathcart responded with a clarification on both.

There was a discussion regarding the cancellation of the pre-budget presentation and a concern about not having enough information to vote on the budget at the next meeting. The state extended the due date of the budget to the county to March 27, 2026. Mrs. Siciliano will provide an update to any budget concerns at upcoming committee meetings.

**Non-Agenda Items:**

Board & District Goal Progress Update - Ms. Smith provided an update to the progress of each goal.  
2026-2027 District Calendar - Mr. Cathcart will update the board at the next meeting regarding 26-27 Calendar

Updates from CMCSBA - Ms. Smith updated the board on the CMCSBA meeting held in February. The presentation was very impressive. The county is requesting input on what board members would like to see at the upcoming meetings.

**Other Matters:**

**Motion to enter Executive Session**

**Motion: Selby            Second: Baldacchini**

**All Voted in Favor**

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

**Personnel:**

Employee #5596

2/25/2026

**Other Matters:**

HIB #3 Maud Abrams 25-26; HIB #1 Mitnick 25-26; HIB #2 Mitnick 25-26

**Motion to return to Regular Meeting:**

**Motion: Cox Second: Randle**

**All Voted In Favor**

**Regular Meeting:** Started at 7:14 p.m.

**Roll Call:**

**Present**

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

**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.*

2/25/2026

**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: Mr. Cathcart noted that his report will be posted on the website tomorrow. Mr. Cathcart recognized School Counselor Week and the Winter Concert.

**C}** School Business Administrator: No Report

**D}** Presentations: **Cape May Tennis Club NJTL Chapter Program Overview**

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

Finance & Facilities Committee : Did not Meeting - Next Meeting March 16, 2026 10 am

Personnel & Management Committee: Committee met on February 17th - Ms. Smith summarized the meeting details.

Curriculum & Instruction Committee: Committee met on February 20th - Ms. Randle summarized the meeting details.

**F}** Board Comment: Mr. Douglass thanked Maintenance Dept for their hard work with snow removal.

Mr. Morris echoed Mr. Douglass's remarks

Ms. Randle thanked Transportation Dept for work navigation streets with snow. Appreciative of the wonderful school activities.

Ms. DiVito just hopes for no more snow

Ms. Baldacchini thanked the maintenance dept and all staff for navigating the difficulties of snow storm.

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Ms. Loefflad thanked staff and administration for hard work.

Ms. Cox called our staff the Dream Team

Ms. Selby was blown away by the band and chorus students at the winter concert. She feels we do a great job with family engagement activities.

Ms. Smith noted how stressful it is for staff and families to come to school in the midst of power outages, etc.

**2} APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

January 28, 2026 Regular Meeting

Regular Meeting & Executive Meeting

**Motion: Selby Second: Baldacchini**

**Discussion: None**

**Voted Yes**

**Abstained**

Cynthia Baldacchini

Lauren Cox

Monica DiVito

Ember Loefflad

James Morris

Lauren Randle

Lindsey Selby

Patricia Smith

Gary Douglass

**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 **January 2026** 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: January 2026 {Backup R-2}**

**R-3 Approval of Bill List: January 28, 2026 - February 25, 2026 {Backup R-3}**

**R-4 Approval of Cafeteria Report: January 2026 {Backup R-4}**

**R-5 Approval of Travel: None**

**P. Personnel:**

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- 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 60 CREDIT AIDES**

Gabrielle Eppright

**SUBSTITUTE CLASSROOM AIDES**

Heather Hedley, Lindsay Matlack, Christine Fittipaldi

**SUBSTITUTE DAY CARE AIDES**

Heather Hedley, Colette Potter, Aaliyah Krieg

**SUBSTITUTE FOOD SERVICE WORKERS**

Heather Hedley, Aaliyah Krieg, Christine Fittipaldi

**SUBSTITUTE BUS AIDES**

Aaliyah Krieg

- 2. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education accept, the resignation of Hayley Pettit, Daily Part-Time Classroom Aide at the Sandman Consolidated School effective February 13, 2026. (Backup P-2)
- 3. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education approves Rian Lawley as Temporary Kindergarten Teacher at the Carl T. Mitnick School at the rate of \$175.00 per diem, effective on or about January 20, 2026 to January 28, 2026 then \$269.85 per diem effective January 29, 2026 to April 30, 2026. (Backup P-3)
- 4. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve the following Non-FMLA/FMLA:

<b><u>EMPLOYEE</u></b>	<b><u>POSITION</u></b>	<b><u>EFFECTIVE DATE</u></b>
#4993	Teacher	1/13/26 - 4/02/26 FMLA-Intermittent
#5794	Bus Driver	3/23/26 - 4/17/26 - Non-FMLA

- 5. 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>
Johnnie Rios	Custodian	12/9/25
Kayla Gushue	Classroom Aide @ Memorial	1/13/26
Chloe Frame	Classroom Aide @ Sandman	2/11/26

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

**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 L1)

<b><u>NUMBER</u></b>	<b><u>TYPE</u></b>	<b><u>TITLE</u></b>
0142	Policy	Nepotism
1220	Policy	Employment of Chief School Administrator
1552	Policy	Sexual Harassment - Staff
1552	Regulation	Sexual Harassment - Staff

**E. Education:**

1. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve the following placement for 2025-2026: (Backup E-1)

**Case #5281-A:** Preschool student to Cape May County Special Services School District

**F. Finance and Insurance:**

1. On the recommendation of the School Business Administrator, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve voiding of 2023 - 2024 SY uncashed checks:

<b>Check #</b>	<b>Account</b>	<b>Payee Name</b>	<b>Issue Date</b>	<b>Amount</b>
421165	Student Activity	Academic Entertainment, Inc.	08/01/23	\$1,195.00
421274	General Fund	Wetherill, Liberty	08/01/23	\$1,522.00
421755	General Fund	Villa Napa Auto Parts	02/29/24	\$503.37

**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: None**

**Legislative and Internal Policies: L-1**

**Education: E-1**

**Finance: F-1**

**Motion: Smith Second: Cox**

**Discussion: None**

**Vote:**

Cynthia Baldacchini

2/25/2026

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

**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: March 18, 2026

**B}** Emergency Drill: 2/20/26 Lockdown Drill

**C}** Fire Drills: 2/18/26 - Memorial Schools; TBD - Sandman, Maud Abrams and Mitnick Schools

**8} ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION TO ADJOURN THE MEETING**

**Motion: Selby Second: Cox**

**All Voted in Favor**

**The Meeting Concluded at 7:41 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,



Board Secretary/School Business Administrator