

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

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

Work Session Meeting

Roll Call:

PRESENT

Cynthia Baldacchini

Lauren Cox

Ember Loefflad

James Morris

Lauren Randle

Lindsey Selby

Patricia Smith

Gary Douglass

ABSENT

Monica DiVito

Also in Attendance:

Van Cathcart, Superintendent

Katie Siciliano, Board Secretary

Brett Gorman, Board Attorney

Agenda Items:

No comments on Agenda Items

Non-Agenda Items:

Mrs. Siciliano updated the board on the status of transporting students participating in the Cape May Tennis Youth program from Lower Township Schools.

Other Matters:

Motion to enter Executive Session

Motion: Selby Second: Cox

All Voted in Favor

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Personnel:

Superintendent Evaluation Pre-Conference

Other Matters:

H.I.B. Sandman #5 2025-2026; H.I.B. Sandman #6 2025-2026

Motion to return to Regular Meeting:

Motion: Selby Second: Cox

All Voted in Favor

3/25/2026

Regular Meeting: Started at 6:30 p.m.

Roll Call:

PRESENT

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

ABSENT

Monica DiVito

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: Mr. Cathcart highlighted the Read Across America Event - he thanked the librarians and clerks for organizing. Mr. Cathcart also highlighted Career week and thanked all of the staff, administrators and counselors who made it possible.

C} Presentations: Mr. Cathcart recognized Meg Desmond, Counselor of the County by the Cape Atlantic Counselors' Association

D} School Business Administrator: Mrs. Siciliano made a statement regarding the 2026 -2027 budget that will be submitted to the Executive County Superintendent.

E} **Committee Reports:**

Finance & Facilities Committee - Mr. Douglass noted that the Finance Committee Meeting was held on March 16, 2026 where the committee was updated on 2026 - 2027 budget.

Personnel & Management Committee - Mrs. Smith noted that the Personnel & Management committee met on March 17, 2026 and sent minutes out to the board. The next meeting will be April 21, 2026.

Curriculum & Instruction Committee - Mrs. Randle noted that the Curriculum & Instruction Committee met on March 20, 2026. Mrs. Randle went over the highlights of the meeting and noted that she sent out minutes to the board. The next meeting is April 22, 2026.

F} Board Comment: Mrs. Randle acknowledged the special area teachers and was impressed by the Special Area night at Mitnick. She also highlighted the ECAC meeting and acknowledged Jody from Cape Assist who is very collaborative. Mrs. Cox thanked Mr. Cathcart and Mrs. Siciliano for the hard work preparing the 26-27 budget Mrs. Smith wished all staff and students as wonderful and restful Spring Break.

3/25/2026

2} APPROVAL OF MINUTES:
February 25, 2026 Regular Meeting & Executive Meeting

Motion: Smith Second: Cox

Discussion: None

Voted	Absent
Cynthia Baldacchini	Monica DiVito
Lauren Cox	
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: None

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

R-3 Approval of Bill List: February 26, 2026 - March 25, 2026 {Backup R-3}

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

R-5 Approval of Travel: March & April 2026 (Backup R-5)

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

Shirley Robinson, Michelle Simmons

SUBSTITUTE 60 CREDIT AIDES

James Monahan

SUBSTITUTE CLASSROOM AIDES

James Monahan

- 2. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve Sharon Holden as Principal’s Secretary at the Carl T. Mitnick School effective May 1, 2026 on Step 4 of the LTEEA’s Secretary’s Salary Guide at the rate of \$43,037.00 and a Stipend of \$1,250.00 as Principal’s Secretary. (In district transfer) (Backup P-2)
- 3. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve Jessica Bryan, Preschool Instructional Coach at the David C. Douglass Veterans Memorial School, for placement of BA+15 on the LTEEA Teachers’ Salary Guide, to reflect an increase of credits to her degree, effective April 1, 2026. (Backup P-3)
- 4. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve Lindsay Dowe, School Nurse at the Sandman Consolidated School, for placement of BA+30 on the LTEEA Teachers’ Salary Guide, to reflect an increase of credits to her degree effective April 1, 2026. (Backup P-4)
- 5. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve the Summer Externship for Learning Disability Teacher Consultant (LDTC) Stephanie Meehan, from Rowan University effective July 1, 2026 through August 15, 2026 with Alison Paras, Case Manager. (Backup P-5)
- 6. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve Lori Lybarger of Alliance of Therapy Dogs (ATD), to provide volunteer visitation services with her therapy dog, Betty, to provide dog therapy at the Maud Abrams School for the 2025-2026 school year, on an as needed basis. (Backup P-6)
- 7. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve the following teachers from the Wildwood Crest School District to observe classroom interactions: (Backup P-7)

<u>Observing Teacher</u>	<u>Teacher Being Observed</u>	<u>Grade Level</u>
Amie Ostrander	Jessica Breuss	1st Grade
Stephanie Benson	Alyssa Gannon	Kindergarten

- 8. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve the following Non-FMLA/FMLA/FLI:

<u>EMPLOYEE</u>	<u>POSITION</u>	<u>EFFECTIVE DATE</u>
#5287	Teacher	3/1/26 - 3/6/26 Non-FMLA
#5077	Teacher	5/18/26 - 10/23/26 - FMLA
		10/24/26 - 12/23/26 - FLI

- 9. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education approves the transfer of Brittney Delano from the Senior Cook at Carl T. Mitnick School to the Senior Cook at Charles W. Sandman Consolidated School effective January 1, 2026. Transfer includes a salary decrease from \$27,035 to \$25,615 per the LTEA Contract.
- 10. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve the resignation of Allison Morey, 2nd Grade Teacher at the Carl T. Mitnick School, effective April 17, 2026. (Backup P-10)

H. Harassment, Intimidation & Bullying:

- 1. The Board affirms the actions taken by the Superintendent and the School Safety Teams, for HIB #3 Maud Abrams 25-26; HIB #1 Mitnick 25-26; HIB #2 Mitnick 25-26. (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>
0142	Policy	Nepotism
1220	Policy	Employment of Chief School Administrator
1552	Policy	Sexual Harassment - Staff
1552	Regulation	Sexual Harassment - Staff

- 2. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve the Revised 2025-2026 District Calendar. (Backup L-2)
- 3. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve the 2026-2027 District Calendar. (Backup L-3)

E. Education: None

F. Finance and Insurance:

- 1. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education to approve the adoption of the Tentative Budget for FY 2026-2027:

BE IT RESOLVED that the tentative budget be approved for the 2026-27 School Year using the 2026-2027 state aid figures and the School Business Administrator/Board Secretary be authorized to submit the following tentative budget to the Executive County Superintendent of Schools for approval in accordance with the statutory deadline:

	Budget	Local Tax Levy
General Fund	\$26,545,433	\$21,398,412
Special Revenue Fund	\$5,353,683	
Debt Service Fund	\$1,480,980	\$ 912,398
Total Base Budget	\$33,349,349	\$22,310,810

And to advertise said tentative budget in the Star and Wave in accordance with the form required by the State Department of Education and according to law; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a public hearing be held at the Lower Township Board of Education located at the Carl T. Mitnick School on Wednesday, April 29, 2026 at 6:00 p.m. for the purpose of conducting a public hearing on the budget for the 2026-2027 School Year.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the district establish a maximum of \$17,000 in the 2026-2027 school year for travel related expenditures.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Lower Township Board of Education includes in the proposed budget a Health Care Costs adjustment as calculated in the budget software and pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:7F-38 subsection (d) in the amount of \$630,713.00. The additional funds will be used to pay for the additional increases in health care premiums.

Capital Reserve Withdrawal - Other Capital Projects

BE IT RESOLVED that included in the general fund appropriations, budget line 620 is a withdrawal from Capital Reserve - Excess Costs & Other Capital Projects, for \$150,000 for Security Door Replacement for several district external doors. The use of \$150,000 of capital reserve will allow the district to improve the facilities by replacing 20 year old exterior doors.

Maintenance Reserve Withdrawal

BE IT RESOLVED that as per N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-14.2(d) the general fund appropriations include a \$175,000 withdrawal from the Maintenance Reserve Account for use on required maintenance activities for a school facility as reported in the comprehensive maintenance plan pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:26-20.5.

2. On the recommendation of the School Business Administrator, that the Lower Township Board of Education to approve the submission of the 2026-2027 Preschool Budget. (Backup F-2)
3. On the recommendation of the School Business Administrator, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve the Cape May County Special Services School District 2026-2027 school year and ESY tuition rates below:

ESY- Tuition	\$ 3,600
ESY- One-to One Aide	\$ 3,100
ESY- Transportation	\$ 2,550
Preschool Disabilities	\$ 45,500
Autism	\$ 47,500
Emotional Regulation Impairment	\$ 49,500
Multiple Disabilities	\$ 41,500

4. On the recommendation of the School Business Administrator, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve the Resolution and Indemnity & Trust Agreement, attached, to renew membership in the Atlantic & Cape May Counties Association of School Business Officials Joint Insurance Fund (ACCASBO JIF) for the three year membership term commencing on July 1, 2026. (Backup F-4)

5. On the recommendation of the School Business Administrator, that the Lower Township Board of Education approves the increase in the Daycare rates for the 2026-2027 school year.

AM Only Daycare	\$133.85 per month	\$ 36.50 per week	\$ 6.70 per day
PM Only Daycare	\$257.14 per month	\$ 64.28 per week	\$ 12.85 per day
AM & PM Daycare	\$388.70 per month	\$ 97.18 per week	\$ 19.44 per day

6. On the recommendation of the School Business Administrator, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve voiding of 2023 - 2024 SY uncashed checks (Backup F-6)

7. On the recommendation of the School Business Administrator, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve the renewal of a three (3) year software license contract for fund accounting, personnel and payroll with Systems 3000, Inc. which was effective 07/01/2025 at an annual license fee of \$ 29,462.00 for 2025 - 2026, \$30,051.00 for 2026-2027 and \$30,652.00 for 2027-2028. (Backup F-7)

8. On the recommendation of the School Business Administrator, that the Lower Township Board of Education confirms the award of a Contract to Turn-Key Technologies for 6-strand Fiber Optic Cabling per Form 470 # 260010993 Proposal - E-RATE Funded. (Backup F-8)

9. On the recommendation of the School Business Administrator, that the Lower Township Board of Education confirms the award of a Contract to Questivity for APC UPS maintenance and technical support/BMIC per Form 470 # 260010992 Proposal - E-RATE Funded. (Backup F-9)

10. On the recommendation of the School Business Administrator, that the Lower Township Board of Education approves the following equipment on GovDeals:

Lenovo Lenovo 100e Chromebooks As Is - Parts Only	Qty 42	Starting Bid: \$10.00
Samsung Chromebook 2	Qty 2	Starting Bid: \$10.00
Dell Latitude Laptops - As Is - Parts Only	Qty 12	Starting Bid: \$10.00

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Dell Desktops Optiplex - Parts Only	Qty 5	Starting Bid: \$10.00
iPads - Parts Only	Qty 6	Starting Bid: \$10.00
Lenovo n22 Chromebooks	Qty 30 \$15.00 Each	Starting Bid: \$10.00
Samsung XE503c32	Qty 30 \$15.00 Each	Starting Bid: \$10.00

MOTION ON CONSENT AGENDA ON ALL MOTIONS LISTED BELOW:

- Routine Matters: R-1 to R-5**
- Personnel: P-1 to P-10**
- Harassment, Intimidation & Bullying: H-1**
- Legislative and Internal Policies: L-1 to L-3**
- Education: None**
- Finance: F-1 to F-10**

Motion: Selby Second: Cox

Discussion: None

Voted Yes	Absent
Cynthia Baldacchini	Monica DiVito
Lauren Cox	
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):* A member of the public addressed the board regarding concerns with PreSchool being a standalone school.

7} GOOD TO THE ORDER:

- A}** Next Board Meeting: Work session: April 29, 2026
- B}** Emergency Drill: March 20, 2026 - Lockdown
- C}** Fire Drills: 3/10/26 - Memorial School & Sandman School; 3/13/26 - Maud Abrams School; 3/20/26 - Mitnick School

8} ADJOURNMENT

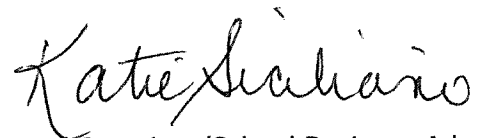
MOTION TO ADJOURN THE MEETING

Motion: Baldacchini Second: Selby

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**All Voted in Favor
The Meeting Concluded at 6:47p.m.**

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kate Siciliano". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Board Secretary/School Business Administrator