

**LOWER TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION
MINUTES
EXECUTIVE SESSION
JULY 30, 2025**

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

Member Present:

Cynthia Baldacchini
Lauren Cox
Monica DiVito
James Morris
Lauren Randle
Joseph Thomas
Jonathan Vile
Patricia Smith
Gary Douglass

Also in Attendance:

Van Cathcart, Superintendent
Susan Nelson, Recording Secretary
Brett Gorman, Board Attorney

Motion to enter into Executive Session:

Motion: Vile Second: Thomas

All Voted In Favor

Entered Executive Session at 6:15 p.m.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Personnel Matters-Transfer: Employee #4155 - Mrs. Baldacchini had questions; Mr. Cathcart assured the board members about the employee and their move to Maud Abrams.

Other Matters:

Shared Service Contract Negotiations Food Service - Mr. Cathcart noted that the Food Service Supervisor formerly supervised 19 schools at his prior district. Mr. Douglass noted that LCMR had concerns about the food service shared service contract.

School Business Administrator Search - Mr. Cathcart advised board members on the BA candidate.

ServSafe & Part-Time Custodian Grievance Review/Update - Mr. Cathcart met with the association - timelines for grievance have been paused.

Mr. Douglass noted that committees need to email via bcc their meeting notes to other board

members.

Motion to return to Regular Meeting:

**Motion: Thomas Second: Baldacchini
All Voted In Favor:**

This session concluded at 6:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted


Susan Nelson
Recording Secretary

July 30, 2025

**LOWER TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION
RESOLUTION
AUTHORIZING EXECUTIVE SESSION**

WHEREAS, while the Sen. Byron M. Baer Open Public Meetings Act (N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 et seq.) requires all meetings of the Lower Township Board of Education to be held in public, N.J.S.A. 10:4-12(b) sets forth nine (9) types of matters that may lawfully be discussed in "Executive Session," i.e. without the public being permitted to attend, and

WHEREAS, the Lower Township Board of Education has determined that ____ issues permitted by N.J.S.A. 10:4-12(b) to be discussed without the public in attendance shall be discussed during an Executive Session to be held on July 30, 2025 at ____P.M. and

WHEREAS, the nine (9) exceptions to public meetings set forth in N.J.S.A. 10:4-12(b) are listed below, and next to each exception is a box within which the number of issues to be privately discussed that fall within that exception shall be written, and after each exception is a space where additional information that will disclose as much information about the discussion as possible without undermining the purpose of the exception shall be written.

"(1) Any matter which, by express provision of Federal law, State statute or rule of court shall be rendered confidential or excluded from public discussion." The nature of the matter, described as specifically as possible without undermining the need for confidentiality is _____

"(2) Any matter in which the release of information would impair a right to receive funds from the federal government." The nature of the matter, described as specifically as possible without undermining the need for confidentiality is _____

"(3) Any material the disclosure of which constitutes an unwarranted invasion of individual privacy such as any records, data, reports, recommendations, or other personal material of any educational, training, social service, medical, health, custodial, child protection, rehabilitation, legal defense, welfare, housing, relocation, insurance and similar program or institution operated by a public body pertaining to any specific individual admitted to or served by such institution or program, including but not limited to information relative to the individual's personal and family circumstances, and any material pertaining to admission, discharge, treatment, progress or condition of any individual, unless the individual concerned (or, in the case of a minor or incompetent, his guardian) shall request in writing that the same be disclosed publicly." _____

July 30, 2025

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"(4) Any collective bargaining agreement, or the terms and conditions of which are proposed for inclusion in any collective bargaining agreement, including the negotiation of terms and conditions with employees or representatives of employees of the public body"

ServSafe & Part-Time Custodian Grievance Review/Update

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"(5) Any matter involving the purchase lease or acquisition of real property with public funds, the setting of bank rates or investment of public funds where it could adversely affect the public interest if discussion of such matters were disclosed." The nature of the matter, described as specifically as possible without undermining the need for confidentiality is Personnel matters _____

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"(6) Any tactics and techniques utilized in protecting the safety and property of the public provided that their disclosure could impair such protection. Any investigations of violations or possible violations of the law." The nature of the matter, described as specifically as possible without undermining the need for confidentiality is _____;

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"(7) Any pending or anticipated litigation or contract negotiation in which the public body is or may become a party. Any matters falling within the attorney-client privilege, to the extent that confidentiality is required in order for the attorney to exercise his ethical duties as a lawyer." The parties to and docket numbers of each item of litigation and/or the parties to each contract discussed are and nature of the discussion, described as specifically as possible without undermining the need for confidentiality is: _____

☒

"(8) Any matter involving the employment, appointment, termination of employment, terms and conditions of employment, evaluation of the performance, promotion or disciplining of any specific prospective public officer or employee or current public officer or employee employed or appointed by the public body, unless all individual employees or appointees whose rights could be adversely affected request in writing that such matter or matters be discussed at a public meeting." Subject to the balancing of the public's interest and the employee's privacy rights under South Jersey Publishing Co. v. New Jersey Expressway Authority, 124 N.J. 478, the employee(s) and nature of the discussion, described as specifically as possible without undermining the need for confidentiality: Employee #4155; Shared Services Contract Negotiations Food Service; School Business Administrator Search

July 30, 2025



"(9) Any deliberation of a public body occurring after a public hearing that may result in the imposition of a specific civil penalty upon the responding party or the suspension or loss of a license or permit belonging to the responding party as a result of an act of omission for which the responding party bears responsibility." The nature of the matter, described as specifically as possible without undermining the need for confidentiality is _____

WHEREAS, the length of the Executive Session is estimated to be ____minutes after which the public meeting of the Board shall reconvene and proceed with business.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Lower Township Board of Education will go into Executive Session for **only** the above stated reasons;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board hereby declares that its discussion of the aforementioned subject(s) will be made public at a time when the public's interest in disclosure is greater than any privacy or governmental interest being protected from disclosure. For each of the above items, the estimated date by which such disclosure can be made and/or the occurrence that needs to take place before disclosure can be made are listed below (attach separate sheet if necessary)

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board Secretary, at the present public meeting, shall read aloud enough of this resolution so that members of the public in attendance can understand, as precisely as possible, the nature of the matters that will privately be discussed.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board Secretary, on the next business day following this meeting, shall furnish a copy of this resolution to any member of the public who requests one at the fees allowed by N.J.S.A. 47:1A-1 et seq.

**LOWER TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION
MINUTES
WORK SESSION AND REGULAR MEETING
JULY 30, 2025**

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

Work Session Meeting:

Roll Call:

Present

Cynthia Baldacchini
Lauren Cox
Monica DiVito
James Morris
Lauren Randle
Joseph Thomas
Jonathan Vile
Patricia Smith
Gary Douglass

Also in Attendance:

Van Cathcart, Superintendent
Susan Nelson, Recording Secretary
Brett Gorman, Board Attorney

Agenda Items:

Mrs. Cox had questions about the Political Activities Policy.
Mrs. Smith thinks L.2 should be tabled, F.6 contract BCBA concerns, and stresses the need for better communications between the board and administration.
Mrs Baldacchini had concerns about the Political Activities Policy.

Non-Agenda Items:

Mr. Thomas wanted to recognize the passing of some former employees during the open session.
Board Members had concerns about background checks for therapy dog handlers and the lack of policy/guidelines.

Motion to enter into Executive Session:

Motion: Vile Second: Thomas

All Voted In Favor

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Personnel Matters-Transfer: Employee #4155

Other Matters:

Shared Service Contract Negotiations Food Service

School Business Administrator Search

ServSafe & Part-Time Custodian Grievance Review/Update

Motion to return to Regular Meeting:

Motion: Thomas Second: Baldacchini

All Voted In Favor

Regular Meeting: Started at 6:45 p.m.

Roll Call:

Present

Cynthia Baldacchini

Lauren Cox

Monica DiVito

James Morris

Lauren Randle

Joseph Thomas

Jonathan Vile

Patricia Smith

Gary Douglass

Also in Attendance:

Van Cathcart, Superintendent

Susan Nelson, Recording 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.

2024-2025 Board Goals:

Support the district’s effort to enhance student achievement, staff development, and parent engagement through policy and advocacy while maintaining the fiscal integrity of the budget.

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: Preschool Project on schedule at Memorial, ESY, and Summer Tutoring. 120 students attended, and staff and students had a great summer session. The district will attend Lower Township's National Night Out on August 5th.

C} School Business Administrator: NONE

D} Presentations: 2024-2025 Recognition of Retirees

E} Committee Reports:

Curriculum and Instruction Committee: Mrs Cox discussed ELA - NJSLE Data shows an increase in growth. Updates to Staff Handbook, next meeting 8/18/2025.

Finance and Facilities Committee: NONE

Personnel and Management: Mrs. Smith discussed Mr. Cathcart’s first 100 days. Setting district goals and board goals. Mrs. Smith mentioned a webinar on goal setting for board members.

F} Board Comment: Board members thanked the retirees for their service to the district and the community, and thank all who participated in this year's Summer Tutoring Program.

2} APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

June 25, 2025

Regular Meeting & Executive Meeting

Motion: Vile Second: Cox

Discussion: None

All Voted in Favor:

Cynthia Baldacchini
Lauren Cox
Monica DiVito
James Morris
Lauren Randle
Joseph Thomas
Jonathan Vile
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 **June 30, 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). To be supplied.

R-2 Approval of Transfers: June 25, 2025 - July 30, 2025 {Backup R-2}

R-3 Approval of Bill List: June 25, 2025 - July 30, 2025 {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 substitutes be approved for the the 2025-2026 school year, pending receipt of required documentation: (Backup P-1)

SUBSTITUTES NEEDING MORE DOCUMENTATION

SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS

Nicholas Sanchez, Gabrielle DiDonato, Beth LaSerre

SUBSTITUTE 60 CREDIT AIDES

Peyton Bortner

SUBSTITUTE CLASSROOM AIDES

Olena Mogylei, Kyla Melo, Katherine Mirgon, Jill McGuire, Nicole Calverley

SUBSTITUTE DAYCARE AIDES

Katherine Mirgon

SUBSTITUTE CAFETERIA AIDE

Ali Amalou, Nicole Calverley

SUBSTITUTE FOOD SERVICE WORKERS

Ali Amalou, Jeanine Recupero, Nicole Calverley

SUBSTITUTE BUS AIDE

Nicole Calverley

SUBSTITUTE CUSTODIAN

Matthew Drake

2. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education approves the on-call daily substitutes being rehired for the 2025-2026 school year. (Backup P-2)
3. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education accepts, with regret, the retirement of Susan Smeltzer, School Nurse at the Carl T. Mitnick School, effective October 1, 2025. (Backup P-3)
4. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve Kelly Baron as Temporary 5th Grade Teacher at the Sandman Consolidated School, effective 9/1/25 to 1/5/26. (Backup P-4)
5. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve the following transfer, effective 9/1/25:

STAFF

Annmarie Bada

TRANSFERRED FROM

Intervention @ Sandman

TRANSFERRED TO

Intervention @ Maud Abrams

6. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve the following Mentors for the 2025-2026 school year:

STAFF

Allyson O'Shea

Douglass Milstead

Carolann Mastalski

Jessica Bryan

Emma Karch

Kristyn Colville

Madison DuBois

Riley DeCamillo

Vienna Delconte-Pfetscher

POSITION

Principal @ Mitnick School

Assist. Principal @ Sandman &

Maud Abrams Schools

Super. Early Childhood

Preschool Instructional Coach

Preschool Relief @ Memorial

Preschool Relief @ Memorial

Preschool Relief @ Memorial

Preschool Homeroom @ Memorial

Preschool Homeroom @ Memorial

MENTOR

Christina Granero

John King

Sarah Bowman

Carolann Mastalski

Jessica Bryan

Jessica Bryan

Jessica Bryan

Rachelle Carbonaro

Megan Brannan

Hanna Christiansen
Keara Sorenson
Annmarie Bada
Sarah Reese

1st Gr. Homeroom
3rd Gr. Homeroom
Intervention @ Maud Abrams
School Nurse @ Mitnick

Jennifer Ackroyd
Erin Skill
Eileen Gianakopolous
Beverly Righter

7. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve Karen Wadding of Alliance of Therapy Dogs (ATD), to provide volunteer visitation services with her three therapy dogs, Morgan, Annie and Molly, and Frank Lee with one therapy dog, Salty, and Julia Sangillo with her therapy dog, Daisy, to provide dog therapy at the Carl T. Mitnick School and the David C. Douglass Veterans Memorial School for the 2025-2026 school year, on an as needed basis. (Backup P-7)
8. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve Sarah Reese as School Nurse at the Carl T. Mitnick School, on Step 8, BA+15, \$59,724 of the LTEEA Teacher's Salary Guide, effective date to be determined. (Backup P-8)

H. Harassment, Intimidation & Bullying:

1. The Board affirms the actions taken by the Superintendent and the School Safety Teams, for H.I.B. Sandman #6 2024-25; H.I.B. Maud Abrams #6 2024-25. (Backup H-1)

L. Legislative and Internal Policies:

1. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education approves the annual review and adoption of all district policies and regulations. (Backup L-1)
2. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve the first reading for the following revisions to existing or new Policies and Regulations: (Backup L-2)

NUMBER

3233

4233

TYPE

Policy

Policy

TITLE

Political Activities

Political Activities

Motion to Table L. 2.

Motion: Smith Second: Cox

All Voted In Favor

3. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve the LTES Staff Handbook. (Backup L-3)

E. Education:

1. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, the Lower Township Board of Education approved a District Waiver Request based on the grouping age ranges and ELP of consecutive grade span of our English Language Learners. The district currently has 7 MLs in Kindergarten, 10 MLs in 1st Grade, 9 MLs in 2nd Grade, 11 MLs in 3rd Grade, 5 MLs in 4th Grade, 4 MLs in 5th Grade and 1 MLs in 6th Grade. ELP levels range from

entering to bridging. Implementing a full-time bilingual education program would cause our district group students of multiple age ranges into a class and would inhibit developmentally appropriate instruction. (Backup E-1)

2. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education confirms that the WIDA Access Test Student Score Reports were mailed via USPS on July 18, 2025 to the parents of all Multilingual Learners. (Backup E-2)
3. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve the purchase and pilot program of Open Court English Language Arts Curriculum in grades K-6 for the 2025-2026 school year. (Backup E. 3)
4. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve the 2025-2026 Remote Learning Plan. (Backup E-4)

F. Finance and Insurance:

1. On the recommendation of the Interim School Business Administrator, that the Lower Township Board of Education accepts and authorizes the submittal of the FY-2025 IDEA=B Grant Application as follows: (Backup F-1)

IDEA – Basic	\$462,755
IDEA – PreK	<u>\$ 27,182</u>
Total	\$489,937

2. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve that the district is in compliance with the Children’s Internet Safety Protection Act (CIPA), as per the district’s Internet Safety Policy (Policy# 2361), which enables eligibility in the E-Rate program.
3. On the recommendation of the Interim School Business Administrator, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve raising the QRA Bid threshold to \$53,000.00.
4. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve the Breakfast and Lunch rates for the 2025-26 school year as listed:

	<u>2024-2025 SY</u>	<u>2025-2026 SY</u>
Breakfast (Full)	\$0.00	\$0.00
Breakfast (Reduced)	\$0.00	\$0.00
Breakfast- Staff (student breakfast)	\$N/A	\$N/A
Breakfast- Staff (special)	\$N/A	\$N/A
Lunch (Full)	\$3.50	\$3.60
Lunch (Reduced)	\$0.00	\$0.00
Lunch- Staff (student lunch)	\$4.50	\$4.60
Lunch Staff(special)	\$5.50	\$5.60
Milk	\$0.75	\$0.75

5. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education appoint John Hansen as Interim Board Secretary and appoint Susan Nelson as Recording Secretary for Board Meetings, correction to Motion 8.d. on the June 25, 2025 Board Agenda.
6. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education authorizes a Contract with Step by Step ABA to provide student observations, consultations and class support. (Backup F-6)
7. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve the transfer of ownership of the cold storage container to the Township of Lower.
8. On the recommendation of the Interim School Business Administrator, that the Lower Township Board of Education authorize the Interim School Business Administrator to make appropriate transfers and issue checks between the meetings and report them at the next board meeting.
9. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education confirm issuance of Purchase Order #26-00280 to McGraw Hill School Publishers for Open Court as approved by the Curriculum Committee.

MOTION ON CONSENT AGENDA ON ALL MOTIONS LISTED BELOW:

Routine Matters: R-1 to R-5

Personnel: P-1 to P-8

Harassment, Intimidation & Bullying: H-1

Legislative and Internal Policies: L-1 & L-3, L-2: Tabled

Education: E-1 to E-4

Finance and Insurance: F-1 to F-9

Motion: Thomas Second: Baldacchini

Discussion:

All Voted in Favor

Cynthia Baldacchini

Lauren Cox

Monica DiVito

James Morris

Lauren Randle

Joseph Thomas

Jonathan Vile

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):*
No Public comments.

7} **GOOD OF THE ORDER:**

A} **Next Board Meeting:** August 27, 2025

B} **Summer School Fire Drill:** 7/23/25

8} **ADJOURNMENT:**

MOTION TO ADJOURN THE MEETING

Motion: Thomas **Second:** Cox

Discussion: None

All Voted in favor

Time: 7:05 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,


Susan Nelson
Recording Secretary