

**LOWER TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION
MINUTES
EXECUTIVE SESSION
AUGUST 27, 2025**

Meeting was Called to Order at 6:00 p.m.

Roll Call:

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

Absent:

Lauren Cox

Also in Attendance:

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

Motion to enter into Executive Session:

Motion: Baldacchini Second: Douglass

All Voted in Favor

Entered Executive Session at 6:49 p.m.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Choice - Pat Smith had questions about a Preschool student from out of the district. Mr. Cathcart advised that the district has corrected the issue moving forward.

Other Matters:

New School Business Administrator Update - Mr. Cathcart advised the board that the new Business Administrator will be present at the regular meeting. John Hansen will stay on to mentor the new business administrator. He also advised board members that the new business administrator's references were excellent and that she holds a Business Administrator Certificate, and the County approved the new Business Administrator's contract. Other candidates had qualifications only in the public sector.

Van Cathcart received a resignation today. He requested approval from board members to fill the School Psychologist position and to post for an anticipated opening. Board members were okay with the posting.

Pat Smith requested that action plans be developed.

Motion to return to Regular Meeting:

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

This session concluded at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted

Susan Nelson
Recording Secretary

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**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 August 27, 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

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same be disclosed publicly." _____

☐

"(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"

☐

matter,
for

"(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 described as specifically as possible without undermining the need confidentiality is Personnel matters _____

☐

"(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 _____;

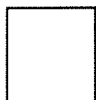
☐

"(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:

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"(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
AUGUST 27, 2025**

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

Work Session Meeting:

Roll Call:

PRESENT

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

ABSENT

Lauren Cox

Also in Attendance:

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

NJSBA Representative Michelle Kennedy gave a presentation: Board Self-Evaluation

Michelle Kennedy advised that the Business Administrator needs to update the census in the NJSBA portal. Ms. Kennedy advised the board that the Compilation Report should only be given to Board Members, not the Superintendent.

John Vile questioned Bret Gorman about Board Member conflicts for the Superintendent Evaluation.

Agenda Items:

Mrs. DiVito mentioned that the district has a policy on therapy dogs. Policy 25.60 last edited 10/2022.

Mr. Thomas commented on Mr. Cathcart's Standard #1.

Mr. Vile advised the board that updates need to be made to the Staff Handbook.

Mrs. DiVito questioned how the Staff Handbook and Student Handbook are distributed.

Mrs. Smith felt overwhelmed by the number of policies; she suggested that the policies be reviewed via committee meeting. She disagrees with the Department of Education.

Mr. Cathcart suggested that policies be reviewed monthly

Mr. Douglass discussed F. 2. The purchase of a new vehicle versus a used vehicle.

Non-Agenda Items:

Pat Smith mentioned that the Goals Webinar was very informative.

Mr. Cathcart advised the Board Members on Teacher Evaluation and looked at state changes.

Mr. Cathcart mentioned Safety Barriers at Sandman they are looking into other options. The district has funds left over from the Sandman Parking Lot Project.

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Mr. Cathcart mentioned that he would love to have the Board Members tour the district and see all the projects that have been completed at Memorial School.

Motion to enter into Executive Session:
Motion: Baldacchini Second: Douglass
All Voted in Favor

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Business Administrator

Motion to return to Regular Meeting:

Motion: Thomas Second: Baldacchini
All Voted In Favor

Regular Meeting: Started at 7:04 p.m.

Roll Call:

PRESENT

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

ABSENT

Lauren Cox

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.

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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: Wanted to thank all of the Custodial and Maintenance Staff for their hard work and dedication this summer.

C} School Business Administrator: None

D} **Presentations: Christina Granero, Supervisor of Academic Achievement - ACCESS Scores**

E} Committee Reports:

Curriculum and Instruction Committee: Mrs Baldacchini mentioned the review of The pilot program, curriculum, and instruction will be able to track progress and impact for the grant.

Finance and Facilities Committee: Mr. Douglass discussed the Business Administrator transition and the Pre-K Construction.

Personnel and Management: Next meeting 9/22/2025

F} Board Comment: Mrs. Randle wanted to acknowledge the new Mitnick Principal and the success of the kindergarten visitation.

Board Members wished the best of luck for the next school year.

Mr. Thomas mentioned that the secretaries do a wonderful job.

2} APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

July 30, 2025

Regular Meeting & Executive Meeting

Motion: DiVito Second: Smith

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Discussion: None

Voted: Yes

Cynthia Baldacchini

Monica DiVito

James Morris

Lauren Randle

Jonathan Vile

Patricia Smith

Gary Douglass

Voted: No

Joseph Thomas

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 **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

Elizabeth Churchill-Grira, Diana Sweeney, Timothy Millaway

SUBSTITUTE CLASSROOM AIDES

Grace Robles-McCarthy, Christopher Adams, Kayla Gushue, Marlee Grecco

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SUBSTITUTE SECRETARIES/CLERKS

Doreen Swanson, Kristi Famiano

SUBSTITUTE CAFETERIA AIDES

Christopher Adams, Danae Allen, Taylor Hill

SUBSTITUTE FOOD SERVICE WORKERS

Danae Allen, Kayla Gushue

SUBSTITUTE BUS DRIVER

Danae Allen

SUBSTITUTE BUS AIDES

Danae Allen, Kayla Gushue

SUBSTITUTE DAY CARE AIDES

Danae Allen, Kristi Famiano

SUBSTITUTE CUSTODIAN

Maria Gonzalez-Arriaga

2. 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>
Anthony Leonardis	Food Service Worker	9/1/25
Kellianne Muller	Food Service Worker	9/1/25
Mariame Fofana	Food Service Worker	9/1/25
Marlee Grecco	Classroom Aide @ Maud	9/1/25
Olena Mogylei	Classroom Aide @ Maud	9/1/25
Sophia Bolton	Cafeteria Aide @ Mitnick	9/1/25

3. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board Of Education approve Nicole Connor as Temporary 3rd Grade Teacher at the Maud Abrams School, at a per diem rate of \$269.85 per day, effective September 1, 2025 to February 27, 2026. (Backup P-3)

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

<u>STAFF</u>	<u>POSITION</u>	<u>MENTOR</u>
Ashley Nelson	Intervention @ Maud Abrams	Eileen Gianakopoulos

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5. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve Rebecca Gallagher as Bus Driver in the district, Step 1, \$28.11 hourly of the LTEEA Bus Driver's Salary Guide, effective September 1, 2025. (Backup P-5)
6. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education approves the 2025-2026 employment Contract between the Lower Township Board of Education and Katie Siciliano, School Business Administrator/Board Secretary, as approved by the Executive County Superintendent at a salary of \$112,500.00, effective November 3, 2025, pending documentation. (Backup P-6)
7. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve Jennifer Boyle as Preschool Intervention and Referral Specialist (PIRT) at the David C. Douglass Veterans Memorial School, lateral move, Step 6, BA+15, \$57,924 on the LTEEA Teacher's Salary Guide. (Backup P-7)

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 first reading for the following revisions to existing or new Policies and Regulations: (Backup L-1)

<u>NUMBER</u>	<u>TYPE</u>	<u>TITLE</u>
0173	Policy	Duties of Public School Accountant
0174	Policy	Legal Services
0177	Policy	Professional Services
1570	Policy/Regulation	Internal Controls
1620	Policy	Administrative Employment Contracts
6111	Policy/Regulation	Special Education Medicaid Initiative (SEMI) Program
6220	Policy	Budget Preparation
6220	Regulation	Budget Preparation
0143	Policy	Board Member Election and Appointment
1636.01	Policy	Notification of Promotion, New Job, and Transfer Opportunities
1648.15	Policy	Recordkeeping for Healthcare Settings in School Buildings-Covid-19
2422	Policy	Statutory Curricular Requirements
5117	Policy/Regulation	Interdistrict Public School Choice
5339.01	Policy	Student Sun Protection

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E. Education:

- 1.** On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve the district's application for the NJ DOE Instructional Materials for Professional Advancement and Coherent Teacher (IMPACT) Competitive Grant for \$100,000.
- 2.** On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve the District's Mentoring Plan Statement of Assurance for 2025-2026 for fiscal impact and the District Professional Development Plan Template. (Backup E-2)
- 3.** On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education to approve the 2025-2026 Student Parent Handbook. (Backup E-3)
- 4.** On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve Ms. Amanda Pierce's request to participate in the educational research project *Improving Conceptual Knowledge in Upper Elementary Science with Scaffolded Sketch-Based Modeling*, in accordance with Policy 9550.

F. Finance and Insurance:

- 1.** On the recommendation of the School Business Administrator, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve the hourly rates for the following **on-call** district **substitutes** effective September 1, 2025:

Bus Driver (CDL Certified) 5½ hrs/day	\$24.25 per hour
Bus Aide 51/2 hrs/day	\$15.50 per hour
Paraprofessional with 60 C or passing ParaPro Test	\$17.25 per hour
60-Credit Aide with County Sub Cert.	\$16.55 per hour
Classroom Aide without 60 C & No County Sub Cert.	\$15.50 per hour
Sub. Teacher (County Sub. Cert)	\$150.00 per diem
Sub. Teacher (Teacher Cert)	\$175.00 per diem
Sub. Nurse	\$175.00 per diem
Day Care Lead w/Teacher Cert. (Step 1)	\$17.38/per hour
Day Care Lead w/o Teacher Cert. (Step 1)	\$16.63/per hour
Day Care Worker (Step 1)	\$15.98/per hour
Secretary/Clerk	\$16.55 per hour or \$107.58/per diem
Custodian	\$16.55 per hour
Cafeteria Aide	\$15.50 per hour
Food Service Worker	\$15.50 per hour

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Security	\$17.25 per hour or \$138/day
Long Term Sub. Teacher	\$175.00
Long Term Sub teacher (BA Step 1)	\$53,970/200 =
\$269.85/diem	*(after worked 60
days)	
Long-Term Sub. Teacher w/Teacher Cert	\$269.85/per diem

2. On the recommendation of the Interim School Business Administrator, that the Lower Township Board of Education authorizes the acquisition of one 2025 Ford F250 from Winner Ford, (State of New Jersey, Contract, #A88726, T210) in the amount of \$62,804.15. (Backup F-2)

3. On the recommendation of the Interim School Business Administrator, that the Lower Township Board of Education accept and authorize the submittal of the 2025-2026 ESEA grant funds and authorize the transfer of the Title IV allotment to Title I.

TITLE I-A	\$467,484
TITLE II-A	\$ 53,515
TITLE III	\$ 12,201
TITLE IV-A	\$ 32,601~~{authorized to transfer to Title I-A}
TOTAL	\$565.801

4. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education appoints John J. Hansen, Interim School Business Administrator, as Fund Commissioner to the Southern Coastal Regional Employees Benefits Fund.

5. On the recommendation of the Interim School Business Administrator, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve the Sidebar Agreement Between the Lower Township Administrators' Association and the Lower Township Board of Education. (Backup F-5)

6. On the recommendation of the Interim School Business Administrator, that the Lower Township Board of Education approves the Agreement for Shared Services of Food Service Director Between the Lower Township Board of Education and The Lower Cape May Regional Board of Education effective July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2027 (Backup F-6)

7. On the recommendation of the Interim School Business Administrator, that the Lower Township Board of Education approves the Agreement for Shared Services of Food Service Director Between The Lower Township Board of Education and The Cape

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May City Board of Education effective August 27, 2025 through June 30, 2026. (Backup F-7)

8. On the recommendation of the Superintendent and Interim School Business Administrator, the the Lower Township Board of Education approve the amendment of Kurt Himstedt's 2025-2026 employment contract to include a stipend of \$4,500 effective September 1, 2025 for the work associated with the Shared Services Agreement with the Cape May Board of Education for Food Services Management. For services rendered during the transition, the Food Service Director has an allotment of \$3,500 per the Shared Services Agreement.

9. On the recommendation of the Interim School Business Administrator, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve the annual program renewal with Frontline Education for the Absence & Substitute Management System, Applicant Tracking, IEP Direct and Program Management, at a total cost of \$52,845.46.

10. On the recommendation of the Interim School Business Administrator, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve the following employees' salaries to be partially funded by the federally funded grants for the 2025-26 school year:

Title IA (Account# 20-231-100-101-00-080 (64% of Salary)

Holly Golden

Rebecca Johnson

Erine Lloyd

Erica O'Neill

Miken Sheets

MOTION ON CONSENT AGENDA ON ALL MOTIONS LISTED BELOW:

Routine Matters: R-1 to R-5

Personnel: P-1 to P-7

Harassment, Intimidation & Bullying: None

Legislative and Internal Policies: L-1

Education: E-1 to E-4

Finance and Insurance: F-1 to F-10

Motion: Thomas Second: Smith

Discussion: None

All Voted in Favor

Cynthia Baldacchini

Monica DiVito

James Morris

Lauren Randle

Absent

Lauren Cox

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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):***

7} **GOOD OF THE ORDER:**

A} **Next Board Meeting:** September 24, 2025

8} **ADJOURNMENT:**

MOTION TO ADJOURN THE MEETING

Motion: Vile **Second:** Smith

Discussion: None

All Voted in favor

Time: 7:25 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Susan Nelson
Recording Secretary
Amended 9/25/2025