

**LOWER TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION
MINUTES
EXECUTIVE SESSION
SEPTEMBER 24, 2025**

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

Members Present:

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

Also in Attendance:

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

Motion to enter Executive Session

Motion: Vile Second: Cox

All Voted In Favor

Entered Executive Session at 6:19 p.m.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Discussion: Employee #4341: Board Members discussed the recent resignation of Board Member Joseph Thomas, including any implications arising from the resignation and its impact on Employee #4341.

Motion to return to Regular Meeting:

Motion: Randle Second: Baldacchini

All Voted In Favor

This session concluded at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Susan Nelson
Recording Secretary

**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 September 24, 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." _____

"(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" _____

"(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 _____

☐

"(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: Employee #4341

☐

"(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:

☐

"(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
SEPTEMBER 24, 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
Jonathan Vile
Patricia Smith
Gary Douglass

Also in Attendance:

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

Agenda Item:

Mrs. Randle asked if the Security Officers always carried firearms.
Mrs. Cox had questions regarding staffing new Aides and Paraprofessionals.
Mr. Cathcart advised how part-time positions are staffed.
Mrs. Baldacchini had concerns about the wording of the Policy regarding Teachers and Administrators.
Mrs. Smith addressed Mrs. Baldacchini's concerns.

Non-Agenda Items:

Mrs. Smith stated there was more to write on Board Norms. She also advised that the Cape May County Meeting will be hybrid, with both virtual and in-person options.
Mr. Morris advised that the State is offering grants for Electric Buses, which include the installation of a charging station.
Mr. Cathcart will look into the grant with the Transportation Supervisor. Mrs. Randle suggested that the Board open that up for discussion.
Mr. Douglass and the Board Attorney discussed and advised the board members on the steps to fill the open seat on the Board. Mr. Cathcart can advertise for the open seat.
The board member discussed whether to reschedule the October 22nd Board Meeting due to a conflict. They decided to keep the meeting as scheduled.

Motion to enter Executive Session

Motion: Vile Second: Cox

All Voted In Favor

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Personnel: Employee #4341

Other Matters:**Motion to return to Regular Meeting:**

Motion: Randle **Second:** Baldacchini

All Voted In Favor

Regular Meeting: Started at 6:35 p.m.

Roll Call:**Present**

Cynthia Baldacchini

Lauren Cox

Monica DiVito

James Morris

Lauren Randle

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: Thanked Cape Assist for Orientation participation with staff members.

C} School Business Administrator: NONE

D} Presentations:

E} **Committee Reports:**

Finance & Facilities Committee: The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 7th, at the Board Office.

Personnel & Management Committee: Meeting scheduled for Monday, September 29th.

Curriculum & Instruction Committee: Mrs. Randle discussed AI, next meeting scheduled for Tuesday, October 14th.

F} Board Comment: Mr. Vile mentioned that Retired Teacher Debbie Legates passed away recently.

Mrs. Smith loved the new lunch menus on the website.

Mr. Cox wanted to acknowledge the new board goal agenda items for student chronic absenteeism.

Mr. Morris: Great job.

2} APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

August 27, 2025

Regular Meeting & Executive Meeting

Motion: Smith Second: Baldacchini

Discussion: NONE

Voted Yes:

Cynthia Baldacchini

Monica DiVito

James Morris

Lauren Randle

Jonathan Vile

Patricia Smith

Gary Douglass

Abstained:

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 **August 31, 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: August 27, 2025 - September 24, 2025 {Backup R-2}

R-3 Approval of Bill List: August 27, 2025 - September 24, 2025 {Backup R-3}

R-4 Approval of Cafeteria Report: September 24, 2025 {Backup R-4}

R-5 Approval of Travel: October 20-23, 2025 - NJSBA Workshop - Pat Smith, Lauren Randle, Van Cathcart

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

Terri Griffin, Melissa O'Donnell, Rebecca Morrow, Courtney McCarthy

SUBSTITUTE CLASSROOM AIDES

Courtney McCarthy, Shannon Unruh, Erin Fisher, Lynn Gillis, Biby Reyes, Deborah Lewis, Kaitlyn Dunlevy, Danelle Matthews, Grace Robles-McCarthy, John Lauricella, Grainne McKnight

SUBSTITUTE DAYCARE AIDES

Shannon Unruh, Dawnelle Matthews, Courtney McCarthy, Angela Isaacson, William Fox

SUBSTITUTE FOOD SERVICE WORKERS

Shannon Unruh, Donna Perry, Lynn Gillis, Dawnelle Matthews, Courtney McCarthy

SUBSTITUTE CAFETERIA AIDES

Shannon Unruh, Donna Perry, Lynn Gillis, Dawnelle Matthews, Courtney McCarthy, Angela Isaacson

SUBSTITUTE CUSTODIANS

Shannon Unruh, Joseph Downam

SUBSTITUTE BUS AIDES

Shannon Unruh, Lynn Gillis, John Lauricella, Angela Isaacson

SUBSTITUTE SCHOOL SECURITY OFFICER

Jeffrey Brooks

- 2.** On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve Non-FMLA/FMLA for the following employees:

Employee #

#5694 - Custodian
#6023 - Food Service Worker
#5587 - Bus Driver

Effective Dates

8/21/25 - 9/30/25 - FMLA
9/2/25 - TBD - Non-FMLA
9/10/25 - 10/22/25 - FMLA

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>Olena Mogylei</i>	<i>Classroom Aide @ Maud Abrams</i>	<i>9/2/25</i>
<i>Anthony Leonardis</i>	<i>Food Service Worker</i>	<i>9/2/25</i>
<i>Kellianne Mueller</i>	<i>Food Service Worker</i>	<i>9/2/25</i>
<i>Rachel Stone</i>	<i>Bus Aide</i>	<i>9/2/25</i>
<i>Rosemary Graham</i>	<i>Bus Aide</i>	<i>9/2/25</i>
<i>Taylor McCullen</i>	<i>Bus Aide</i>	<i>9/2/25</i>
<i>Marlee Greco</i>	<i>Classroom Aide @ Maud Abrams</i>	<i>9/8/25</i>
<i>Amy Laub</i>	<i>Daycare Aide @ Mitnick</i>	<i>9/8/25</i>
<i>Rebecca Morrow</i>	<i>60 Credit Aide @ Sandman</i>	<i>9/17/25</i>
<i>Lisa Cardillo</i>	<i>Clerk @ Mitnick</i>	<i>9/18/25</i>
<i>Biby Reyes</i>	<i>Classroom Aide @ Memorial</i>	<i>TBD</i>
<i>Deborah Lewis</i>	<i>Classroom Aide @ Memorial</i>	<i>TBD</i>
<i>Grace Robles-McCarty</i>	<i>Classroom Aide @ Mitnick</i>	<i>TBD</i>

4. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education, that the Lower Township Board of Education accept, with regret, the resignation of Jennifer Giorgio-Blum, Case Manager/School Psychologist at the Sandman Consolidated School, effective October 26, 2025. (Backup P-4)
5. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education accept, with regret, the resignation of Bruce Townsend, Daily Part-Time Custodian, effective September 5, 2025. (Backup P-5)
6. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education accept, with regret, the retirement of LaTrice Abrams, Lead Food Service Worker, effective January 1, 2026. (Backup P-6)
7. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve Lauren Magnavita transferring from 3rd Grade Resource Center (Special Ed.) to Learning Disabilities Teacher/Consultant (LDTTC), on a lateral move at the same salary. (Backup P-7)
8. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education accept the resignation of Joseph Thomas, Board Member, effective September 19, 2025.

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)

<u>NUMBER</u>	<u>TYPE</u>	<u>TITLE</u>
<i>0173</i>	<i>Policy</i>	<i>Duties of Public School Accountant</i>
<i>0174</i>	<i>Policy</i>	<i>Legal Services</i>
<i>0177</i>	<i>Policy</i>	<i>Professional Services</i>
<i>1570</i>	<i>Policy/Regulation</i>	<i>Internal Controls</i>

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

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)

<u>NUMBER</u>	<u>TYPE</u>	<u>TITLE</u>
3233	Policy/Regulation	Political Activities Regulation
4233	Policy/Regulation	Political Activities Regulation

3. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve the School Security Officers/Substitute School Security Officers, as listed below, to carry firearms while on duty on school grounds, in accordance with N.J. Statute and Code, for 2025-2026:

Darrin Hickok – Supervisor of Security	Christopher Winters - Floating Security
Jack Flanagan - Maud Abrams School	Jim Dietterich - Sub. Security
Albert Flitcroft - Sandman School	Doug Whitten - Sub. Security
Marlin Hedum - Mitnick School	James Knox - Sub. Security
Kevin Boyle - Memorial School	Jeffrey Brooks - Sub. Security

4. On the recommendation of Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve the following District Goals:

District Goal – Improving Student Attendance

The Lower Township Elementary School District will reduce chronic absenteeism across all four schools by a minimum of **3 percentage points** by June 2026.

District Goal - eduCLIMBER Onboarding and Implementation

By June 2026, the district will complete the onboarding process with eduCLIMBER, with full implementation beginning in the 2026–2027 school year.

5. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve the following Board Goals:

Develop an understanding of the proper implementation of Board SMART goals through the stages of adoption, progress monitoring and achievement.

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.

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.

6. On the recommendation of the Lower Township Board of Education, that the Board recommends the approval of the New Jersey School Boards Association Chief School Administrator Evaluation Tool for us in the evaluation of Superintendent performance, with adaptations permitted as necessary.

E. Education:

1. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve the following programs and educational services offered in grades Preschool through Grade 6, for the 2025-2026 school year: (Backup E-1)

Programs

Visual and Performing Arts (Arts and Music)	Special Education - Resource Program
Basic Skills Instruction	Special Education - Self Contained
Comprehensive Health and Physical Education	Special Education - Preschool Disabled
	Technology/STEM
Advanced Skills	Social Studies
Handwriting	World Language/Spanish
Instrumental Music/Strings	
Language Arts Literacy	
Reading	
Writing	
Library/Media	
Mathematics	
Science	

Services

Child Study Team
English as a Second Language
Guidance/Counseling
School Nursing
Speech

2. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education approves the submission of the district's preschool enrollment projections for the 2026-2027 school year to the Department of Education. (Backup E-2)

F. Finance and Insurance:

1. On the recommendation of the School Business Administrator, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve the Transportation Jointures, with the below listed school districts, to transport students attending Lower Township Elementary School's Choice Program for the 2025-2026 school year, at the state mandated maximum per-pupil rate of \$1,177.

<u>District</u>	<u># Students</u>	<u>Total Cost</u>
Cape May City School District	4	\$ 4,708.00
Dennis Township School District	2	\$ 2,354.00
Middle Township School District	55	\$64,735.00
Wildwood Crest School District	2	\$ 2,354.00
<u>Wildwood School District</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>\$ 5,885.00</u>
TOTAL		\$80,036.00

3. On the recommendation of the Interim Business Administrator, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve Change Order #1 to contract with CM3 Building Solutions for the 2025 fire alarm replacements at Maud Abrams, Carl T. Mitnick and Sandman Consolidated Schools: (Backup F-3)

Original Contract	\$1,600,474.98
Change Order #1	<u>< 25,070.23 ></u>
New Contract	\$1,575,404.75

Certifications of Substantial Completion: August 22, 2025

4. On the recommendation of the Interim Business Administrator, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve Change Order #1 to the contract with Marino General Contractor for the PreK Expansion Project at Memorial School: (Backup F-4)

Original Contract	\$1,518,000.00
Change Order #1	<u>\$ 13,080.21</u>
New Contract	\$1,531,080.21

5. On the recommendation of the Interim Business Administrator, that the Lower Township Board of Education issue a Purchase Order Contract to Falasca Mechanical in accordance with terms and conditions for ESCNJ#23/24-23 New Jersey State approved COOP #65MCESCCPS to replace (1) Daikin Unit Ventilator at Sandman Consolidated School in the amount of \$18,965 using 2022 Bond Referendum Funds (HVAC replacement). (Backup F-5)
6. On the recommendation of the Interim School Business Administrator, that the Lower Township Board of Education issue a Professional Services Contract to Pennoni for the design and bid specifications for the installation of bollards at Sandman Consolidated School in the amount of \$9,400 to be charged to 2016 bond referendum funds. (Backup F-6)
7. On the recommendation of the Interim Business Administrator, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve the Joint Transportation Agreement between the Lower Township Board of Education and the Lower Cape May Regional Board of Education to transport one (1) student from Cape May County Special Services School to home.

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 to L-6

Education: E-1 & E-2

Finance and Insurance: F-1 to F-7

Motion: Smith Second: Baldacchini

Discussion: NONE

All Voted in Favor:

Cynthia Baldacchini

Lauren Cox
Monica DiVito
James Morris
Lauren Randle
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: October 22, 2025

B} Fire Drills: 9/10/25 - Sandman School; 9/11/25 - Maud Abrams School, Mitnick School, Memorial School

Monthly Emergency Drill: 9/18/25 - Evacuation Drill

8} ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION TO ADJOURN THE MEETING

Motion: Randle **Second:** Cox

Discussion: None

All Voted in favor

Time: 6:47 p.m.

F.Y.I

1. Attendance/Enrollment
 2. Sandman School Reports
 3. Maud Abrams School Reports
 4. Mitnick School Reports
 5. Memorial School Reports.
 6. Supervisor of Special Services Report
 7. Supervisor of Buildings and Grounds Reports
 8. Supervisor of Transportation Reports
 9. Food Service Profit & Loss Report
 10. Supervisor of Curriculum and Instruction Report
 11. Supervisor of Academic Achievement Report
 12. Day Care Reports
- October Calendar