

**LOWER TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION
MINUTES
WORK SESSION AND REGULAR MEETING
OCTOBER 22, 2025**

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

Work Session Meeting:

NJSLA Presentation - Sarah Bowman

Members Present:

Cynthia Baldacchini

Lauren Cox

James Morris

Lauren Randle

Jonathan Vile

Patricia Smith

Gary Douglass

Absent:

Monica DiVito

Also in Attendance:

Van Cathcart, Superintendent

Susan Nelson, Recording Secretary

Brett Gorman, Board Attorney

Agenda Items: No Questions

Non-Agenda Items:

Board Norms - Mrs Smith wanted board members to stay informed with Board Norms. She also wanted to inform board members that any changes need to be made before they are published on the website. Mrs. Smith is happy with how the board is progressing. Mrs. Smith also advised board members that at the County Meeting on December 9th, from 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., there will be a presentation on the Roles & Responsibilities of newly elected board members.

Open Board Seat - Mr. Douglass advised that Katie and John can advertise via Public Notice and send all letters of interest to board members so a discussion can be held at the board meeting on December 3, 2025, with the goal of appointing someone at the reorganization meeting on January 7, 2026.

Building & Grounds Finance - K & 2nd Grade Playgrounds, no installation date planned yet. Smart Boards are being installed at Maud, and Memorial will be next.

Other Matters:

Motion to enter Executive Session

Motion: Smith Second: Baldacchini

All Voted in Favor

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

H.I.B. Sandman #1 2025-2026; H.I.B. Sandman #2 2025-2026

100 Day Plan Update

Other Matters:

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Motion to return to Regular Meeting:
Motion: Baldacchini Second: Smith
All Voted In Favor

Regular Meeting: Started at 6:56 p.m.

<u>Present:</u>	<u>Absent:</u>
Cynthia Baldacchini	Monica DiVito
Lauren Cox	
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.

- 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.

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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: NONE

B} Superintendent: On October 6 2025, the Fire Department visited the Memorial School and gave a presentation on Fire Prevention. The Mitnick School had a field trip to Cape May Point State Park, where they explored the effects of erosion. The Maud Abrams School had a "Rock the School" event, and staff members created a glow room. Lastly, the Sandman School had a bullying presentation highlighting Empathy & Respect on October 6, 2025.

C} School Business Administrator: NONE

D} Presentations: **Students with NJSLA perfect scores (2024-25) have been invited, along with their past teachers & families, to be recognized.**

E} **Committee Reports:**

Finance & Facilities Committee - Met on October 7, 2025

Personnel & Management Committee - Met on October 22, 2025, they approved all personnel agenda items—next meeting to be determined.

Curriculum & Instruction Committee - Met on October 14, 2025, recap of in-service and NJSLA Data discussed. Next meeting scheduled for November 18, 2025.

F} Board Comment:

Mrs. Baldacchini expressed positive vibes for NJSLA

Mr. Vile mentioned the school board election is Nov 4, 2025 .

Mrs. Smith expressed positive vibes.

Mrs. Randle thanked Mrs. Bowman for her presentation, with a focus on all the Positive growth. She also wanted to highlight Mrs. Mills for receiving a grant from The Cape May County Board of County Commissioners for the Youth Arts Program. She is happy after school activities are returning to the district.

Mr. Morris congratulated all.

The Board members congratulated Grace McClellan as the 3rd Grade Teacher and John Pasternak as Bus Driver.

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2} APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

September 24, 2025
Regular Meeting & Executive Meeting

Motion: Vile **Second:** Smith

Discussion: NONE

Voted In Favor:

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

Absent:

Monica DiVito

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 **September 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).

R-2 Approval of Transfers: September 30, 2025 - October 22, 2025 {Backup R-2}

R-3 Approval of Bill List: September 30, 2025 - October 22, 2025 {Backup R-3}

R-4 Approval of Cafeteria Report: October 22, 2025 {Backup R-4}

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

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Susan Murphy, Susan Mellon, Stephanie Wiscott, Nancy Peltier, Nicole DeWald, Bryanna Dehainaut

SUBSTITUTE CLASSROOM AIDE

Anden McCabe, Nicole DeWald

SUBSTITUTE FOOD SERVICE WORKERS

Patricia Burk, Janice Sutton, Allison Muller

SUBSTITUTE CUSTODIANS

Zachary Layton, Daniel Sherno

SUBSTITUTE BUS DRIVER

David Kelly

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

<u>Employee #</u>	<u>Effective Dates</u>
#6023 - Food Service Worker	9/2/2025 - 10/31/2025 - Non-FMLA
#5719 - Food Service Worker	9/17/25 - 10/17/25 - FMLA
#5403 - Teacher	11/13/25 - 2/5/26 - 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>Eileena Solter</i>	<i>Paraprofessional @ Memorial</i>	<i>9/8</i>
<i>Kemalyn Giles</i>	<i>Custodian</i>	<i>9/15</i>
<i>Katie Allay</i>	<i>Cafe Aide @ Sandman</i>	<i>9/18</i>
<i>Amber Nordaby</i>	<i>Cafe @ Mitnick</i>	<i>9/23</i>
<i>Deborah Lewis</i>	<i>Paraprofessional @ Memorial</i>	<i>9/29</i>
<i>William Fox</i>	<i>Daycare</i>	<i>10/6</i>

4. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve Annika Tostevin as Mentor to Alexis Girard, 6th Grade Resource Room Teacher at the Sandman Consolidated School for the 2025-2026 school year.
5. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education accept the resignation of Jessica Donohue, Library Media Specialist at the Sandman Consolidated School, effective December 5, 2025 or earlier if a replacement is secured. (Backup P-5)
6. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve Peyton Bortner as Temporary 2nd Grade Teacher at the Carl T. Mitnick School, effective October 8, 2025 to January 1, 2026. (Backup P-6)
7. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education accept the resignation of Katie Cunha, Daily Part-Time Nurse's Clerk at the Sandman Consolidated School, effective October 31, 2025. (Backup P-7)

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8. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education authorizes Van Cathcart, Superintendent to hire a School Media Specialist, Nurse's Clerk - Daily Part-Time and Temporary Kindergarten Teacher, prior to the next Board Meeting.
9. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve change in title for John J. Hansen from Interim School Business Administrator to Interim Assistant School Business Administrator, effective November 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026.
10. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve Grace McClellan as 3rd Grade Special Education LLD Teacher at the Maud Abrams School, on the 1st Step of the LTEEA Teachers Salary Guide, \$53,970, effective December 15, 2025, pending required paperwork. (Backup P-10)
11. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve John Pasternak as Bus Driver, on the 2nd Step of the LTEEA Bus Driver's Salary Guide, \$28.46 an hour, effective October 23, 2025. (Backup P-11)

H. Harassment, Intimidation & Bullying: None.

1. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Board approve the H.I.B. School Self-Assessment scores for the 2024-2025 school year. (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)

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

E. Education:

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

Case #4900-A - 4th grade student to Cape May County Special Services School District.

Case #4715-A - 4th grade student to Cape May County Special Services School District. This student transferred back to the district having previously been approved and attending CMCSSD.

Case #5209-A - Kindergarten student to Cape May County Special Services School District.
2. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve the Nursing Services Plan for the 2025-2026 school year. (Backup

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E-2)

3. On recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education acknowledges the mailing of the NJSLA Individual Score Reports via USPS on September 26, 2025. (Backup E-3)

F. Finance and Insurance:

1. On the recommendation of the Superintendent that the Lower Township Board of Education approve the following Appointments and Resolutions, for the fiscal year November 1, 2025 until the Reorganization Meeting 2026, as listed below:

- a.. **Board Secretary & Records Custodian** - Katie Siciliano
- b. **Public Agency compliance Officer (P.A.C.O.)** - Katie Siciliano
- c. **Chief Equity/Affirmative Action Officer/Title IX Coordinator** - Katie Siciliano

2. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education appoint Katie Siciliano as temporary QPA, with a bid threshold of \$53,000.
3. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education appoint Katie Siciliano as the Fund Commissioner for the ACCASBO JIF and Southern Coastal HIF with John Hanson serving as alternate.
4. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education appoint Katie Siciliano as the district's Administrator for NJ Homeroom.
5. On the recommendation of the Interim School Business Administrator, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve petty cash disbursements for the Transportation Department in the amount of \$200.00 monthly.
6. On the recommendation of the Interim School Business Administrator, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve the following increases to On-Call Substitutes - Hourly Rates for 2025-2026, effective January 1, 2026 for the following positions:

Current Rate - \$15.50 Rate Effective January 1, 2026 - \$15.92

Bus Aides 5 ½ hrs/day
Classroom Aides without 60 credits and no County Substitute Teacher Certification
Cafeteria Aide
Food Service Worker

7. On the recommendation of the Interim School Business Administrator, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve the following equipment on GovDeals :

Lenovo n22 Chromebooks	Qty 30	\$15.00 Each
Samsun XE503c32	Qty 30	\$15.00 Each

8. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve the submittal of certification to utilize Capital Maintenance and Emergent Project Funding Unclaimed Funding as follows: (Backup F-8)

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- #1. Sandman - Supply and replace two each sets of 500 Mem and connector from existing handhole to school. Approximately \$27,000
 - #2. Sandman - Supply and install stepping pod, top rail, center support. Approximately \$ 6,260*
- Grant Funded \$33,260

Balance funded by general funds.

- 9. On the recommendation of the Interim School Business Administrator, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve the Three-Year (2024-2025, 2025-2026, 2026-2027) Facility Comprehensive Maintenance Plan and Form M-1, as submitted. (Backup F-9)
- 10. On the recommendation of the Interim School Business Administrator, that the Lower Township Board of Education authorize the Service Contract with the Commission with Blind and Visually Impaired, for 2025-2026 school year. (Backup F-10)
- 11. On the recommendation of the Interim School Business Administrator, that the Lower Township Board of Education authorizes the Interim School Business Administrator to pay bills during the month of November and report payments to the Board at the December 3, 2025 meeting.
- 12. On the recommendation of the Interim School Business Administrator, that the Lower Township Board of Education authorize the submittal of the 2026-2027 Preschool Budget and Operational Plan by November 14, 2025.
- 13. On the recommendation of the Interim School Business Administrator, that the Lower Township Board of Education authorize the submittal of the 2025-2026 Application of State School Aid (ASSA).
- 14. On the recommendation of the Interim School Business Administrator, that the Lower Township Board of Education adopt the 2026-2027 Budget Calendar. (Backup F-14)
- 15. On the recommendation of the Interim School Business Administrator, that the Lower Township Board of Education accept a grant from the Youth Art Program in the amount of \$2,180, provided by The Cape May County Board of County Commissioners. (Backup F-15)

MOTION ON CONSENT AGENDA ON ALL MOTIONS LISTED BELOW:

Routine Matters: R-1 to R-5

Personnel: P-1 to P-9

Harassment, Intimidation & Bullying: H-1

Legislative and Internal Policies: L-1

Education: E-1 to E-3

Finance and Insurance: F-1 to F-15

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Motion: Douglass Second: Smith

Discussion: NONE

Voted in Favor:

Cynthia Baldacchini

Lauren Cox

James Morris

Lauren Randle

Jonathan Vile

Patricia Smith

Gary Douglass

Absent:

Monica DiVito

4) NON-CONSENT AGENDA:

5) OLD/NEW BUSINESS:

6) OPEN MEETING TO THE PUBLIC: (public comment rules as read above apply):

7) GOOD OF THE ORDER:

A) Next Board Meeting: December 3, 2025

B) Fire Drills: 10/16/25 - Carl T. Mitnick School; 10/17/2025 - Maud Abrams School; TBD - Sandman Consolidated School; and David C. Douglass Veterans Memorial School

Monthly Emergency Drill: 10/23/25 - Active Shooter/Lockdown Drill

8) ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION TO ADJOURN THE MEETING

Motion: Baldacchini Second: Randle

Discussion: NONE

All in favor: All

Absent: Monica DiVito

Time: 7:14 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

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12. Day Care Reports
November Calendar