

**LOWER TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION
MINUTES
WORK SESSION AND REGULAR MEETING
MARCH 19, 2025**

Call to Order:

Work Session: Started at 6:00 p.m.

Work Session Meeting:

Roll Call- Board Members:

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

Absent:

Monica DiVito

Also in Attendance:

Jeff Samaniego, Superintendent
Patricia Ryan, Board Secretary
Brett Gorman, Board Attorney

Agenda Items:

- Mrs. Randle sought clarification on the leadership responsibilities outlined in the job description for the Supervisor of Early Childhood Education position, which was clarified by Mr. Samaniego.
- Mrs. Smith mentioned that the new Board Committees are on agenda to be approved and the new committee lists, with alternate members, will be provided.

- **Non-Agenda Items:**
 - **Discussion on the revised 2024-2025 District calendar**
- Mr. Samaniego explained that the 2024-2025 was revised due to the snow days, with the tentative last day for students is June 18, 2025 and last day for staff members is June 19, 2025. In addition the district will still observe Juneteeth on June 19th, 2025.
- Mr. Douglas mentioned that he would like to discuss the fall break next school year.
- Mr. Samaniego stated that the County In-Service day will be moved back to October instead of March in the 25-26 SY.

Other Matters: None

Motion to enter Executive Session

Motion: Vile Second: Thomas

All Voted In Favor:

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Personnel: Employee #4155; #5439; #5356

Other Matters: None

Motion to return to Regular Meeting:

Motion: Baldacchini **Second:** Cox

All Voted In Favor:

Regular Meeting: Started at 7:15 p.m.

Roll Call:

Present:

Cynthia Baldacchini

Lauren Cox

James Morris

Lauren Randle

Joseph Thomas

Jonathan Vile

Patricia Smith

Gary Douglass

Absent:

Monica DiVito

Also in Attendance:

Jeff Samaniego, Superintendent

Patricia Ryan, 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.

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:

-Mr. Samaniego thanked Heather Sekela and the Education Foundation for the Mitnick library dedication ceremony honoring Dr. Rochford.

-Mr. Samaniego also thanked Acme for the gift cards that will be sent to needy families within our district and thanked Kristin Sterling for all her work.

- Mr. Samaniego informed the board that the Education Foundation will be delivering food purchased/donated by Acme on April 15th to needy families. There will be volunteers, including our 6th grade students bagging the food. Mr. Samaniego also thanked Shannon Feltwell and the transportation department for helping with the delivery planning.
- Mr. Samaniego mentioned that the 2025-2026 school calendar will include the fall break.

C} School Business Administrator:

- Mrs. Ryan informed the Board that the County office informed her that the district was eligible for the Tax Levy Incentive Aid to eligible districts.
- Over the past week, Mrs. Ryan conducted small budget sessions with the Board to explain details of the 2025-2026 budget so they are all thoroughly informed prior to approving the preliminary budget.
- Mrs. Ryan reminded the Board that the public hearing will be conducted at the April 30th board meeting where the final budget for the 2025-2026 school year will be presented.

D} Presentations: None

E} Committee Reports:

Building and Grounds Committee: None

Curriculum Committee: None

Finance Committee: Mr. Vile stated that the committee last met on March 3rd to discuss the 25-26 SY budget, Preschool Expansion Project, and new hires.

F} Board Comment:

- Mrs. Baldacchini congratulated everyone on the dedication of the library to Mr. Rochford and that it was very well organized.
- Mr. Thomas thanked Mr. Samaniego and Mrs. Ryan for all their hard work and time spent on the 25-26 SY budget.
- Mrs. Cox thanked everyone who was involved in organizing the Preschool Spring events.
- Mr. Vile thanked everyone for the library dedication ceremony.
- Mrs. Smith thanked Heather Sekela and the Education Foundation for the library dedication ceremony. Mrs. Smith mentioned that the Board discussed three policies (3233, 4233, and 7510) and it was determined that they were well written and no changes were necessary.
- Mrs. Randle thanked the board members for all their time and consideration during the Superintendent search.
- Mr. Douglass thanked the Board for all their hard work and time they contributed to the Superintendent search and also thanked everyone involved in the Mitnick Library dedication ceremony.

2} APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

February 26, 2025 Board Meeting and Executive Session

Motion: Smith

Second: Randle

Discussion: None

Voted Yes:

Cynthia Baldacchini

Lauren Cox

Monica DiVito

James Morris

Lauren Randle

Joseph Thomas

Jonathan Vile

Patricia Smith

Gary Douglass (Abstained from Executive Session Minutes)

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.*

-NO PUBLIC COMMENTS-

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 within the block.

R. Routine Matters

R-1 Approval of Financial Statements:

Secretary's and custodian's reports for February 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: February 26, 2025 - March 19, 2025 {Backup R-2}

R-3 Approval of Bill List: February 26, 2025 - March 19, 2025 {Backup R-3}

R-4 Approval of Cafeteria Report: March 2025 {Backup R-4}

R-5 Approval of Travel: None

P. Personnel:

- 1.** On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the following substitutes be approve for the 2024-2025 school year, pending receipt of required documentation: (Backup P-1)

SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS

Madison McClain, Linda Portewig, Sharon Hickok

SUBSTITUTE 60 CREDIT AIDE

Kaya Thomas

SUBSTITUTE CLASSROOM AIDES

Debra Heenan, Holly Saini, Lynn Gillis

SUBSTITUTE CAFETERIA AIDES

Jennifer Bolten, Lynn Gillis

SUBSTITUTE FOOD SERVICE WORKERS

Lynn Gillis, Sophia Cruz

SUBSTITUTE BUS AIDES

Debra Heenan, Lynn Gillis, Kevin Bonner

SUBSTITUTE CUSTODIAN

Miguel Lopez

- 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> |
|------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| Samantha Martin | Classroom Aide @ Mitnick | 2/24/25 |
| Jennifer Pietro | Classroom Aide @ Mitnick | 3/10/25 |

- 3. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve the Supervisor of Early Childhood Education job description. (Backup P-3)

- 4. 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> |
|--------------------------|---|
| #4708 | March 4, 2025 to March 17, 2025 (Non-FMLA) |
| #5284 | March 5, 2025 to March 14, 2025 (Non-FMLA) |
| #5232 | September 1, 2025 to January 1, 2026 (FMLA) |
| #5778 | September 1, 2025 to January 1, 2026 (FMLA) |

- 5. On the recommendation of the Board of Education, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve Van Cathcart as Superintendent, in the District, effective July 1, 2025. (Backup P-5)
- 6. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve Aiden Conley, as Computer/Network Technician, in the District, as BA Step 1 of the LTEEA Teachers Salary Guide, effective date April 1, 2025, pending documentation. (Backup P-6)
- 7. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve the transfer of Employee #4155 to Intervention at the Sandman Consolidated School effective April 4, 2025.
- 8. On the recommendation of the Superintendent, that the Lower Township Board of Education agrees to the employment increment withholding for employee #4155 for the 2025-2026 school year as follows:

WHEREAS, it has been determined that employee #4155 has engaged in inappropriate conduct;

WHEREAS, it has been determined that employee #4155's inappropriate conduct provides a sufficient basis to withhold his/her employment and adjustment increment pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:29-14;

IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, that employee #4155's employment and adjustment increment for the 2025-2026 school year shall be withheld; and

IT IS FURTHER RESOLVED that the Superintendent will provide employee #4155 with written notice of this action within ten (10) days pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:29-14.

This motion will take effect immediately on this 19th day of March, 2025.

H. Harassment, Intimidation & Bullying:

- 1. The Board affirms the actions taken by the Superintendent and the School Safety Teams, for H.I.B. Sandman #1 2025-26 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)

| <u>NUMBER</u> | <u>TYPE</u> | <u>TITLE</u> |
|---------------|-------------|--|
| 0155 | Policy | Board Committees |
| 8500 | Policy | Food Services |
| 5111 | Policy | Eligibility of Resident/Nonresident Students |
| 5111 | Regulation | Eligibility of Resident/Nonresident Students |
| 2260 | Policy | Equity in School and Classroom Practices |
| 2260 | Regulation | Equity in School and Classroom Practices |
| | | Complaint Procedures |
| 2422 | Policy | Comprehensive Health and Physical Education |
| 2428.1 | Policy | Standards-Based Instructional Priorities |

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 2025-2026:

BE IT RESOLVED that the tentative budget be approved for the 2025-26 School Year using the 2025-2026 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:

| | |
|--|-----------------------------|
| General Fund | \$ 27,052,823 |
| Special Revenues (Grants & Entitlements) | \$ 5,205,679 |
| Debt Service Fund | <u>\$ 1,483,230</u> |
| TOTAL BUDGET | \$ 33,741,732 |
| Local Tax Levy (Including Debt Service) | <u>\$ 20,796,727</u> |

And to advertise said tentative budget in the Cape May Star & Wave newspaper 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 30, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. for the purpose of conducting a public hearing on the budget for the 2025-2026 School Year.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the district establish a maximum of \$17,000 in the 2025-2026 school year for travel related expenditures.

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 – Other Capital Projects in the amount of \$150,000 for other capital project costs of Preschool Facility Project. The total cost of this project is \$150,000 which represents expenditures for construction elements or projects that are in addition to the facilities efficiency standards determined by the Commissioner as necessary to achieve the New Jersey Student Learning Standards.

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 2025-2026 Preschool Budget. (Backup F-2)
- 3. On the recommendation of the School Business Administrator, that the Lower Township Board of Education to approve the Cape May County Special Services School District 2025-2026 school year and ESY tuition rates:

| | |
|---------------------------------|-----------|
| ESY- Tuition | \$ 3,500 |
| ESY- One-to One Aide | \$ 3,025 |
| ESY- Transportation | \$ 2,500 |
| Preschool Disabilities | \$ 42,500 |
| Autism | \$ 46,000 |
| Emotional Regulation Impairment | \$ 45,900 |
| Multiple Disabilities | \$ 38,750 |
- 4. On the recommendation of the School Business Administrator, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve the renewal of Administrative Services with Ameriflex for dental and prescription COBRA coverage, effective April 1, 2025.
- 5. On the recommendation of the School Business Administrator, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve the sale listing of the 2009 GMC Lift Truck on GovDeals for \$10,000. (Backup F-5)
- 6. On the recommendation of the School Business Administrator, that the Lower Township Board of Education approve the renewal of a one (1) year software license contract for fund accounting, personnel and payroll with Systems 3000 Inc. effective 07/01/2025 at an annual license fee of \$30,040. (Backup F-6)

-Motion by Mr. Douglass to move motion Personnel #8 from the Non-Consent agenda to the Consent agenda.

**Motion: Vile Second: Smith
Discussion: None
All Voted In Favor**

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: H-1
Legislative and Internal Policies: L-1
Education: None
Finance: F-1 to F-6**

Motion: Smith Second: Cox

Discussion: None

Voted Yes:

- Cynthia Baldacchini
- Lauren Cox
- Monica DiVito
- James Morris
- Lauren Randle
- Joseph Thomas
- Jonathan Vile
- Patricia Smith
- Gary Douglass (Abstained from Motion P-5)

Absent:

- Monica DiVito

4} NON-CONSENT AGENDA: None

5} OLD/NEW BUSINESS: None

6} OPEN MEETING TO THE PUBLIC: None

7} GOOD TO THE ORDER:

- A}** Next Board Meeting: Work session: April 30, 2025
- B}** Emergency Drill: 3/27/25- Lock Down Drill
- C}** Fire Drills: 3/14/25- Sandman School; 3/7/25- Maud; 3/28/25- Mitnick;
3/28/25- Memorial
- D}** Bus Evacuation Drills: 3/3/25 - Sandman School; 3/4/25 - Maud Abrams School;
3/5/25 - Mitnick School; 3/10/25 - CMC Special Services School; 3/11/25 - Memorial School

8} ADJOURNMENT

MOTION TO ADJOURN THE MEETING

Motion: Vile Second: Cox

All Voted In Favor

This meeting concluded at 7:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Patricia Ryan".

Patricia Ryan

School Business Administrator/Board Secretary

**LOWER TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION
MINUTES
EXECUTIVE SESSION
MARCH 19, 2025**

Meeting was called to order at 6:11 p.m.

Roll Call:

Present:

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

Absent:

Monica DiVito

Also in Attendance:

Jeff Samaniego, Superintendent
Patricia Ryan, Board Secretary
Brett Gorman, Board Attorney

Motion to enter Executive Session:

Motion: Vile Second: Thomas

All Voted In Favor

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Personnel: Employee#4155; #5439; #5356

- Board discussed Employee #4155 employment status and return to work.
- Mr. Gorman discussed with the Board Employee #5439 employment and employment contract.
- Board discussed Employee #5356 employment

Other Matters: None

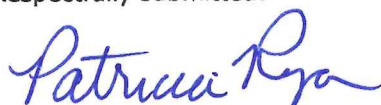
Motion to return to Regular Meeting

Motion: Baldacchini Second: Cox

All Voted In Favor

This session concluded at 7:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:



Patricia Ryan
School Business Administrator/Board 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 3 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 March 19, 2025 at 6:11 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."

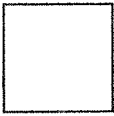
(4) Any collective bargaining agreement, or the terms and conditions of which are proposed for inclusion in any collective bargaining agreement, including the negotiation of terms and conditions with employees or representatives of employees of the public body"

"(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 _____;

"(7) Any pending or anticipated litigation or contract negotiation in which the public body's/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: Employees #4155; #5439; #5356



"(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 45 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.