



Lower Merion School District

301 East Montgomery Avenue ♦ Ardmore, PA 19003-3399

www.lmsd.org

LMSD Board of School Directors Business Meeting Highlights

Jan. 28, 2019, Business Meeting

For a complete agenda, visit the [BoardDocs section](#) of the District website.

PRESENTATIONS

Students from Cynwyd Elementary School's 4th grade performed a song set to music by Imagine Dragons about the Habits of Mind guidelines they've learned to use when they find themselves in a new or challenging situation. These include 1) Persisting, 2) Managing Impulsivity, 3) Striving for Accuracy, 4) Listening with Understanding and 5) Empathy.

Architects from Spiegle and Fielding Nair shared information about their process and very initial design concepts for the new middle school. The process has included looking at the LMSD strategic plan, "All Forward," and meeting with teachers, students, administrators and community members. Conversations about issues such as security, inclusion, sustainability, accessibility, and interdisciplinary and collaborative learning are ongoing. (The presentation is available in Board Docs)

Mr. Copeland explained that the District will not be filing a preliminary budget because no application is being made for Act 1 exceptions for the third consecutive year. In his initial budget update, he shared that \$1.7 million of the fund balance will be used to balance the 2019-2020 budget. The new budget anticipates increased revenue to meet the ongoing challenges of increased enrollment and planning for both short- and long-term goals, including paying for the middle school land acquisition, the middle school field acquisition and the field development without borrowing, while maintaining the highest bond-rating. The anticipated school tax increase for the average homeowner will be about \$166. (The presentation is available in Board Docs).

PUBLIC COMMENT ON ACTION ITEMS

A Narberth resident expressed concerns about having some less stimulating but not segregated spaces for lunch and physical education in the new middle school for special needs students.

A Wynnewood resident expressed concerns about the locations of core spaces such as gyms and labs in the new middle school and about whether fifth graders would have their own area of the school.

A Narberth resident lauded the architects' design and clever use of the site topography but suggested moving the loading dock farther back and utilizing the roof as a green classroom space. He was also concerned about on-site parking for evening events.

A Wynnewood resident suggested going beyond LEED certification for sustainability to make a Living Building. She also wanted more lab spaces and areas that can be closed off and opened up.

The architects replied to these comments saying they are looking into soft separations for special ed students in core spaces. They also stated that two gyms and additional spaces for physical activities, along with multiple labs and makerspaces are planned, but not yet incorporated into the design, as they will be further instructed by the programming. In addition, they explained that the bus loops will be wide enough to allow for parking for night events and that the locations of the various learning communities are not finalized, but that locating 5th and 6th grades appropriately will be part of that planning.

SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE

Mr. Copeland shared the following highlights:

- Several hundreds of students, along with their families and community members took part in the Martin Luther King Afternoon of Service at Lower Merion High School on January 18th. Congratulations to our MLK Volunteer Service Award winners: Tula Childs from Harriton High School, Lauren Cobitz from Lower Merion High School, Anna Welsh from Welsh Valley Middle School and Michelle Kelly from Bala Cynwyd Middle School.
- Congratulations also to Harriton High School Senior Samuel Weissman. Sam was named a Top 40 finalist in the Science Talent Search competition – winning \$25,000. If he's chosen in the Top Ten in the competition in March, he could win up to \$250,000 for his research.
- And finally, LMSD had seven students recognized as Presidential Scholars. Six are from Harriton – which had more winners than any other high school in the state of Pennsylvania – and one is from Lower Merion.

HUMAN RESOURCES

The Board approved personnel actions across the District, including staff hires, re-hires and reclassifications for the 2018-2019 school year.

The Board notes with sadness the Dec. 22, 2018, passing of David Bates, who served as night custodian at Merion Elementary School from 1999 until his retirement in 2014 and the Dec. 21, 2018, passing of Thomas Byrd, who served as a bus aide and driver from 1987 until his retirement in May 2018.

EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

Ms. Robinson reported on the Jan. 8, 2019, Curriculum Committee Meeting, where the committee discussed discontinuing ERB testing for more local assessments, adding additional bridge opportunities for students to accelerate in math and PSSA achievement and growth data.

The Board approved the following:

- Registration and tuition fee structure for 2019 Summer school programs and SPIES
- The following overnight trips:
 - BCMS, WVMS, LMHS and HHS Science Olympiad trips to Huntingdon, Pa., in April
 - WVMS VEX Robotics trip to Council Bluffs, Iowa, in April
 - HHS and LMHS Squash trips to Hartford, Ct., in Jan-Feb.
 - HHS Speech and Debate trip to Bloomsburg, Pa., in March
 - HHS FBLA trip to Hershey, Pa. in April
 - LMHS Ultimate Frisbee trips to Arlington, Va., in March and Amherst, Mass., and Pittsburgh, Pa., in May

STUDENT SERVICES

The Board approved agreements for Students receiving Non-District Educational Services.

BUSINESS OFFICE AND FINANCE

Mr. Driscoll gave a report on the January 24, 2019, Facilities/Purchasing Committee Meeting reviewing the items that were recommended for tonight's agenda.

The Board approved the List of Bills reviewed through the Facilities and Purchasing Committee as well as the December 2018 LMSD Financial Report.

The Board received the second quarter student activities report.

The Board accepted with gratitude the donation of a water filtration station from the Belmont Hills HSA to Belmont Hills Elementary, the donation of \$150 from Travis and Alexandra Conley in memory of Beverly B. Alexandre to pay off student lunch debts, and the donation of a Kawai console piano from Alan Wilberger to Gladwyne Elementary School.

The Board adopted a resolution to not raise the rate of any tax for the support of its public school for the 2019-2020 fiscal year by more than 2.3%.

FACILITIES AND OPERATIONS

The Board approved the following items:

- Contract to replace the auditorium projection screen, two gas ovens and a chiller at WVMS
- License agreement with First String Sports for a summer basketball camp
- Master agreement for professional service with Storm Water Solutions, LLC

- Individual work order for Storm Water Solutions, LLC
- Contract for professional architectural and engineering services with Spiezle Architectural Group, which supersedes the Sept. 24, 2018, agreement
- First amendment to and restatement of the master agreement for professional services between LMSD and Shephard Restoration Engineers, Inc.
- Second amendment to and restatement of the master agreement for professional services between LMSD and CMC Engineering, Inc.
- First amendment to professional services agreement with Shephard Restoration Engineers, Inc. to reconstruct the masonry parapet wall at BCMS
- First amendment to professional services agreement with David Blackmore and Assoc.
- Proposal from Chester Valley Engineers Inc. for civil engineering services
- Individual work order with Element Environmental Solutions
- Proposal from CMC Engineering for improvements to the tennis courts at LMHS
- Proposal from Sims Architects for modifications to the GES library
- Proposal from Shephard Restoration Engineers for façade restorations at BCMS
- Proposal from Shephard Restoration Engineers for masonry restoration at PVES
- Proposal from Shephard Restoration Engineers for major roof and partial masonry restoration at MES
- Quote from Visual Sound for SMART Learning Suite one-year extended software maintenance

OLD BUSINESS

Ms. Robinson gave a report on the Jan. 11, 2019, Policy Committee Meeting, where the policies below were discussed.

The Board approved second readings on:

- Policy 210 Use of Medication
- Policy 246 Prohibited Harassment

NEW BUSINESS

The Board heard first readings on:

- Policy/AR 201 Admission of Beginners
- Policy/AR 203 Blood Borne Pathogens (for repeal)
- Policy/AR 205 Immunization and Communicable Disease

AUDIENCE RECOGNITION

It was clarified that students who are walked between LMSD kindergarten programs and off-site wraparound programs will be given the option of bus rides at 9 AM and 3:30 PM, if the outside programs and parents/guardians sign waivers clarifying that the outside programs are responsible for child welfare and safety for the children for the time they are not on and LMSD bus or in an LMSD building.

A Wynnewood resident who is the parent of two high school sophomores expressed frustration that the District had not yet implemented later start times for the high schools. They are scheduled for a 6:38 AM bus to school so she drives them to school to enable them to get additional morning sleep. She added that drowsy drivers cause accidents.

A Villanova resident expressed concern that the bus entrance for the planned playing fields for the new middle school will ruin the jewel of her neighborhood where elderly residents currently enjoy a tranquil, dead end street. She cited safety concerns and suggested the buses use Montgomery Ave. or County Line Road to reach the fields.

A Penn Valley resident questioned whether students were allowed to comment on non-action items at the beginning of a Board meeting and wanted a clarification on whether the new middle school would have a traditional quiet library with a librarian or a media center.

Dr. Gilbert explained that allowing students to speak early in a Board meeting on non-action items was at her discretion. She stated that she has allowed students to speak first during the first Audience Recognition in the past but said that it also depended on the number of presentations and amount of regular Board business anticipated for the evening.

Mr. Copeland responded to the audience members explaining that the driveway configuration for the new fields is still under consideration and that the media space for the new middle school is being planned with a media specialist.

SUNSHINE ACT

Ms. Brooks, Solicitor from Wisler Pearlstine, reported when the Board of School Directors met in Executive Sessions and the topics discussed.

UPCOMING MEETING DATES

Board Meetings: (at 8:00 p.m. in the Administration Board Room)

Monday, Feb. 11 – Education Committee and Supplemental Regular Board Meeting

Tuesday, Feb. 19 – Regular Business Board Meeting

Committee Meetings: (at 8:30 a.m. in the Board Room, unless otherwise noted)

Tuesday, Feb. 5 – Curriculum Committee

Friday, Feb. 8 – Policy Committee

Thursday, Feb. 14 – Facilities/Purchasing Committee

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